

Florida VETERINARIAN

ADVANCING ANIMAL HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

UF | College of Veterinary Medicine

Small animal practitioner, business owner believes in giving back both to profession and to community

By Sarah Carey

While horseback riding as a teen, Dr. Dale Kaplan-Stein underwent the emotional trauma of having her dog, who was running alongside her, be hit by a car. In the drama that ensued, friends held her horse while Kaplan-Stein rushed to the family veterinarian's office with her dog, which was diagnosed with a dislocated hip, fixable through surgery.

"I remember just sitting there, almost like a Norman Rockwell picture, and my dog turned out to be fine," recalled Kaplan-Stein, a member of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's class of '81. "As a youngster, the impact was, hey, these veterinarians saved my dog's life."

The early impression veterinary medicine

made on Kaplan-Stein stuck. In college, which was spent in Dade County and later at the University of Florida, the former Miami native thought hard about what she really wanted to do with her life.

"There was a lot of sacrifice, and I really had to work for my grades," Kaplan-Stein said. "I decided I wanted to become a vet, and UF has allowed me to be what I wanted to be. Veterinary medicine has always been fun for me."

At 52, Kaplan-Stein owns two small animal veterinary hospitals in Gainesville, Oaks Veterinary Hospital, which she founded in 1982, and Northwood Oaks Veterinary Hospital, which opened in 1995. She is an adjunct professor at UF as well, assisting Dr. Natalie Isaza, '94, in the shelter medicine program, and in addition is a fervent UF CVM alumnae and fundraising volunteer.

"It feels good to give," said Kaplan-Stein, who serves on UF's 2007 Capital Campaign committee representing the veterinary college. "I would just like to plant the seed with our alumni that when you talk about \$100 or \$500, more than likely that amount of money won't change your lifestyle, but it could

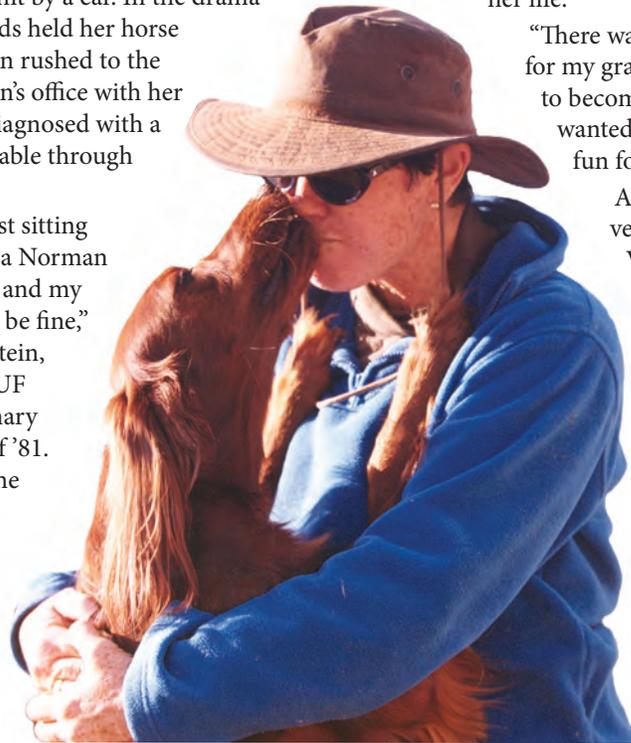


Photo courtesy of Dr. Kaplan-Stein

Dr. Dale Kaplan-Stein gets a kiss from Reddog, one of her three Irish setters.

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“I would just like to plant the seed with our alumni that when you talk about \$100 or \$500, more than likely that amount of money won't change your lifestyle, but it could make a big difference to the university.”

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UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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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@vetmed.ufl.edu.

Check out the college website at:
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 Legato

Director of Public Relations

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

Coordinator of Alumni Affairs

Jo Ann Winn

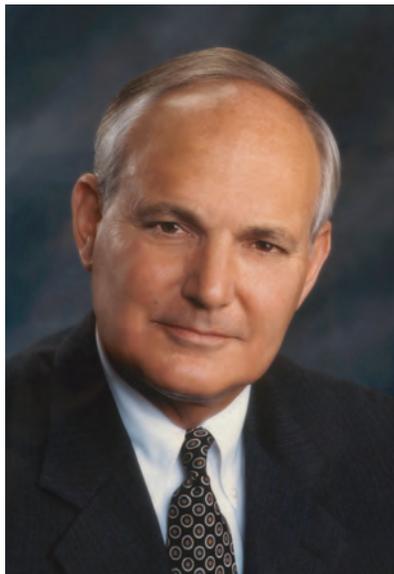
Small Animal Hospital
(352) 392-2235

Large Animal Hospital
(352) 392-2229

College Administration and Dean's Office
(352) 392-2213

Public Relations
(352) 392-2213, ext. 5206

Development and Alumni Affairs
(352) 3929-2213, ext. 5200



Dean Glen Hoffsis

It is with a great sense of pride and accomplishment that I announce the approval of funding for the Veterinary Education and Clinical Research Center, which includes a new small animal hospital for UF. This goal has been a dream of the college for many years and much work went into the campaign to obtain private support, as well as to gain high priority for this project within the university.

Our former dean, Joseph DiPietro, must be given special mention because of his relentless work that culminated in the success I am announcing today. The case for the need for the hospital was compelling and this resulted in over \$4 million in private gifts. This degree of private support was a major factor in moving the project up the priority list within the university. During the early months of this year, we were successful in gaining the #1 priority ranking for new construction at UF. The project was requested at \$49 million.

Following the legislative session in May, it became evident that only one new building was funded for UF and it was the Veterinary Education and Clinical Research Center! Furthermore, we were successful in obtaining a 100 percent state match for the private gifts through what is called the "Courtelis Match." This means that in addition to the appropriated \$49 million, we will be able to add just over \$8 million to the project for a total of approximately \$58 million.

