

ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

VOLVet Vision

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2024



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Farewell from the Interim Dean



This summer marked a new era for the UT College of Veterinary Medicine. As a 43-year veteran of the college, I have witnessed and been a part of many changes. Now, we turn our attention to the arrival of our new dean, Paul Plummer.

Our college is on a strong trajectory with so many dedicated and talented colleagues in our faculty and staff ranks, outstanding students eager to learn and grow, and improved facilities and resources. As interim dean, it has been my pleasure to serve and to place the finishing touches on the work started by Dean Emeritus, Jim Thompson.

Like all of you, I care deeply about UTCVM, and I am excited about the future. There are very few words that are as strong in meaning as “care.” The people of UTCVM care. They care about what they do, and they care about their colleagues. Dr. Plummer is a very caring and genuine person who wants to be here. That is the most important thing in my book.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the college as interim dean. I enjoyed returning to my role as a “doggie doctor” and being among my colleagues and students. Good luck to Dr. Plummer in his new role, and I look forward to what is in store for the next 50 years of our great college.

Robert C. DeNovo
UTCVM Interim Dean Jan 1-July 21, 2024



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SPECIAL THANKS to the faculty, staff, students, and clients of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine for letting us share their stories.

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Jim Thompson Retires

BY SANDRA HARBISON

Thank You for 15 Years of Dedication and Service!



Dr. Jim Thompson looks over blueprints during construction of the John and Ann Tickle Small Animal Hospital expansion.

A tireless advocate for students, staff, faculty, and the entire veterinary profession, Jim Thompson retired as dean of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM) after serving for 15 years.

Among his greatest satisfactions has been watching students transform into outstanding veterinarians, prepared to address the world's grand challenges and advance animal, human, and environmental health. "I feel a great sense of pride when I walk down the hall and see the class graduation composites on the wall," Thompson reflects. He has been a part of educating 15 of those classes, more than 25% of all UTCVM graduates. "I'm proud that our veterinary students have been really well educated and have outperformed their national peers on average every year on the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam."

Thompson, who served as executive associate dean and professor in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine before coming to Tennessee, was handed a letter his first day on the job: the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education had moved UTCVM from full to limited accreditation. Thompson had read the college's accreditation self-study and knew deficiencies existed in the large animal hospital which hadn't had any significant updates or infrastructure improvements since it opened in the late 1970s. "Being placed on limited accreditation was a sudden wake-up call, and I immediately knew the first few years here would be more challenging than I anticipated," recalls Thompson. A \$20.9 million investment was needed to make the necessary large animal hospital upgrades. "Trying to raise more than \$20 million was difficult, and we are forever grateful to our legislators, the Farm Bureau, the Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, alumni, private donors,

and others who stepped up to help us meet the challenge. We created a premier facility to meet the medical and surgical needs of our equine and farm animal owners, held strong to protecting the food supply from farm to fork, and fulfilled our responsibility to deliver a strong teaching program for our veterinary students." The veterinary college subsequently regained full accreditation.

During his tenure as the veterinary college's fifth dean, Thompson has worked with five of the Institute's executive leaders. UT System President Emeritus Joe DiPietro hired him in the fall of 2008 and calls Thompson a proven preeminent higher education leader who has led the veterinary college with distinction even when faced with several large thorny problems such as an economic downturn and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic in addition to accreditation issues. "He overcame the adversity he faced through his leadership, business acumen, hard work, and teamwork. Few, if any, I know are such adept problem solvers as Jim," says DiPietro. "He has left an indelible legacy of a much improved college physical plant and I have watched the college's programs and reputation dramatically improve on his watch."

In 2022, a dozen long-time faculty and ten essential staff members with a combined 681 years of service to the university, took advantage of the UTK Faculty Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program. Many had played a role in the education of every veterinarian who had graduated from UTCVM. "When I arrived in 2008, we had many faculty who had been here since our college doors first opened to students in 1976, so I anticipated those individuals would gradually retire as the years clicked forward," says Thompson. "But to have so many talented, gifted people retire in one fell swoop was a huge challenge and is probably why I stayed through 15 years, trying to navigate that forward." The future will look different, but Thompson is confident the college will be an even better version of itself because of the vision and commitment of its founders.



Dr. Thompson, Dr. Kathy Kunkel (CVM '89), and UTIA Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President Keith Carver prepare for a hooding ceremony for the UTCVM graduating class of 2023.



Dr. Thompson with Kim Abney, artist who created the original artwork gifted to him by the college.

