

CVM Today

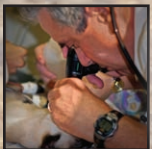
College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
Texas A&M University • Summer 2009 • Volume 11, No. 1

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UNIVERSITY

The Winds of Change Moving Forward



Westminster Champion,
Former Patient
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Medicine Program
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Save Macaws
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Student Body President,
BIMS Major
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CVM *Today*

College of Veterinary Medicine
& Biomedical Sciences
Texas A&M University
Summer 2009 • Volume 11, No. 1

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DEAN'S *Message*

What an amazing three and half months it has been since my arrival in Aggieland! Between the many meetings and special occasions - I've had the privilege of getting to meet so many warm and wonderful people. As we work to keep moving this great college of ours forward to meet the challenges of our profession, I look forward to getting to know many more of you along the way.

In addition to the ever-changing Texas weather, I've noticed that it has been exceptionally windy here, and that reaffirmed to me that the winds of change are definitely blowing at the CVM. We're engaged in national searches for a new department head for veterinary pathobiology and for an associate dean for research

and graduate studies. We received full accreditation from the AVMA's Council on Education, whose standards will help guide us into the future. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in response to a request from the Texas legislature, prepared a report addressing the shortage of rural veterinary practitioners and the lack of diversity in veterinary medical schools. This report recommended the expansion of the CVM at Texas A&M University as the way to address both of these needs. We're also in the process of completing the addition to our research tower and initiating the construction of the Veterinary Imaging & Cancer Treatment Center, greatly enhancing our ability not only to treat our patients, but also to impact human health through research.

Thanks to the efforts of so many alumni, friends, faculty, staff and students, the CVM has become a world class veterinary medical program where we respond to veterinary and public health needs around the world. Indeed, we have a solid foundation on which to build our future. However, if we are going to continue our success, we are going to need to continue building new relationships and strengthening old ones. We have been fortunate for the support from producer groups, the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, other professional associations, and the generosity of individuals who care about animals and our college. We couldn't have made it this far without them, and we can't continue to thrive without their continued support.

As the winds of change continue to blow here in Aggieland, I hope you'll hold onto your hats, because it's just going to get better. I am so excited about the potential for this college, for the possibilities that lie ahead, and for the positive response to our programs I've received during my travels. I hope that should your travels bring you through Aggieland, that you will be sure to stop by and say "Howdy!" It's my pleasure to serve as dean of this college, and my privilege to get to know as many of you as I can.



Dean Eleanor M. Green and Cohen

Eleanor M. Green, DVM, DACVIM, DABVP
Carl B. King Dean
of Veterinary Medicine

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**Stump with his
co-owner/handler,
Scott Sommer.**



Texas A&M veterinarians celebrate Westminster victory of former patient

by Angela Clendenin

With viewers around the nation watching on live television, a humble Sussex spaniel called “Stump” took the honor of “Top Dog” at the annual Westminster Kennel Club dog show. Of course, some of his biggest fans are from the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM), and they cheer him on for a very different reason.

Stump’s story begins with a very sick dog. After being seen by Dr. Matthew Dikeman at Brittmore Animal Hospital, Stump was referred to the clinicians at Texas A&M University’s Small Animal Hospital. At the SAH, Stump was able to be seen by veterinary specialists utilizing the latest in medical treatments. Stump stayed at the SAH for 13 days, 12 of which were spent in the Intensive Care Unit.

“Stump arrived in January 2006 with a body-wide infection, infection on his heart valves, fluid in his lungs, and a blood coagulation disorder called DIC,” recalled Dr. Katherine Snyder, medical resident in charge of Stump’s case. “He was very sick. We treated him with antibiotic therapy, heart medications, oxygen, and some anticoagulant medications. He really pulled through like a champion.”

Conditions like the one that Stump presented with are uncommon, according to Snyder, but they are the result of different types of bacteria circulating in the body. It’s not breed specific and can affect all kinds of dogs. The diagnosis is a difficult one, often with no way to prove where it started or why it developed. The prognosis for dogs that experience these infections is usually guarded to poor—with an uphill battle for survival. Fortunately, given the right medications and enough time, dogs can completely recover from this serious illness.

“It’s not easy to diagnose, but there are signs that dog owners should watch for,” added Snyder. “Fever, lethargy, poor appetite, a heart murmur, difficulty breathing, or coughing can all be signs that something is not right with the dog. Owners should take their dogs to the veterinarian as quickly as possible after noticing these symptoms so that appropriate treatment measures can be started in a timely fashion.”

Before heading out on tour, Stump’s co-owner/handler, Scott Sommers brought the champion back for a check-up at the CVM. Stump was treated to a hero’s welcome with a reception in his honor. Members of the CVM staff, including many who were here and helped to treat Stump, came to congratulate the special patient and Sommers on their big win. In addition, Sommers was given a plaque recognizing Stump for his significant achievement on behalf of the faculty, staff and students of the CVM.

“We are appreciative to the team at Texas A&M for all they did for Stump,” said Sommers. “He was very sick, and they pulled him through.”

Sommers has been invited to bring Stump to events all around the country over the next year, including television appearances, and a possible opportunity to participate in the Macy’s Thanksgiving parade.

“We’ll be taking it pretty slow because of his age, and we definitely wanted to get a check-up before doing any kind of extensive travel,” said Sommers as he acknowledged the flurry of phone calls surrounding his special friend.

Stump’s story is about survival, and while the world will recognize him as Best in Show from Westminster, the CVM will recognize him as the champion of their hearts. 🐾



Stump enjoys his visit with D'Lisa Ryland, RVT, (left) and Dr. Katherine Snyder (center) at the CVM. Stump is co-owned by Sommers and Ceil Ruggles.

A First for Veterinary Medicine:

AGA Medical Corporation creates closure device specifically for dogs with heart disease

by Faith Lawson

A new device created just for canine heart disease means the beginning of a new trend in veterinary medicine. Until recently, veterinarians have been forced to adapt human medical devices to their patients' treatment needs. Little has been done specifically for dogs until now.

Used to treat canine patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), a common congenital heart defect where the ductus arteriosus remains open, the Amplatzer® Canine Duct Occluder is the first medical device designed specifically for minimally

invasive catheter-based procedures in dogs. The occluder's success has won merit across the country. Many are now using this device in a minimally invasive procedure to treat PDA, including cardiologists here at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM).

As an alternative to surgical ligation and coil embolization, the procedure to implant the new device requires only a small incision and little patient recovery time.

"The device is made of two connected discs. One disc goes through the PDA and the other remains inside," explained.

Dr. Ashley B. Saunders, an assistant professor at the CVM.

"An incision is made in the inner thigh and the device is inserted into a vessel through a catheter," said Saunders.

"We strive to use the least invasive procedures in our patients and this device allows us to do just that," she added.

Prior to the Amplatzer® Canine Duct Occluder, Texas A&M cardiologists were known for their ability to perform coil embolization in dogs with PDA. While proud of their success, Saunders wants veterinarians to know that there exists a new device that is even more effective and cost efficient.



Patent ductus arteriosus occlusion performed in the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital's catheterization laboratory at Texas A&M University.

“Dr. Matt Miller began closing PDA in puppies using coil embolization in 1994. It’s a challenging procedure, but we became really good at it. People were sending us cases from all over the country.

“However, with the coil embolization procedure, it could sometimes take multiple coils to close the PDA and that meant more time, money and expertise. With the new device, we can close the PDA very fast and prefer to use it. We can now fix a PDA in any way that the patient needs, whether using surgery, coil embolization or a duct occluder,” said Saunders.

“Technological advances and experience have led to success rates that approach one-hundred percent,” noted Dr. Matthew W. Miller, a professor at the CVM.

While coil embolization has worked well in the past, the duct occluder proves to be even more successful. However, either procedure is better than none at all.

Saunders added, “If untreated, dogs with PDA have a sixty percent chance of mortality in the first year. Any procedure is better than none at all. If the PDA is closed, dogs can live normal lives.”

The new duct occluder may be the preferred treatment method for canine PDA, but the device doesn’t come without limitations. The size of the patient could prevent some from receiving the benefits of the new device.



Drs. Sonya Gordon and Crystal Hariu perform patent ductus arteriosus occlusion in a dog.

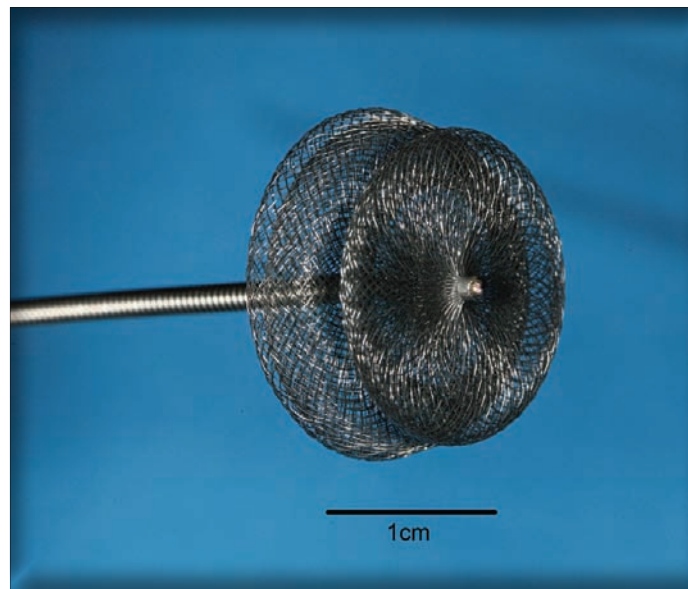
“Due to the size limitations of the occluder, some dogs may only be able to have coil embolization or surgical ligation,” said Saunders.

“A vessel in the thigh of the dog must be big enough for the catheter and device to fit. A three kilogram-sized dog is often the smallest allowed for this procedure. Also, some dogs may have a PDA that is too big for the occluder to remain in place and they, too, are unable to receive this method of treatment.”

While the coil embolization procedure initially brought recognition to Texas A&M, the duct occluder continues to add to their success and renowned reputation as leaders in veterinary cardiology.

“We are lucky to have the resources to perform the procedures that allow us to give research presentations and write reports on this new device,” noted Saunders.

As for the future of veterinary medicine, Saunders hopes that this new device will lead to other companies



Close-up of the Amplatzer® Canine Duct Occluder.

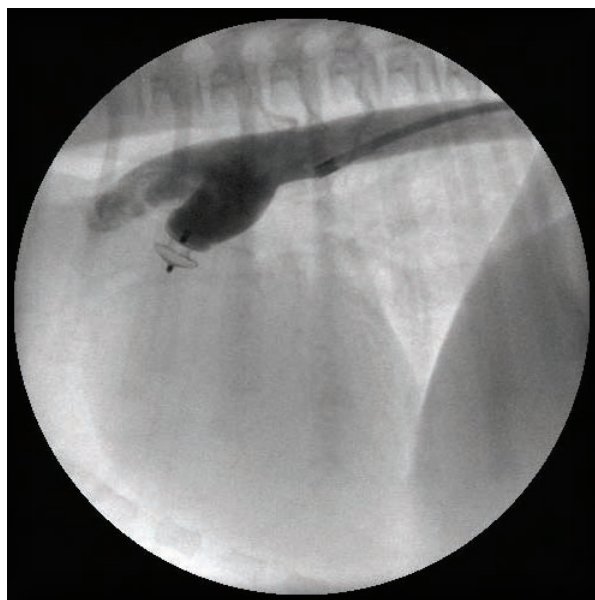
developing medical equipment specifically designed for animals, as well.

“I believe that this new device will affect the future of veterinary medicine and hopefully lead to other companies’ interest in helping dogs,” said Saunders.

Thanks to new technology and veterinary expertise, the future of canine healthcare continues to give our furry companions longer, healthier lives.

“We have the ability to close every PDA and to choose which procedure is best, whether it be a minimally invasive catheter-based procedure or surgery,” emphasized Saunders.

“Our dogs are able to live normal, happy lives.” 🐾



Angiogram documenting closure of a patent ductus arteriosus with an Amplatzer® Canine Duct Occluder.

Feline Internal Medicine Education Program unites veterinarians through web conferencing

by **Faith Lawson**

Classroom interaction and face-to-face discussion were once the only teaching methods available to those in pursuit of continuing education hours, and the hassles of traveling to class and balancing schedules were enough to make some go mad. But technological advances and dedicated professors have now made it easier than ever before for students to continue their education.

Thanks to the team from the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences and enthusiastic participants, the Feline Internal Medicine Program is using innovative technology to unite veterinarians from across the state in a web-based

classroom to continue their education and further their expertise.

Through the Office of Continuing Education at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM), the Feline Internal Medicine Program now offers a new case-based distance education course designed to complement, rather than compete with, the established Annual Feline Medicine Symposium at the University. During this ten month program, twenty-three veterinarians will log on to their computers to engage in highly interactive case discussions based on broad feline health issues. Pfizer generously donated an educational grant to get the project off the ground.

"Convenience is key, and it's important to be able to enjoy the web conference in the comfort of your own home," said Dr. John August, the facilitator of the Feline Internal Medicine Distance Education Program and professor at the CVM.

The university's web conferencing system, CENTRA, allows attendees to log in from their home or work computers to participate in an online discussion using a microphone headset to speak and interact with both August and other participants. In addition to voice interaction, the technology permits the use of Power Points, clinical images and the conducting of audience surveys.

Perhaps one of the most specialized features of the program is the ability of the facilitator to put the participants into "break out" rooms for separate discussions, a technology that Dr. August has found to help facilitate discussion and increase participation.

"The 'break out' rooms are designed to place attendees into small groups based on their geo-

graphic location to discuss the material," explained August. "We have discovered that these 'break out' sessions encourage participants to further engage in the discussion of the cases without the fear of speaking in front of a large group and with the comfort of being supported by fellow veterinarians from their surrounding areas."

In order to measure the learning outcomes of the distance education program, Dr. Noberto Espitia, the co-facilitator of the distance education course and the Small Animal Hospital supervisor at the CVM, requests feedback and a biography from each of the participants.

"We want to measure learning outcomes by compiling the problem-solving and thought processes based on their feedback using multiple methods," shared Espitia. "The attendees' responses through reflection papers, minute papers, biographies and conventional and qualitative surveys allow us to determine if meeting objectives are being met. This personal exchange gives us the opportunity to enrich and enhance the program."

Dr. Panos Xenoulis, graduate research assistant in the college's Gastrointestinal Laboratory, identifies suitable journal articles and book chapters as recommended reading prior to each conference. Participants then access the documents electronically through the Medical Sciences Library. Xenoulis also helps August with the selection of cases to be discussed at each conference. Case study materials are sent to the participants several days before each conference for their review.