This sounds like a huge sum and it is, but the cost of construction within our environment is astronomical and we anticipate building a 90,000 square-foot structure. So our campaign continues in order to add more capabilities and equipment into the hospital. We are offering naming opportunities and gifts will continue to be matched so that your contribution is leveraged significantly. Anyone making a gift now will know for sure that the project is going forward and that they will be able to see their contribution put to work educating the next generation of students and residents and providing services for many clients and animals.

The construction project will be managed by Executive Associate Dean Jim Thompson and Associate Director of Medical/Health Administration Bob Hockman and coordinated with our faculty and staff. I am confident we will build a state of the art and beautiful building we will all be proud of and that benefits the college, the profession and the important work performed within. Planning began some time ago and will continue until the building is completed in about 18 months.

I have devoted this entire column to this project because it is the most significant step forward for the college in many years. We do not have the good fortune to build such a structure very often. We all should take a moment and absorb the significance of this accomplishment and then get busy with the work of capturing this great opportunity to create a building that will take UF to the next level of excellence. Thank all of you for all you do for the college as together we work to advance the veterinary profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen".

Glen Hoffsis

Dean

You'll notice the new color-bar graphic on our masthead this issue. The color bar is part of a more comprehensive identity campaign to better brand the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Medical Center, within the new university identity guidelines. This campaign, initiated by Dean Glen Hoffsis, has the goal of unifying the many components of the college by utilizing similar graphic elements in all college, VMC and department and auxiliary publications. All of our publications will soon reflect these changes, and we hope you like our new look!

Developing new diagnostics for rickettsial diseases

By Sarah Carey

As the scientific community worldwide becomes increasingly conscious of tick-borne rickettsial diseases as a growing threat to human health, researchers at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine are poised to play a key role.

Tick-borne rickettsial diseases have a worldwide distribution, but are most common in temperate and subtropical regions. These diseases include Rocky Mountain spotted fever (caused by *Rickettsia rickettsii*), Mediterranean spotted fever (caused by *R. conorii*), African tick-bite fever (caused by *R. africae*), Queensland tick typhus (caused by *R. australis*), North Asian tick spotted fever (caused by *R. sibirica*), Flinders Island spotted fever and Thai tick typhus (caused by *R. honei*), and ehrlichiosis and anaplasmosis (caused by *Ehrlichia* and *Anaplasma*.)

For years, the epidemiology of tick-borne rickettsial disease was thought to amount to a single pathogenic rickettsia known to occur on each continent. It was believed that relatively few tick-borne rickettsiae caused human disease. However, over the past 22 years, at least 11 additional rickettsial species or subspecies have been identified as emerging pathogens, as well as cases of infection caused by *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, the agent of human anaplasmosis, and *Ehrlichia chaffeensis*, the agent of human ehrlichiosis.

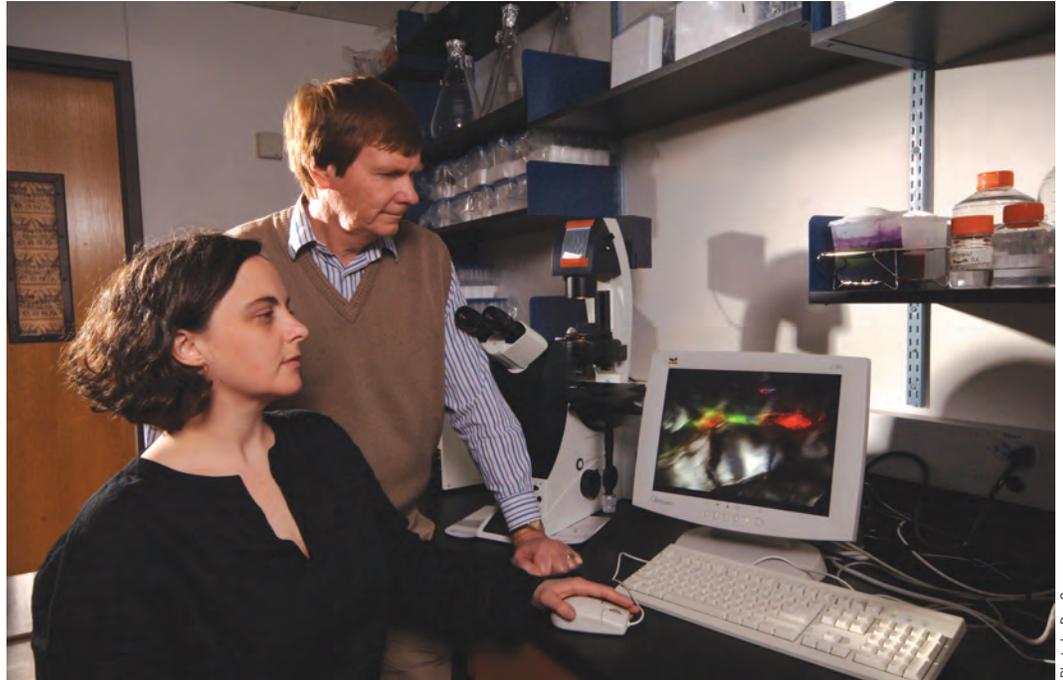
As is true of many emerging pathogens, these and other diseases now on the rise in Europe and in the U.S, originated in animals. Scientists at the UF veterinary college have long studied the animal variations of anaplasmosis and other tick-borne rickettsial diseases, including ehrlichiosis. While perhaps best known worldwide for their decades of research into heartwater, a devastating disease that affects cattle and other livestock, the UF team also has significantly contributed to the understanding of other rickettsial organisms in the same family.