Alluding to Dr. Thompson's pole-vaulting career, the original artwork features a pole-vaulting Smokey surrounded by many UTCVM familiar faces cheering him on



students, faculty, staff, and supporters. He will be missed, but we also know this is a well-deserved retirement."

But of all the building and program expansions, Thompson says it is the people he has come to know that he will miss. "I have enjoyed working side-by-side with people from across the university and within the college. People who are passionate and committed to making a difference. Our veterinary family has always embraced the challenges we have faced, and we have worked hard to raise the bar when it comes to teaching our students, serving referral veterinarians,

Jeffrey Clark graduated from UTCVM in 1982 and serves on the college's Board of Advisors. He has known all the college's deans. At Thompson's last board meeting, Clark said he is a tough act to follow. "Jim's vision and the accomplishments he's steered forward are amazing. I hardly recognize the school because of all the things Jim has done, along with Dr. Bob DeNovo and others. The facilities and educational programs are amazing."

Thompson's vision helped position the college to continue to build on its successes. During his tenure, Thompson has overseen significant positive changes in the college, including successful sequential accreditations, growth in the professional veterinary and graduate degree programs, expansion and renovation of the Charles and Julie Wharton Large Animal Teaching Hospital, build-out of the second floor of the John and Ann Tickle Small Animal Hospital, creation of the college's recently opened Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), which includes teaching labs, the 130-seat Ann and John Tickle Lecture Hall, and a Clinical Skills Simulation Laboratory, and construction of two additional 130-seat lecture halls within the Agriculture and Natural Resources building on the agricultural campus.

Thompson recognized, even before his official hire, the importance of the college's ties to UTIA and to the College of Social Work. "Veterinary medicine must never forget its responsibilities to agriculture and food security. Our tight ties to agriculture are essential to the health of Tennessee. Likewise, our long, close relationship with the College of Social Work and the recent establishment of the Center for Veterinary Social Work will help ensure our veterinary profession is supported well into the future."

Keith Carver, senior vice chancellor and senior vice president at the UT Institute of Agriculture, praises Thompson's commitment to providing the best possible learning environment for students. "His indelible imprint will be felt for years to come, providing ongoing benefits to

providing compassionate care, and advancing discoveries that improve animal and human health. Animals are important to the fabric of our society. It's never been better to be part of the University of Tennessee and the Institute of Agriculture." 🐾



Dr. Thompson enjoys his custom UTCVM rocking chair presented to him at his UTIA retirement celebration. Joining him are Keith Carver, UTIA Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President; David White, Interim Dean, Herbert College of Agriculture; and Hongwei Xin, Dean of AgResearch.

A Life of Its Own

The History of UTCVM

BY DR. NANCY HOWELL

The move to establish a veterinary college in Tennessee really did have a life of its own. As early as 1967, interest was developing, although not yet developed within the university. Instead, agricultural and legislative leaders in the state were discussing it. “They deliberately did not try to contact us,” said former UT president Dr. Ed Boling in a 1993 interview. “Their idea was that ‘we’re going to do this because we think it ought to be done for the state and for the university, whether they want it or not.’”

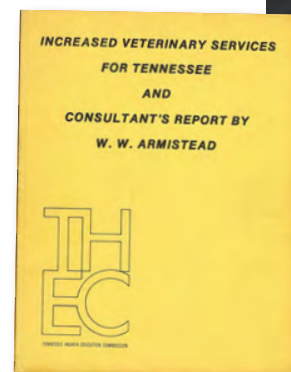
The establishment of a veterinary college was not on any UT wish list. “It was not on our list anywhere,” said Boling. Former UT president Dr. Joe Johnson agreed. “The creation of the veterinary school had a life of its own outside the university through the Farm Bureau and through legislators.” Typically, a new college would involve a lengthy approval process within the state and the university. “It really came out from almost a landslide among the agriculture community to us, to the legislature and to the governor,” said Johnson.

Between 1972 and 1976 a feasibility study was authorized, legislation establishing and funding a veterinary college was passed, a dean and initial faculty were hired, and the Class of 1979 was admitted, all before ground was broken for the new building in 1976.

What prompted this groundswell of support in an idea? The first veterinary school in Tennessee actually was the Collins Veterinary College in Nashville, which opened and closed the same year—1899. Before the UT college opened, Tennessee residents made use of contracts that allowed Tennessee students to pay in-state tuition at veterinary schools in other states, primarily Ohio and Alabama (Auburn and Tuskegee). Slots in those contract schools were limited. In 1966, Auburn only had slots for nine Tennessee students. Access to veterinarians was particularly acute in Tennessee’s rural counties, with 30 of the state’s 95 counties having no



Dean W.W. Armistead, University of Tennessee President Dr. Ed Boling, Tennessee Governor Ray Blanton, and University of Tennessee Chancellor Dr. Jack Reese participate in the groundbreaking of UTCVM in 1976.



