

# Florida veterinarian

Advancing Animal, Human and Environmental Health

University of Florida

College of Veterinary Medicine

Winter 2007

## Changing the culture: UF veterinary graduate leads corporate diversity program for Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

By Sarah Carey

These days, Daphne Mobley, class of '88 and vice president of corporate diversity for Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, doesn't apply the clinical skills she received in veterinary school -- at least, not to animals.

But the thought processes and problem solving approaches she learned in the veterinary field help her every day in her high-profile job as she provides strategic leadership for Wyeth's global diversity program.

"Veterinarians evaluate animals, develop a diagnostic plan and then treat the patient," Mobley said. "The same skills are necessary when you evaluate an organization and determine how to implement a diversity program."

That program includes recruitment, retention and development of a work place Mobley defines as diverse in terms of not just race/ethnicity but also experiences and backgrounds.

"In order to allow innovation to occur, people with different views have to contribute ideas," Mobley said. "The ideas will be different because everyone has a different way of evaluating things. The culture has to be changed so that leaders or the culture have a more inviting environment so that people feel comfortable discussing their different views."

After completing veterinary school at the University of Florida, Mobley completed a postdoctoral program in cardiovascular research, a residency in laboratory animal medicine at Glaxo Smith-Kline and subsequently joined Wyeth in May 1992.

"My first 'real' job was as a manager of toxicology, laboratory animal resources for Wyeth," Mobley said. "At the time I wanted to remain connected to the clinical aspect and requested my boss to allow me to do so. I maintained my veterinary skills even when I made my transition reporting to the CEO of Wyeth."

During her tenure in that role, Mobley was assigned to a veterinary project with Fort Dodge Animal Health, Wyeth's animal health division, but in her new role she does not have the opportunity to apply her skills as a veterinarian.

"I am pretty much home only to sleep and I travel a fair bit so I do not have any pets," Mobley said. "I did have a cat a few years ago when I was home more often."

Mobley has been a part of many veterinary organizations over the years -- too many to mention in full, but including the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, and the American

*continued on page 8*



Photo courtesy of Dr. Daphne Mobley

Dr. Daphne Mobley

INSIDE



### Major Gift

College receives \$1 million estate gift from Robin Weeks Foundation.

3



### Horse Sense

Equine researcher urges timely vaccination against West Nile Virus.

4



### Cowabunga, Lulu

UF veterinary ophthalmology team restores sight to miniature Jersey cow.

5



### Helping Hands

Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS) group provides care to pets of seriously ill, disabled individuals.

6

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Florida Veterinarian is published by the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine for alumni and friends. Suggestions and comments are welcome and should be emailed to:

Sarah Carey, Florida Veterinarian editor,  
at: careys@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu.

Check out the college website at:  
[www.vetmed.ufl.edu](http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu)

**Dean**

Glen F. Hoffsis  
D.V.M., M.S.

**Executive Associate Dean  
& Associate Dean for Students  
and Instruction**

James P. Thompson  
D.V.M., Ph.D.

**Associate Dean for Research  
and Graduate Studies**

Charles H. Courtney  
D.V.M., Ph.D.

**Senior Director of Development  
and Alumni Affairs**

Zoë Seale

**Director of Development  
and Alumni Affairs**

Karen Hickok

**Director of Public Relations**

Sarah K. Carey  
M.A., A.P.R.

---

Small Animal Hospital  
(352) 392-4700, ext. 4700

Large Animal Hospital  
(352) 392-4700, ext. 4000

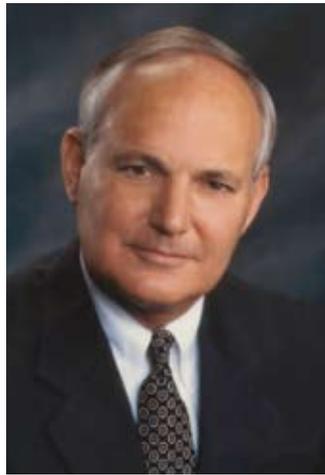
College Admissions  
(352) 392-4700, ext. 5300

Deans Office  
(352) 392-4700, ext. 5000

Public Relations  
(352) 392-4700, ext. 5206

Development and Alumni Affairs  
(352) 392-4700, ext. 5200

# Message from the dean



Dean Glen Hoffsis

**G**reetings, everyone, and thanks to all who have made my first few months in Gainesville as exciting as they have proved to be. Let me tell you that this longtime Ohio State Buckeye can sincerely say, "It's great to be a Florida Gator!"

