

Lawrence R. Soma, Penn Vet

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Lawrence Roger Soma, V'57, an emeritus professor of anesthesiology in Penn Vet, died recently from heart failure. He was 92.

Born in Queens, New York, Dr. Soma grew up in Bolton, Connecticut, and studied at the University of Connecticut from 1950 to 1953 before earning his Veterinariae Medicinae Doctoris (VMD) degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1957. After graduating, Dr. Soma served in the United States Army Veterinary Corps. He was commissioned as a Captain, serving on active duty from 1958 to 1960 and in the Army Reserve from 1960 to 1966, during the Vietnam War.

Lawrence Soma

Starting in 1960, Dr. Soma devoted more than five decades of service to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine/New Bolton Center. He was assistant and associate professor prior to becoming professor of veterinary medicine clinical studies in 1972. He served as chair of the department starting in 1975. In 1993, he became the Marilyn M. Simpson Professor of Veterinary Medicine.

A founding member of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesiology, Dr. Soma was internationally recognized for his contributions to veterinary anesthesia and clinical pharmacology. He served on numerous school and University committees, including multiple terms on the Committee on Appointments and Promotions, the Committee on Academic Status of Students, and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, where he also served as chair. He also served as principal investigator of the Pennsylvania Horse & Harness Racing Commissions Research Program.

In 2006, along with two colleagues, Dr. Soma was honored by the U.S. Harness Writers Association (USHWA) for developing the world's first test for confirming the presence of the blood-doping drug commonly known as EPO, used in race horses. During the 2013-2014 academic year, he retired and became Professor Emeritus of Anesthesia and Clinical Pharmacology, Clinical Studies at New Bolton Center/Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Soma is survived by his children, Scott J. (Nancy); Mark A. (Tracy); and Craig L. (Kim); grandchildren, Bon Soma, Jaeke Lyn Macdonald, Tyler Soma, Paul Soma, Alexander Soma, and Avery Soma; and great-grandchildren, Rory Macdonald and Camila Macdonald.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Penn Vet at Giving to Penn.