A feasibility study by W.W. Armistead recommends the establishment of a veterinary school in Tennessee.

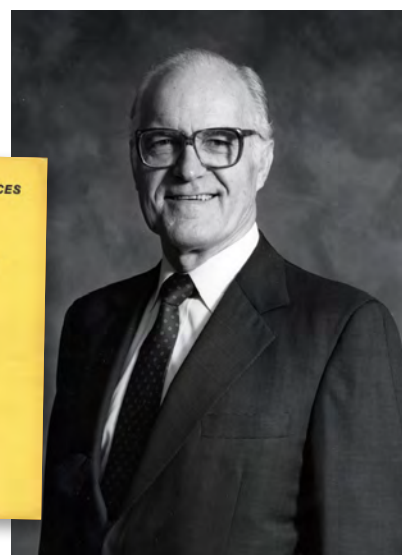
veterinarians practicing in the mid-1960s. Legislators were concerned, as was the Tennessee Farm Bureau.

Clyde York worked on his family’s farm in Overton County before attending UT as an agriculture student. He became an extension agent, later Tennessee Farm Bureau president, and a UT Trustee. The suggestion to the UT Board of Trustees to conduct a feasibility study establishing a veterinary school came from York. “If you had to give any one person credit, the lion’s share of credit goes to him,” said Johnson. Years later when the Clyde York Veterinary Medicine Building was dedicated, a surprised York said, “It was a mighty nice thing that happened to me, and I’m highly honored.”

The forces to create a veterinary school also included the Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, which established a committee in 1967 to review the possibility. Among those on the committee was Dr. George Merriman, a veterinarian who taught pre-veterinary courses in the animal science department. For years Merriman was the sole UT contact for all things veterinary medicine. A vote by the TVMA unanimously supported the establishment of the school. Next, the university contacted the American Association of Veterinary Medicine (AVMA), which provided a list of names of veterinarians with knowledge of developing a veterinary school.

A feasibility committee was established at UT in 1968 to conduct a three-day meeting on the possibility. Agriculture and veterinary deans from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Purdue University, Ohio State University, and the University of California met under the direction of Dr. Webster Pendergrass, then dean of UT’s College of Agriculture and later vice president of UT’s Institute of Agriculture. Kingsport veterinarian Dr. Tyler Young also served on the committee, which had a briefing by Dr. J. B. Jones, then a veterinarian with the UT Memorial Research Center and Hospital. He later became a department head at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine.

The final finding was a veterinary school at UT was indeed feasible, noting that proximity to Oak Ridge, the UT Medical Center, agriculture, and biomedical academic disciplines at UT all contributed to the finding. The final version of the report, however, was not released until 1972. Although there was little apparent progress at UT during the previous four years, that was not the case throughout the Southeast. In the late 1960s and



early 1970s, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia-Maryland, and North Carolina had established or were establishing veterinary schools.

Caution was displayed by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), which was discussing with Florida the possibility of a regional plan, with Tennessee veterinary students taking one year of courses in the UT College of Agriculture, followed by two years at Florida’s veterinary college, then a fourth-year clinical clerkship in Tennessee. The THEC executive director was also seeking more contract slots at the University of Georgia for Tennessee veterinary students. A headline in the Chattanooga Times in 1973 “Caution Urged on Veterinary Schools” prompted renewed progress for a Tennessee school. The Tennessee Legislature House Joint Resolution #235 directed THEC to study the feasibility and report back to the legislature by October 1973.

Enter Dr. Willis W. Armistead, who was hired to conduct the study. Armistead was the current dean of Michigan State University’s veterinary school. He was former dean of Texas A&M’s veterinary school, and past president of both the AVMA and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. He was the founding editor of the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, a World War II veteran who served in Italy, and was sought after for academic positions in other universities, including provost and president.

Armistead’s thorough study for THEC, the “Increased Veterinary Services for Tennessee and Consultant’s Report,” issued in November 1973 outlined options to increase the number of veterinarians in Tennessee. At the time, there were 13.5 per capita veterinarians per 100,000 people nationally. In Tennessee, the number was only nine per 100,000. Armistead looked at the availability of increasing contract spaces at other states; he reviewed the possibility of a veterinary school with three potential sizes from 60–100 students to jump-start an increase in numbers of practicing veterinarians. The case was made that establishing the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine was the direction the state and the university should pursue.