While attending the national football championship game in Glendale, Az. with my wife, Lana, I received a call from Doug Barrett, senior vice president for health affairs at the UF Health Science Center, informing me that I have now "officially completed my orientation to the Gator Nation." Stick with the winners, I've always advised others. So far, I seem to be following my own advice.

Since my arrival in October, Lana and I have been welcomed warmly by our UF colleagues, the community of Gainesville and UF CVM alumni. My days for the most part have consisted of meetings....

and more meetings...with the various constituencies that make up or support the College of Veterinary Medicine, and to which the college contributes time or talent.

I've learned about the many services that make up our Veterinary Medical Center and heard from faculty about their dreams for the future. I have also attended development leadership sessions and begun to gear up for the upcoming UF Capital Campaign. I've attended the annual Florida Cattleman's Association, AAEP, AAVMC and Banfield deans meetings and at all of these events, I've come to understand even more the reach of the Gator Nation. I can honestly say I'm humbled by the kindness I've been shown.

Our college is well respected and well positioned to do great things, from the clinical offerings of our hospitals -- which keep growing -- to the research possibilities we see every day in our work with emerging pathogens and other key UF initiatives.

Suffice to say, I am beginning to get my sea legs, (if an Ohio native can say that) and understand the complexity of the many challenges facing us as a college. But I have no doubt that here at UF, Lana and I are truly are a part of a winning team.

All best wishes for a joyous and prosperous 2007. Go Gators!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glen Hoffsis  
Dean

## College meets fundraising goal to build new hospital thanks to \$1 million estate gift

By Sarah Carey

**A** \$1 million installment of a multimillion-dollar estate gift from a South Florida cattle ranch owner to the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine will help ensure the construction of the Veterinary Education and Clinical Research Center, which includes a new small animal hospital.

College administrators said the gift puts the UF veterinary college just over its \$4 million private fundraising goal. The college's financial

commitment is expected to be matched and supplemented with additional state dollars to complete the project, which is estimated to cost approximately \$50 million.

"Our hope is that groundbreaking for our new hospital will take place in 2008 and that the facility will be completed by 2010," said Dr. Jim Thompson, executive associate dean and associate dean for students and instruction, who was interim dean at the time the first gift installment was received.

"The college and hospital faculty, staff and students know how fortunate they are to receive these gifts and to have the opportunity to continue to expand the health care of animals," Thompson added.

Warren Wiltshire, a UF alumnus and business partner of the personal representative of the estate of Robin Weeks, came to UF Sept. 23 to present the \$1 million check to UF President Bernie Machen and college administrators.

With him was Dr. Mike McNulty, a mixed-animal practitioner and a member of the college's class of '83. McNulty was Weeks' veterinarian and friend for many years. Along with another "cowboy" friend, McNulty worked with Weeks' four herds of Brangus cattle, moving them from one pasture to another several times each year.

He also served as Weeks' pipeline for information when she decided to put the UF College of Veterinary Medicine in her will.

"I'll never forget, a few years before she died, I was leaving her ranch late on a Saturday afternoon and I told her, 'I'm



Left to right are Warren Wiltshire Jr. of Wiltshire, Whitley, Richardson, et al. of Fort Myers, representing Robin Weeks' Estate; Dr. Jim Thompson, Dr. Mike McNulty and UF President Bernie Machen.

Photo courtesy of UF News Bureau

going to stop and get a six-pack of beer and a lottery ticket.' She immediately replied, 'you've already won the lottery.'"

McNulty added, "I looked at her quizzically and she explained, 'with your education, you've already won the lottery.' She knew education was a sure ticket, if not to wealth and riches, at least to a better life. I've never forgotten that afternoon and appreciate it greatly every time I think about it."

McNulty said his parents were Irish immigrants who had no education and who stressed the importance of his education. Some time later, he shared with Weeks his plans to leave his property to the UF veterinary college upon his death.

"I think that registered in her mind," he said, adding that a short time after Weeks became ill with throat cancer, she asked to meet with him at her home.

"I sat down with her and she said she wanted me to give her some information about how to make a gift to the veterinary college," McNulty said.

Weeks died in September 2005.

