

Our beloved friend and colleague, Clark Bushey, died from complications from a stem cell transplant for leukemia on December 29th. He graduated from Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine in 1969 and worked briefly with a practice in New York state until they asked him to do small animal work. He then moved to St. Albans and worked with Dr. Milt Robison. He was a founding partner in Northwest Vets.

Most of us have quite a repertoire of stories about Clark (see below). But woven through these stories is the real Clark: an unforgettable, passionate, devoted, hard-working man. Clark did indeed love to work. In the early days of his career, the hours of work he did were legendary. Starting his days before dawn and working late into the night 7 days a week was routine. And until he became sick, he still was filling his days with vet work, gardening and landscaping, walking, skiing, bike riding, cutting wood and plowing snow. Even when he sat down, he usually had a book in his hands.

Clark lived his life with a passion that is uncommon in this world. At times, his passion was impulsive, crazy, hilarious, spontaneous or abrupt. His emotions were transparent. He wasn't one to play head games or to strategize. What you saw was what you got! He told you just what he was thinking, like it or not. He was not one to hold grudges or be vindictive. He nearly always had a positive attitude and didn't have time for self-pity. Even as his health was failing and the upcoming journey looked daunting, Clark just looked upon this as just another challenge to take on. While in Fletcher-Allen for 2 months of miserable chemotherapy, Clark had his laptop out and followed his blood counts on an Excel spreadsheet, fully involved in all aspects of his treatment.

His passion for dairy practice was unsurpassed. Even after 40 years of practice, Clark loved to learn about new theories, surgeries, procedures and diseases. He loved to track numbers for his herd health clients, often coming to the office early to print out reports for the day's farms. He would work tirelessly for his farms that wanted problems solved. His passion for practice was absolutely contagious. We are all better veterinarians and farmers from working with Clark. During his career, he encouraged and mentored dozens of co-workers, vet students, pre-vet students, farmers and farm workers. He didn't cut us any slack and he wasn't big on doling out sympathy! He expected all of us to work with the same passion that inspired him. He would thrust IV tubing in some poor farm worker's hand and insist they try hitting a vein with his guidance.

But underlying all his loveable quirks was his love for all of us. When asked what he liked about his job for a video for high school science classes, Clark was to the point. With an arm up a cow's rectum and the camera rolling, Clark said, "I love working with people." Yes, indeed, he did. Clark has enriched our lives, taught us about cows, made us howl with laughter, pissed us off, and inspired us with his positive attitude. Our lives are better and richer because we knew him.

We would like to make a collection of stories about Clark to keep him alive in our memories and keep smiles on our faces. If you have stories to offer, please either write them down or convey them to one of the vets so we can put them together in a scrapbook.