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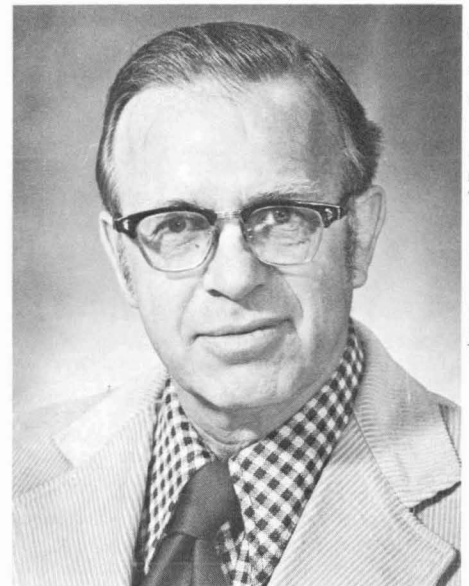
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## Dr. James Tufts, Research Veterinarian, Deceased

by Tanner S. Chrisler,  
Publicity Director,  
American Pigeon Fanciers Council



Dr. James M. Tufts

photo courtesy of Ralston Purina Co.

Dr. James M. Tufts, senior research veterinarian at Ralston Purina Company, died of an apparent heart attack, Saturday, October 28, at his home in suburban St. Louis. Funeral services were held at Mary Mother of the Church Catholic Church.

This news came as a shock to many of the pigeon fanciers and cage bird breeders who knew "Doc" — not only as a friend of animals, but also — as a warm friend of the people who raise them. By utilizing his company's policy of offering diagnostic and counseling services, Dr. Tufts performed hundreds of "posts" on birds of every type and size, and every case was handled with the most professional kind of laboratory analysis.

As an outgrowth of his early work, Dr. Tufts authored his company's booklet, "Pigeon Diseases Their Prevention and Control", which achieved wide circulation at a time when very little modern information was being published in the field. On four occasions he was a featured speaker at the American Pigeon Fanciers Council annual conference in St. Louis.

Widely known in veterinary circles, Dr. Tufts was a consultant to the St. Louis Zoo, Grant's Farm (an animal-oriented theme park), the St. Louis Police Department Mounted Patrol and the St. Louis City Hospital. Whenever there was a special problem with the world famous Budweiser Clydesdales (45 mares and 8 stallions in the breeding herd), their keepers frequently called in Dr. Tufts.

His experience with horses went back to his boyhood in Michigan, where his father raised trotters and pacers. He received his degree in Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University and did two years of graduate work in diagnostic medicine at Iowa State University, after which

he joined Ralston Purina Company in 1954.

In an article in the company's magazine, featuring his unusual work, Dr. Tufts said, "My job requires considerable travel, consulting with customers in Canada and Mexico, as well as around the United States." Although the bulk of his assignments were with various kinds of poultry on farms—from the most primitive to the most advanced—he was called in by a number of zoos around the country.

A case which made national headlines involved a tendon transplant and graft on a baby whooping crane in 1962, when the world population of this rare bird was only 46. Later he did his best to save the life of our national symbol, when he operated on an American bald eagle which had multiple fractures, after being hit by a speeding truck. And he saved the life of America's most talkative mynah bird by placing a steel splint in its broken bone.

Speaking personally, this pigeon fancier will remember Dr. Tufts as a patient teacher and practical problem solver. Even though pigeons comprised only a tiny part of his company's business, Dr. Tufts was never "too busy" to follow-up a written report with a personal phone call. He was never too sophisticated to explain the technicalities in layman's language. And he was never too intimidated by regulations to interpret the findings of science, pertaining to other animals, as to their probable application to our birds. For his extra effort—above the call of duty—my fellow fanciers and I will be eternally grateful.

He is survived by his widow, Virginia, four daughters and five sons. Condolences and memorials may be sent to Mrs. Tufts at 10431 Schuessler Rd., St. Louis, MO 63128.