"The majority of her estate assets consist of agricultural real estate in Glades County," said Weeks' longtime accountant and personal representative Bob Richardson.

"There definitely are additional funds that will be available and have been earmarked to the College of Veterinary Medicine," Richardson said. 🍀

## UF veterinarian: It's not too late to vaccinate horses against West Nile virus

By Sarah Carey

**A**lthough cooler temperatures have arrived in Florida, horses in the Sunshine State are still at risk for contracting potentially fatal mosquito-borne diseases, such as West Nile virus, University of Florida veterinarians and state officials warn.

"The National Weather Service is projecting a warmer than normal winter, so horse owners should not become complacent and make sure they vaccinate their horse," said Michael Short, D.V.M., equine programs manager for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Animal Industry.

While state officials report no equine cases yet this year, a new single-dose vaccine recently tested in horses by a University of Florida infectious disease specialist may reduce the overall occurrence of the cyclical virus because the product can be administered any time of year, with almost immediate protection. Known as PreveNile, the vaccine began reaching veterinarians in late September.

"Horse owners who have not vaccinated their animals already should do so as soon as possible," said Maureen

Long, D.V.M., an associate professor of equine medicine at UF's College of Veterinary Medicine and a nationally recognized expert on West Nile virus. "We want horse owners to vaccinate if they haven't, because since there is no cure for West Nile Virus, prevention is really the only tool we have for controlling this ongoing threat."

As of Oct. 31, the disease has been reported in 3,752 people nationwide and in 939 horses this year. In its most serious manifestation, West Nile virus causes fatal inflammation of the brain, and it also occurs in a variety of domestic and wild birds, including crows. Nationwide, more than 23,000 cases have been reported in horses since its initial appearance in 1999, with more than a third of these animals dying, including more than 1,000 in Florida.

West Nile virus cycles between birds and mosquitoes and mosquito bites are the only way a horse can become infected. Horses and humans infected with the disease cannot infect other horses and humans, experts say. Compared with most states, Florida has a year-round mosquito season, but the insects are most active in the summer and fall.

"Vaccination is a very important component of horses' health, and the arboviruses, West Nile virus and Eastern equine encephalitis, are two diseases we strongly urge horse owners to have their horses vaccinated for," Short said. "Many horses die every year from these two diseases and those we report are just confirmed cases. There probably are a lot more out there that we don't hear about."

PreveNile is marketed by Intervet Inc. and received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for commercial use in July. Long and her staff provided immune protection studies for the product, the first live-virus vaccine to prevent West Nile virus in horses.

PreveNile provides 12 months of immunity and may be used even if other products have been administered within the past year. Other vaccines previously on the market required two doses before becoming effective.

"The other vaccines are labeled only for protection against viremia, or the presence of virus in the blood," Long said. "This is the only market vaccine that is labeled for protection against disease itself because of the way in which we tested the product in horses."

Some 19,000 humans have been infected with the virus, and nearly 800 people have died from it, according to the USDA's animal and plant health industry surveillance program.

"There is intense interest in developing vaccination strategies for humans," Long said. "A similar product is currently being tested in humans by Acambis Inc., the human vaccine company that constructed this product originally. Work in horses is invaluable for assessment of this type of vaccine for use in humans."

Horse owners with questions about vaccination protocols and options should contact their veterinarian. 



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Maureen Long examines a mare and foal at UF's Veterinary Medical Center in 2005.

# Veterinary ophthalmologists enable blind calf to see

By Sarah Carey

It's blue skies, clear eyes for Lulu these days.

The 4-month-old miniature Jersey cow, owned by Peter Petres, of Bradenton, was born with cataracts but now has the gift of sight, thanks to the UF Veterinary Medical Center's ophthalmology team.

"She came in on Tuesday, Oct. 10, had surgery the next day and went home the following Monday so that we could keep her confined and give her intravenous medications," said Caryn Plummer, D.V.M., an assistant professor of ophthalmology, who served as the attending veterinarian on the case along with Maria Kallberg, D.V.M., Ph.D.

"We did cataract extraction by way of a procedure called phacoemulsification, which involves making a small incision in the cornea — the same procedure that we use to remove cataracts in dogs and that human ophthalmologists use to remove cataracts in humans," Plummer said. "The cow's lens is much larger, though."

Plummer said Lulu is "doing great" and had returned to the VMC two weeks after surgery for a re-check.

