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veterinary
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Stephanie Holloway, right, a member of the Class of 2010, is pictured with her husband, Dr. Tim Holloway, '07, following the 2008 sophomore coating ceremony. For more photos from the ceremony, see p.5.



Brazilian Olympic dressage horse returns home after successful treatment at UF

BY SARAH CAREY

After surviving an odyssey of difficult surgeries and complicated medical problems, a Brazilian Olympic dressage horse named Livello has lived to train another day and is recuperating back in his home country, thanks to University of Florida veterinarians.

UF equine surgeon David Freeman, who played a key role in Livello's amazing story and eventual turnaround, discharged the horse on April 11 to one of his Brazilian veterinarians, who flew home with him.

"This horse is all quality," Freeman said. "Everyone who dealt with him here did a wonderful job, and this is a horse that came all the way from Brazil because we had the technology to treat him."

Freeman said Livello's case illustrated the importance of powerful imaging equipment, particularly UF's MRI unit, in guiding effective medical treatment.

"Radiology, specifically Drs. Matt Winter and Shannon Holmes, did a wonderful job with interpreting the images," Freeman said, adding that clinicians and technicians from the radiology, surgery, ophthalmology and anesthesia services were all extremely helpful.

"Livello actually came here because the owners were aware we had CT and thought that could be used to help him, but it turned out that the MRI was a better imaging tool for his problem," Freeman said.

"Livello is the horse we dreamed of back in our childhood, when we first realized we loved horses....their smell, the noise from their hooves..."

— *Patricia Brossi, Brazilian veterinarian*

Brazilian veterinarian Fernanda Bicudo Cesar said the horse's owner, Dr. Jorge de la Rocha, and his family were "very thankful for everyone involved."

Cesar spent two weeks at UF with Livello when his primary veterinarian, Patricia Brossi, had to return home after spending two months in Gainesville.

"The owners haven't seen him for three months, but now they can sleep well and finally feel that things are going to be OK," Cesar said.

Brossi said Livello was a fighter, and so much more than that to those who know him.

"You have only to go through his medical records to appreciate how much of a fighter he is," she said. "Besides that, he talks to you, he makes it really clear how much he appreciates everything you do for him."

"Livello is the horse we dreamed of back in our childhood, when we first realized we loved horses, those huge creatures, their smell, the noise from their hooves, the feeling of being on top of them," Brossi said. "He is special to Dr. Jorge because he fits him, with his size and his personality, as no other horse ever did."

Livello's story began in Brazil last October with a bad tooth. A tooth extraction procedure damaged the horse's tear duct and infraorbital nerve, veterinarians said.

"Tears were coming down his face, and he had nerve damage that was causing him to rub his face and sneeze," Freeman said, adding that a subsequent procedure involving a veterinary surgeon from Tennessee and a world-renowned equine dentist who were flown to Brazil to help, did not resolve the problem.

"The surgeries went well, but never cleared up the infection Livello had developed in his sinuses," Freeman said.

Because of his infection, Livello subsequently developed facial swelling and a malodorous nasal discharge.

Desperate to help him, his owners and their veterinarians, who had heard of Freeman and UF's imaging capability through veterinary meetings in Brazil, decided the horse needed to be seen and treated at UF. In February, de la Rocha, who also has ridden Livello as part of the Brazilian Olympic dressage team, flew the horse and Brossi, his veterinarian, to Florida's Alec P. and Louise H. Courtelis Equine Hospital.

"We had some idea based on Livello's history and clinical signs that there was probably



Dr. David Freeman stands with Livello, a Brazilian Olympic dressage team horse, who underwent three surgeries at UF before being released to return home to Brazil.

some necrotic bone that needed to be removed," Freeman said. "But we didn't know the exact location or extent of it, and that is where both the CT and our new MRI unit came in."

An initial surgery resulted in the removal of a lot of dead bone and tissue, but Livello's sinus drainage continued as did the malodorous nasal discharge.

