

A Natural Healer

Jean Dodds, pioneering veterinarian and founder of HemoPet.

Kim Campbell Thornton

She should have been a pediatrician. That's what Jean Dodds' father believed. A doctor himself, from a family of doctors, he attempted to persuade his daughter to choose medical school over veterinary school by taking her to visit Ontario Veterinary College, at the time one of the most modern veterinary colleges in the world.

But then "he saw surgery with everybody being gowned and said 'My God, it's just like human medicine,'" recalls Dodds, whose early love of animals was influenced by her greta aunt, a watercolorist who loved animals as well.

The visit only confirmed her desire to study veterinary medicine, and she applied to OVC's class of 1964, despite the fact that women, not especially welcome, made up 8 percent or less of the student body at veterinary colleges in teh 1960s.

"The only way a woman could get in was to exceed academically beyond the average male applicant," Dodds says, "and they made you do farm experience if you'd never worked on a farm, which I hadn't. They felt women couldn't do that. It's a five-year school, and they had a maximum of 20 women allowed per five years, so the number of women they let in depended on the number they graduated. I was determined I was going to be a veterinarian, though, and it never even occurred to me taht I wouldn't get it."

Her interest was clinical research, and after graduating with honors she landed a summer job as a research scientist with the New York State Health Department in albany, studying animals with inherited bleeding diseases such as von Willebrand's disease. The job lasted a bit longer than a singel summer.

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