The infectious agents that cause the animal variations of anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis, which historically have affected dogs, horses, cattle and sheep, have recently made the jump to humans. More than 2000 people in the U.S. and Europe have now been infected with the human form of these diseases.

“Our background comes from studying these diseases in animals for 20 to 30 years, way before the disease in humans was recognized,” said Anthony Barbet, Ph.D., a professor of infectious diseases with the college. “When the human diseases were becoming prevalent, we already knew the

human infections. In addition, the group has found that animals may remain persistently infected even after antibiotic treatment.

Alleman and Wamsley, both veterinary pathologists, work in UF’s Veterinary Medical Center seeing and diagnosing actual cases of ehrlichiosis and anaplasmosis in



Dr. Heather Wamsley and Dr. Anthony Barbet examine anaplasma infection by fluorescence microscopy.

various approaches we could take to study and diagnose these infections in people because we had previously used them in animal diseases.”

The clinical presentations of these two distinct, potentially life-threatening infections are fever, headache, myalgia and other nonspecific symptoms that are difficult to diagnose.

“One interesting observation is that people can be affected both with Lyme disease and Anaplasma, because they are transmitted by the same tick,” Barbet said. “Some cases, originally thought to be Lyme disease, are actually the human versions of anaplasmosis.”

In addition to Barbet, the rickettsial disease group includes Rick Alleman, D.V.M., Ph.D., Jeffrey Abbott, D.V.M., Ph.D., and Heather Wamsley, D.V.M.

Significant findings include developing new diagnostic tests using PCR-based methods and new molecular approaches which may be applied in order to pinpoint

animal patients. The two collaborate with Abbott, also a pathologist, and Barbet, a molecular biologist, who have discovered why it is difficult for the body to completely eliminate these infections.

“If cattle get infected with *Anaplasma marginale*, they’re infected for life,” Barbet said. “We’ve figured out the disease organisms have a very complex method of antigenic variation. The reason that the animal’s immune system does not get rid of these organisms is that they’re constantly changing.”

Barbet’s group made this finding in animal infections some 5-10 years ago.

“So when human infections starting emerging, we wondered if they had some similar disease systems and it turns out they do,” Barbet said.

Their work is supported by funds from federal (NIH and USDA) and international agencies (The Wellcome Trust) and commercial companies such as IDEXX Corporation, which licenses a diagnostic patent from the University of Florida.

Alumnus heads back to Honduras with job, high hopes

By Sarah Carey

Like many veterinary students at the University of Florida and elsewhere, Baird Fleming, class of '07, grew up with several pets. But growing up in Honduras, where his father headed up banana operations for the Dole Fruit Company, Fleming's pets included not just the traditional variety -- he had five dogs -- but also parrots, kinkajou and his personal favorite, a river otter.

"Our house was on about an acre, and because relations were tense between Honduras and Nicaragua at the time, the place was pretty well guarded," said Fleming, 33. "The guards spent a lot of time taking care of the animals, but a lot of hunting went on in the area and because of that, many animals were orphaned. We would raise them."

Any animals that could be released into the wild were, but others were kept as pets.

"Monkeys and otters, that's kind of what I grew up with," said Fleming. "That's why I had this interest in exotics. I was always upset that people were killing these animals, while to me they were such awesome pets."

Fleming left Honduras after high school and attended Emory University in Atlanta, graduating with a degree in biology with a comajor in human and natural ecology, which allowed him to focus on human impacts on the environment.

After graduation, he returned to Honduras, this time to the island of Roatan, where he worked with dolphins at the Institute of Marine Sciences. Just over a year later, he returned to the United States, where he worked for a small animal hospital in St. Petersburg. He was a kennel assistant, then a kennel manager and finally a technician/kennel manager. At the same time, Fleming volunteered at the Lowry Park Zoo.

"After about six months, the zoo hired me on as an aviary keeper," Fleming said. "Then after another six months, they hired me as a trainer for the bird of prey program and I did bird of prey shows for the zoo. I kept getting pulled from one job into another."

While working with the bird of prey program, the zoo's veterinary clinic opened a new position for a hospital and quarantine keeper.

"They bribed me heavily to work for them," Fleming laughed. "But it was even better than working with the dolphins at Roatan. It was the best job I'd ever had."

He likened the position to being a bouncer at a bar. The zoo veterinarian would call on him to secure various animals, including 12-foot alligators and red wolves.

"I learned a lot about reading animals' eyes and their movements, such as whether I needed to back up or keep going, and what their

bubble was as far as the fight or flight instinct was concerned," Fleming said.

Meanwhile, many people familiar with Fleming's background

were encouraging him to pursue a project back in Honduras. At one point, Fleming took a veterinarian from Lowry, a curator from Palm Beach and two zoo architects to the country's north coast.

"We came up with the idea of creating a biopark in which we would epitomize the culture, including the flora and fauna specific to the area," Fleming said.

When he subsequently received a call from the Institute of Marine Sciences, during which he was asked to head up a new cruise ship facility to entertain custom-

ers on the island of Roatan, Fleming saw an opportunity to return to Honduras and implement his biopark idea.

But for a variety of reasons, including the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the economic uncertainty that followed, the concept fell through. Fleming found himself in limbo.

"I had to make some decisions," he said. "I was 28 years old and I felt I'd been goofing around all my life. I decided I'd either go to business school and get a master's, or I'd go to veterinary school and get a D.V.M. But I didn't think my prospects for veterinary school were very good because my grades in college were less than stellar."

A member of Emory's crew team, Fleming said he'd spent much more time rowing than concentrating on his grades. He decided to try for veterinary school and attended the University of North Florida in Jacksonville to complete his prerequisites. Amazingly to Fleming, he was accepted at UF on his first application.