After each conference, August, Espitia and Xenoulis convene to take an internal assessment and critical self-reflection to determine the pros and cons of the session and how they can better future conferences.

"We hope to meet the individual expectations of the participants, the course objectives and our own objec-



Dr. John August examines a feline patient.

tives,” said Espitia. “Overall, we strive to increase participant learning and skill confidence, increase our own learning of the program and student objectives, better the program quality and better the design of delivery.”

Distance education had been previously used in 2001 and 2002 using true video conferencing and, even though the program was successful educationally, it failed financially. So August went in search of a better system to meet the needs of the students and the university.

“I wanted something that took advantage of the internet and provided more than just the facilitator lecturing. I wanted something more interactive,” explained August. “After presenting lectures by traditional videoconference to Chilean students in Santiago last fall, it was suggested to me that I use CENTRA internet conferencing. I looked into it and here we are. I found that it takes a lot of work to get it started, but now I’m hooked.”

CENTRA’s advanced technology facilitates a high level of interaction among participants by allowing them to communicate through text messaging, voice interaction and variety of other tools. Attendees are also able to highlight specific texts or pictures and use pointers to direct their colleagues’ attention to their discussion points.

With continued development and measurement of learning outcomes, August would like to see the web conferencing program expand to other areas of clinical education and help more veterinarians develop new skills.

“I hope that the conferencing system will help the participants to feel more comfortable discussing cases among themselves and have a better understanding of how to use new technologies and electronic library resources during and beyond this course,” noted August. “Eventually, I hope that others will use this format to present continuing education in other disciplines.”

But August has little to worry about, as many of the conference’s participants have expressed satisfaction in the program.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the Feline Internal Medicine Grand Rounds Distance Education,” said Dr. Mary L. McCaine, Dip ABVP (Feline). “The

continued on page 11

First of Its Kind:

Feline Internal Medicine Residency



Dr. Sally Purcell, feline internal medicine resident, works with a new furry friend.

In addition to the distance education program, the Feline Internal Medicine Service now offers a new Feline Internal Medicine Residency Program. The program began in July 2008 and is a three-year residency designed to prepare residents for board certification by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM). Funding for the first three-year program has come from income generated by the CVM’s Annual Feline Symposium.

The focus of the residency is on feline internal medicine. However, in order to fulfill requirements for ACVIM certification, residents will also be expected to complete rotations in canine internal medicine.

After the new training program was advertised through the National Internship-Residency Matching Program, Dr. Sally Purcell was selected as the first resident. Purcell is a DVM graduate from Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) and was completing her rotating internship at Ohio State University when she was accepted into the program.

“I chose Texas A&M University

because it is the only university in the country that offers an internal medicine residency with a feline focus,” said Purcell. “Texas A&M is very cat friendly and cat savvy.”

While currently working on her project “Chronic Feline Diarrhea and Response to Diet,” Purcell finds there are many things about the program that she loves.

“We try to be the least invasive that we can be with the cats and I like that about this program,” noted Purcell. “We do easy, simple tests, such as endoscopy, ultrasounds and laparoscopy, and strive to get the cats out of the hospital as soon as possible.”

After completing the program, Purcell plans to use her knowledge and expertise from the program to pursue a career in internal medicine with a predominant feline focus.

“Through the program, I hope to become board certified in internal medicine, specifically feline,” commented Purcell. “I haven’t decided if I will go into private practice or pursue academia, but I want my niche to be feline. I want to be the ‘go to’ person for feline medicine.”

The Feline Internal Residency program strives to provide its residents with an unrivaled educational experience, as the CVM continues to pave the way for the future of veterinary medicine.

“To our knowledge, this program is the only internal medicine residency with a feline focus. We like to think that we are somewhat unique,” noted Dr. August, a professor in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences at the CVM. “This program, along with our fourth year feline internal medicine rotation and two continuing education programs, is just another indication of our commitment to feline medicine.”

CVM informs, educates local community with inaugural cattle and equine events

by **Stacie Kopecki**

This March the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences participated in two first-time events aimed at educating the local community about animal health and welfare issues. The Inaugural Beef Cattle Producers' Meeting on March 4th and An Equine Evening at the Expo on March 10th addressed key issues affecting beef cattle and horses and highlighted the role veterinary medicine plays in the success of raising these animals.

The Beef Cattle Producers' Meeting focused on key management opportunities to improve herd health and herd productivity. The CVM's food animal section hosted the event, and the meal was sponsored by Pfizer Beef Cattle Veterinary Operations.

Dr. John Davidson, clinical assistant professor of large animal clinical sciences, spearheaded the meeting in an effort to increase awareness of what the CVM has to offer cattle ranchers in the area.

"When I was in private practice we held producer meetings to get to know our clients, educate them on what's

going on in the industry and to get their feedback on what they need from us as veterinarians," explained Davidson. "I thought this model should be applied to the vet school to build and grow our relationships with local cattle ranchers."

Davidson spoke about the services that the Large Animal Hospital offers as well as the services that are offered by the Field Service. Through this educational opportunity, he hopes to not only build relationships with current clients, but to also increase the hospital's client base.

"We have a tremendous facility, tremendous people and outstanding students so of course we want to tell people about those things," noted Davidson. "But if we can use that knowledge to expand our client base, we can increase the revenue for our teaching hospitals which in turn increases teaching opportunities for our students, and that of course is our main goal."

Galen Pahl, assistant Large Animal Hospital director, who helped to organize both events, believes that the meeting was a great step in building awareness throughout the Brazos Valley about

all the school's services, but specifically the CVM's field services unit.

"Many people don't know that we have an ambulatory service that will come out to a client's property so they don't have to bring the animal(s) into our facility," stated Pahl. "Hopefully this meeting will get the word out and help to grow this service."

With almost 100 participants in its first year, both Davidson and Pahl believe that the event was a great success and one on which they would like to build.

"These types of opportunities only get better and better as time goes on and I think we have really established a great foundation this year," said Davidson.

While the Inaugural Beef Cattle Producer's Meeting was organized exclusively by the CVM, An Equine Evening at the Expo was a joint effort between the CVM, the Department of Animal Science Equine Section and the Brazos Extension Horse Committee.

The main purpose of this meeting was education and outreach to equine owners and enthusiasts throughout the Brazos Valley.



Dr. Michael Martin, associate professor of large animal clinical sciences, brought the CVM on board for this effort through his work on the Extension Horse Committee.

"The committee was looking for ways to promote horse activities in our area. I had seen these types of clinics in other places around the country and I thought it would be a good way to accomplish our goal," remarked Martin.

While the meeting was a time to create fellowship between horse lovers in the region, the topics discussed were both timely and relevant to all those present.

Guest speaker, CVM graduate Dr. Cynthia Gutierrez from Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, spoke about a growing problem in the equine industry which is the unwanted horse.

"This was really our main topic at the meeting because this has become such a problem," explained Martin. "Since the U.S. shut down horse processing plants,

it has unfortunately become a common side-effect that horses are left abandoned and neglected. As horse-lovers it is something that we want to raise awareness about."

Other topics discussed included medical conditions affecting horses and disaster management procedures for horses and cattle.

Dr. Peter Rakestraw, clinical assistant professor of large animal clinical sciences, presented "Pharyngeal Cicatrix: An Emerging Upper Respiratory Disease?" and Dr. Dennis Sigler, an extension horse specialist presented "Management of Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome."

Another extension horse specialist, Dr. Brett Scott spoke on disaster management in a talk entitled, "Disaster Management—Are you prepared?"

"This is a topic that we all are interested in and wanted included in the program especially in light of last year's hurricane season and our experience in hosting a

large animal evacuation center during Hurricane Ike," noted Pahl.

Even though this was also a first-time event the turn-out was exceptional, with 140 attendees.

"I think the success of this event was partly because we chose topics that appealed to and educated all ages of horse lover," stated Martin. "Because of this, entire families could come together and we even had a group of 4-H kids come to learn about current equine issues."

For both Davidson and Martin, these first time meetings were an overwhelmingly positive experience that they plan on continuing each year in the spring with greater and greater success.

"Both events were definitely successful and would not have been without the help of all our wonderful support staff. With their continued help, hopefully these meetings will become just another tradition in Aggeland," remarked Davidson. 🌿

Creating, continued from page 9

interactive style in which we are able to hear and speak with our colleagues, as well as see Dr. August and the visual images, is very effective. It is nice to be able to be in the comfort of your own home, but receive all the benefits of a live session. The small group size helps in interaction, and I am getting the benefit of my colleagues' knowledge as well as

the information that is in the reference materials and presentation. I'm looking forward to participating in this type of program in the future!"

Other participants also take pleasure in the convenience of the conference and enjoy working with an experienced veterinarian and lecturer.

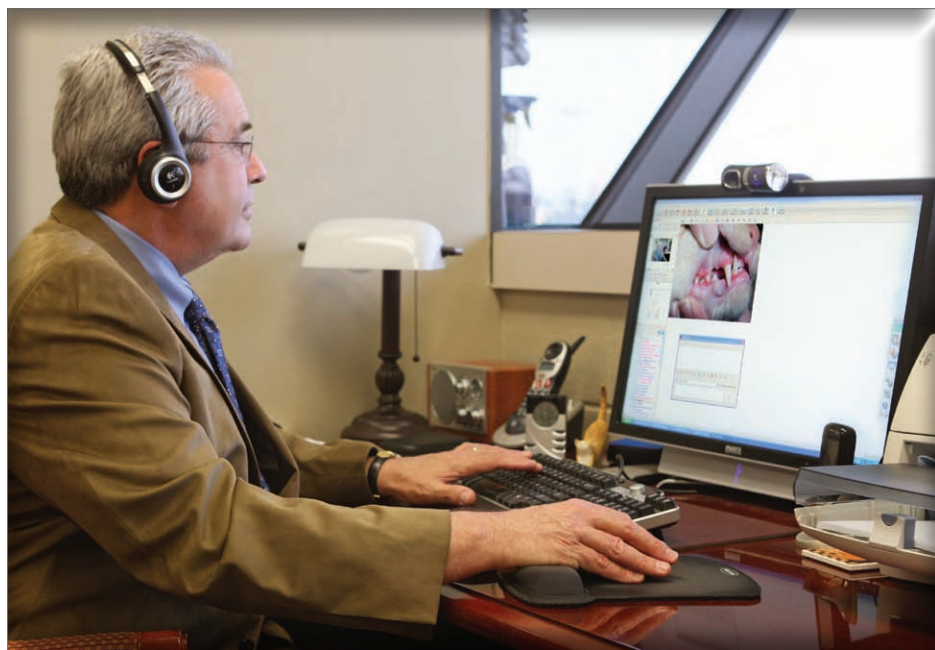
"I have found the web conferences thus far to be the best continuing education experience I have ever had from my own home," commented Dr. Kimberly

Downes. "The audio is a great addition and Dr. August has a good pace. I will be taking more classes when they become available."

"As veterinary practitioners, we look for continuing education experiences that are practical and medically sound. Texas A&M's recent offering, entitled "Feline Internal Medicine Grand Rounds," provides a group of veterinarians the opportunity to interact with a top veterinary practitioner, author and lecturer in an intimate setting," stated Dr. Richard Young, Dip ABVP. "This is a creative, on-line forum that allows participants time to prepare for specific topics prior to a meeting and then interact as colleagues for two hours a month."

After completion of the ten month program, August hopes that attendees will tell others of their enjoyable experience and that the Feline Internal Medicine Program will be able to fill up a similar class for next year.

"It's been rewarding to facilitate a discussion between veterinarians from different places," said August. "It's been great seeing people not being afraid to use new technology. A lot of credit should be given to the participants for embracing the technology and enjoying the opportunity to interact with the group about the cases." 🌿



Dr. John August discusses the selected case with online participants.

Research

Spotlight



Flashes of Color: Research to save Macaws

by Roma Subramanian

At the Schubot Aviary

"Would you like to come over some time on Wednesday? We can take Patty out and do her nails," Dr. Patricia Gray's email reads. A chance to watch someone's nails being clipped is not an offer I would ordinarily accept. But there's a twist to this pedicure—Patty is a scarlet macaw. More interestingly, for the past year, she and other macaws at the Schubot Exotic Bird Health Center aviary of the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences have been involved in a behavioral project. The project aims at training them to voluntarily step out of their cages and onto a handler's arm or a wooden (or plastic) perch. Interested to see how Patty has responded to the training, I accept Gray's invitation.

The macaws screech as we approach the aviary. Donated by breeders and pet owners, the macaws at the aviary are mainly studied to help understand proventricular dilation disease or PDD, a potentially fatal viral infection of captive parrots. Although housed for research purposes, the macaws are treated more like pets than as specimens in cages. Each receives a name, toys to play with and much affection and petting. Gray explains that these highly intelligent birds need a lot of social interaction for their psychological well being.

"They can get bored and pluck their feathers if kept in an environment without stimulation," Gray says. "At the aviary, every effort is made to reduce the birds stress levels and improve their quality of life."

As we approach Patty's cage, Gray explains that the training is done so that during sample collecting

procedures (for example, for blood), the birds can be drawn from their cages without using a net.

"Netting is a horrible, [psychologically] scarring experience for the birds," she explains. "The birds can injure themselves and the handler when trying to avoid being captured by the net."

At the Schubot aviary, the birds are coaxed out of their cages using the language of rewards and positive reinforcement. Gray opens Patty's cage and holds out a peanut (the reward or treat) in one hand and a plastic stand in the other. Keeping up a steady stream of encouragement, she attempts to draw Patty to the stand by enticing her with the peanut.

At first, Patty stands still at the back of the cage, her brilliant plumage neatly arranged in an overlap of red, yellow and blue feathers. But soon, the lure of the peanut proves irresistible, and she warily approaches Gray. She approaches the front of the cage and reaches out with her beak to grab the peanut, but she does not climb onto the stand. Although she does not climb onto the plastic perch, Gray gives her the peanut, explaining that "the tiniest positive behavior needs to be rewarded."

"By using this type of positive reinforcement, I hope that the veterinary students and student workers helping with this project can train the macaws to step out of their cages for any handler," Gray says.

In addition to teaching students humane handling practices for birds, an important outcome of the project is that it promotes efficient sample collection. This in turn impacts research at the Schubot Center by facilitating, for example, the collection of blood samples to compare the blood constituents of wild and captive macaws and fecal samples from PDD-affected birds to study this deadly disease.

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PDD research at the Schubot Center is focused on studying the causative agent of PDD, which is believed to be avian borna virus. Researchers are studying whether the antiviral drug amantadine stops the virus from being shed in the feces of PDD-affected birds.

Schubot Center researchers have also developed a serological test that may help diagnose PDD.

The test detects antibodies produced against avian borna virus in the serum of PDD-affected birds.

