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New ABAC Museum Exhibit Paying Homage to Beloved Veterinarian and His Passion For Animals

TIFTON- The Veterinary Infirmary Exhibit honoring Dr. Coy Hansel Poitevint will open on Oct. 11 at 2 p.m. at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Lynn and George Lee of Tifton will cut the ribbon in memory of their late uncle, and tour the exhibit along with museum guests. Light refreshments will be served.
While attending ABAC in 1935 Poitevint was active in the Baldwin Players, College 4-H Club, Ag Club, Baptist Young People’s Union, and the Boys Glee Club. Later he worked his way through graduate school at the University of Georgia and Auburn (then called Alabama Polytechnic Institute), and after a short time as a county extension agent he obtained his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1943. He was married to his wife, Louise, for 69 years, was active in his church and various civic clubs and organizations, and was recognized with numerous prestigious awards throughout his life.

He spent 50 years of his life in veterinary service, and now his family is honoring him and his love for ABAC, UGA, Auburn and veterinary medicine. Last year, a fund was created allowing the design and creation of a new permanent exhibit in memory of Poitevint.

Though he practiced in the mid and late 1900s, the exhibit will represent a late 19th-early 20th century veterinarian’s office, to better fit with the time period in history portrayed by the Museum. The Veterinarian Infirmary Exhibit will be located in the Historic Village, in the rear of the Feed and Seed store.

Many of the exhibit elements were built using reclaimed lumber which came from a Tift County barn built in the late 1800s. Charlotte Bedell, wife of the late Dr. Bedell and Dr. Arvle Marshall, friend of the late Poitevint, both provided family heirlooms from their veterinary practices. The College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Georgia and the Tifton Veterinary Diagnostic Lab provided the majority of the veterinary instruments and equipment on display, with many of the artifacts dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Georgia Veterinary Medicine Association and the Alabama Veterinary Medical Association also assisted with locating information, archives and artifacts.
Visitors to the new exhibit will be able to view artifacts belonging to Poitevint such as photos, hand-drawn surgery sketches, books, and diplomas. An interpretive panel depicting the history of veterinary medicine over the last three centuries was designed by Tifton’s marketing firm, The Big Picture, and is also a part of the exhibit. ABAC Rural Studies student Hannah Beth Hembree assisted with this exhibit, logging in more than 160 hours of work toward its completion and documenting her work in a massive project portfolio. GMA maintenance and restoration specialist David King served as the exhibit builder.

“We appreciate the opportunity to add this exhibit to display an important part of the heritage of rural Georgia. We are grateful to our friends and partners for providing the funding and artifacts to make this exhibit a spectacular addition to the state’s museum of agriculture,” said Paul Willis, Vice President for Finance and Operations at ABAC.

The Wiregrass Country Fair will also be held on Oct. 11 at the Museum, and promises a day full of animals and outdoor activities. Daily admission or a GMA Season pass can be purchased at the Country Store.

For more information on this exhibit contact Polly Huff, curator of the GMA at phuff@abac.edu.

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