"I came to veterinary school because I wanted to go back to Honduras and somehow tie in tourism with animal conservation and cultural conservation," Fleming said. "Vet school gave me the knowledge and the confidence I needed."

Last August, Fleming arranged a trip to Honduras for 13 UF students, two residents and one faculty member, Dr. Darryl Heard. The group visited the Institute of Marine Sciences as well as three rehabilitation parks. Group members were able to examine and perform procedures on animals including a margay, a jaguar, an anteater and several bird species.

"While I was down there, I talked to a guy who was involved in an up and coming park on a development in Roatan," Fleming said. The two discussed the idea, as well as Fleming's desire to build a biopark and his extensive background in the area.

Fleming wound up with a job offer.



Baird Fleming, '07, is shown at Lowry Park Zoo in the 1990s when he worked as a trainer in the park's bird of prey program.

Photo courtesy of Baird Fleming

New graduate's quest to advance animal and human health has roots in father's legacy

By Sarah Carey

For Brooke Bloomberg, class of '07, service to mankind and to animal kind is a way of life she grew up with as the daughter of a board-certified small animal orthopedic surgeon who helped form the backbone of what the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine is today.

It's hard not to see her father, the late Dr. Mark Bloomberg, former chief of staff of UF's small animal hospital and chair of the college's



Brook Bloomberg, '07, stands alongside a tree dedicated in memory of her father, the late Dr. Mark Bloomberg, outside the building which once housed his office on the CVM campus.

Photo by Sarah Kiewel

department of small animal clinical sciences, in Brooke, whether through the marked physical resemblance she bears to him or through the commitment to human and animal health she displays through her outreach activities.

But Brooke, 32, has always been her own person. She grew up in Gainesville and holds an undergraduate degree in animal sciences and a master's degree in public health, both from UF.

"I always wanted to be a vet growing up, and I loved going to work with my dad," Brooke said. "I remember going with him to the hospital on weekends when he was on clinics. After looking at all his patients, we would go out to the barn to take a look at the horses, which was my favorite part.

"We would grab a piece of hay and chew on it as we walked down the barn aisles," she added. "Being a veterinarian seemed to define so much of my dad's life. I grew to greatly respect the profession from him and his colleagues that I met from around the world."

A huge Gator fan, Mark Bloomberg died of a heart attack in January 1996 while watching UF play Nebraska in the Fiesta Bowl during the national college football championship game. After his death, Brooke began to question her own motives for pursuing the profession.

"I wanted to make sure I was going to vet school for the right reasons," Brooke said. "It was through my service to the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps that I realized how I could combine my love of veterinary medicine and at the same time build a career that focused on improving health for both animals and humans."

She said the UF veterinary college has provided her with opportunities to travel and experience veterinary medicine on a global level. She has been to Chile to study the risk factors of Mycobacterium bovis. She has been to Ecuador more than once to perform veterinary medical outreach, and to Honduras to participate in a wildlife and zoo medicine class. In April, she headed for Indonesia to participate in an avian influenza field training workshop for Indonesian veterinarians.

"Seeing how veterinary medicine is practiced in other countries and the resources that are available has been eye opening," said Brooke, who is interviewing for jobs in public health and laboratory animal medicine. "I have such great respect for the veterinary profession and am honored to be a part of it. I aim to build a career that both protects and improves the health of animals and humans."

He plans to serve as the park's veterinarian and as its director and will live in a house on the beach that is part of the development. Fleming can't contain his excitement about the challenges he faces, among them the fact that his wife is expecting a baby this summer.

"I'm going to be really busy for a very long time," he said. "But I will have carte blanche to work on any animal I want to, and do anything to it I want to, with the backing of the government. This is

all because of my relationships down there and the credibility I have built up."

Fleming added that he hopes to establish an official program with UF through which zoo medicine students can visit every year. Two more opportunities for UF students to visit Honduras are already planned for this summer.



Dr. Ellen Wiedner listens to the heart and lungs of a goat named Smiley.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Ellen Wiedner

Farm animal pets have new resource at UF's Veterinary Medical Center

A growing number of companion farm animals — including llamas, sheep, potbellied pigs, alpacas and goats — are being kept as pets and seen as clients at the University of Florida's Veterinary Medical Center, which has hired a new faculty member specifically to beef up services to these animals and their owners.

Ellen Wiedner, D.V.M., has always had a soft spot for these animals, and has worked with them in private practice for almost a decade. Recently, she joined the UFVMC faculty as a clinical assistant professor to begin building a more comprehensive program to provide care and treatment for them.

"I'm looking forward to this," said Wiedner, who will be coming to UF one week per month initially and hopes to expand the service as her caseload grows. "UF has always welcomed these animals into our clinic and we're excited to reach out to the community in new ways."

She said she hopes to start educational programs focusing on topics such as nutritional and medical care and adds that the owners of companion farm animals will hopefully benefit from UF's growing outreach.

"We will do farm calls for these patients when it's appropriate, and they are also invited to be seen in the UF large animal hospital," Wiedner said. "The bottom line is that our overall focus is going to be high-quality care for these animals, no matter what."

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's College of Veterinary Medicine, Wiedner completed an internship at Cornell University in Ambulatory and Production Medicine and a residency in large animal internal medicine at Purdue University. She is board-certified in large animal internal medicine and serves as a consultant for the Veterinary Information Network, an online information service for veterinarians.

TAKE NOTE: VMC phone numbers change

As part of an effort to provide our callers with more direct access to administration, college departments and hospital services, we have changed our phone numbers. Please see page 2 for the new numbers to use for contacting us. Individual extensions will remain the same. Thank you for your patience.