The test is currently exhibiting a specificity of about 90 percent. It is an improvement over crop biopsy, which is also used to detect PDD. Crop biopsy is invasive, can give rise to complications and is only about 60 percent accurate in diagnosing PDD. The researchers hope that the test will prevent PDD from being misdiagnosed, which often results in the euthanasia of rare, expensive birds.

The test is being offered as a free service to veterinarians to confirm its accuracy.

A Continent Away: The Macaws of Tambopata

In the Amazon rainforests of southeastern Peru, another researcher from the Schubot Center, Dr. Donald Brightsmith, is also involved in behavioral studies on macaws. Brightsmith is trying to understand why parrots, specifically macaws, in this region eat clay. Every morning, along the banks of the upper Tambopata River in this region, hundreds of parrots flock to a 100-foot-tall dirt cliff for a breakfast of clay. As they gather to feast on the clay, they transform this cliff (known as a clay lick) into a rainbow of color, making this phenomenon one of the most spectacular scenes in wildlife.

"Two main theories have been put forth to explain this phenomenon," Brightsmith said. "One is that parrots treat this clay like an avian daily vitamin pill and eat it to get minerals missing in their diets. The other is that the clay protects the birds from the toxins in their diet. Further studies are needed to

explain which of these theories explains the parrots' behavior."

Identifying the factors that drive macaws to eat clay is just one of the studies in which Brightsmith is involved. As director of the Tambopata Macaw Project, which operates out of the Tambopata Research Center in southeastern Peru, Brightsmith aims to study the basic ecology and natural history of large macaws and use this information for their conservation.

Some Macaw Basics

Macaws range in their distribution from central Mexico to northern Argentina and are known for

their colorful plumage and intelligence. They are also known for their longevity. Their life spans range from 30 to 50 years and in captivity, they may live for up to 70 years. Macaws are distinguished from other parrot species by their long tails and large beaks and they range in size from one foot (the Hahn's or red-shouldered macaw) to three feet (the



A red-and-green macaw chick at the Tambopata Research Center in Peru.

hyacinth macaw).

Most of the 15 species of macaw in the wild are endangered. They are threatened mainly by habitat loss, hunting (for food or feathers for traditional head dresses) and the pet trade. According to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), only macaws bred in captivity may be sold as pets. However, as Brightsmith explained, these birds present the enticing equation "Rarity + Beauty = \$\$\$\$," and they continue to be illegally trafficked.

Research at Tambopata

The abovementioned threats to the species are compounded by the naturally low reproductive rates of these birds. Insufficient nest sites are one factor responsible for this low rate.

To combat the shortage of nest sites, Eduardo Nycander, founder of the Tambopata Macaw Project, designed artificial nests made of plastic polyvinyl chloride pipes. The outside of the pipes was patterned and darkened to resemble a tree trunk. In



The Tambopata River in the Amazon rainforests of Peru.

1992, six such nests were attached to tree trunks. It was observed that all except one attracted macaws to them. Since then, about 80 percent of the nests hung at the site have been occupied by macaws.

Chick fatality is another cause of the low reproductive rates of these birds. During the past year, researchers at the Tambopata Macaw Project have used video cameras inside nests to help identify factors responsible for chick death. According to the December 2007 to August 2008 annual field report of Earthwatch Institute (a sponsor of the Tambopata Macaw Project), the use of video cameras “has been a big step forward [in] understanding how sibling rivalry and parental decisions affect chick starvation.”

Recently, Brightsmith and his team conducted a project that involved capturing blue-and-yellow macaws and fitting them with satellite collars developed by Northstar Technologies. The collars weigh about an ounce and the birds can easily carry them. The collars help researchers monitor the movements of the macaws and learn about their habitat.

Preliminary results from this project indicate that the macaws are flying beyond the protected boundaries of the Tambopata National Reserve and across the route of the proposed Interoceanic highway. This is of concern as it indicates that the highway, which will connect Brazil to Peru and Bolivia, is encroaching upon macaw habitat.

Conservation and Education

Through magazine articles, lectures and a continuing education course entitled “Parrots of the Amazon Rainforest,” Brightsmith hopes to educate the public, both at home and abroad, about parrot biology and conservation.

In an article titled “My Macaws,” Brightsmith encapsulates the goal of the Tambopata Macaw Project in the following words: “Bright feathers make a scarlet macaw a beautiful sight. But they also make it an easy target. But here, where I work, people are learning that it’s better to share the forest with macaws without harming them. That way, all the little chicks we save will have a safe place to live when they grow up.” 🌿

Parrots of the Amazon Rainforest: A Course for Veterinarians, Veterinary Technicians, Aviculturists & Enthusiasts

“One of the goals of the Tambopata Macaw Project,” Brightsmith said, is to make “research in wild parrots relevant to captive parrots, be it [with regard to] breeding or pet ownership.”

As a step toward this goal, he along with Dr. Jill Heatley, clinical associate professor of zoological medicine at Texas A&M University, held a continuing education course called Parrots of the Amazon Rainforest. The week-long course was held from January 26 to February 1 at the Tambopata Research Center in Peru. Through lectures and labs on topics such as parrot identification and reproduction, the course aimed to show participants how parrots behave in the wild and teach basic skills to diagnose, treat and manage captive birds.

For veterinarian Dr. Janis Robin Scott, one of the course’s 15 participants, the course fulfilled a lifelong dream of watching parrots congregate at the clay lick along the banks of the Tambopata River.

“The experience of watching dozens and dozens of blue-and-gold and scarlet macaws in addition to other parrots at the lick was a privilege,” said Scott. “The instructors made the course a fun, hands-on learning experience in a professional, non-tourist atmosphere,” she added.

Based on the enthusiastic response, the course is expected to be an annual event. “Parrots of the Amazon Rainforest” is the first continuing education course organized by the Office of Veterinary Continuing Education of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences held outside the country.



Spatial segregation of species on the clay lick at the Tambopata River.

Life as Mark Gold:
~ Student Body
President
~ BIMS Major

by Faith Lawson

Monday, April 6th, 2009

9:00 am - President's Meeting

10:00 am - Interview with the CVM

10:30 am - Meeting with a fellow student

The rest of the day continued with various meetings, appointments, events and, somewhere in between the craziness, school work. Welcome to a day in the life of Mark Gold, Student Body President (SBP) and Biomedical Sciences (BIMS) major. The first SBP with a major in Biomedical Sciences, Gold has learned to balance the rigors of being Student Body President with the demands of a BIMS degree, all without losing sight of his ultimate goal of becoming a doctor.

A career in medicine has long been a dream for Gold, and he attributes his passion to an opportunity he had in the

eighth grade to travel overseas to Lebanon with his father, a skilled ophthalmologist.

"The trip changed my life," exclaimed Gold. "I grew up in a small town in Texas called Palestine and traveling to Lebanon opened my eyes to the world. There are so many stereotypes of the Middle East, but I found that these were friendly people who have the same needs as we do. I wanted to enter into medicine because of its potential to serve people anywhere in the world."

Gold enrolled in the BIMS program at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences upon his acceptance to the university and his experience in the program has positively impacted his leadership role as SBP.

"Through my BIMS degree, I have been forced to learn the importance of time management, teamwork and hard work in anything in life, especially as Student Body President," said Gold. "With the caliber of coursework in the BIMS program, you can't just study the night before."

In regards to teamwork, Gold said, "There are not a lot of BIMS majors in student government, and I've found that I process things a bit differently. I might not be the most creative, but I can take that creative idea and make it work. My role is more analytical when it comes to balancing creativity and implementation in the student government and I attribute that to my background in the BIMS program."

But more than rigorous coursework and long nights of studying have prepared him for his role as SBP. Gold says that it's his fellow Aggies who are also enrolled in the program who have contributed to his success.

"I love that I've been able to meet people from all walks of life, those who want to become veterinarians, dentists or doc-



Mark Gold discusses an assignment with Dr. Edith Chenault.

tors, and interaction with those people has helped translate into my campaign and term as Student Body President,” noted Gold. “I recently had the opportunity to interview with Turkmenistan TV and my experience with international students within the BIMS program has helped prepare me for such events.”

Through interactions with the president of the university, the student body, and even the Texas State Senate, Gold has learned a few things that he feels have better prepared him for a career in medicine.

“I’ve gained a lot of management experience during my term as Student Body President,” commented Gold. “I am in charge of managing a 15-member executive council and managing a budget. I help to create visions, goals and strategic plans for the student government and all who are involved.”

During his term as SBP, Gold has had to overcome the challenges of public speaking, networking and traveling throughout the state, but it’s an adventure that he says has made him a better person.

“I will never forget this experience and I will never be the same,” said Gold. “I believe these challenges will better me as a doctor, a person and as a family man.”

As Student Body President, Gold works not only with students currently attending the university, but also with incoming students. For those entering into the BIMS program, Gold advises that they follow three important rules.

“Don’t forget your purpose,” urged Gold. “In the middle of organic chemistry, it can be easy to forget. I’ve felt it,

too. It’s so easy to get bogged down and forget about the patients whose lives you hope to save and the people that you will help. When you think about it, that test you just failed doesn’t really matter.”

Gold also suggests that students should not be afraid to ask questions and to understand that work within the BIMS program is supposed to be demanding.

“You can’t understand everything and that’s why we are here. We are meant to learn,” explained Gold. “If you are afraid to ask questions, you might miss out on something. Remember, the coursework is meant to be challenging.”

Finally, when studying for an exam or searching for answers to a difficult question, Gold stresses the importance of surrounding yourself with fellow classmates.

“Utilize your peers,” emphasized Gold. “If I don’t understand something, more than likely someone else has the same question. We’re in class with some of the nicest people. They’re Aggies, of course! I’ve been far more successful when I work with my friends.”

Elizabeth Crouch, the director of the Biomedical Sciences program at Texas

A&M University, has enjoyed seeing Gold become a strong leader and a positive representation of the entire University.

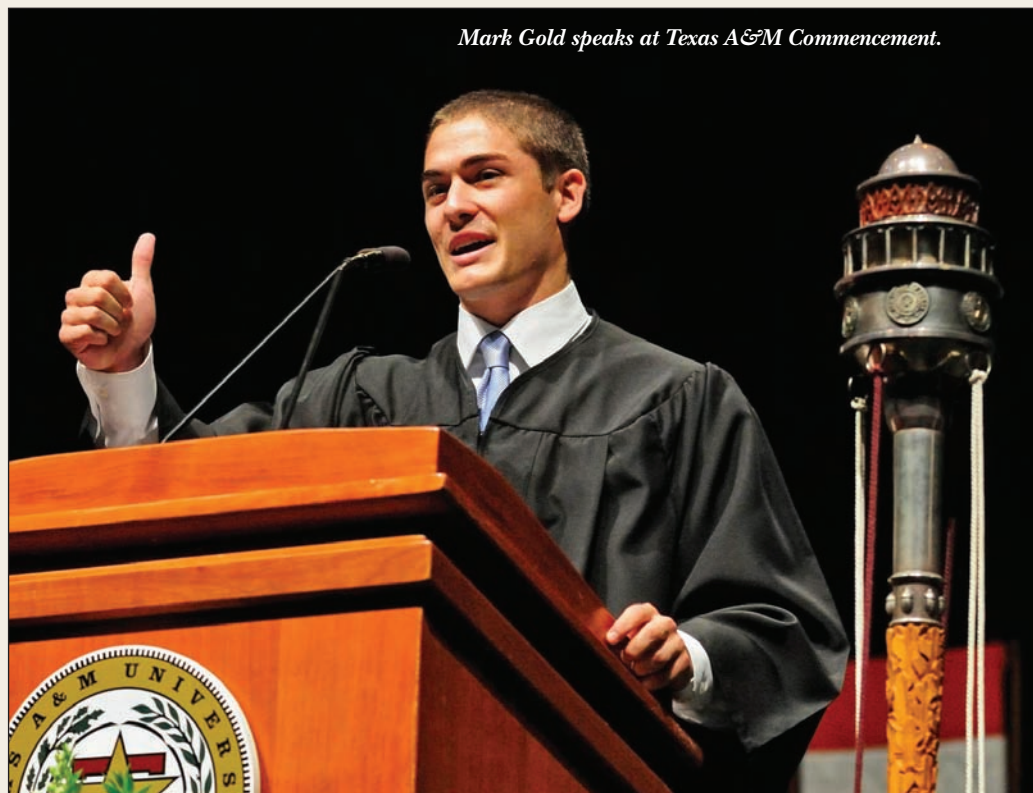
“Mark Gold is an outstanding student and leader,” praised Crouch. “The Biomedical Sciences program has been proud to call him one of our own, as he has represented himself, the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and Texas A&M University well. He demonstrates professionalism and a genuine interest in others that is sure to serve him well in his future endeavors.”

As his term as SBP comes to an end, Gold says that it’s the people who he will miss the most.

“I look at Big Event,” reflected Gold. “When I looked out at the audience as I was giving my speech, I saw twelve thousand people with twelve thousand smiles at 8:30 a.m. in thirty-degree weather waiting to serve Bryan/College Station.”

But it’s not just the annual service events that bring out the good nature of Texas A&M students. Gold sees the student body lending a helping hand no matter what the situation.

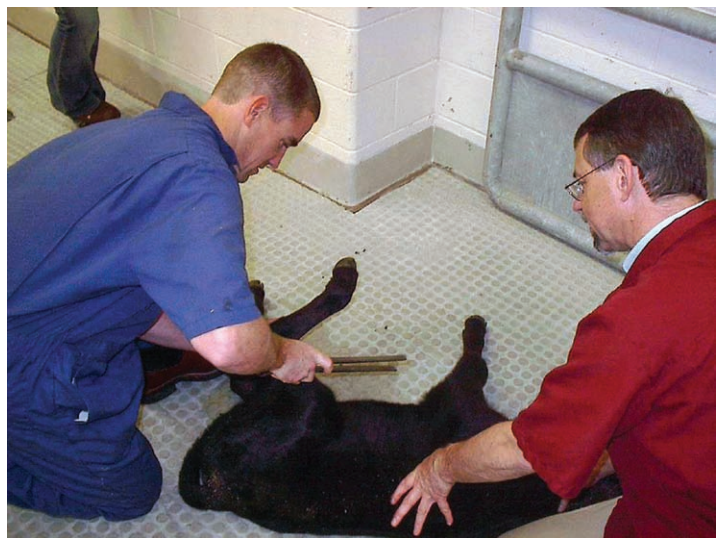
“I look at the support for the Galveston students after Hurricane Ike and the support that was rallied after the helicopter crash on Duncan Field,” continued Gold. “Each semester there has been a defining moment for me. I will miss the Aggies the most. They are some of my best friends.” 🍀



Mark Gold speaks at Texas A&M Commencement.