Four months later, legislation was introduced and passed less than three months later with only one dissenting vote on Mar. 11, 1974. Nearly everyone wanted to be a sponsor of the legislation. A dilemma developed, however, over the creation of a medical school at East Tennessee State University. Winfield Dunn, then Tennessee governor, had vetoed the ETSU medical school, only to have his veto overturned by the legislature. Dunn, a dentist, supported the veterinary school. His decision to support a veterinary school in East Tennessee, but not a human medical school nearby created political pressure for the governor.



UTCVM founding faculty. Left to right, first row: Drs. Alfred Legendre, Wayne Baldwin, E. Dean Gage, Arthur Brown, and Hyram Kitchen. Second row: Drs. Roland Johnson, Desmond Doyle, Gerald Bratton, R.L. Michael, Robert Sholtens, and David Brian. Third row: Drs. Royce Roberts, Ralph Hall, William Grau Jr., Jack Oliver, and C.F. Reed. Fourth row: Drs. D.J. Krahwinkel, Joe Oden, H.T. Barron, and dean W.W. Armistead. Not pictured: Dr. Don McGavin.

Boling and Johnson described a memorable meeting with the governor in 1974 in which Dunn asked them to withdraw the legislation. Boling said: “Governor, you’re giving us credit for having a lot more power than we have.” Dunn left the room, but later when the bill passed, he supported the veterinary school effort entirely, Boling added.

With the legislation passed and funding allocated to start the college and construct the building, a dean was needed. Pendergrass, now vice president of the Institute of Agriculture, went to Boling’s office in 1974 to suggest a founding dean: Armistead. Boling was skeptical that the distinguished Armistead would consider leaving Michigan State to come to Tennessee. But he did. “One of the reasons I came here was that it appears to me that there was such an unusual amount of support for a new program,” said Armistead. The legislature appropriated \$17 million to construct the building, establishing the veterinary college as a budgetary line item, in part, said Johnson, to protect it. Armistead began hiring faculty and staff, overseeing the architecture and construction, while also overseeing the process of evaluating student applicants.

The early development of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine had many supporters. Armistead put the vision in motion by hand-selecting faculty, many of whom he had known throughout the country. “He knew professors all over the country who wanted to join him,” said Boling. “It was a good college right from the start.” Joe Johnson concurred. “It did have a life of its own and has been a tremendous success story. It really has.”

Graduates recite the veterinary oath at the college’s first commencement ceremony in 1979.



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This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. In 1974, near-unanimous legislation passed the House and Senate establishing UTCVM, and we are spending this year reflecting and celebrating.

For five decades, supporters have helped us make remarkable strides in advancing veterinary medicine, discovery, and education. Your generosity will help ensure our college is poised for success as we start our next 50 years.

Thank you for your support!

Dr. Robert DeNovo

Q&A with the Interim Dean

Why did you choose to work at UTCVM?

I got a call from Al Legendre in 1981 about a position in Internal Medicine at UTCVM. My residency at the University of Georgia was 2 months from finishing, time and money were running short, and I was a phone call away from accepting a position elsewhere. I had recently met Al and a few other UTCVM faculty at a meeting, at which time they assured me the internal medicine group at UT was rock solid with no open positions in sight, so I was surprised to get that call. I deferred my decision for the other position I was considering for a few weeks so I could interview at UT, primarily because I had been told such good things about the new veterinary college in Knoxville, and because my interactions with Al and others had been so positive.

When I walked into UTCVM on the first day of my interview, I got a warm and genuine reception from everyone I met, be they faculty, staff, or students. People were working together and had an enthusiasm for teaching that was palpable. What impressed me most was the culture of collegiality and mutual respect. Everyone was smiling and looked like they were having fun. Of course, I figured everyone was on their best behavior, but during the next few days as I met with more people, it became clear that a special community existed here. People cared for each other and cared about teaching, which was repeatedly referred to as “Job #1.” That concept was reinforced by the students I met who, without exception, said that the faculty truly cared about teaching and learning and that they cared about the students. That impressed me. This was a special group of people with a shared vision of purpose, and I knew that if offered, I would accept. We had no family or friends in Tennessee, and Knoxville was a long way from home and family, but I went with my gut. I wanted to be a part of their vision to educate a new generation of veterinarians and enjoy doing so.

What makes UTCVM special?