"She's healing beautifully," Plummer said. "Her vision will never be normal, because we do not have an intraocular lens available for use in cows, since there is no commercial market for such things. Even so, her vision will certainly be better than before the cataract removal."

Petres and his wife, Tracy, had been looking for a miniature Jersey cow because they thought the breed would be perfect for their five-acre ranchette near Sarasota.

"Over the years, I kept tabs on breeders, availability, prices and general information," he said.

"This past June, I saw that a breeder had a heifer cow born with congenital cataracts. It tugged at my heartstrings, what the outlook might be for this calf, so before I even spoke to the breeder, I



Photo by Sarah Carey

Pictured with Lulu, a 4-month-old Miniature Jersey cow, on Oct. 11 prior to her release from UF's Veterinary Medical Center are her owners Tracy Petres and Peter Petres, visiting veterinary student Bil Crumley from Colorado State University, and UF veterinary ophthalmology resident Sarah Blackwood, D.V.M. Lulu had successful surgery at UF's VMC to remove cataracts in both eyes Oct. 10 and continues to recuperate well at home in Sarasota.

contacted UF's VMC to see what might be done."

Told that cataract removal was indeed possible and would give Lulu a better quality of life, Petres contacted the breeder and arranged to pick up Lulu.

"With the cataracts, Lulu had a limited routine on her own, so I made it a point to walk her as often as possible with a halter," Petres said. "There was no problem giving her attention where she was staying, as she is so cute and everyone loved her. She was brushed

and handled often and seemed to thrive."

Veterinary ophthalmology resident Sarah Blackwood, D.V.M., called daily with Lulu's progress and the next week Petres brought her home.

"The next morning when I brought Lulu out of the stall into the pasture, it was her turn to kick and run," Petres said. "She ran around in circles, stopped to sniff poles and sniff me, and then went back to running." 

# Program *spotlight*

## PAWS group helps seriously ill, disabled people care for pets



Photo by Sarah Carey

Junior veterinary student Hope Jankunas with PAWS client Richard Martin and his dog, Rip, visit outside of the UF Veterinary Medical Center in December 2006.

By Sarah Carey

**M**any people who suffer from debilitating illnesses such as cancer and AIDS struggle emotionally, physically and financially to care for themselves, so properly looking after their four-legged family members can quickly become more effort than they can shoulder alone.

Enter the Pets Are Wonderful Support group, or PAWS, at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.

"We generally have 20 to 30 clients, and each of them can have a limit of three pets that we'll treat," said Jenna Ashton, class of '07, who since 2001 has

played a key role in running PAWS and currently serves as its vice president of surgery.

Richard Martin, a retired Pacific Bell employee whose income is a monthly disability check, has been a PAWS client for five or six years, he said. Martin has brought Rip, his 13-year-old Rhodesian ridgeback crossbred dog, to PAWS for routine physical examinations and for periodic biopsies of the fatty tumors Rip is prone to getting on his body.

Martin first heard about PAWS through the Ryan White program at the public health department.

"It has really been a blessing for us," said Martin, who acquired Rip as a puppy from his nephew. "I probably couldn't afford to have a pet if I had to pay all the costs myself, after rent, utilities and insurance."

PAWS works with representatives of community organizations that serve individuals with special health needs to identify potential clients. Participants must certify that they have a terminal or debilitating illness, and that they meet low-income criteria.

"The program was patterned after one in California that was set up specifi-

cally to help AIDS patients at a time when they were considered pariahs and often had no one for emotional support, except their pets," said Jack Gaskin, D.V.M., who along with Amy Stone, D.V.M., serves as PAWS' clinical instructor and adviser. Natalie Isaza, D.V.M., is the group's surgery supervisor.

He added that PAWS volunteers are compassionate, community-minded and dedicated to the true calling for many veterinarians: the human-animal bond.

"Our clients are needy and very grateful that these young professionals-to-be take time from their busy schedules to assist them and their pets," Gaskin said. "It's very much a mutually beneficial relationship."

Gaskin credited the program's founder, UF veterinary college professor emeritus Tom Lane, D.V.M., with the program's success. Lane, who also helped to create the college's 24-hour pet loss support hotline, retired in 2000.

"So much of the veterinary community has benefited from Dr. Lane's largesse and expertise," Gaskin said. "He is very much a credit to our college."