Leadership

Lab



by Dr. Dan Posey

Mentorship:

Foundations of the Veterinary Profession

There are numerous challenges facing veterinary medicine from the shortage of veterinarians in every aspect of our profession to the recruitment of future veterinarians to meet our future needs. Attrition of veterinarians from certain disciplines, and developing a retention plan for our entire profession, have become important priorities as well. All of these challenges can be addressed through understanding and applying the principles of mentorship.

Mentorship refers to a relationship where experienced individuals (mentors) guide, share, and assist in the professional development of less experienced individuals (mentees). There are numerous methods for developing this relationship, from working side by side in the employer / employee relationship to working with veterinary educators, or even being counseled by a close relative. Mentoring relationships come in all shapes and forms and should be a life-long pursuit for all veterinarians. In a recent article, Niehoff, Chenoweth and Rutti surveyed practitioners in the Midwestern states on their mentoring relationships. They found that the majority of the surveyed veterinarians (47 percent) defined their mentorship relationship through their working associations. The next largest percentage was defined as a teacher/advisor/student working connection. Understanding where in the profession veterinary medical students seek out mentors is important. Some of these searches start early in life with mentoring by family members, secondary educational teachers, and local family veterinarians, but the majority of mentees begin their exploration of mentorship relationships in their undergraduate, graduate and /or their professional veterinary educational programs.

Mentoring a veterinary medical student is a unique and gratifying connection between veterinary mentors and mentees because they share areas of common interest like: the need for career development in both technical and non-technical skills, psychosocial support to assimilate into our profession, personal management skills, handling negative and positive feedback, role modeling with emphasis on personal and professional life skills, life balance within a successful career and engagement and facilitating a trusting relationship.

Mentees seek out this important professional connection because they receive counsel on improvement in a particular area where they perceive that they need help. The mentor can share insight on the scope of the profession that may not be readily seen from the mentee's vantage point. This nurturing environment leads to the

exploration of untapped professional areas, like leadership development, opportunities in career advancement or the discussion about career direction. Networking can be the focus of a mentor's advice, assisting connecting the mentee with future mentors or an advisory team. Mentees greatly benefit through a valid, open and trusted relationship. Mentorship also allows the mentee to increase their own self-evaluation proficiency, self-awareness of their own professional and personal abilities which leads to the development of a more confident and self-actualizing individual. Mentorship helps to quicken the transition from student to veterinarian, the development and integration of the mentee into the animal health team, and accelerates their conversion into becoming a confident veterinary practitioner.

Mentors seek out this meaningful relationship because they desire sharing expertise that was gained through their vast amount of experience. These advisers are vested in this relationship and want the mentee to learn not to make the same mistakes either clinically or professionally. The mentor sometimes gains a new professional perspec-

tive through this important association, such as enhanced professional development and great enjoyment by furthering their own confidence in clinical and non-clinical skills through teaching. Great mentors are professionally recognized by peers, which increases their professional image and credibility. The mentors gain extreme professional satisfaction by directing their charges to the place where the mentee's talents and professional gifts would benefit our profession the greatest. This renews the mentor's own professional development by seeing the possibilities that once

were acknowledged through

their own career. It gives them a new perspective that only can be seen through the refreshing of a set of experienced eyes. The mentor / mentee relationship is not a one-way street. A valid connection requires the mentee to initiate feedback on the mentor's professional advancement by building a mutually trusting and open relationship. Additionally, mentorship provides an opportunity for the experienced veterinarian to share the love and passion they have for the veterinary profession with the mentee.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has invested into this concept of mentorship instruction by developing "Self-Paced Workbook: Mentor Guide". There are some direct benefits to the AVMA organization through each veterinarian embracing the concept of becoming the best mentor possible. The benefits include networking between novice and veteran veterinary prac-



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tioners, current leaders encouraging and challenging the next generation of leaders, the personal satisfaction of better assimilating our newest members into our diverse profession, increasing professional satisfaction and helping to decrease attrition within certain professional areas. Mentorship not only increases our professional value by increasing the dissemination of information and ideas but allows individuals to find where they can best serve with our society.

Mentees are the driving force in this relationship. They must seek out their mentor and help define the relationship through expressing their desire and goals for this professional relationship. They must exhibit to the mentors that they are willing to listen and learn, crave counseling and exhibit qualities of trustworthiness and principle.

Most veterinary graduates value the idea of mentorship and state that the primary attribute that they hunt for in their first employer is possessing good mentorship quality. They crave a relationship that will assist them in making the transition from a professional student to valued member of the veterinary community. They are hoping for a relationship that is based on mutual respect and trust. These new graduates desire feedback, positive and negative, that will help assimilate them into our profession and assist them in their professional growth. We validate this relationship through honest and constructive feedback. Criticism is not always welcomed, but is essential in this association. If done correctly, constructive criticism will increase the value of the professional connection. We only get better as professionals through correcting and improving our weakest characteristics.

The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences is advancing the mentorship initiative through numerous programs. All first year professional veterinary students are assigned to two mentorship programs. The first is a mentor group of nine to ten students that meet with one or two faculty members. They meet during orientation to their professional training over lunch. This group meets a variety of times during their first year of veterinary school. The time and

frequency is established and mutually agreed upon by the group. The focus is to help transition the students from their undergraduate or graduate educational programs or their previous careers into the professional program. Most mentor groups meet six times during this first year. Other benefits to the first year veterinary student are to engage in discussion of how to utilize their summers and the winter and spring breaks. Discussing and discovering the needs of each of the students within the group can be a difficult but very important process during this first year mentoring process. This has been a successful program and is financially supported with participation encouraged through the Office of the Dean of the CVM.


The other mentoring project that is offered to the first year students is a student-led initiative. This is a program where second year students sign up to mentor first year students. This can be a mutually beneficial process because both the mentor and mentee can network, which has an additive effect. Students are able to help each other and have lasting friendships that are developed through this program.

The Food Animal faculty started a First Year Food Animal Mentoring program last year. This mentoring project was developed to help foster, support and recruit students that had an interest in food animal medicine. This was accomplished by setting up an open forum for the students to meet the Food Animal Faculty and discuss issues that face our profession. The other added benefit is for students to see the number of fellow classmates that have an interest in food animal medicine so that they can be mutually supportive in their educational quests. The students are divided into groups in the second semester and food animal faculty take on the challenge of group mentorship. The focus of this mentorship program is to help the students learn about the veterinarians' role in food supply veterinary medicine and career opportunities, and help to develop a plan to self-discover their future role in our profession.

Most of these mentoring programs are successful because they start out as group programs and transform into individual mentoring relationships. There are numerous complex challenges that face the veterinary profession. One of the key methods to address these needs is through the development of mentors who understand the great personal and professional benefits that can be received by engaging mentees in this mutually beneficial relationship. Mentorship should become a cornerstone of the veterinary profession.

For information on mentoring veterinary students at Texas A&M, or for additional resources on mentoring, please contact Dr. Dan Posey, Director of Special Programs and Clinical Associate Professor by calling 979-845-5051, or via email at dposey@cvm.tamu.edu.

Information for this article was pulled from the following sources:

- 1) The AVMA's Self-paced Workbook: Mentor Guide.
- 2) Niehoff, Brian, Peter Chenoweth, and Raina Rutti. "Mentoring within the Veterinary Medical Profession: Veterinarian's Experiences as Proteges in Mentoring Relationships." *JVME* 32 (2) 264-271. 

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CVMBBS CONTACT Information

2009 Schedule

July 24–26, 2009
Practical Dentistry
for Small Animal Practitioners
Chair: Dr. Bert Dodd

August 8–9, 2009
Orthopedics Conference
Chair: Dr. Don Hulse

August 21–23, 2009
Oncology/Cytology Conference
Chair: Dr. Heather Wilson

September 11–13, 2009
Canine Medicine Conference
Chair: Dr. Audrey Cook

October 2–4, 2009
Annual Clinical Neurology Conference
Chair: Dr. Jon Levine

October 16–18, 2009
Annual Equine Reproduction Symposium
Chair: Dr. Dickson Varner

October 23–25, 2009
Annual Equine Conference
Chair: Dr. Peter Rakestraw

November 6–8, 2009
Small Animal Emergency Medicine
& Critical Care
Chair: Dr. David Nelson

November 13–14, 2009
Small Animal Anesthesia Conference
Chair: Dr. Elizabeth Martinez

December 4–6, 2009
Annual Exotic Pets Conference
Chair: Dr. Sharman Hoppes

2010 Schedule

February 5–7, 2010
17th Annual Veterinary Technician Seminar
Chairs: Ms. Lori Atkins & Candise McKay

March 26–28, 2010
Pain & Physical Rehabilitation Seminar
Chair: Dr. Gwendolyn Carroll

April 23–25, 2010
Annual Feline Medicine Conference
Chair: Dr. John August

All dates are subject to change.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION Calendar

The Winds of Change

by Angela Clendenin

THE WINDS OF CHANGE have been blowing around our nation, and this has been especially evident at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM). Years of hard work and dedication from the faculty, staff and students, coupled with the arrival of the tenth dean of the college, set the stage for a very bright future.

In just a short span of time, a new dean took over the reins of the CVM, the American Veterinary Medical Association's Council on Education recognized the CVM with full accreditation, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board submitted a report on veterinary medical education in Texas to the legislature with recommendations that, if implemented, could lead to significant expansion of the CVM.

New Leadership

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved the appointment of Dr. Eleanor M. Green recommended by Texas A&M University President Elsa Murano with concurrence from A&M System Chancellor Michael D. McKinney, following an extensive national search. Green was named dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, effective March 1.

"We are obviously pleased with the appointment," noted Dr. Murano. "I am confident that Dr. Green will effectively build on her college's strengths, providing the leadership that will further enhance its respective reputations for excellence in teaching, research and service at the state, national and international levels."

Green's appointment follows a search that attracted applicants and nominations from many leading institutions in the United States. She succeeds Dr. H. Richard Adams, who is returning to the faculty of the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology. Green will be the first woman to serve as dean of the college.

As dean, Green serves as the principal academic leader and chief executive officer of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Since her arrival, Green has spent time meeting many of the alumni and supporters of the college, and served as the commencement speaker for the DVM Class of '09.

Texas A&M Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics Jeffrey S. Vitter applauded the Regents' decision, citing Green's impressive credentials.

"Dr. Green's leadership of two different colleges of veterinary medicine, as well as her recognized ability to bring together faculty, staff, and students to advance a shared vision, equip her well for her responsibilities leading the CVM. I am looking forward to working with her as we develop the Academic Master Plan and set the course for reaching the goals of Vision 2020."

Green arrived in Aggieland after serving as professor and chair of the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida—Gainesville. Before joining the faculty at the University of Florida, Green was professor and head of the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences and director of the Large Animal Veterinary

Medical Teaching Hospital at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She has also served on the faculties of the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine and the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Texas A&M is a special place," said Green. "I know that's something people hear over and over again, but once I came here and met the people and saw the programs they had in place, I knew this is where I needed to be. I am so excited about our future, and working with all of our outstanding faculty, staff, students, and supporters to continue making this the premier place for veterinary medical education."

In addition to her roles as clinician, academician, and

administrator, Green continues to serve as an active leader in the veterinary profession. She is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, Specialty Internal Medicine, and a Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, Certified in Equine Practice. She has served as president of three national organizations, the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, the American Association of Veterinary Clinicians, and the American Association of Equine Practitioners. She is the first woman president of all three of these national organizations. She has contributed to numerous committees in many organizations, such as the American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Veterinary Clinicians, American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges,

American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. She is also active in industry organizations and is currently on the Board of Directors of the Florida Quarter Horse Association, on the Public Policy Committee of the American Quarter Horse Association, on the Board of Directors of the Florida Division of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, on the Board of Directors of the Florida Horse Park Authority, and is Chair of the Florida Thoroughbred Racing Task Force.

Dr. Green has received several awards in her profession. She was given the 1999 American Association of Veterinary Clinicians Faculty Achievement Award. In 1997 she was named a Distinguished Practitioner of the National Academies of Practice. She was honored as an Outstanding Auburn University Graduate at the 1992



Dean Eleanor Green talks with a visitor on Parents' Day.

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celebration of 100 Years of Women at Auburn. She was recently invited to speak at the annual Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation dinner in Saratoga on current issues in Thoroughbred racing and the role of American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and of research in preserving the health and welfare of the horse.

Accreditation Visit

Preparing for an accreditation visit is a consuming process that involves the tireless efforts of practically everyone in the CVM. Originally scheduled for mid-September, the accreditation team from the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) Council on Education postponed their accreditation visit due to the arrival of Hurricane Ike in the Gulf of Mexico. As the hurricane battered Galveston and the surrounding area, bringing high winds and lots of rain to the Brazos Valley, all efforts shifted to sheltering. The winds dissipated, and the accreditation visit was rescheduled for January 2009.

The long hours of collecting the necessary information and compiling the self-report were all made worthwhile when the AVMA awarded full accreditation to the CVM after completing the extensive review process.

"The accreditation team's report was one of the first things I received when I arrived," said Green. "While I wasn't here when the self-report was compiled, I appreciate the amount of time and work it took to prepare for the site team's visit, especially when it had to be rescheduled because of the weather."

The accreditation review is a rigorous and comprehensive peer review process conducted by the AVMA's Council on Education every seven years, and measures DVM educational programs against 11 standards of quality.

As a fully accredited program, the CVM was compared against these national standards, and had to demonstrate that curriculum, outcomes, public health and safety were aligned with the CVM's own stated mission and goals. By receiving this recognition, students can be assured they will graduate with the competencies and skills necessary to enter practice, and that they will meet the requirements for licensure to practice. In addition, those that employ graduates from the CVM will know their new employees have

achieved specified learning goals and are ready to begin professional practice.

"The accreditation process is a lengthy, but essential, part of providing the very best veterinary medical education for our students," said Green. "Our success with this process is a credit to the effort of so many faculty, staff and students who committed their time to preparing the report, hosting the site visit team, and responding to the accreditation team's questions. The accreditation process is an important tool in our strategic planning process, and we couldn't be happier with the AVMA's report. To continue as a leader in veterinary medical education, we have to ensure that we always look for innovative ways to advance learning in our institution, to set the bar for others, and to be aware of how we measure against others."