Despite our growth, the evolution of our programs, and the challenges

that are inevitable in a changing environment, the things that first attracted me to UTCVM still exist. We have remained true to our mission to advance animal and human health through education, discovery, and exceptional veterinary care. The words in the college logo are knowledge, compassion, and discovery. If there were room for another word or two to describe the character of our college and the common thread that all who have been a part of UTCVM share, I would add family and care.

What are you most proud of?

That’s a tough one, but the first thing that comes to mind is something that I already mentioned... Teaching continues to be Job #1. I have no doubt that will continue for the next 50 years. Something I don’t think is as appreciated as it should be is how the college has used resources. UTCVM has always been lean, particularly compared to peer institutions. But we continue to develop quality programs that are well-recognized by peers. Our graduates, house officers, and graduate students have always been competitive, sought-after, and successful. They have not been shy about expressing their gratitude for the education that they received here.

What was the college like when you came on board?

It was 1981, so the college had just graduated its 2nd class. Camaraderie was strong, many faculty were fresh out of graduate and residency programs, and we were all learning together how to build a strong educational program. We had about 40 faculty, which was lean compared to peer institutions. Considering our responsibilities to develop, from the ground up, a new curriculum, a hospital and referral services, new research initiatives, continuing education and outreach programs, and all the required administrative functions, we had our hands full. We relied heavily on each other. For me, that was the best part of being here. The team concept was strong, and I knew others had my back.

The facilities were spacious, new, and modern. We would joke, “What are we going to do with all this empty space?” There was ample teaching space, but the building was designed to accommodate a 3-year curriculum with a class size of 60, so there was no room for growth or to accommodate new and innovative teaching methods.

A few “old-school” administrative traditions were still in play. For instance, the Sequoyah Room was off-limits to everyone except faculty... not unlike a high school teacher’s lounge...a “members-only” inner sanctum for faculty to take a break (and have a smoke!). Security was non-existent. None of the CVM’s external doors were locked. Many faculty and staff resisted when we finally started to lock doors after-hours. Doing so would be inconvenient!

Technology was pretty fundamental: no computers, no pagers, and no cell phones. Communication within the hospital occurred via intercom, wall-mounted phones with long cords that could stretch halfway down the clinic corridors, and wall-mounted two-way radios, appropriately referred to as squawk-boxes because of their shrill sound. The entire hospital was equipped with these devices. Our preferred



method for communication method was face-to-face...inefficient, but remarkably effective. Sophisticated lecture technology consisted of 2x2 slide presentations with overhead projection (dual projection for the more adventurous faculty) and recently developed VCR movies that required us to roll clunky portable TVs into the lecture halls. We had no instructional support.

The curriculum was on a three-year, round-the-clock schedule. Students started in June and emerged as veterinarians 36 months later. They had no summer break and minimal time off to transition from classroom work to the clinics. It was tough. We began a traditional 4-year curriculum in 1989, which added another class of students. That’s when the big squeeze began. We had to convert research space into lecture space and storage rooms into teaching rooms, which started a cascade of other renovations that continues to this day.

What were some of the challenges you faced?

Limited resources, particularly staffing in the hospital and support services. Holiday “breaks” were anything but a break for clinicians. I remember many breaks when Becky Gompf was at the front desk managing client phone calls and admissions/discharges, Al Legendre was filling prescriptions in the pharmacy, Jim Brace was managing ICU, DJ Krahwinkel was serving as anesthesiologist-surgeon-hospital director, and I was shoveling snow off the hospital steps... all while managing hospitalized patients. Parking was as much of a challenge then as it is today. No complaints, however. We made it work, and we made it fun.

What was your favorite position held at UTCVM?

Without a doubt, being in the clinics working elbow-to-elbow with students and residents was the best. No matter how long or tough of a day it had been, if there was one moment during the day when that light came on in a student’s mind when I could see that they “got it,” it was a good day. Mentoring residents took that sense of satisfaction to an entirely different level. We had stellar residents. It was tough staying a step ahead of them. Truth be told, they mentored me.

What advice do you have for new students?

Everything you will be exposed to during your time at UTCVM, be it educational, personal, or somewhere in between, is a teachable moment—take advantage. Take advantage of opportunities that are available outside of your curriculum. Participate in CAIT, HABIT, and social activities. Volunteer in the hospital. Apply for the summer research program. Don’t hesitate to ask for help. Most importantly, have fun.

How has UTCVM changed and what do you see in the future for UTCVM?

So much has changed... where to start?