UF scientist receives Morris Animal Foundation grant to further canine influenza studies

The University of Florida veterinary scientist who helped discover the canine influenza virus has received a \$78,000 grant from the Morris Animal Foundation to further her efforts to fight the serious respiratory disease that affects dogs.



Dr. Cynda Crawford

The two-year grant has been awarded to Cynda Crawford, D.V.M., Ph.D., a scientist at UF's College of Veterinary Medicine. Additional funding partners include the American Humane Association and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Since emerging in pet dogs in Florida in 2004, canine influenza virus has been identified in 26 states and the District of Columbia, with current hot spots in Denver, Pittsburgh, Miami, California's Bay area and Cheyenne, Wyo. Infected dogs are highly contagious before they show clinical signs of infection, making it difficult to control the virus' spread and forcing many animal shelters to euthanize thousands of infected dogs. No vaccine exists.

"This study will determine the prevalence of influenza virus infections in shelters and will identify the factors associated with its introduction and spread," Crawford said. "We hope to develop effective guidelines for managing respiratory infections."

Marie Belew Wheatley, American Humane Association president and CEO, said helping shelter organizations keep their animals both healthy and adoptable is one of the group's major goals.

"We feel this study will go a long way toward addressing this problem," she said.

Canine influenza symptoms, primarily coughing, mirror those of other common respiratory infections such as kennel cough, but can progress to life-threatening pneumonia. The virus itself can't be treated, but associated secondary bacterial infections require antibiotics and, in the case of pneumonia, hospitalization. The disease can be diagnosed only through laboratory tests.

“Canine influenza virus is a rapidly emerging threat to all dogs who spend time in multidog environments, and it has led to the death of more than a thousand dogs in shelters around the country,” said Patricia N. Olson, D.V.M., president and chief executive officer of Morris Animal Foundation. “We are thankful to American Humane and the ASPCA for partnering with us to address this critical health issue and to save dogs’ lives.”



Dr. Scott Terrell

Terrell wins college’s Young Alumni Award

Veterinary pathologist Scott Terrell, a member of the college’s class of ’97, has received two awards recently in honor of his professional contributions.

Terrell was selected as a 2007 Outstanding Young Alumnus, an honor for which he was recognized April 14 during UF’s third annual Spring Weekend. He also received the College Council’s 2007 Teacher of the Year award

After receiving his D.V.M. degree, Terrell completed his residency in anatomic pathology at UF and in 2000, returned to his alma mater as clinical assistant professor in the college’s department of infectious disease and pathology. Terrell commutes to Gainesville from his home in Orlando weekly to teach veterinary immunology, systemic pathology and small animal pathology among other topics, to CVM students.

Beyond his professorial duties, Terrell has been employed at Orlando-based Disney since 1999, where he is acting director of veterinary services for Animal Programs at Walt Disney World. As such, he is the diagnostic pathologist for all Disney-owned animals and all animals found on Disney property. He also oversees the day to day operations of the veterinary team and animal nutrition team, a group that manages the

care for the approximately 2,000 terrestrial animals and 3,000 fish that make their home at Walt Disney World.

Terrell has spent the last eight years working to build a relationship between the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and Disney.

“The Young Alumni Award is recognition of a lot of work to create a partnership between a great university and a great company,” he said. “When Disney calls UF for help, they are there for us, and when UF needs Disney for something — support for scholarships or research, venues for special events — it’s there for both sides.”

College names 2007 Distinguished Award winners

A small-animal practice owner, a livestock reproduction specialist and a North Florida dairyman have been honored in the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine alumni council’s 2007 Distinguished Awards program.

Three awards were designated: one for alumni achievement, one for distinguished service to the veterinary profession and one for special service.

This year’s Alumni Achievement award recipient is Link Welborn, D.V.M., a 1982 graduate of the college. Welborn, co-owner of several small animal practices in Tampa, is a past president of the American Animal Hospital Association. He has served on the college’s alumni council and advisory committee and helped establish the Jim Himes Alumni Scholarship in honor of an emeritus dean of students at the college. Welborn was named Veterinarian of the Year by the Florida Veterinary Medical Association in 2006.

“Dr. Welborn is a stellar example of one who models professionalism across all slices of life,” said Gail Kunkle, D.V.M., a professor of small animal dermatology and associate chair for instruction at the college, in a letter supporting Welborn’s nomination. “He is an ambassador for veterinary medicine nationwide as well as serving as an ambassador for our college.”



Dr. Link Welborn

Maarten Drost, D.V.M., a professor emeritus at the college and an internationally respected expert in livestock reproduction, has received the Distinguished Service award. Drost pioneered studies in embryo transfer techniques and was the first person in the world to perfect that technique in water buffaloes.

A 1962 graduate of Iowa State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, Drost has received numerous awards for teaching as well as for his scientific accomplishments. Drost officially retired from UF in 2003 but has remained active, completing a Web atlas of animal reproduction using thousands of visual aids that are freely available to students and scientists worldwide.

Donald Bennink, owner of North Florida Holsteins dairy farm in Bell, Fla., has received the Special Service Award. North Florida Holsteins is the UF Veterinary Medical Center’s longest-standing client.

“They have been the backbone of the food animal teaching program for many years,” said Art Donovan, D.V.M., a professor of food animal medicine at the college. “With the exception of the charter class, nearly every student that has graduated from our college has passed through the gates of Don’s farm. The students have had the opportunity to hone their clinical and problem-solving skills using his cows in a production setting. He also has provided a significant caseload to the food animal hospital, where more intense case management could be provided.”

More than 30 veterinary residents and 20 interns in the Food Animal Reproduction and Medicine Service, as well as six graduate students from 16 different countries, have received a substantial portion of their training at North Florida Holsteins, Donovan added.

The awards were presented during CVM commencement May 26 at UF’s Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.