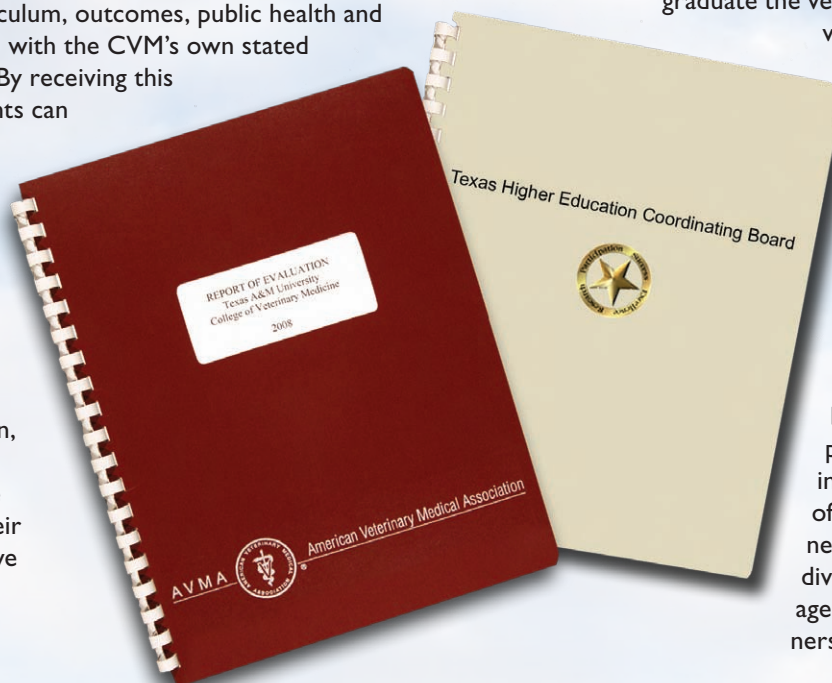
Gaining Ground

In a recent landmark report, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) made significant recommendations to the state legislature which address the shortage of food and fiber (large animal) veterinarians, as well as the need to address recruitment of students from underrepresented groups—a nationwide problem.

The THECB conducted a comparative study of veterinary medical education utilizing data from multiple veterinary medical organizations and consultants from veterinary medical academia around the country. The conclusions for the most efficient way to address the future of the veterinary medical education in the State of Texas were 1) that at this time no new veterinary medical school was needed, 2) CVM should be offered the resources necessary to continue and expand their efforts to promote food and fiber animal practice, 3) recruiting students from underrepresented groups should be a top priority, and 4) formula funding should be restored to THECB recommendations.

"We have worked very diligently to educate and graduate the very best entry level

veterinarian possible through a four-year program," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, former dean of veterinary medicine. "In addition, we have implemented programs and strategies that have enabled us to be responsive to and proactive in addressing the future needs of the profession. The need for increased diversity and the shortage of rural practitioners are two pressing



concerns for our profession, and we hope that the THECB report will serve to highlight those needs to our legislature.”

The THECB report noted that the CVM had initiated mentoring programs to support veterinary medical students interested in rural practice and large animal medicine, as well that the college had been able to keep tuition rates low when compared to the top 10 most populous states.

The report from the THECB is sent to the legislature, who will ultimately decide how best to implement the recommendations stated in the report.

“Should the legislature agree to follow through on the conclusions from this report with funding, the CVM would be able to reinvest in our infrastructure which would make a significant impact on our college and its contribution to the profession,” added Adams. “We appreciate the thoroughness of the THECB report and the opportunities it presents for solving the growing demands of the veterinary medical profession by its recommendations for support for veterinary medical education in Texas.

One of the ways to increase the rural and large animal veterinary medical shortage that is often discussed within the veterinary profession is increasing the class size at Texas A&M. To accomplish this would require additional funding for faculty and facilities, funding that the CVM hopes will come from the state legislature. To be prepared should that funding come through, administrators and staff have been working to develop an expansion plan that will be implemented should the CVM be directed to increase the number of students in the program.

“The potential to increase the size of our program, gain some additional classroom space, and further develop opportunities for research and teaching is exciting,” said Green. “These are the types of opportunities that don’t come along very often, and are the direct result of teamwork. It is in this spirit of teamwork that we will continue to watch and work and be prepared to move forward if directed to do so.”

New Team Members

New facilities are not the only things the CVM is waiting on. Faculty and staff are currently engaged in the recruitment of two key members of the administrative team.

With the retirement of long-time head, Gerald Bratton, the pathobiology department began a national search for a replacement, with the fundamental goal of recruiting the most talented individual dedicated to the advancement of the department and college. Dr. Glen Laine, department head for veterinary physiology and pharmacology, is serving as the search committee chair. Dr. Fuller Bazer has assumed duties as interim head and will continue in this role until March 2010 or until the



An aerial satellite image of the Texas Veterinary Medical Center at Texas A&M University.

permanent position is filled. He has had a very productive career at Texas A&M, having served in a number of administrative roles.

Dr. Garry Adams retired as the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in 2007, and then returned to the CVM in the newly created position for Associate Dean for Homeland Security and Interim Associate Dean for Research. In his new role, Adams works with faculty researchers to build collaborations between academia and government in support of homeland security efforts. The national search for Adams’ replacement as the AD for Research and Graduate Studies is led by Drs. Duane Kraemer and Tim Phillips.

“We are fortunate to have so many talented faculty here that ensure everyone has a voice in the search process,” said Green. “Additionally, we have excellent programs and dedicated support staff that continue to make Texas A&M an attractive place for potential new faculty and administrators. Without everyone’s cooperation, we wouldn’t be in a position to go out and pick the best and brightest for our available posts.”

The Word of the Day—“Change”

New faces and potentially new places. These recent developments and changes are propelling the CVM forward. Each event is important in its own right, but when combined together, they create a formidable force of change.

“The veterinary medical profession has become very dynamic,” said Green. “As the answers to the global challenges of the future are sought, our expertise as clinicians and veterinary scientists is in demand. To respond to the increase in opportunities created as we adopt the ‘One Medicine’ philosophy, we have to re-examine how we prepare the next generation of veterinarians. By monitoring trends in our profession and strategically adjusting our way of doing things, we can continue to graduate the highest quality entry-level veterinarians that will be prepared to make a difference in the world.” 🌿

First year of stallion season auction a success

The Legends Premier Stallion Season Auction was a remarkable success, raising over a quarter of a million dollars in its first year for the Texas A&M University Stallion Reproductive Studies (SRS) program.

The auction featured seasons from 262 western performance, racing Quarter Horse and racing Thoroughbred stallions that were donated by stallion owners around the world.


Dr. Dickson D. Varner, Professor of Theriogenology and Pin Oak Stud Chair of Stallion Reproductive Studies in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, spearheaded this effort to expand and enhance the SRS program.



"Indeed, we were spellbound by the generous participation of stallion owners in this fund raiser," says Dr. Varner. "I suspect that the key factors in this exceptional response were our close association with the equine breeding industry and the dedication of all raised monies exclusively to the betterment of the breeding stallion. We were also thrilled by the level of bidder

activity in this auction, despite the current economic situation globally. Without doubt, proceeds from this projected annual event will lead to improvements in the reproductive health of stallions worldwide."

Proceeds from the auction will go toward expanding the Stallion Reproductive Studies program to meet the ever-growing needs of horse breeders worldwide. The program's research benefits the reproductive health of all breeding stallions.

The second annual Legends Premier Stallion Season Auction is set to begin on December 1, 2009. Auction status and donations for 2009 can be found on the website at legends.cvm.tamu.edu. 

Texas A&M cloning expert speaks at AQHA Forum

Dr. Katrin Hinrichs, professor and Patsy Link Chair in Mare Reproductive Studies at Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, spoke at a forum on equine cloning at the 2009 American Quarter Horse Association Annual Convention in San Antonio on March 6.

The forum, which was also web-cast live to AQHA members worldwide, addressed up-to-date information on equine cloning as well as the issue of registering cloned horses.

Dr. Hinrichs, whose equine embryo laboratory at Texas A&M produced the first cloned horse in North America, outlined the techniques used in cloning and the current status of horse cloning.

Within the past couple of years, commercial cloning of a number of horses, including American Quarter Horses, has been well publicized. However, under current AQHA rules, American Quarter Horses produced by any cloning process are not eligible for registration.

At the San Antonio convention, the AQHA Stud Book and Registration Committee considered a proposed change to this rule,

allowing a live foal produced via cloning to be registered if its DNA matches that of a registered American Quarter Horse.


"As a scientist and as an AQHA member myself, I feel it is important for the membership to understand what cloning is and is not before they address this important decision," Hinrichs said. "I am happy to support the American Quarter Horse Association in putting this forum together, so that AQHA members can learn about the procedure."

Other panelists included Sharon Spier, an epidemiologist at the University of California-Davis; George Seidel, a professor of biomedical sciences at Colorado State Univer-



Texas A&M's cloned horse, Paris Texas.

sity; and Blake Russell of ViaGen, a commercial cloning company.

After a long discussion on the topic at the convention, the representative at the AQHA decided to put together a task force on the registration of cloned horses and present it again at next year's convention. 

Parents' Day

April 4, 2009



Commencement

May 14, 2009



Gentle Doctor Benefit Auction

April 4, 2009





Open House

April 25, 2009



White Coat Ceremony

April 3, 2009



Honor's Convocation

April 3, 2009



SCAAFP participates in Houston Charity Cat Show



Texas A&M SCAAFP members represent the CVM at the Houston Charity Cat Show. From left to right: Tiffani Taylor, Vice President, 4VM; Kira Fleitman Ramdas, President, 4VM; Ashley Stricklin, 2VM; Regina Roach, Class Representative, 3VM; Leslie Moore, 2VM; Andrew Otto, Class Representative, 4VM.

To increase awareness about the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, the Student Chapter of the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) participated in the two-day Houston Charity Cat Show held this past January.

The students set up a booth displaying a collage of photographs that included pictures of cats being treated at the Small Animal Hospital, radiographs and images of diagnostic specimens.

"Initially, the colorful pictures grabbed people's attention. We then walked them around the booth and gave them information on the CVM's veterinary medicine program and medical facilities for cats," said Kira Fleitman Ramdas, a fourth-year veterinary medicine student who, until recently, was president of the Texas A&M University student chapter.

"We managed to create a good deal of awareness about CVM's program which is great because I think it is the best [program] in the country," Ramdas said.

Those who visited the booth received a specially prepared pamphlet outlining the CVM's education programs and facilities for cats, and pencils and bookmarks. The students told children visiting the booth about what it means to be a vet, the courses they need to take and the GPA they need to get into veterinary school. Cat fanciers who spoke with the students were told about the medical procedures and facilities that the CVM provides for cats.

The group's adviser Dr. John August, who accompanied the students, said that the participating students' professional behavior and enthusiasm were impressive.

"We exposed a lot of people to our students, and through our stu-

dents, to the college's strong commitment to the health and welfare of cats," he stated.

Dr. August emphasizes that this was a student-run initiative, with Ramdas assuming a leadership role.

"It took real commitment to participate in a show held during the weekend before the start of school," he said.

Other activities of the Student Chapter of the AAFP at Texas A&M University included volunteering at the San Antonio Wildlife Orphanage during the fall semester.

The organization also recently received a national-level award from the Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA) for their volunteer work at a feline-only shelter which benefitted feline welfare and enhanced the human-animal bond. 🐾

~ Marissa Doshi

Reproductive Sciences Laboratory to relocate

The Reproductive Sciences Laboratory (RSL) at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) will soon have a new home and a new name. In a few months, the laboratory will begin operating out of a site on Highway 47, approximately six miles from the college, and it will be called the "Reproductive Sciences Complex" (RSC).

Dr. Duane Kraemer, one of the principal investigators at the RSL and a professor in the Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology (VTPP) department, has been the driving force behind this move.

"The college is fortunate to have been able to purchase this site as it is an ideal property for their purposes," said Kraemer.

The site was previously occupied by Global Genetics and Biologicals, a company founded by two former PhD students from the RSL, Drs. Gabriela and Bill Foxworth. The company was set up to offer reproductive technology services, such as in vitro fertilization, for cattle and small ruminants.

Because of their relationship with the college, the Foxworths' felt that the facility and property would be a benefit to programs offered at the CVM and approached the college with a proposal for sale. Kraemer said that the Foxworths' were "very patient" with the college as it raised the funds to purchase the site.

Dr. Glen Laine, head of the VTPP department, played a major role in



Dr. Duane Kraemer, a principal investigator at the RSL, tours the new facility.

raising the funds for purchasing the facility. He described the funds as a "combination of monies from the college, the Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology department, the Large Animal Clinical Sciences department and extra mural grants."

Housed on 45 acres of land, the site has a state of the art laboratory building connected to an administrative building, animal handling facilities, a surgery building for small ruminants, a number of housing pens for bovine and small ruminant animals and a hay barn. Besides the additional space, the main advantage of the relocation is that in the new facility animals will be housed close to the laboratories.

"This will enable more efficient sample delivery from the animals to the laboratories as well as teaching," noted Kraemer. "In addition, the

biocontainment facilities at the new site will permit more control over disease transmission."


Research at the RSL is focused on animal biotechnology (for example, breeding disease resistant animals). The additional land at the new site offers the opportunity for expansion, as half of the 45 acres at the new location is wooded and has not yet been developed.

"The extra space will facilitate the further development of reproductive science ventures," said Laine.

According to Kraemer, one use that has been proposed for the undeveloped area at the new site is deer research.

In addition to the researchers Drs. Mark Westhusin, Charles Long and Duane Kraemer, their technicians and graduate students of the RSL, two veterinarians from the

Large Animal Hospital, Dr. Wesley Bissett and Dr. Juan Romano, will also be moving to the new facility.

Excited about the move, Kraemer said that the site will allow "the three missions of research, teaching and service to be enhanced in the area of reproductive sciences." 



The new Reproductive Sciences Laboratory facility is six miles from the CVM campus on Highway 47.

VMTH sponsors Aggie Guide and Service Dog puppy

Pass the grounds near Rudder Fountain on Monday afternoons, and you'll find them overrun with playful puppies. These special dogs are part of the Aggie Guide and Service Dog (AGS) Program enjoying an afternoon of fun with their raisers.

Among the playing puppies, you may spot a bright-eyed, hyperactive black Labrador retriever. That's Molly, a puppy sponsored by the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM).

AGS is a student-run organization at Texas A&M University that spreads awareness about and promotes the training of service dogs that are used by people with disabilities.

Typically, puppy raisers (usually student volunteers, although any one from the Brazos Valley who meets the requirements is eligible) pay for all the puppy's needs. Expenses include the cost of premium food, veterinarian bills, training classes and toys. Raising a puppy can get quite expensive, with raisers having to spend nearly \$1500. By providing Molly with quality medical care, the VMTH's sponsorship is



Molly undergoes a check-up at the VMTH's Small Animal Clinic.

helping reduce this financial burden on Kelsey Loflin, Molly's raiser who is a freshman at Texas A&M University.

"We really appreciate our sponsors. They are helping not only our dogs but also those who will get these puppies as service dogs," said Natalie Edwards, AGS's senior puppy raiser supervisor.

The VMTH pays for Molly's vaccinations and check-ups. It also sponsored her spaying and microchip (a tracker inserted in the nape of the neck of every AGS puppy). Basic medicines such as flea preventative and heartworm medication are also provided by the VMTH.