Faculty & classes were predominantly male... about 75%, and our college population was much smaller. Classes were 60 – 65 students each. The faculty was less than half of the current size; everyone’s photo could fit on one composite. The staff, particularly hospital, laboratory, and research staff, was very lean. We had 10 residents in SACS, 6 in LACS, 2 in Pathobiology, and no interns. Currently, the veterinary medical center has a total of 49 residents and 18 interns. There were a handful of graduate students, but no formal graduate program existed within the college.

The Veterinary Medical Center did not exist as a unified entity. Large Animal Clinical Sciences (originally Rural Practice), Small Animal Clinical Sciences (Urban Practice), and Avian & Exotics (Environmental



Practice) operated as separate hospital units. Radiology was a shared service. Technologies such as ultrasound, CT, MRI, and the linear accelerator were way out of our financial reach; some predicted that we would never enjoy such capabilities. Services such as Pharmacy, Medical Records, Computer Operations, and the Business Office operated as independent units; Hospital Operations did not exist. And Client Services was much different. Rural and Urban Practices operated their own reception desks and communications. Dictation and word transcription (typewriters) were considered to be an advanced method of communication.

The CVM’s Office of Research did not exist. Research programs were in the early stages of development and most were located on the main UTK campus. And because the CVM Dean’s office was located in Morgan Hall, sightings of the Dean anywhere in the CVM were an infrequent occurrence!

Perhaps the most re-defining changes have occurred through the development of unique and innovative programs developed at UTCVM that go far beyond the scope of veterinary education that existed when I came to UTCVM. Programs such as Veterinary Social Work, the Master Teacher Program, Human Animal Bond in Tennessee, Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee, the Vet Tech Intern Program, the Center for Agriculture and Food Security and Preparedness, Public Health, and the One Health Initiative have added to the depth and richness to UTCVM’s educational and research profiles. Other veterinary college’s aspire to develop and pattern such programs.

The most palpable change that has impacted everyone here is the growth of our building which has almost doubled in size. And more growth is to come in the near future. Doing so will allow continued advancement of educational, research, and hospital programs. Precisely what that will look like is hard to predict in an environment where the needs for medical, social, agricultural, and economic health seem to change daily. But our college has a history of being creative, agile, and responsive. I have no doubt that this will continue, and in doing so, UTCVM will continue to be relevant and positively impact societal needs in Tennessee and beyond. 🐾



Alumnus Returns to Take Post at UT College of Veterinary Medicine

BY LISA STEARNS

Welcome Back, Dean Plummer!

The sixth dean of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine is Dr. Paul J. Plummer, DVM, PhD. Prior to joining UT, Plummer served as the associate dean of research and graduate studies for the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University as well as a professor and Anderson Endowed Chair in Veterinary Sciences in the Department of Veterinary Diagnostic and Production Animal Medicine.

Plummer attributes his academic career in part to his early experiences growing up in both East Tennessee and Pennsylvania. As a youth, he spent his summers working cattle and goats on his family's farm in Sevierville and lived there full-time during his undergraduate studies and while attending veterinary school. He also helped his uncle on veterinary farm calls. As a third-generation University of Tennessee, Knoxville, alumnus, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in microbiology in 1996 and earned his DVM from UTCVM in 2000. He and his family maintain active farms today.

"I'm thrilled one of our alumni with such a distinguished career leads our nationally recognized College of Veterinary Medicine," said University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Chancellor Donde Plowman. "Each year, the college graduates compassionate medical professionals committed to providing the best care for their patients. Dr. Plummer's own practice has taken him all over the U.S. and world, and we couldn't be more excited to welcome him back home to Rocky Top."

Plummer joined the College of Veterinary Medicine as its sixth dean in July. The UT College of Veterinary Medicine was founded in 1974 and in 2024 is celebrating 50 years of service to the citizens of Tennessee and to the science of veterinary medicine. It is one of only 33 accredited colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States.

UT Institute of Agriculture's senior vice chancellor and senior vice president, Keith Carver shared, "I am very excited about both the professional and personal experience Paul brings to the role of dean. He is an innovative thinker, collaborative partner, and believes passionately in the land-grant mission."


"Early in my childhood I fondly remember attending field days with my grandfather on what is now the Northeast Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center," said Plummer. "That was the first of many interactions I would have with UTIA, and it laid an indelible image in my mind of what it meant to work to improve the lives of rural communities and agricultural producers around the state."