Dr. Maarten Drost



Dr. Donald Bennink

Attention all alumni: The James A. Himes Alumni Scholarship fund needs your support.

UF College of Veterinary Medicine alumni created the fund in 1998 to benefit students in need and to honor Himes, whose service to UF began more than 40 years ago and continues today.

“For 15 of those years, Dr. Himes served as associate dean for students and instruction,” said Link Welborn, ’82, who helped conceive of and develop the scholarship when it was first formed. “His unselfish and caring nature has touched the lives of thousands of students, families and colleagues. This \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to a veterinary student with financial need and who has demonstrated what we call ‘the Himes attitude.’”

In its first years, more than \$47,000 was raised to support the scholarship, but the current balance -- about \$63,000 -- hasn’t changed significantly in the past five years.

“A few alumni have continued to donate regularly, such that we have been able to award a \$1,000 scholarship to a senior veterinary student every year since 2000,” Welborn said. “However with more than 88 percent of veterinary students having educational debt, and with those in debt owing more than \$88,000 on average, the need for scholarships has never been greater.”

Since the scholarship’s inception, the goal has been to raise \$100,000, whereupon matching funds of \$50,000 will be requested. The scholarship would then be sufficient to provide approximately \$6,000 per year in scholarships indefinitely.

“As professor and associate dean emeritus, Dr. Himes continues to go to his office at the college almost every weekday,” Welborn said. “At 87 years young, he remains dedicated to helping veterinary and pre-veterinary students in every way that he can. I’m asking everyone, especially college alumni, to consider giving generously,



Dr. Link Welborn, '82, who received the college's 2007 Alumni Achievement Award, visits with Dr. Jim Himes May 26 prior to commencement exercises for the class of 2007. Welborn helped create the Himes Scholarship several years ago.

Photo by Sarah Carey

as many have done already, with the goal of reaching the \$100,000 mark for state matching funds before the end of the year.”

Added Zoe Seale, the college’s senior director of development and alumni affairs, “We only need 37 people to step up and make a gift or a pledge of \$1,000 each.”

“When we break it down like that, it seems easy to reach the goal,” Seale said. “The question I would ask each alumnus is, ‘do you want to be one of the 37 who makes this happen?’”

For more information about how to donate to the Himes Scholarship, contact the college’s office of development and alumni affairs at (352) 392-2213, ext. 5200. 📞

GRADUATION 2007

Photo by Sarah Carey



Melissa Bourgeois, '07, Dr. Maureen Long and Heather Zaretsky, '07 are shown just prior to commencement exercises held May 26 at UF’s Phillip Center for the Performing Arts.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Marcia Nobel, '07, Jodi D’Amico, '07 and Harvey Knowles, '07, visited for a few moments while preparing for commencement exercises on May 26.

make a big difference to the university in terms of programs or expansion. I want our veterinary school to produce the best vets out there, because I want to hire them.

“Public universities cannot survive on their own without donations. They cannot advance. So I want us to be able to buy that ultrasound so the students can learn, or find out why our animals are dying from what looks like kennel cough but turns out to be canine influenza,” she added.

Her belief in giving back to the college and to the community is an important part of Kaplan-Stein’s identity, reflected in her recent commitment to help the UF veterinary college become involved in UF’s Interdisciplinary Family Health course. Part of the university’s Program for Interdisciplinary Education, the course offers a cross-disciplinary approach to community health care and targets underserved and/or indigent individuals.

Along with UF’s shelter medicine program director Isaza, Kaplan-Stein has worked with a select group of veterinary students toward this end.

“They are doing wonderful work with our needy pets, offering spay and neuter clinics with some basic health care,” said the program’s assistant director, Rhondda Waddell, Ph.D. “Dr. Kaplan-Stein keeps us going with Science Diet pet food. Many of our families depend on that food to feed their pets. Otherwise, they might be feeding their own food to their animals.”

Among Kaplan-Stein’s mentors from vet school are small animal medicine professor Michael Schaer, D.V.M., and veterinary neurologist Cheryl Chrisman, D.V.M., along with parasitology professor Ellis Greiner, Ph.D.

“Dr. Schaer would show slides of case after case, so into it and demanding that we get it right, and that is just my personality,” said Kaplan-Stein. “I was always like that. Dr. Chrisman is probably the best teacher of neurology in the world, and I always loved Dr. Ellis Greiner and his parasites.”

When Kaplan-Stein first opened Oaks Veterinary Hospital, she had no computers and the many tests veterinarians are capable of running these days, even routine blood tests, were not in vogue.

“You used your brain a lot,” Kaplan-Stein recalled. “One thing we all need to never forget is, don’t forget what you were taught and don’t forget what doesn’t make sense when you put all the facts together. You’ve got to go back to that all the time and not get wrapped up in a particular test.”

After graduation from veterinary school, Kaplan-Stein knew she’d be living in Gainesville because her husband, Robert, had a contracting business in town. She decided to open her own practice because raising a family with two young daughters, flexibility was something she was afraid she’d lose working for someone else.

“It’s all worked out,” Kaplan-Stein said. “But my biggest accomplishment is not my practice; it’s raising two daughters that will actually contribute to this society of ours, and my 32-year marriage.”

Daughter Sara, 23, was recently accepted to UF’s dual DVM/Master of Public Health program, now in its first year, and daughter Gracie, 21, is a member of the crew team at the University of Pennsylvania and studying communication.

Today Kaplan-Stein sees her profession as “a romantic kind of job.”

“Everyone loves a veterinarian,” she said. “People approach me because it’s intriguing to them. That’s why a lot of people want to go into this profession, but you have to have the passion for it -- no ifs, ands or buts.”