To participate in surgery clinics, students must have completed either the shelter medicine or surgical rotations, whereas for general clinics — to serve as doctors under faculty supervision — students must be juniors or seniors and have taken either general medicine or small animal medicine. Freshman and sophomore students serve as technicians.

Money is allocated to the group through the Veterinary Medical College Council, which receives funding from the UF-wide Board of College Councils. Gaskin said PAWS also had benefited from support from Westside Animal Hospital and its owner, veterinarian Wilbur Wood, D.V.M., as well as from Micanopy Animal Hospital and its owner, veterinarian Molly Pearson, D.V.M.

"They really helped in the early phases of the program by volunteering their clinics, staff and resources," Gaskin said. "In addition, Cheryl Shehta and her associates at Webster Veterinary Supply have been very generous in donating supplies over the years."

In addition to supplies provided through Webster, pharmaceutical companies — including Pfizer, Novartis and Bayer — have donated medication to be distributed to pets receiving care through the program. Hills Pet Food has donated food for PAWS participants as well.

PAWS also represents a meaningful learning opportunity for student volunteers.

"What's really important about PAWS is that third- and fourth-year students with clinical experience give guidance to first- and second-year students who, in turn, gain firsthand experience dealing with clients, patients and routine veterinary care issues before they enter their formal clinics," Gaskin said. "The PAWS environment is low-key and unhurried, so students have the opportunity to learn their way around the small animal clinic and gain some clinical expertise in advance of their classmates who choose not to participate." 🐾

## Around the VMC



This baby squirrel, nicknamed Lanai, dropped out of its nest and was brought into UF's Veterinary Medical Center for treatment in September. Lanai was treated successfully for a broken arm. Holding her is veterinary student Stacy Rebello

University of Florida veterinary student Tiffany Holcomb monitors the condition of this 13-year-old Bengal tiger at the UF Veterinary Medical Center Oct. 11. The privately owned tiger had come to UF for a dental recheck following a root canal performed six months ago earlier. The tiger's mouth was deemed to be in good shape, UF veterinarians said.



Photo by Ray Carson, UF News Bureau

Photo by Ray Carson, UF News Bureau

# Honors, Awards and Appointments

## College administrator named executive associate dean

**J**ames P. Thompson, D.V.M., Ph.D., has been named executive associate dean of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.



Dr. James P. Thompson

Until his appointment, Thompson was the college's associate dean of students and instruction for the past decade. He served as interim dean of the college from Feb. 20 to Oct. 1, when Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M., became the college's permanent dean. Thompson's new position is the second-highest-ranking position at the college.

Thompson received both his D.V.M. and Ph.D. degrees from UF and completed a residency in small animal internal medicine at UF prior to joining the faculty in 1986.

"Dr. Thompson has wide experience as associate dean of student affairs and his recent role as interim dean provided additional perspectives valuable to the college," Hoffsis said. "I am confident in his abilities and feel he will bring strong skills and vision to our administrative team."

Board-certified in the specialties of internal medicine, immunology, virology, microbiology and oncology, Thompson has won numerous awards both for his teaching and for his research and has served as academic adviser for dozens of veterinary students, residents and interns over the years. After his days as a graduate student and resident at UF, Thompson became an assistant professor and director of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital's immunology service before advancing to full professor and associate dean.

Thompson has been active at

the national level in the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges and the American College of Veterinary Microbiology. He also served as a member of the Morris Animal Foundation's scientific advisory board.

At the university level, he has contributed as a member of both the Faculty Senate and Curriculum committees. He is a member of the UF Health Science Center Academic Deans Council and has served on numerous committees within the veterinary college.

Thompson has maintained an active teaching post within the veterinary curriculum in the area of professional veterinary ethics.

He will continue to maintain direct oversight of the Office for Students and Instruction and the college's D.V.M. degree admissions program until his replacement is named, Hoffsis said. 

*continued from page 1*

College of Laboratory Animal Medicine -- and says each was instrumental for her as she initiated each phase of her career. "They were also critical because they assisted with my network of experts in each area," she said. "I knew that I wanted to succeed and I wanted to capitalize on the insight that seasoned experts in those disciplines could provide."

In terms of public service, "I really get a high out of helping others," Mobley said. "I like to see others succeed, learn and benefit from whatever insights I may have for them."

