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Carlton Gyles, 1940–2025

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Obituary

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Animal Health Research Reviews mourns the death of Carlton Gyles, our Editor-in-Chief from 2002 to 2012.

Born in Jamaica, Carlton Gyles came to Canada in 1958 to study, graduating from the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC). In 1968, after completing a ground-breaking PhD from the University of Guelph, he received a post-doctoral fellowship to conduct research in England with H. Williams Smith and in Denmark with the Orskovs. He returned to a faculty position at the OVC in 1969, where he taught bacteriology to Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students and advised numerous graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in research on bacterial disease.

Gyles's accomplishments were at the highest level in the fields of academic veterinary medicine, veterinary microbiology including the microbiology of pathogenic *Escherichia coli*, and service to the Canadian veterinary profession. He was perhaps Canada's best-known and most respected veterinarian, but his influence extended internationally. He was the recipient of innumerable honours and awards throughout his career. A founding member of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, one of Canada's three national science academies, he served on its Board of Directors from 2005 to 2011. Appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2024, he was described as a Canadian national veterinary treasure.

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Contributions to veterinary microbiology

Gyles was one of the world's authorities on *E. coli* infections and was sought after throughout his career as an advisor for graduate students, many of whom have gone on to their own distinguished careers. As a graduate student, Gyles made the then-groundbreaking discovery of the *E. coli* heat-labile enterotoxin and its role in diarrhoeal disease in animals and humans. Understanding based on this discovery has among other developments led to the development (by others) of the effective oral vaccine for enterotoxigenic *E. coli* (ETEC) infections (traveller's diarrhoea) in humans as well as effective vaccines against ETEC in farm animals.

Gyles subsequently made a lifetime of further outstanding contributions to understanding how *E. coli* causes disease in animals and people, including seminal studies of Shigatoxigenic *E. coli* infections in cattle and swine. Gyles's work, and that of his students, has been influential in understanding many aspects of the epidemiology and pathogenesis of the infection, which have led to many improvements in how the infection is controlled. He initiated and edited the book '*Escherichia coli* in Domestic Animals and Humans' in 1994.

The book 'Pathogenesis of Bacterial Infections in Animals' that Gyles initiated and first co-edited with C. O. Thoen in 1986 has had four subsequent editions, the latest in 2024, and is the premier book on advanced veterinary bacteriology, read widely internationally. Held in over 1300 libraries around the world, it confirmed Gyle's reputation as a world-leading veterinary microbiologist.

Contributions to veterinary science journals

Gyles was the long-term Editor-in-Chief of *Animal Health Research Reviews* (2002–2012). This influential international journal grew out of the Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases, a US-based century-old conference of which Gyles, like many other Canadian veterinary researchers, was a long-term supporter. Without his willingness to take on this role, it is doubtful that the journal would even have been started or to have become as successful as it is. He was also Editor-in-Chief of *The Canadian Veterinary Journal*, the monthly national veterinary journal, and has been sought after to be on the editorial boards of other veterinary journals including the major journal in his field Veterinary Microbiology (1976–2020).

Academic leadership role

While at the University of Guelph, Gyles's analytical ability, thoughtfulness, breadth of vision, balanced and moderate judgement, political skills, and wisdom were used by numerous and varied groups within the administration. Gyles was often invited to present the 'keynote' talk, usually on *E. coli*, at national and international microbiology conferences. He could always be relied on to set a positive tone for the conference that followed with a thoughtful and inspiring talk.

Gyles took a national leadership role in the Canadian Research Network on Bacterial Diseases of Swine, the Canadian Research Institute for Food Safety, the management over many years of the Master of Science in Food Quality and Safety Assurance at Guelph, and the development of the Master of Public Health program at the OVC.

Contributions to the Canadian veterinary profession

Gyles's contributions to veterinary medicine in Canada and to the Canadian veterinary profession were profound, but most notably as Editor-in-Chief of *The Canadian Veterinary Journal* from 2008 to 2020. The official publication of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), this is a high-quality professional publication covering numerous aspects of interest to Canadian veterinarians. During his editorship, Gyles wrote about 60 editorials on an extraordinary range of topics, all typically characterised by being wise, well informed, thoughtfully analytical, and focused on the welfare of animals and of society. At the time he was awarded CVMA Life membership in 2018, the CVMA President said, 'We will forever be grateful for his selfless dedication to our association and for his example of professionalism and sincerity to the veterinarians and veterinary students around him.'

On his retirement in 2005, the OVC created the annual Carlton L. Gyles OVC Support Staff Excellence Award. The selection criteria are that the 'recipient should exemplify some of the characteristics of Dr Gyles, including: Being an exemplary role model; Creating a positive effect of those around them; Being thoughtful and compassionate; Having a willingness to accept responsibility that goes beyond their job function; Being a mediator; Striving always for high quality; Striving for everyone to win; Being optimistic'.

Veterinary science has lost a giant.

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