Upon completion of his DVM at UT, Plummer spent a year at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine in a rotating internship in large animal medicine and surgery. Rather than stay for his large animal internal medicine residency, he returned to Knoxville for three years as a resident in large animal internal medicine. There he saw cases in the hospital, and assisted private-practice veterinarians in the area with consults or continuing education classes.

From Knoxville, Plummer's academic path took him to Iowa State, where he completed a PhD. in veterinary microbiology in 2009 and then accepted an invitation to serve as an assistant professor with clinical and teaching responsibilities. From there, he progressed to full professor and was named the Anderson Endowed Chair in Veterinary Science. An alumnus of the Food Systems Leadership Institute, Plummer's funded research totals more than \$35 million.

Plummer also serves as the executive director of the National Institute of Antimicrobial Resistance Research and Education (NIAMRRE), a national membership organization of more than 50 academic, industry, and affiliate stakeholders hosted by Iowa State University. He looks forward to continued involvement with NIAMRRE and to the opportunity to engage UT more broadly in those efforts. Plummer also serves as the Chair of the Presidential Advisory Council on Combatting Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria (PACCARB), which provides recommendations to the federal government related to the national response and policy regarding this critical health challenge.

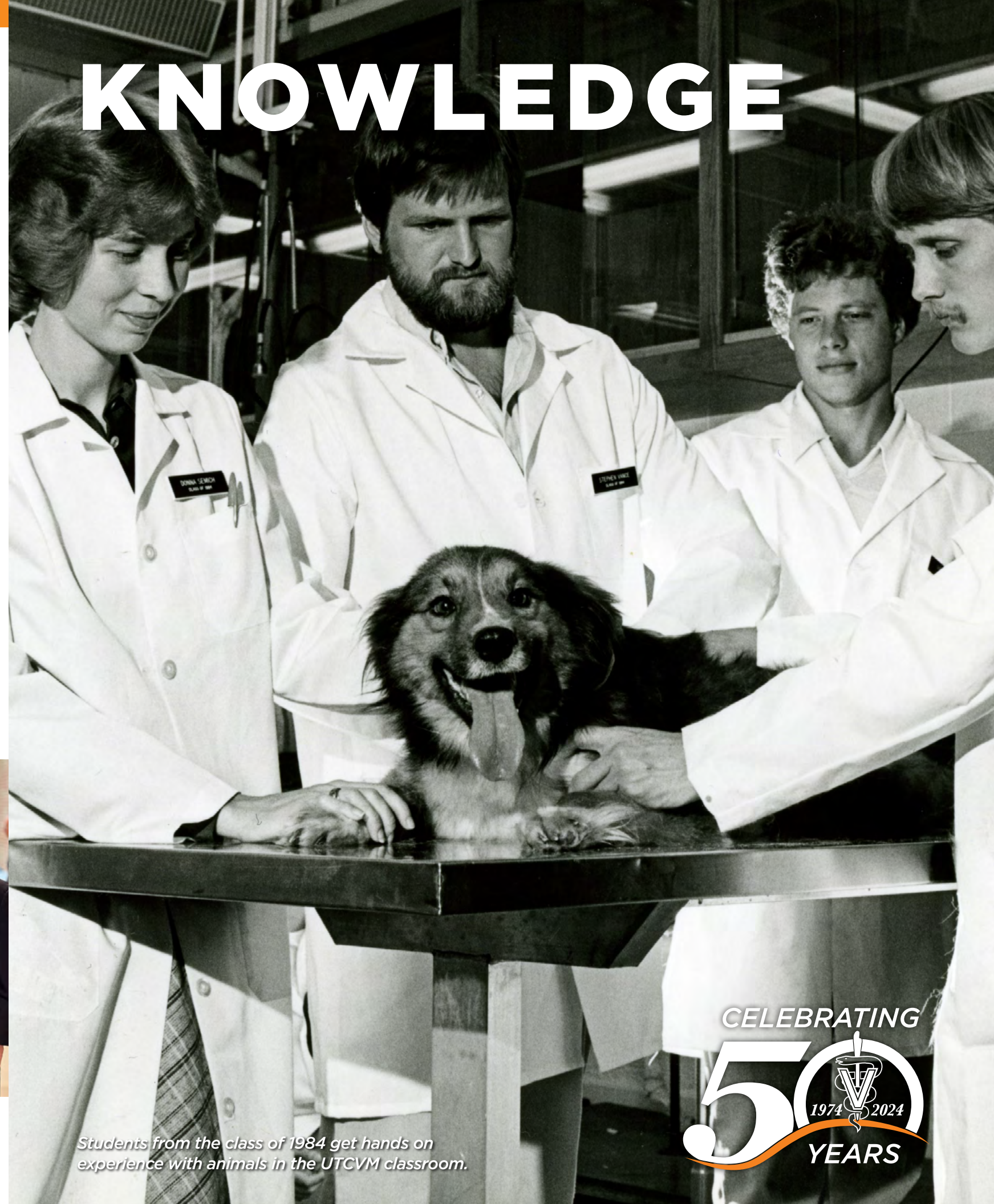
Among his other notable academic achievements, Plummer is a 2004 diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine in large animal internal medicine; a 2014 diplomate in the European College of Small Ruminant Health Management; and a 2021 American Veterinary Epidemiology Society honorary diplomate.