Molly has been in the AGS program for just over a month. She is already

housebroken and knows obedience commands such as "sit," "down," and "stay." Now, she is working on "focus" and coming when called.

"Molly is a good girl and is doing very well," said Loflin. Molly stays with Loflin in an on-campus dormitory and accompanies her wherever possible. Once Molly gets "jacket privileges," she will accompany Kelsey everywhere—restaurants, grocery stores, banks and even classes.

"The goal of puppy training is to provide the puppies with as many positive experiences as possible. They should be able to focus amidst distractions and they should not be afraid of new people or places," Loflin explained.

When Molly is 12-18 months old, she will be tested to determine if she can go on to the next phase of training for service dogs. If accepted, she will be donated to a nationally recognized service dog organization that will train her and then place her with a disabled partner. 🐾

~ Marissa Doshi



Molly is sponsored by the VMTH in the AGS Program.

Large Animal Pharmacy named EHS Safe Laboratory of the Month for February 2009

The Large Animal Hospital Pharmacy at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences was named the February 2009 recipient of Texas A&M's Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Safe Laboratory of the Month award.

"The pharmacy was selected because of their consistent performance in having a clean, safe laboratory. EHS laboratory safety inspectors have a criteria list of over 80 items and the pharmacy has routinely demonstrated model performance," explained Christina Robertson, CIH, industrial hygiene manager, Environmental Health and Safety Department.


In honor of their work, EHS provided the pharmacy staff with a lunch to acknowledge their attention to laboratory safety issues at Texas A&M University.

"Winning this award is certainly an honor, but also a surprise," remarked pharmacy director, Dr. Cornelia Nieuwoudt. "Our goal is to do the best we can for the animals, assist the clinicians, students, and technicians to take care of the patients, and to facilitate teaching



From left to right: Gail Schneider, Cassi Seibold, Su Hollar, Tia Nieuwoudt, Davida Scanlin, Joe Hinton, Jeff Curington, and Jayson Rutherford.

and research. To receive an award for what we do is not expected, but such a nice vote of confidence! We are constantly working at improving

our operations, and being recognized is an encouragement to keep up the good work." 

CVM graduate student wins P.E.O. Scholar Award


Natalie Johnson, a graduate student in Dr. Timothy Phillips' intercollegiate program of toxicology, was selected to receive a P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) Scholar Award for the 2009-2010 academic year.

The P.E.O. is a philanthropic and educational organization interested in bringing women increased opportunities for higher education.

In 1991, the first P.E.O. Scholar Awards provided 30 merit-based scholarships to women of the United States and Canada pursu-

ing doctoral studies. The award has been increased and is now given to 85 women to recognize and encourage academic excellence and achievement in graduate women.

"I am proud to join the six previous recipients of this award from Texas A&M, and I am truly honored that my mentor Dr. Tim Phillips and department head Dr. Evelyn Castiglioni recommended me for this honor," stated Johnson.

The CVM is very proud of Natalie on this distinctive and well-deserved achievement. 



Natalie Johnson

Banu investigates mammary tumors in cats, dogs



Dr. Sakhila Banu

Like humans, cats and dogs can develop mammary cancer.

Dr. Sakhila Banu, a scientist at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University, is studying feline and canine mammary tumors along with

co-investigators Dr. Joe Arosh, Dr. Heather Wilson, Dr. Kenita Rogers and Dr. Mark Johnson. The team hopes to understand how these cancers are formed and sustained.

Mammary tumors are the third most frequently occurring tumors in cats, with 80–96 percent of these tumors turning malignant and metastasizing. In dogs, 50 percent of mammary tumors become malignant.

Since these tumors can recur at the surgical site even after removal, new therapies need to be developed for these cancers. To develop treatments for canine and feline mammary tumors, the molecular interactions involved in their development need to be understood. However, not much is known about these interactions.

Recently, Dr. Banu was awarded research grants from the American Association of Feline Practitioners

and Winn Feline Foundation to study the signaling pathways and molecules involved in the development of feline mammary tumors. Her research could lead to a treatment for such tumors. She has also had a study funded by the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation; this study examines the molecular interactions in canine mammary tumors.

Dr. Banu believes that eventually, her research could open up new avenues for treating breast cancer in humans.

“The molecular behaviors of feline mammary cancers differ from those of canine mammary cancers,” emphasized Dr. Banu, “but as we learn more about these cancers, cats and dogs could be used as models to understand, prevent and treat human breast cancer.”

~Marissa Doshi

New entrance possible through generosity of CVM alumnus

A sloping brown roof and checkered stone pillars frame the new entry way to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM). The construction of this elegant façade has been made possible through the generous donation of an Aggie, Dr. Charles Wiseman, and his wife Pat.

“I contributed funds for the renovation of the entrance,” said Wiseman, who received his degree in veterinary medicine in 1959, “because I want to give back to the school that gave so much to me, and to provide support for the college’s greatest needs.”

The makeover has been successful; the entrance beautifully complements the architecture of the main entry way to the college and adds greatly to the appearance of the building.

Testament to Wiseman’s affectionate school spirit is the fact that this donation is just one of the many gifts he has provided to the CVM. Some of these gifts include a scholarship at the CVM that Wiseman endowed along with his father and sister in memory of his mother. He has also contributed to the endowment of the Wiseman-Lewie-Worth Chair in Cardiology at the CVM.

A plaque acknowledging and honoring the Wisemans’ generosity was installed and dedicated in the new entrance on May 28th.



Dean Eleanor Green, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Wiseman, and former dean, H. Richard Adams, stand in front of the newly renovated entrance.

Sigma Xi honors Phillips for saving lives with clay

Since 2006, Sigma Xi, an international research society, has presented an award to honor and promote creativity in science and engineering. This year's recipient of the award, called the "Walston Chubb Award for Innovation," is Dr. Timothy Phillips of the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. The award consists of a \$4000 honorarium and an opportunity to deliver the Walston Chubb Award Lecture at Sigma Xi's annual meeting.

The award is in recognition of Phillips' 25 years of work on chemical and microbial contaminants of food, particularly aflatoxins. These are toxins produced by certain species of fungi that commonly infect corn and peanuts during drought conditions.

Eating food contaminated with aflatoxins results in a disease called aflatoxicosis, which affects both animals and humans. The adverse effects of aflatoxins depend on the dose and duration of exposure to the toxin. High doses over a short period of time can result in death, while effects of long-term exposure include suppression of the immune system, growth retardation and reduction in the concentration of vitamins A and E and of micronutrients, including iron and zinc.

Phillips' major achievement has been to demonstrate that a naturally occurring, heat-processed clay called NovaSil (NS) can tightly and preferentially bind aflatoxins in the gastrointestinal tract and prevent their toxicity by reducing absorption and bioavailability. Using molecular and animal models, Phillips and his research group have demonstrated (1) the mechanism of aflatoxin interaction at NS clay surfaces and (2) the safety and efficacy of the clay for use in human trials.

"Individuals who are at major risk of developing aflatoxicosis include the 4.5 billion inhabitants of the "hot zone"—the region bound by

the latitudes 40 degrees north and south of the equator. Droughts in this region increase fungal infection and consequently aflatoxin production," explained Phillips. "Guidelines that specify permissible aflatoxin levels in foods are not always strictly followed in developing countries in this zone."

One of the most severe outbreaks of aflatoxin poisoning occurred in 2004 in Kenya and was caused by the consumption of meals prepared from aflatoxin-contaminated maize. Aflatoxin levels as high as 8,000 parts per billion (ppb) were detected. According to the US Food and Drug Administration, human foods, with the exception of milk, may contain up to 20 ppb aflatoxin. This outbreak caused 125 deaths.

Based on a trial in the United States that confirmed the safety of NS clay and determined the appropriate dose of this clay for use in humans, Phillips and his group carried out a larger clinical trial in humans in Ghana (in the Ejura-Sekyedumase district of the Ashanti region) for testing the efficacy of NS clay. This site was chosen for the study because the people in the region were found to have biomarkers of aflatoxins in their blood and urine, indicating aflatoxin exposure.

The study was carried out for three months. A total of 177 volunteers were randomly assigned to three groups that were given either a high dose, low dose or no dose (the placebo group) of NS clay capsules per day.

The study found that 99 percent of the participants reported no clay-related side effects. Further, the clay significantly reduced the level of exposure to aflatoxins.

"The findings support the potential application of NS clay for the protection of human populations at high risk for aflatoxicosis," noted Phillips.

Further studies include optimizing the dosage and delivery methods of



Dr. Timothy Phillips

NS clay. Also, the safety of NS clay for long-term therapy needs to be determined as well as the effectiveness of the clay when included in human foods.

Phillips' research has resulted in the establishment of Texas Enterosorbents, Inc., a TAMU-based company, that is involved in commercializing products based on NS clay.

Phillips hopes that, like iodine, the clay will be used as an additive in table salt or in groundnut- or maize-based foods. He also aims to make the clay available in the form of "sachets of flavored clay" so that a solution of the powdered clay in water may be taken as enterosorbent therapy in acute cases of aflatoxin exposure. In a future study, he also aims to test the efficacy of the clay when mixed with cornmeal since corn is especially prone to aflatoxin contamination.

Phillips hopes that this "field-practical, sustainable and environmentally benign" approach can help positively impact the lives of the 4.5 billion people in the developing world who are seriously affected by aflatoxicosis. 🌱

Dr. Gale Wagner named a finalist for 2009 Presidential Award of Excellence

Dr. Gale Wagner was recognized at the Texas A&M University International Board Dinner as one of the three finalists in line for the 2009 Presidential Award of Excellence for Faculty Service to International Students.

The award was designed in 2005 by the Executive Committee to recognize those who strive to increase international awareness at the university and integrate international students more fully on campus. Wagner was nominated for the recognition by Dr. Gerald Bratton and the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology.

This isn't the first time Wagner has been honored for his work, as he received the Bush Excellence Award for international student work in 2008.

"Dr. Wagner's dedication to working with international students makes a big impact as the veterinary medical profession increases



Dr. Gale Wagner is recognized at the Texas A&M University International Board Dinner.

its integration in animal and public health around the world," said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "By reaching beyond the walls of the CVM,

and extending a welcoming hand to our international students, his work builds bridges that help to develop the leaders of tomorrow." 🌿

Dr. Edith Chenault wins 2008 ACE Award

Dr. Edith Chenault's dissertation was judged best for 2008 by the Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life Sciences research special interest group. The results were announced at a Parent's Day breakfast on April 18, 2009.

"I was thrilled to be recognized by my colleagues in this way. However, I have to give a lot of credit to my doctoral committee for teaching and guiding me and prodding me to finish. The knowledge I gained is something I use just about every time I get in front of a classroom," commented Chenault.

The Association for Communications Excellence (ACE) Research SIG's Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award program is designed to recognize doctoral students who completed the most outstanding dissertation during the previous calendar year. Each institution is eligible to submit one dissertation nominee each year. 🌿



Dr. Edith Chenault

CVM staff and faculty regognized with AFS Distinguished Achievement Awards

Five members of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences family were recognized by the Association of Former Students with university-level Distinguished Achievement Awards at the annual 2009 Distinguished Achievement Awards ceremony on April 28th.

Since 1955, The Association of Former Students has recognized outstanding members of Texas A&M's faculty and staff for their commitment, performance and positive impact on Aggie students, Texas citizens and the world around them through their University Level Awards program.

These prestigious awards recognize individuals for contributions that make an impact to not only their department or college, but also to the entire University.

"To have five individuals from one college honored with this award is a notable accomplishment for the college, and a tribute to the caliber of faculty and staff we have here," stated Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine.

The Distinguished Achievement Award in the Staff Category went to Ms. Gail Snook in Large Animal Clinical Sciences. Snook recognized that this award was based on a lot of hard work. "My parents always taught me to do my best, no matter what I did. I would like to think I have made them proud," she commented.

In recognition of his work to further the veterinary profession, Dr. G. Kent Carter, Large Animal Clinical Sciences, was presented the Distinguished Achievement Award in the Extension, Outreach, Continuing Education and Professional Development


Category. "It is the greatest honor to be chosen to receive this award from the Association of Former Students. The University-level Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award is one of the most coveted awards that a faculty member can receive and its significance is well recognized throughout the university," stated Carter.

Dr. George E. Lees, Small Animal Clinical Sciences, was honored with the Distinguished Achievement Award in the Research Category. "I am, of course, grateful for this recognition; however, I think this award is an especially notable event for the College of Veterinary Medicine because it is the first time a veterinary clinician has received an AFS Award in the category of Research. I believe that clinical research is a very important part of the mission of the CVM, so I am particularly pleased that a clinical investigator has been selected," remarked Lees.

Dr. Mark C. Johnson from Veterinary Pathobiology was recognized with a Distinguished Achievement Award in the Teaching Category.

"Being the recipient of such a prestigious award is thus far the pinnacle of my career at TAMU. I believe students appreciate and interact with faculty that bring positive energy into the learning environment and yet challenge them. I am honored that my students recognized these traits in me and therefore, acknowledge my efforts," stated Johnson.

Also awarded for Distinguished Achievement in the Teaching Category was Dr. Sharon C. Kerwin, Small Animal Clinical Sciences. Kerwin remarked, "I am very humbled and honored to receive this award. My department has a long history of excellence in teaching, and I am very fortunate to work with many other faculty members in this department that have also won this award for teaching; something must have rubbed off!"

"We appreciate the contributions each of these honorees make that have made the CVM such a successful institution," noted Dr. Green. "I especially would like to thank all the people who took the time to nominate each of these outstanding individuals for these awards." 



Left to right: Ms. Gail Snook, Dr. George Lees, Dr. Mark Johnson, and Dr. Kent Carter. Not pictured is Dr. Sharon Kerwin.

Kerwin, Russell receive college level teaching awards



Mr. Porter Garner, Executive Director of the Association of Former Students, Dr. Sharon Kerwin, Dr. Sandee Hartsfield and Dean H. Richard Adams.

In recognition for their efforts in teaching, Drs. Sharon Kerwin and Karen Russell received college level teaching awards from the Association of Former Students. The honorees received a plaque and a stipend at the January 9, 2009 College Hour held at the CVM.



Mr. Porter Garner, Dr. Gerald Bratton, Dr. Karen Russell and Dean H. Richard Adams.

Communicators honored with Brazos Bravo Awards

Communications professionals from the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences recently won awards and recognition for their efforts from the local chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) at the annual Brazos Bravo awards event.

"We have exceptional talent here at the CVM," said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "We are proud of our team and their accomplishments."

Stacie Kopecki (Communications Specialist) won an Award of Merit

in Writing in her first year to enter the contest. The award was for her story in the last edition of "CVM Today" on the visiting Mexican scientists who came to the CVM for a science writing course last summer taught by Dr. Gastel.