"So we did another MRI on him about three weeks later and then another surgery after that," Freeman said. "The MRI images helped us find the sites where we needed to go, and the site was not an easy area to gain access to. We were somewhat reserved by then in terms of our level of satisfaction because we knew there might still be more bone left."

By the time Livello left, however, he had undergone three surgeries at UF, with the last one being the most difficult. Within two weeks of his last procedure, however, Livello began showing signs of improvement.

"His attitude definitely improved," Freeman said. When Livello's nasal discharge vanished, Freeman and his colleagues knew they had turned a corner.

"This was a tough case," he said. "Every now and then we get cases that test us and test our general ability to handle very serious veterinary challenges and this was one of them."

Freeman added that he gave a lot of credit to Livello's owner, de la Rocha, for his unwavering commitment to the horse.

"He was not going to be deterred by the cost of treatment but he was realistic and committed and most of all, he did not want this horse to suffer," Freeman said. "He wanted the very best for him, and he did all the right things. That didn't replace any of our caregiving for the horse, but it made it a lot easier."

Having a ball



The UF CVM's intramural basketball team — known as the 38 Special — won the Graduate-Staff Intramural Championship in April. The winning team, shown above, included Justin Phillips, Jay Newman, Will Robertson, Dr. Dan Lewis, James Mosely, Dan Krull, Greg Long, Kevin Schmidt, James Steeil and Mike Reese. Not pictured are team members Jonathan Shivers and Ben Nevitt. Photo courtesy of Dr. Dan Lewis

Shelter medicine rotation coordinator receives universitywide Superior Accomplishment Award

Dr. Natalie Isaza, the Merial Clinical Assistant Professor of Shelter Medicine at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, has received a universitywide Superior Accomplishment Award for her outstanding and meritorious service.

Isaza was honored in the academic services category along with five other individuals who received top honors in their employment categories during a ceremony held April 22 at the UF's Reitz Union. All six winners received \$2,000, a plaque, and an invitation to the president's box during an upcoming home football game.

A 1994 graduate of UF's veterinary college, Isaza has served as director of its shelter medicine program for four years. She works closely with Alachua County Animal Services to provide clinical experience with shelter animals to UF veterinary students, and oversees the shelter medicine elective clerkship.

In exit interviews, graduating veterinary students have said they value the shelter program because it provides with solid surgical experience for spays and neuters and gives solid background regarding common preventable conditions and diseases affecting dogs and cats.

In addition, the program provides students insights into animal welfare issues impacting society in general as well as their local communities. During the past year, Isaza has taken her students to Gainesville's St. Francis House to provide veterinary care to the pets of homeless and financially needy individuals, an effort started by Gainesville veterinarian Dale Kaplan-Stein, owner of Oaks Veterinary Hospital and Northwood Oaks.

The program recently was honored at the Work of Heart Awards banquet - an annual tradition started in 1971 by the recently disbanded Volunteer Center of North Central Florida. Honorees were nominated by fellow co-workers, employees and volunteers. Each demonstrated "significant contributions of time, talent and an unmistakable passion for bettering the community," according to a story that appeared in the Gainesville Sun.

Dr. Colin Burrows, chair of the department of small animal clinical sciences and chief of staff of the Small Animal Hospital, said Isaza's award was well-deserved.

"Natalie received this award because of her selfless dedication to animals, students and the community," said Dr. Colin Burrows, chairman of the department of small animal clinical sciences and chief of staff of UF's Small Animal Hospital. "Her efforts benefit so many, and we are lucky to have her."



Dr. Natalie Isaza

Infectious diseases professor awarded UFRF professorship

Dr. Mary Brown, a specialist in infectious diseases at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, has received a UF Research Foundation professorship.

Sponsored by the university's Division of Sponsored Research, the professorships are awarded to tenured faculty campuswide for distinguished research and scholarship. The honor includes a \$5,000 salary increase each year for three years and a one-time \$3,000 award for research support.