Mobley has fond memories of her experiences as a veterinary student at UF. About a year ago, while in the

Washington, D.C. area, Mobley ran into a few former classmates from whom she says she still receives "great Christmas cards and letters."

"I really miss them, because it was such a close, fun group and I had a ball -- between the multiple stressful periods."

The last time she was in Gainesville, it was for her 10-year class reunion.

"When I saw people, it was like old times and we picked up right where we left off," she said. "I really miss everyone. Now that I am out of the veterinary circles, I do not see anyone."

Among Mobley's UF mentors were Drs. Jim Himes, Llewellyn Payton, Denny Meyer, -- whom Mobley says

was also a mentor while at she was at GlaxoSmithKline -- Kim Bullock, class of '87, Deidre DuBissette, class of '85 and Alice Tucker, class of '88.

But it's her parents Mobley points to as the people who have consistently and in the most important ways, inspired her life.

"They exemplified so many positive things and a great work ethic," Mobley said. "They were always so very supportive of me and never told me that I could not achieve something. I had so many mentors; all of my bosses as well as my current boss were and are fabulous. I am so very fortunate in that regard." 

## College names new director of Racing Laboratory

**R**ichard A. Sams, Ph.D., has been named director of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine Racing Laboratory.

Sams came to UF from The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, where he was a professor and the director of its Analytical Toxicology Laboratory, a position he held since 1978. Sams received his bachelor of science degree in pharmacy and a Ph.D. in pharmaceuticals and pharmacokinetics from OSU.

The laboratory supports the state Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering's regulation of Florida's racing industry by ensuring that racehorses and greyhounds that win at the racetrack are not affected by prohibited drugs. In 2005-06, the laboratory received and processed some 85,844 samples, which resulted in 533,958 analyses.

The laboratory is one of only a handful of laboratories in the United States to be accredited according to international standards. 🐾



Dr. Richard A. Sams

## Anesthesiologist honored for best abstract at meeting

**A**ndre Shih, D.V.M., an assistant professor of anesthesiology in the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, was honored for having the best abstract presentation at the 9th World Congress of Veterinary Anesthesiology.

The Congress was held in September in Brazil. Veterinary anesthesiologists from all over the world submitted oral or written presentations for consideration in the abstract competition.

Shih's abstract showed that a drug called midazolam can alleviate pain caused by damaged or diseased nerves in rats.

"Neuropathic pain is very difficult to treat, with only about 40 percent of patients with the disease being treatable medically, and the best-case scenario being around 50 percent," Shih said. "We have shown that injection of midazolam helps alleviate painful signs, compared to a placebo of saline injection." 🐾



Dr. Andre Shih

## UF veterinarian lauded for contributions to bovine industry

**J**an Shearer, D.V.M., a University of Florida professor who developed an innovative, bilingual program to train dairy workers how to better detect and treat hoof problems

in cows, has received the American Association of Bovine Practitioners/Alpharma Award of Excellence.

Shearer, who also serves as UF's dairy extension veterinarian, holds appointments in the College of Veterinary Medicine's department of large animal clinical sciences and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' department of dairy science. He also chairs the AABP's committee on animal welfare.

He received the award, consisting of a commemorative ring and a plaque, in September in St. Paul, Minn., during the AABP's annual meeting. The award is given annually to those whose professional activities have had a consistent influence on the daily actions of veterinarians in bovine practice.

In 1996, Shearer initiated the Master Hoof Care Program, an effort that began at UF's College of Veterinary Medicine and has since expanded to educate hundreds of farm health technicians, private claw trimmers and veterinarians from all over the world. The course is offered several times a year in both English and Spanish.

This summer, Shearer was also recognized by The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine when the institution honored him with its Distinguished Alumnus Award.

The award recognizes alumni who have made distinguished contributions to society in the course of their professional careers and who have brought positive recognition to their college. 🐾



Dr. Jan Shearer

## Student spotlight



Pictured Aug. 26 at the Society for Theriogenology meeting in St. Paul, Minn., are (left to right) University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine student Tonya Stephens; former UF theriogenology resident Bruce Christensen, D.V.M., who is now a UF graduate student; student Courtney Riley and student Erin Sellers-Newkirk. The students were among six winners in the society's annual student case presentation competition, designed to promote student interest in the society, to encourage investigative and communication skills and to allow students greater participation in the group's annual meeting. Riley tied for first place with a student from the University of Pennsylvania, Sellers-Newkirk won third place and Stephens took fourth-place honors.