At Kaplan-Stein’s farm in Jonesville live three horses of her own and a few boarders. Even though she’s a small animal veterinarian, in her spare time, Kaplan-Stein loves horses and enjoys trail riding with friends and neighbors in local parks. She even participated in the Great Florida Cattle Drive in December 2006, an annual event which celebrates the state’s ranching history.

Adding to the Kaplan-Stein menagerie are three Irish setters, four schnauzers, two yellow Labradors, a cat, a Patagonian coney and a cockatiel.

“No one likes getting up early or being awakened late at night to take an emergency call, but once I’m inside the hospital, it’s always like candy in a store,” Kaplan-Stein said. “I’m not working on the floor anymore, but I love cases and I go over them, and I can go into my barn at home and I’m as content as a person can be.”

CLASS OF '82 REUNION



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Holly Wendell, '82, Dr. Curtis Barnett, '82, and Dr. Michael Schaer visit April 14 during the class of '82 reunion.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Brandon Davis, left, joined his father, Dr. John Davis, '82, and his brother, Weston Davis, '08, April 14 during the class of '82 reunion.

UF veterinarians seek dogs with melanoma to participate in new vaccine study

By Sarah Carey

University of Florida veterinarians are seeking dogs with melanoma to participate in an ongoing study of a new vaccine designed to fight the spread of the common skin cancer.

“We are currently looking at the effect of this vaccine in dogs that have the disease in all stages, from the least severe to the most advanced, said Rowan Milner, D.V.M., chief of the UF Veterinary Medical Center’s oncology service. “The vaccine we have developed stimulates the natural killer cells in the body that act almost like Pac-men to destroy the tumors.”



Rowan Milner, chief of the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center’s oncology service, administers a physical examination to a golden retriever participating in the melanoma vaccine trial. He is assisted by visiting veterinary student Rebecca Plodzik.

Photo by Sarah Kiewel

Last year Milner and his UF colleagues published information about their study, one of three canine melanoma vaccine studies currently under way in the United States, in *Veterinary Immunology and Immunopathology*. They also have presented papers on it at three scientific meetings. The other two studies are at the Animal Medical Center in New York and at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Milner said.

On March 26, the U.S. Department of Agriculture approved a conditional license for a canine melanoma therapeutic vaccine to Merial. The product licensed was that tested in the AMC study, Milner said.

“All three vaccine studies are different and all want to achieve the same thing: to harness the dog’s immune system to fight the spread of melanoma,” Milner said. “At this stage, we cannot say which one of these vaccines being studied is the best. There is a broad front of research, and once we find out which one is really going to work, the others may fall by the wayside, or we may find that each vaccine targets specific subgroups of melanoma. Time will tell.”

Melanomas are formed when the pigment-producing cells of the skin known as melanocytes multiply in an uncontrolled fashion, eventually invading the tissues that surround them and, in the case of malignant melanoma, spreading to local lymph nodes and the lungs.

“Only between 5 percent and 7 percent of all skin tumors in dogs are melanomas, but melanoma is the most common oral tumor in dogs, making up 6 percent of all cancer cases,” Milner said, adding that UF’s melanoma vaccine does not make use of gene therapy but consists of a more traditional composition aimed at stimulating an immune reaction.

“The interesting thing about the reaction we get it is that it includes antibodies, but also stimulates the natural killer cells,” Milner said, adding that no significant adverse reactions have been seen so far in any of the 35 dogs participating in the study.

“Although most vaccines are given to prevent the onset of disease, the melanoma vaccine is actually a form of immunotherapy because it is being administered after the cancer forms rather than before,” he said.

Melanoma is unusual among cancers affecting dogs and people in that in some cases the body is able to recognize the disease as foreign and can develop an immune reaction to it. In humans, melanomas are associated with ultraviolet light, but this is not thought to be a risk factor in dogs. In dogs, skin tumors can appear anywhere on the body, but are most frequently seen in the nail beds, in the eye and in the mouth, where they are the most aggressive and malignant, veterinarians say.

Oral melanomas are most commonly seen in highly pigmented breeds such as chow chows, German shepherds, poodles and schnauzers. Signs that indicate oral melanoma might be present include growths appearing in the dog’s mouth, bad breath and drooling.

Veterinarians typically treat melanoma-afflicted dogs with surgery to remove the tumor, followed by radiation of the primary site. The biggest threat to a dog’s survival, however, comes if and when the tumor spreads to the lymph nodes, then to the lungs.

“In most cases, surgeons can remove the cancer if it’s small enough, but in high-grade tumors there is a big risk that the tumor will spread to the lungs, eventually causing the lungs to fail,” Milner said.

Milner said the melanoma vaccine would never be a replacement for surgery or radiation, because the local disease still has to be treated.

“The vaccine is really there to suppress the spread of the disease,” he said.

The UF study will accept 60 cases.

Participating dogs will be followed for up to two to three years as part of the study protocols.

“Melanoma does not respond well to chemotherapy, the gold standard for trying to control metastasis of many other cancers,” Milner said. “There are other cancers that chemotherapy works well for, but in my experience, chemo is not very effective in preventing spread of the melanoma. While not a panacea for all problems, immunotherapy will have its place.”

Anyone seeking more information about the melanoma vaccine study should contact UF’s Veterinary Medical Center at 352-392-2235.

Bear and cub treated at UF's VMC released back into the wild

By Sarah Carey

Every now and then, disasters have a happy ending.

The return of two Florida black bears treated at UF's Veterinary Medical Center and Disney's Animal Kingdom to the wild June 19 is surely such an example. The sow and her 3-month-old cub became known as the "Bugaboo bears" because of their May rescue in Columbia County from the so-called Bugaboo fire, which was the name officials gave to designate the Florida portion of a fire that originated in Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp and later crossed state lines.

The mother bear suffered from third-degree burns on her paws. The cub, found high up in a tree above its mother, was dehydrated but otherwise unhurt.