Brown, a professor in the UF veterinary college's department of infectious diseases and pathology, specializes in bacteria called mycoplasmas. Over the past 22 years, Brown has studied infections in creatures from alligators to humans. She has studied the role of mycoplasma in the premature birth of babies and in a respiratory ailment of environmentally threatened tortoises.

The smallest free-living bacteria, mycoplasmas need intimate contact with a host, for instance in the respiratory or urogenital tract, and establish a chronic disease that usually is not fatal because they need the host to survive. The bacteria are spread through direct contact and can cause a wide spectrum of diseases in humans and animals, such as pneumonia, mastitis, urinary tract infection, genital infections, neonatal infections and more rarely, arthritis. "Walking pneumonia" is one example of a mycoplasmal disease in people.

Most recently, Brown has been studying the role of mycoplasmas in a respiratory infection that has spread rapidly among Florida gopher tortoises, a species of special concern, as part of a National Science Foundation project. The gopher tortoise population has declined in part because of loss of habitat. Infectious disease has also been a contributing factor to population declines. The NSF project examines the interactions between infectious disease and human-induced changes to the environment on tortoise health and populations.

With funding from the National Institutes of Health, Brown has studied the role of mycoplasma in recurrent urinary tract infections in women. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Defense have also supported her studies of mycoplasmal disease in food animals.

Brown has been a member of UF's veterinary college faculty since 1985.



Dr. Mary Brown

Clinical pathologist approved for patent on diagnostic technology

A patent for technology developed by a clinical pathologist at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine for diagnosing the presence of a tick-transmitted bacterium that affects a wide variety of mammalian species, including humans, has been approved by the United States government.

"There is lots of interest in this disease, known as *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, because of its emerging prevalence in particularly the human and canine populations in the United States," said Dr. Rick Alleman, a professor of clinical pathology at the UF veterinary college.

"We are recognizing that a percentage of dogs and people who get infected with this agent get sick, while others just carry the organism," said Alleman, who has collaborated with others at the college, including Dr. Anthony Barbet, an infectious diseases professor, and scientist Dr. Roberta Veluci-Marlow, to develop a test that can be used to detect an antibody response no matter what particular variant of the organism the species might be infected with.

"Animals form antibodies to this protein whenever they become infected," Alleman said, adding that the test could be used in dogs or in humans, and in any part of the country.

"After we identified the protein, which was a major first step, we then cloned the gene and sequenced it, which makes it possible to create the protein without using the organism — namely a recombinant version which is like a manufactured version of the original," Alleman said.

Two companies are now testing the protein to determine if they wish to purchase the patent and use it commercially, he added.

A few years ago, Barbet, Burridge, Alleman and others from the veterinary college were involved in a patent that resulted in a test for the diagnosis of infection with another tick-borne agent known as *Ehrlichia canis*. That test is now being marketed commercially by IDEXX Corporation.



Dr. Rick Alleman

Class of '83 reunites for Silver Anniversary celebration



At left, Dr. Jim Himes, associate dean emeritus of students and instruction, is pictured with Dr. Janet Ackerman and Dr. Paul Nicoletti, professor emeritus in the department of infectious diseases and pathology.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Dr. Elizabeth "Buffy" Noyes and Dr. Dawn McLane were among those present from the Class of '83.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Dr. Jim O'Brien from the Class of '83 visits with Dr. Ken Braun, professor emeritus of large animal clinical sciences.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Dr. Ellis Greiner, Jo Ann Winn and Dr. Maarten Drost visit during the morning activities. Greiner is a professor in the department of infectious diseases and pathology, Winn is the college's alumni affairs coordinator and Drost is a professor emeritus of theriogenology.

Photo by Sarah Carey

Animal Planet's Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald will be guest speaker at 2008 commencement ceremony

Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald, star of Animal Planet's Emergency Vets, will be the guest speaker at upcoming commencement exercises for the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's Class of 2008, to be held May 24

at 2 p.m. at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

Fitzgerald, a well-known comedian and entertainer, also maintains a busy practice at Alameda East Veterinary Hospital in Denver.