VeLisa Bayer (Graphic Designer) won an Award of Merit in Design for the Stallion Reproductive Studies logo.

Jennie Lamb (Graphic Designer) won an Award of Excellence in Design for the Stallion Reproductive Studies "push" card—the fold over business cards used to promote the Legends auction.

Angela Clendenin (Director of Communications) won an Award of Excellence in Writing for the main feature in the last edition of *CVM Today* entitled "Outside In: Global Impact on Veterinary Medical Education."

There were 100 entries in multiple categories from the Brazos Valley region, with 64 receiving some level of award. The entries were judged by senior communications professionals in the IABC chapters from Pittsburgh, Detroit, Minnesota, Nashville and Iowa. 🍀

Registered Veterinary Technician of the Year awarded to James David Sessum of the VMTH

The Texas Veterinary Medical Association recognized James David Sessum, a registered rehabilitation veterinary technician at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, with the Registered Veterinary Technician of the Year Award for 2009 for his outstanding contribution to the veterinary profession.

"It is a great honor to have one of our own recognized with such a prestigious award," commented Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "The accomplishment is well deserved. This says a lot about the quality and excellence of our staff and their efforts for success."

Throughout his career, Sessum has brought much to the field of veterinary medicine and this award acknowledges his expertise and significant contribution to animal rehabilitation.

"Receiving this award has been very humbling. It's a big award for the entire state of Texas and I feel honored to have been recognized," exclaimed Sessum.

Sessum always knew he would pursue a career in veterinary medicine. With hard work and a little help from some caring professors, his dream would become a reality.

"During technician school at Tomball College, George Younger, the program director, made a huge impact on my career. I was the only

male in the program with twenty-five women. Younger took me under his wing and hired me as a student worker," said Sessum.

Sessum has experience in the private practice sector and has



David Sessum works with canine rehabilitation clients at the Small Animal Hospital.

"I would like to continue teaching, especially with the continuing education program. I hope to make students more aware of the Complementary and

Physical Medicine program and its services," stated Sessum.

In addition to teaching, Sessum has lectured at continuing education meetings all over the country about the benefits of rehabilitation. He also works with clinics to develop rehabilitation programs in a general practice setting and has had the opportunity to lecture at both the CVM Annual Technician Seminar and the Pain Management and Rehabilitation Seminar at Texas A&M University.

For those aspiring to a career in veterinary medicine, Sessum advises, "Pick a good program and choose a field that excites you. The average burnout of a veterinary technician is seven years, so it's important to pick good people to work for and to surround yourself with those you enjoy."

In 2007, Sessum also received the Staff Award for his outstanding service to the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. 🐾



David Sessum accepts his award.

worked at Texas A&M in both of the anesthesia sections and, for the past several years, as coordinator of the small animal rehabilitation services under the supervision of Dr. Sharon Kerwin. In addition, he supervises the small animal surgery service technicians.

"I am very proud of David Sessum's accomplishments, and what he has brought to the program here at Texas A&M," said Dr. Kerwin. "Our veterinary technicians are truly 'mission critical' in helping us serve the state of Texas both by providing outstanding clinical service and also by producing well-trained, caring veterinarians who will go out and provide great service to the state of Texas and beyond. David Sessum has worked very hard to be the best technician, supervisor, rehabilitationist and leader that he can be, and he sets the standard for our group."

Receiving such a prestigious award might seem like the peak of his career, but Sessum's goals and plans continue to focus on the future.

Positive attitudes and new opportunities

There has been a lot of publicity lately about the state of our economy. We are truly blessed at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) to be associated with such generous people as our benefactors. During these times of discouraging news, we have had the good fortune of seeing the generous level of giving to our college remain intact. We greatly appreciate all that you do for us, and we are keenly aware that you have done this during some pretty tough times. It seems that generous people tend to have positive attitudes and an optimism that ignores negative news, and we are very grateful for that fact.

Speaking of positive attitudes, we are very excited to welcome Dr. Eleanor Green as our new dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Please take every opportunity to visit us at the college and to become better acquainted with Dr. Green. Her enthusiasm and optimism are contagious, and you are sure to take some of that back home with you.

Plans are being completed for the new Imaging and Cancer Treatment Center with ground breaking scheduled for this spring. Funds are in place for the building to house the Center, but funding and naming opportunities are still available for the cutting edge imaging and treatment equipment that will set this center apart in the veterinary profession.

The comparative brain cancer study project between the CVM, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Memorial Hermann Hospital, and Texas Children's Hospital is progressing at a rapid rate. New GPS guided brain



Dr. O.J. "Bubba" Woytek and Dr. Guy A. Sheppard at the Gentle Doctor Benefit Auction.

biopsy equipment has arrived, and the first canine cases are entering the project. It is exciting to observe this collaborative effort that holds such great potential to ameliorate the devastating effects of cancer on animals and humans. The brain cancer study should also pave the way for future cooperative study of other types of cancer.

As always, we encourage you to think of us as your link to the college. Please let us know if there is anything we can do for you. We are always happy to come visit you

or any of your clients or friends who have an interest in what we are doing here in order to tell them the remarkable story of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Better yet, come visit us and see it for yourself. You are always welcome.

O. J. "Bubba" Woytek

O. J. "Bubba" Woytek
Senior Director, Development
and Alumni Relations

Guy A. Sheppard

Guy A. Sheppard
Director, Development
and Alumni Relations

Dr. Joe Gray Peeples Scholarship Fund

A new scholarship has been created in memory of Dr. Joe Gray Peeples, '60, who was a pioneer in cattle embryo transfer. Gifts to the fund can be made payable to the Texas A&M Foundation with a memo directing it to the Dr. Joe Gray Peeples Scholarship Fund.

Donor Focus:

Carter/Bronstad scholarship benefits students in need

Gene Carter graduated from Texas A&M University in 1953 and spent his career in the building profession. Over those years, he and his wife Nancy developed a love for dogs, and they have enjoyed many happy days with their beloved pets.

The Carters became acquainted with Dr. Doug Bronstad while seeking veterinary care for one of their dogs. Dr. Bronstad received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Texas A&M in 1972, and after several years of further study, obtained certification as a specialist from the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. Dr. Bronstad was one of the pioneers in private veterinary specialist hospitals.

Gene and Nancy Carter were so impressed by the exceptional care provided for their pets by Dr. Bronstad, that they contributed a generous gift of an endowment to provide scholarships for veterinary students.

The endowment, named the Carter/Bronstad Scholarship, has benefitted numerous students.

Most recently, the Carters provided a generous gift and indicated that they wished to divide it among four veterinary students who are in their first year of the professional curriculum. Their desire was to provide a substantial scholarship to four students with tremendous financial need.

The four students who were selected to receive these scholarships were James Crenwelge, Rebecca Buckley, Jaqueline Wahl, and Patricia Grana.

It was a very emotional time when these students were informed that they would be the recipients of the wonderful gift provided by the Carters. Words cannot express the gratitude felt by these students for the generosity of the Carters. 🍀

~ Dr. Guy Sheppard



Mr. Gene Carter, Dr. H. Richard Adams, and Dr. Doug Bronstad at the Mark Francis Fellows Luncheon.

Texas Stock Shows show generous support of the CVM

Twenty years ago, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo provided one \$4,000 scholarship annually to a veterinary student enrolled at the College of Veterinary Medicine. That support has increased dramatically to the point that the Houston show now provides eight veterinary student scholarships annually at \$6,000 each, and they have provided a large endowment that produces even more scholarships each year.

The increased support from the Houston Livestock Show is due in large part to the efforts of some of the graduates of our college. Dr. Neal Chastain '44, who is the only veterinarian to have ever served as vice-president of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, was influential in increasing the support from the Houston show for our students.

Gratitude should also be extended to Dr. Tony Barcelona '46, who served as the show veterinarian for many years, as well as to the current show veterinarians, Dr. Greg Knappe '77 and Dr. Leslie Easterwood '90. Mimi and Tom Dompier were also instrumental in the support we have received from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

The San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo Association has also been very generous to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Due in large part to the efforts of Dr. Jake Wells '73, the San Antonio Show provides two veterinary students with \$10,000 scholarships each year. The selected



students also serve as assistants to the official show veterinarians, performing part of their externship service at the stock show. Other Texas A&M University CVM graduates who have been affiliated with the San Antonio show and who have provided support to our programs

are the late Dr. Larry Ehrlund '79, Dr. Loretta Ehrlund '79, and Dr. Ben Espy '96.

The newest member to our group of supportive livestock shows is the Star of Texas Stock Show and Rodeo in Austin. Dr. John Davidson '96 and Dr.

Steven Golla '01 have served as the show veterinarians for this show for many years. Two scholarships of \$5,000 each were awarded this year to students who were selected to serve as externs to the stock show veterinarians.

In addition to benefiting veterinary students financially, these major livestock shows are introducing veterinary students to careers in large animal veterinary practice and food supply veterinary medicine.

~ Dr. Guy Sheppard





Crawfish Boil
April 18, 2009



CVM honors 2009 Outstanding Alumni

The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences proudly honored five Outstanding Alumni with a special reception and dinner at Miramont Country Club on Friday evening, April 3. The 2009 Outstanding Alumni are: Dr. Ray D. Carroll, Class of 1957, of Corsicana, TX; Dr. Jerry Fineg, Class of 1953, of Austin, TX; Dr. Albert E. Jergens, Class of 1983, of Ames, IA; Dr. Deborah T. Kochevar, Class of 1981, of Grafton, MA; and Dr. Fred A. Palmer, Class of 1969, of Godley, TX.

"We are proud to recognize these Aggies who have made significant contributions to not only the veterinary medical profession, but also to their communities, the state of Texas, and to our nation" said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "Their commitment to the future of veterinary medicine through both teaching and service continues to lay the foundation for the next generation of Aggie veterinarians."

Ray Carroll, '57, operated the Carroll and Harper Animal Hospital in Corsicana for over fifty years and emerged as a widely respected food



Dr. Jerry Fineg and guests enjoy the reception.

animal veterinarian and a pioneer of beef cattle medicine. In addition to serving as chairman of the Navarro County Extension Livestock Committee, Carroll has served as a member of several professional organizations, including the Three Rivers Veterinary Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Association of Bovine Practitioners, the Society of Veterinary Theriogenology, the American Hereford Association, the American Angus Association, the American

Simmental Association, the Texas Polled Hereford Association, the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, the Farm Bureau, the Navarro County Historical Society and as three-time president of the Navarro County A&M Club. Carroll's numerous accomplishments and contributions through teaching and research to the field of veterinary medicine have been both honored and recognized and, in 2005, he received the Navarro Country Farmer of the Year award.

Jerry Fineg, '53, has accomplished much throughout his career, including work with the United States Air Force (USAF), NASA, and the College of Pharmacy at The University of Texas at Austin. While working with the USAF, his care of the chimpanzees that were used to verify human survival and function in space made Fineg a pioneer of the space program. His contributions to the field of medicine have been recognized in his receiving of the USAF Commendation in 1966, a Joint Services Commendation in 1969, the Legion of Merit award in both 1969 and 1979, the James T. Doluisio Centennial Fellowship Award from 1986 to 1989 from the University of Texas, the Texas



Dean Eleanor Green presents a 2009 Outstanding Alumni Award to Dr. Ray D. Carroll.

continued on page 46



Dr. Albert E. Jergens accepts his award.

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Excellence Teaching Award from UT College of Pharmacy in 1996, the Distinguished Achievement Award from the TVMA, the Charles A. Griffin Award in 2005 from the National American Association of Laboratory Animal Science and the Distinguished Service Award in 2007 from the Texas Society for Biomedical Research. Fineg has also authored or co-authored more than forty peer-reviewed publications.

Albert Jergens, '83, began his career as an Associate Veterinarian in Houston, Texas after earning Bachelor of Science degrees in Biomedical Science and Veterinary Science, his DVM in 1983, a Master of Science degree in Veterinary Pathology and a PhD in Immunobiology. He continued on to a residency in small animal internal medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia College of Veterinary Medicine and then became the Clinical Assistant Professor of the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. He is now currently a Professor in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Jergens received the Norden Distinguished Teaching Award in 1990 and the SCAVMA Teaching Award for Teaching Excellence in Clinical Sciences in 1995. He was named as a Center for Teaching Excellence

Miller Fellow in 2005. Jergens has served on many committees for the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, including its Board of Regents since 2005. He is a member of the Gastrointestinal Histology Standardization Group for World Small Animal Veterinary Association, the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, the Comparative Gastroenterology Society, the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Gastroenterology Association. His research is currently funded through grants from the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, American Kennel Club, Waltham Pet Foods and the Comparative Gastroenterology Society.

Deborah Kochevar, '81, has made many contributions to the field of veterinary medicine throughout her career beginning with her position as Associate Dean for Professional Programs. She continued on to hold the positions of the Wiley Chair of Veterinary Medical Education at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, professor of veterinary physiology and pharmacology, and current position as the Henry and Lois Foster Professor and Dean of the Cummings School of Veterinary

Medicine at Tufts University. Some of Kochevar's accomplishments include serving as a Congressional Science Fellow to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee in Washington, D.C., leading the American College of Veterinary Clinical Pharmacology as a boarded diplomat and past president, twice chairing the American Veterinary Medical Association's Council on Education, and recently co-chairing an Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges Education Symposium. Her achievements have been recognized through her receiving of the National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award from 1984-86, the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award in both 1991 and 1995, the Student American Veterinary Medical Association National Teaching Award in Basic Science in 1996, and the university level Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching at Texas A&M in 1993.

Fred Palmer, '69, has served the veterinary profession and Texas A&M University through his current position as Chairman of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Development Council since 2007. Palmer worked in private practice until he became the owner



Dean Eleanor Green presents a 2009 Outstanding Alumni Award to Dr. Deborah T. Kochevar.



Dr. Fred A. Palmer with his wife Vola and their guests.

of Simmons & Associates-Southcentral from 1994 through 1997. His active roles in many professional organizations include having served

as President of both the Tarrant County Veterinary Medical Association and the Texas Veterinary Medicine Association. He was also

a Veterinary Delegate in the US People-to-People Citizen Ambassador Program to Australia and New Zealand and was an area representative to the Morris Animal Foundation of Colorado. His contributions to Texas A&M University include terms as the President of the Fort Worth/Tarrant County A&M Club and President of the Association of Former Students. He has served as a member of the Executive Committee of the 12th Man Foundation, Corps Development Council, the Vision 2020 Council, and currently serves as a member of the President's Advisory Council and the Board of Ambassadors for the 12th Man Foundation. 🌿

Former student inducted into AQHA Hall of Fame

Texas A&M former student and Aggie veterinarian, Dr. Charles Graham, was recognized for his contributions to the equine industry with an induction into the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame. The ceremony was a part of the AQHA conference held in March in San Antonio, TX.