Photo courtesy of the Society for Theriogenology

## New patient advocate program improves customer service at VMC

By Sarah Carey

**M**any hands make light work. That expression captures the spirit of the small animal hospital's Volunteer Advocate program, which began in July and has brought new faces -- as well as helpful hands -- to the client services area.

The program began to take form after Carol Ash, a retired eminent scholar from the UF College of Nursing, made former Dean Joe DiPietro aware of her interest in volunteering at the UF VMC. A casual conversation led to a lunch meeting between Ash, DiPietro and small animal hospital chief of staff Colin Burrows, B.Vet.Med., Ph.D., after which Ash was invited to help get a formal volunteer program off the ground. Burrows then asked Jo Ann Hostetler, the small animal hospital's coordinator of administrative services to work with Ash to coordinate the program. Hostetler already had been visualizing such a program and was delighted when it was formalized.

"I said I didn't know anything about setting up a volunteer program, but I'm willing to give it a shot," said Ash, who recently helped list the new program with the Volunteer Center of Alachua County. "It's a challenge, but I like a challenge."

The program so far has involved volunteers from Oak Hammock community, where Ash lives, and a few others in the community who work in two- to four-hour slots performing various tasks -- all aimed at enhancing the overall client service in the hospital.

Volunteers greet clients and welcome visitors at the door, direct them to the check-in counter, offer a set of arms to hold an animal while a client signs in, and in general serve as liaisons between hospital clients and service technicians and students.

"They converse with clients in the receiving area to see if they have concerns about their waiting time, have any general questions, would like a cup of coffee or directions to the nearest mall, anything that will help make their visit as pleasant and comfortable as possible," Hostetler said.

"If anyone voices a concern, the advocate comes out to talk to a member of the client service team, which has the appointment schedule and a record of the student who has picked up the medical record for that case," she said. "We call the student on their Nextel phone and ask for an update on the waiting time and relay that information to the client." In most cases, clients are happy just to feel they have not been forgotten and someone is paying attention and aware of their situation, Hostetler added.

Other tasks patient advocates perform include helping the clients at discharge.

"The clients may have dog food or medication in hand, holding on to their pet and trying to write a check, all at the same time," Hostetler said. "The advocate is there to give



Photo by Sarah Carey

Patient advocate Carol Ash visits with an animal patient and his owner during their appointment at the Small Animal hospital in early January.

them a hand, or just ask how everything went with their visit." Often clients will be busy cashing out and then they will think of something they forgot to ask the student or the doctor. So the advocate might contact the student again."

The hospital's most visible patient advocate to date has been Ash, who prior to coming to UF in 1992 worked as the director of nursing education at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

"People are just so grateful for the help," Ash said. "Particularly if they have never been here before, they're confused and bewildered. When they say 'thank you so much,' it makes you feel like it's all worthwhile."

Burrows added that he could see the benefits of the program, even in a short period of time.

"The volunteers have made themselves invaluable in just a short while," he said. "They are valued members of our client service team. We just wish we had more of them." 🐾

## Team VetMed raises more than \$29,000 for CVM student scholarships



Photo by William Castleman

Pictured above, thanks to photographer William Castleman, are members of the 2006 Team VetMed Horse Farm Hundred cyclists. On Oct. 22, the team participated in the 26th annual Horse Farm Hundred bike ride through Alachua and Marion counties. The 100-mile pack finished at Morningside Nature Center around 4 p.m. with Dr. Jim Thompson leading the group home. "It was a perfect ride, with no flat tires and no injuries," said Jo Ann Winn, the college's events coordinator. "The team has raised more than \$29,000 for student scholarships and the college. That's something to be proud about."

## Supporting the Gator Nation...



Joan Drost, Cheryl Rowe and Pat Neilson show off some of the wares on Jan. 22 at the UF & Shands Gift Stop. Proceeds from the sales of these items – notably Gator Championship T-shirts – benefit the College of Veterinary Medicine. Drost, wife of professor emeritus Dr. Maarten Drost; Rowe, wife of scientist Dr. Carlos Romero; and Pat Neilson, wife of former college research dean Dr. John Neilson, are members of the veterinary auxiliary group, which functions as a support group for the college.