This year, 83 UF veterinary seniors will receive their DVM degrees. In addition, the 2008 winners of the UF CVM Alumni Council's Distinguished Awards will be announced during the commencement

ceremony.

Everyone is invited to come out and support the Class of 2008!

Novartis gift funds renovations to surgery bandage room



Members of the small animal surgery service gathered Wednesday, April 30, to celebrate the recent renovations made to the surgery bandage room. The renovations were made possible thanks to a \$15,000 donation from Novartis Animal Health. Joining the UF group for the celebration was Dr. Steven Fox, now director of pain management with Novartis and a former UF small animal surgery resident, and local Novartis representative Nichole Roberts. From left to right are Dr. Kelly Thieman, Dr. Alistair Coomer, Dr. Dan Lewis, Dr. Colin Burrows, Dr. Steve Fox, Nichole Roberts, Dean Glen Hoffsis, Dr. Kristin Kirkby, St. George's University veterinary student Paul Weber, Dr. Jim Farese, Dr. Marije Risselada and Wendy Davies.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Dr. Dan Lewis visits with a surgery patient and Dr. Steve Fox, a former UF small animal surgery resident who is now director of pain management for Novartis Animal Health.

Photo by Sarah Carey

The Small Animal Hospital's surgery treatment room -- better known internally as the "bandage room" -- recently received a facelift, thanks to a generous contribution from Novartis Animal Health.

The company's donation, approximately \$15,000, covered the cost of installing all new cabinets and treatment tables, in addition to new computers and a digital radiographic work station.

"All three surgery services, including orthopedics, soft tissue and surgical oncology, use the room, which is arguably the busiest room in the hospital," said Dr. Dan Lewis, an orthopedic surgeon and professor in the department of small animal clinical sciences.

Helping to facilitate the gift was former UF small animal surgery resident Dr. Steve Fox, who now serves as director of pain management for Novartis.

"I specifically asked Steve to work with the company to help us make this happen," Lewis said. "He worked very hard to find the money from several divisions. We are extremely grateful to Steve and to Novartis for all of these efforts."

Lewis said the renovations will make possible better patient care as well as educating students, interns and residents in the art and practice of small animal surgery.

"My experiences at UF as a surgery resident are most memorable," Fox said. "I worked with some of the finest mentors in our profession and witnessed the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine 'get its legs.' The college now enjoys international recognition for its standards of excellence in teaching, research and clinical medicine. As such, it gives me great pride to be an alumni."

Fox added that the new physical structure of the school is "both ambitious and impressive, testimonial to the university's goal of matching the faculty's state-of-the-art excellence with equivalent housing."

He said Novartis has always enjoyed a close collaboration with academia and that he was pleased his company could assist UF in an area of need.

"Veterinary medicine is best served with a close relationship between academia and industry," Fox said. "Novartis is dedicated to advancement of state-of-the-art 'best medicine' and this example of Novartis support for a UF request serves the best interest of each party, as well as our profession."

"No doubt, many present and future students will benefit from this modest contribution," Fox said.

Duly coated! Sophomore coating ceremony marks transition to clinical rotations



Dr. Ray Mobley, extension veterinarian from Florida A & M University, stands at left with veterinary sophomore student Marcy Sumling, Linwood Starks and friends following the sophomore coating ceremony May 1. Mobley presented their white coats to both Sumling and Starks.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Sophomore student Ramon Perez poses with classmate Courtney Varney.