Coverage of the bears' plight reached national proportions, with stories appearing in media outlets including the New York Times, CNN and USA Today among countless others.

The Bugaboo bears became a symbol of hope for many when the fire, which consumed approximately 125,000 acres of timber, swamp land, grass and scrub in Florida alone while firefighters struggled to gain control and residents feared for their homes, even their lives.

"When the Georgia fires and Florida fires all burned together, (Bugaboo) is probably one of the top three in terms of Continental U.S. history," said Ralph Crawford, assistant bureau chief for the state's Division of Forestry.

After their initial rescue by Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission biologists Jim and Elina Garrison, biology technician Don Wainwright and FWC veterinarian Mark Cunningham, the bears were taken to Gainesville and treated by members of the UF VMC's zoological medicine service. Adrienne Atkins, D.V.M., the third-year zoo medicine resident, was the clinician who led the care team from UF.

Also weighing in with a consult was David Mazingo, M.D., professor of surgery and anesthesiology at UF's College of Medicine and head of the Shands Burn Center, and his team of wound specialists. The group visited the bears in the zoo medicine ward at Atkins' invitation.

"We went over one time and looked at the burns on the bottom of the adult bear's feet," Mazingo said. "We thought they should heal fine and nothing more really needed to be done other than what they were doing. Mazingo and his colleagues have visited the college on several occasions over the years to provide consultation relating to wound care.

"They were relieved when we said we didn't feel surgical intervention was necessary," he added.

Six days later, FWC's Cunningham picked the bears up and drove them to Disney's Animal Kingdom, where they were kept in a quarantine facility and fed a diet consistent with what they would normally eat in the wild: blueberries, heart of palm, and cabbage. Disney veterinarian Scott Terrell, D.V.M., (CVM class of '98), acting director of veterinary services for the park, and UF's fourth-year

zoological medicine resident Christine Fiorello, D.V.M., then assumed primary responsibility for the bears' care.

Once the mother bear, whose burn injuries had been veterinarians' primary concern, was deemed ready for release, she and her cub were transported to the release site by the State Agricultural Response Team/Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service from the College of Veterinary Medicine, complete with a law enforcement escort.

The VETS vehicle consists of a 4-wheel drive Ford king cab truck purchased with funds from the Florida Veterinary Medical Association Foundation. The truck towed a 24-foot utility trailer equipped with a 15,000 BTU air conditioner which was purchased to haul response team equipment to disasters, then to be used as a bunk house or office on the scene. UF purchased the custom-built trailer for VETS with funds donated by the American Kennel Club.

The new rig had never been used to transport any animals, much less wild animals, but when state agricultural officials asked for help with the bear release, VETS was ready.

On the day of the release, the VETS team, including college director John Haven and security coordinator David Johns from UF's VMC, left Gainesville for Orlando to pick up the bears at Disney and then transported them upstate to the release site in the Osceola National Forest.

Located across a sandy graded road 22 miles inside the forest, the site was within the bear's original range. VETS team members then worked with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission biologists and Cunningham to determine the logistics. The decision was made to remotely use a winch attached to the handle on the bears' crate to lift the latch and enable the bears to run to freedom.

And that they did, racing from their tarp-covered crate across a sandy graded road 22 miles into the Osceola National Forest.

In seconds, the bears were gone, hidden in the deep palmetto brush. 🐾



University of Florida veterinarian Erin McNally monitors anesthesia while others on the veterinary care team dress the foot wounds of this 18-year-old Florida black bear May 14 at UF's Veterinary Medical Center. State wildlife officials brought the bear and her cub to UF for treatment after they were found by firefighters during the Bugaboo fire in Columbia County. The adult bear suffered third-degree burns on her paws and received daily wound care at UF while her condition stabilized.



The adult black bear rescued from the Bugaboo fire and treated at UF's VMC races from her transport cage and back into the Osceola National Forest after being released back into the wild June 19.

Photo by Sarah Kiewel

Photo Tracy Wilcox, the Gainesville Sun

Aug 4 The annual Dog Owners and Breeders Symposium will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Gainesville. For more information, contact the UF Department of Conferences at (352) 392-1701.

Aug 4 The annual Florida Cat Conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Gainesville. For more information, contact the UF Department of Conferences at (352) 392-1701.

Oct 21 The annual Horse Farm 100 bicycle ride with Team VetMed will take place in Gainesville, departing from Morningside Nature Center. For more information, contact Jo Ann Winn at (352) 392-2213, ext. 5013.

Nov 2-3 UF's annual homecoming celebration will take place, with the traditional barbeque event planned for CVM alumni on Nov. 3. Kick-off time for the football game -- Gators vs. Vanderbilt -- will determine exactly when the CVM event will be held. For more information, contact Jo Ann Winn at (352)-392-2213, ext. 5013.

Nov 3 The college's fall alumni council meeting will take place prior to the CVM homecoming alumni barbeque. For more information, contact Jo Ann Winn at (352) 392-2213, ext. 5013.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Stacey and Gary Anthon are pictured with Scooby, a 6-year-old black Labrador retriever, and Dr. Amara Estrada in a small animal hospital examination room. The Anthon's, who are from Salt Lake City, Utah, brought Scooby to Gainesville March 26 to participate in a pacemaker study being conducted by the UF VMC's cardiology service. Scooby had successful surgery to implant a pacemaker the next morning, and remained in Gainesville recuperating under the care of cardiologists until the Anthon's came to pick him up and take him home in June. Scooby is doing extremely well and will continue to visit UF periodically for check-ups, veterinarians said.



Photo by Sarah Kleweil

Senior veterinary student Becka Williams holds a Bengal kitten named Elvis in the small animal hospital, while fellow senior Courtney Riley looks on from a treatment room.