"The success of a college can be judged by the success of its graduates," said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. "We thank Dr. Graham for making Texas A&M so successful. We are very proud of his accomplishments, and his lifetime of achievement."

Graham has served as leader in not only the equine industry, but also in his community and his profession. While serving on numerous boards and committees, Graham has been named Most Worthy Citizen by the Elgin Chamber of Commerce and received the Distinguished Alumni award from Texas A&M University where he completed degrees in Animal Husbandry and Animal Science. After serving in the United States Army, Graham returned to Texas A&M where he

received his DVM degree from in 1961.

The Star of Texas Fair & Rodeo recognized Dr. Graham's contributions by honoring him with the naming of the Charles W. Graham Western Heritage Center. In addition, he was honored with a Senate Concurrent Resolution by Senator Ken Armbrister and Representative Robert Saunders during the 70th Legislature of the State of Texas.

Dr. Graham has also been inducted into the Texas Horse Racing Hall of Fame (2002) and has served on its Board of Directors and as an Executive Board Member. In 2008, Graham was inducted into the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame.

"I am honored to have been selected for induction into the AQHA Hall of Fame," said Graham. "This is the icing on the cake for a tall, skinny boy that came from Thorndale, Texas. I promised my mother when I left Thorndale that I would amount to something and I believe I've kept my promise. The love of the horse has been the common thread that has brought me to the dance, or so to speak. I have loved working for the horse owners and sharing my passion for the livestock industry as a whole. My blood runs maroon



Dr. Charles Graham

for the Fighting Texas Aggies and the lessons I learned while I was in College Station prepared me to be a leader, to stay involved and speak my voice for what is right whether it be in family, community or the industry where I've earned my living. This honor is the reward for many, many long days and nights keeping my hands to the plow. I think any student that holds a spot at Texas A&M University has the potential to become a Hall of Famer, as well." 🌿

CVM alumnus named AVMA representative on One Health Joint Steering Committee

CVM alumnus, Dr. Michael B. Cates has become the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) representative on the One Health Joint Steering Committee, lending a powerful new voice to the One Health movement.

One Health is a collaborative effort of multiple disciplines, working locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health for people, animals, and the environment. The need for One Health is underscored when considering recent public health events, including the 2006 *E. coli* outbreak in spinach, the spread of West Nile virus throughout the United States, avian influenza, and the global epidemics of dengue, chikungunya, and Rift Valley fever.

The AVMA Executive Board appointed Dr. Cates to the post at a meeting earlier this month. As the AVMA representative to the One Health committee, Dr. Cates will help create a One Health Commission and also contribute to a global One Health Initiative.

"I believe strongly that we must place a much bigger emphasis on the linkages between human, animal



Dr. Michael B. Cates

and environmental health and that we should do so in a truly interdisciplinary manner," Dr. Cates says. "I am honored to be the new AVMA representative to this steering committee, and I look forward to working with all the members toward the vision of global 'One Health.'"

Dr. Cates received his doctorate in veterinary medicine at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1980 and a master's in public health from University of Texas Health Science Center in 1987. He has been a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine since 1989 and was honored as one of their distinguished diplomates in 2008. 🌿

Aggie recognized by Kansas State's MPH program

Dr. Ethel Taylor was named the 2009 Outstanding MPH Student, one of four individuals recognized for excellence in the Kansas State University Public Health Program. Taylor earned her DVM from Texas A&M University and graduated with her MPH degree in May 2009, with an emphasis in infectious diseases/zoonoses.

Dr. Taylor has excelled in her research, which focuses on enteric disease epidemiology—primarily the distribution and genotypic/phenotypic characteristics of *E. coli* O157:H7 from human cases and cattle. She has already co-authored one published peer-reviewed paper, and is currently finalizing two first-authored manuscripts: one on the research completed as part of her MRCE fellowship, and one directly resulting from her work related to field experience with the FDA and CDC.

She won an award from the Association for Veterinary Epidemiol-

ogy and Preventive Medicine for a poster presenting of her research at the 2008 Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases. Recently, Dr. Taylor was selected for the highly competitive, Epidemic Intelligence Service Program at the CDC where she will begin her work after she graduates.

Dr. Michael Cates, director of the MPH program, said, "The strength of our program lies in the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, research, and public health practice among our faculty, graduates and

students, and our success hinges on their work. It is a pleasure to recognize Dr. Taylor and her colleagues for their outstanding public health contributions and accomplishments to our program, our university, our state, and beyond." 🌿



Dr. Ethel Taylor accepts her award from Dr. Michael Cates.

Westbury Animal Hospital honored by magazine

Westbury Animal Hospital in Houston, TX has received *Veterinary Economics* magazine's 2009 Hospital of the Year recognition. The award is in honor of the hospital's sophisticated design, construction and advanced technology.

Drs. Ben E. Johnston, L.D. Eckermann and Jonathan Cooper graduated from Texas A&M University and recently moved into the new hospital adjoining the old facility, which was constructed in 1968. The veterinarians have had to weather some of Houston's most damaging natural disasters, but Mother Nature couldn't stop their facility from turning into one of the most reputable animal hospitals in the country.

In 1995, Drs. Johnston and Eckermann decided that the design of their original facility no longer met the needs of their practice and went in search of a plan to construct a new building.

"We wanted to move from the old facility so that we could provide better service for our clients, care for their pets and create a better working environment for our staff," said Dr. Ben E. Johnston, the co-owner of Westbury Animal Hospital. "There were a lot of bottlenecks in the old hospital and it was hard to move around each other. We were backed up on dentistry and surgeries due to a lack of space."

But before a new hospital could be constructed, there were a few requirements that the veterinarians thought necessary for the success of a new facility.

"Ultimately, we just needed more space and a warm and relaxed atmosphere for our clients, their companions, and our staff," noted Johnston. "We wanted more exam rooms, a private consultation room, separate dog and cat treatment areas, a separate dental suite, two surgery suites, a special procedures room, and a larger central treatment area with an adjoining ICU to

provide better care for all of our patients and clients. We also wanted to have more kennel space for our extended-stay guests, a staff lounge, a meeting/training room and a library for our staff."

In October 2006, the planning process had been completed and construction began. Unfortunately, severe weather and powerful storms would push back completion and make construction near impossible.

"On the first day of construction it started raining," recalled Johnston. "It rained several times weekly for the next five months which prevented us from getting the exterior walls, windows, doors, or roof in place. We had about a six month set back due to the heavy rains and bad weather."

After much frustration and a lot of persistence, the skies finally brightened and Westbury Animal Hospital opened its doors in March 2008. The new hospital proved to be worth the wait, as the veterinarians watched their practice become more successful than ever before.

"With the new facility, we have been able to be more efficient and effective," said Johnston. "We are able to take better care of our clients and their animals. At first, it seemed as if we weren't very busy, but then I realized that it was just because we had more room for everyone to work. The atmosphere is more pleasant and the animals,

and the staff enjoy the new hospital."

Dr. Johnston credits the success of the hospital to a combined effort of his partners, Drs. Eckermann and Cooper, the associate veterinarians, Drs. Jeff Chalkley, Brenda Flores, and Kristy Kyle, and the entire support staff. Advice and encouragement from many veterinary friends and supportive clients also helped along the way.

"Has Texas A&M University contributed to the success of our practice? You bet it has!" said Johnston. "Without the training we received at Texas A&M, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. We have employed recent graduates from the university and they have been outstanding."

More than *Veterinary Economics* magazine has recognized their achievements, as Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences also praised the success of Westbury Animal Hospital.

"We are proud to have some of our alumni recognized for their outstanding achievements," said Dr. Eleanor Green, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "We wish to congratulate Westbury Animal Hospital and Drs. Ben Johnston, L.D. Eckermann and Jonathan Cooper for their receiving of *Veterinary Economics* magazine's 2009 Hospital of the Year." 🐾



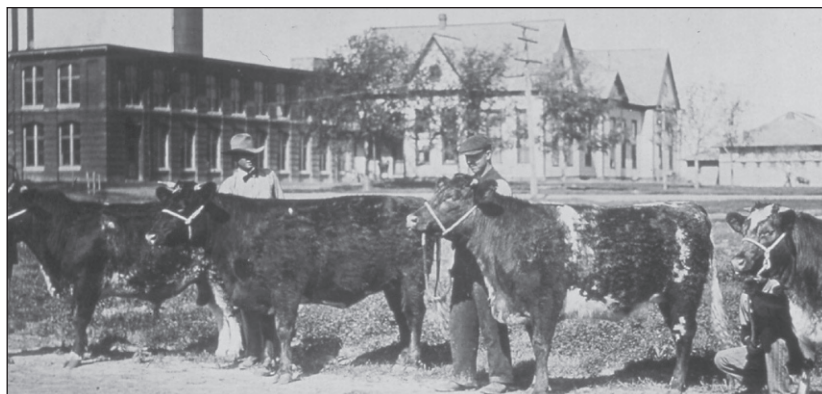
Westbury Animal Hospital in Houston, Texas.

CVM honored with TVMA Heritage Practice Award

The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) has distinguished itself once again—this time not only as a heritage veterinary practice but as the oldest, continuously operating veterinary practice in the state of Texas. This distinction has earned the CVM the “Texas Veterinary Heritage Practice Award” that was presented to the college by the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA).

The awards program, which is in its inaugural year, will annually honor three to four private or public veterinary practices in the state of Texas that have been in continuous operation for 50 years or longer.

“The day-to-day practice of veterinary medicine at A&M began in 1888 with Dr. Mark Francis as head of the new Department of Veterinary Science, and it has continued uninterrupted for the last 121 years,” said Dr. Charles Pipes of the Historical Committee of the TVMA, who helped with the research of the heritage practices for the awards program. “We, as veterinarians of a united veterinary association, want to honor the tenacity and determination of those veterinary practitioners who mind-



Large animal veterinary medicine in the early days of the CVM.

fully passed the “baton of practice” from one generation to the next for 50 years or more. They have maintained the integrity of those practices for a very long time in various communities throughout Texas and in doing so have made very special and substantial contributions to our noble and wonderful profession,” Pipes added, further elucidating the significance of the award.

Exemplifying this “passing of the baton,” which is the core theme of the award, Dr. H. Richard Adams, former dean of the CVM, and his successor, Dr. Eleanor Green, jointly accepted the award from the president of the TVMA, Dr. Anmarie Macfarland, at the TVMA

annual meeting on March 7, 2009, in San Antonio, Texas.

In addition to the CVM, the Dr. Frank E. Rutherford Veterinary Hospital (Dallas), the El Paso Veterinary Hospital (El Paso) and the Alamo Dog and Cat Hospital (San Antonio) were honored as Texas veterinary heritage practices.

“We are grateful to be recognized as one of the first ‘Texas Veterinary Heritage Practice Award’ recipients,” Green said. “It fosters a deep appreciation for the trailblazers of this profession, and to be counted among the pioneers of veterinary medicine is an honor and tribute to the decades of hard work by so many people.”



The first veterinary medicine building at Texas A&M University.



Dr. Joe Templeton

On January 5, 2009, the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences lost one of our own with the passing of Dr. Joe Templeton.

A native of Dublin, Texas, Dr. Templeton dedicated the last 33 years of his life to the CVM. During his tenure at Texas A&M, Dr. Templeton worked in the veterinary pathology department with a research focus on immunogenetics in cattle, dogs, and bison, and also served as head of the comparative medicine division. He collaborated with most of the CVM faculty and contributed to all kinds of research projects. Dr. Templeton also served as a faculty senator, as a school board member for the College Station Independent School District, and as a governor-appointed commissioner to the Texas Animal Health Commission.

He began his college education by earning a bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian University. After completing a PhD at Oregon State, Dr. Templeton landed his first job with the University of Oregon Medical School. From Oregon, Dr. Templeton moved to Texas for a position at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston before arriving at the CVM.

Dr. Templeton is survived by his wife of 50 years, Jamie, and two children, Rachael and John. We will miss him greatly.

Class of 1938

W. Dan 'Dr. Dan' Roberts, 94, of Wichita Falls, TX, died Mar. 6, 2009.

The W. Dan Roberts, DVM, '38, Endowed Scholarship in Biomedical Sciences has been established at the CVM. Contributions should be sent to College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Office of the Dean, 4461 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4461. Please make checks payable to the Texas A&M Foundation and include "Dan Roberts Scholarship" in the memo section.

Class of 1939

Drue Ward, 92, of Fort Worth, TX, died Dec. 13, 2008.

Class of 1941

Hubert Carver of Rogers, AR, died October 20, 2008.

Class of 1943

Donald Arthur Crippen, 89, of Seneca, SC, died Dec. 19, 2008.

Harold "Doc" Staggs, 93, of Santa Cruz, CA, died Jan. 18, 2009.

Class of 1948

Robert K. Morris, Sr., of Lake Charles, LA, died Nov. 30, 2008.

William R. Porter, II, 90, of Spencer, WV, died Feb. 18, 2009.

Class of 1949

Harvey Fred McCrory, 87, of Starkville, MS, died Jan. 10, 2009.

Class of 1950

James L. Massey, 87 of Beaumont, TX, died Dec. 4, 2008.

Johnie Lee Reeves, 83, of Austin, TX, died Apr. 26, 2009

Class of 1951

Charles Edward Copenhaver, 81, of Houston, TX, died May 11, 2009.

Tim Garland Faulkenberry, 88, of Brownfield, TX, died Dec. 20, 2008.

Charles Roy Stevens, of Houston, TX, died Dec. 10, 2008.

Lawrence B. Stevenson, Jr., of Monahans, TX, died Nov. 30, 2008.

Class of 1953

Thaddeus M. Howard of San Antonio, died Apr. 21, 2009

Class of 1956

Joe Lancaster, Ferriday, LA, died Apr. 28, 2009.

Class of 1959

Warren W. McCoy, 73, of Syracuse, MO, died Feb. 1, 2009.

Class of 1962

Joe Gray Peeples, 71, of Garland, TX, died Jan. 4, 2009.

Bruce Ueckert of Bellville, TX died Mar. 20, 2009

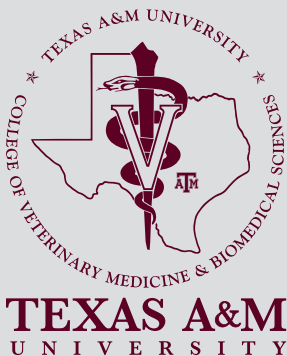
Class of 1966

Robert L. "Bob" Cator, Jr., 69, of Mission, TX, died Feb. 5, 2009.



PARTING *Shot*

**Dean Eleanor M. Green and
Dr. H. Richard Adams, former Dean,
at Commencement, May 14, 2009.**



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