Photo by Sarah Carey

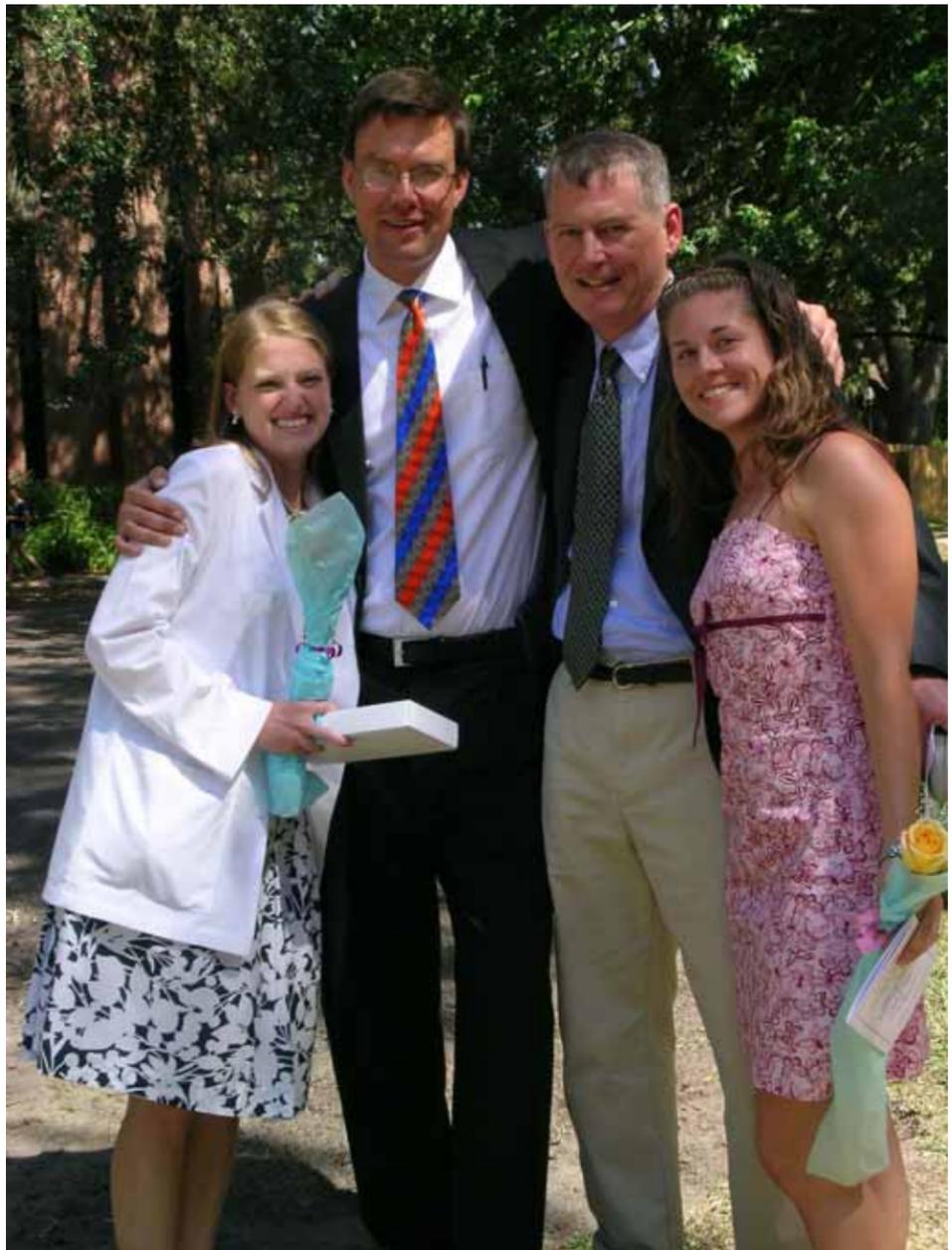


Sophomore student Mondrian Contreras beams after the ceremony with his twin boys.



Dean Glen Hoffsis, Dr. Ernest Godfrey Jr., sophomore veterinary students Alexa McDermott and Ashley Baker, and Florida Veterinary Medical Association president-elect Dr. Jerry Shank. Godfrey was the FVMA's 2008 "Champion of Veterinary Medicine" and in his honor, two scholarships were awarded this year to McDermott and Baker.

Photo by Sarah Carey



From left to right are sophomore student Grayson Cole, Dr. Calvin LeClear, Dr. Kevin Anderson and freshman veterinary student Jessica Mack.

Photo by Sarah Carey