With the recent UF victory over Ohio State in the college championship game fresh in their minds, several members of the UF CVM Gator Nation gathered after the college's alumni reception, held Jan. 14 during the NAVC Conference in Orlando. In a bit of team-spirited fun, the group walked with the UF banner down the hallway and posed outside of the room where Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine had hosted its alumni get-together. From left to right are: Anna Thompson, '08, Dr. Ellis Greiner, Amy Lauranzon, Kate Berk, '08, Katherine Crook, '08, Sonya Myers, '08, Dr. Karri Barabas, '03, and Jamie McLaughlin, '08.

## Veterinary student takes third place for essay

**M**elissa Bourgeois, a senior student at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, recently received third place in the annual J. Fred Smithcors essay contest sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical History Society.

Held to encourage interest in history from students enrolled in veterinary medical colleges in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, the contest is named in honor of J. Fred Smithcors, D.V.M. Ph.D., author of several books on veterinary history, for his contributions as founder of the AVMHS. Results of the most recent essay competition were announced in August.

In addition to pursuing her veterinary degree at UF, Bourgeois is a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in the college's



Melissa Bourgeois

department of large animal clinical sciences. Her award-winning essay was titled, "From 1946 to the Present -- NASA's Contributions to the Veterinary Medical Sciences."

Her award consists of \$250, a copy of the Merck Veterinary Manual, a one year subscription to the AVMHS newsletter and publication of all or part of her article in the newsletter.

"Melissa thinks extra-globally," said Paul Gibbs, B.V.Sc., Ph.D., a professor of infectious diseases at the UF veterinary colleges and one of Bourgeois's mentors in the joint D.V.M./Ph.D. program. "She is fairly convinced she wants to be a NASA scientist and an astronaut.

"She also has traveled extensively and is excited about the prospect of doing international work. She worked with the state Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services during one of her externships to draw up plans for the control of African Horse Sickness," Gibbs said. "They were impressed enough that they invited her to present her findings at the state diagnostic laboratory in Kissimmee." 

## Calendar *items for Florida Veterinarian*

**February 15 -17:** Back-to-College weekend, sponsored by the UF Alumni Association, will be held on the UF campus. Dr. Terry Curtis, a veterinary animal behaviorist and member of the UF CVM's class of '97, will speak on "Storm Phobia in Dogs." The UF CVM classes of 1990, 1991 and 1992 have been invited to attend. Saturday's featured guest will be Stephanie Abrams from The Weather Channel. For more information or to register, go to: [www.ufalumni.ufl.edu](http://www.ufalumni.ufl.edu)

**February 19:** College of Veterinary Medicine Alumni Reception at Western States Veterinary Conference will be held at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas. Festivities start at 7:30 p.m. in room Islander G. For more information, contact Sunshine Andrei at [andreis@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:andreis@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5200.

**March 9:** A Salute to Pets 'N Vets (formerly known as Party in the Jungle) will be held at Parrot Jungle in Miami as a fund raiser for the UF CVM. For more information, contact Sunshine Andrei at [andreis@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:andreis@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5200.

**April 13 -14:** Spring Reunion Weekend and Silver Society, sponsored by the UF Alumni Association. A gathering of all UF

Classes of 1982 for a 25th anniversary reunion and Silver Society Reception. For more information, contact Jo Ann Winn at [winnj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) to register, contact UF Alumni Association at [www.ufalumni.ufl.edu](http://www.ufalumni.ufl.edu)

**April 14:** The UF College of Veterinary Medicine's annual Open House, sponsored by the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association, will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Sarah Carey at (352) 392-4700, ext. 5206.

**April 21:** The UF College of Veterinary Medicine's Spring Alumni Council Meeting will be held at Emerson Alumni Hall, President's Room B from 10:00 - 2:00. Lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Sunshine Andrei at [andreis@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:andreis@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or Genevieve Mendoza Perez at [perezg@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:perezg@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-4700, ext. 5200.

**July 7:** Referring Veterinarian Appreciation Day will be held at the UF/Gainesville Hilton. For more information, contact Linda Lee at (352) 392-4700, ext. 5714.

**August 4:** The annual Dog/Cat Breeders & Owners symposium will be held in Gainesville. Stay tuned for more information.

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
P.O. Box 100125  
Gainesville, FL 32610-0125

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Gainesville, FL  
Permit No.94