Plummer's wife, Dr. Cassandra Long Plummer, is a member of the UTCVM class of 2002. She and their entire family are excited to return to East Tennessee. 



Dr. Plummer is pictured with Drs. Al Legendre, Becky Gompf, Bob DeNovo, and Keith Carver at the April meet-and-greet.

KNOWLEDGE



Students from the class of 1984 get hands on experience with animals in the UTCVM classroom.



The Difference Orange Makes BY DR. DENNIS GEISER & DR. MARCY SOUZA

In the beginning, the focus of outreach for the college centered around developing a strong stakeholder base. These partnerships would be the foundation of the college's success in achieving its vision and mission to provide knowledge, compassion, and discovery beyond its walls. Early in the college's life, because there was not a large alumni base, the targets for outreach included veterinary students, practitioners, the Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, Tennessee Farm Bureau, commodity groups, the UT Institute of Agriculture, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and animal associations and clubs.



Dr. John Henton with students pictured in the first CVM yearbook in 1979.

In 1978, Dr. John Henton began an organized effort to provide life-long learning opportunities for veterinarians in Tennessee and the region. His goal was for the college to have at least one continuing education opportunity, large or small, per month for stakeholders. Dr. Henton and his wife, Cathy, significantly contributed to the bond between the college and its growing alumni base by bringing faculty and students together professionally, academically, and socially. He and the college's meeting planner, Barbara Campbell, were always an available, comprehensive resource for students, alumni, and veterinarians. On football Saturdays, you could always find John and Cathy at the UTCVM tailgate in one of the college's parking lots. They always opened their home to students who couldn't make it home for the holidays. Today, the two main continuing education conferences that were initiated during Dr. Henton's tenure as outreach coordinator, continue to be held—the Henton Conference (termed the "Last Chance Seminars") and the Annual Conference.

Today, the college's lifelong learning opportunities have been joined by an array of other significant outreach programs, including, but not limited to, Human-Animal Bond in Tennessee (HABIT), Veterinary Social Work (VSW), Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT), Suicide Awareness Prevention, and the summer student experiences. Our outreach efforts are not only felt across Tennessee, but our footprint has grown as we impact the health of people and animals worldwide.

In 2023, the Center for Veterinary Social Work was launched with impacts across the globe. The college has hosted scholars from Argentina, the Philippines, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania since 2022 and is hosting a cohort of Filipino veterinary educators in fall 2024. We are also sending

our students around the globe to learn about zoo medicine in Belize, rural medicine in Argentina, access to care and One Health in the Galapagos, and wildlife rehabilitation in South Africa.

In the summer of 2014, Dr. Courtney Dickson (CVM Class of 2016) spent



Dr. Henton teaching students at the CVM Cherokee Farms campus.

two months in rural South Africa working with veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators as a rising third-year veterinary student. The experience changed her life and she wanted to pay it forward to future veterinary students. Traveling to the other side of the planet can be daunting. Dr. Dickson wanted to remove this barrier so UTCVM students could work with South African wildlife, visit Kruger National Park, and experience a different culture.

Dr. Dickson began her South Africa Veterinary Experience (SAVE) program for UTCVM first- and second-year students in 2019 and has brought groups every summer – with a few years' break due to the pandemic. Students travel to South Africa as a group with Dr. Dickson, spend two weeks working at Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, and then spend a week on safari in Kruger National Park. Over the years, 41 students have participated in the program. In 2024, the non-credit program was officially offered as a UTCVM volunteer abroad opportunity and 20 students participated. Dr. Marcy Souza, associate dean for outreach and global engagement, also traveled with the students in 2024 to learn more about the program and serve as a left-side-of-the-road safari driver in Kruger National Park.



Dr. Courtney Dickson, adjunct clinical instructor, (first row, second from left) and Dr. Marcy Souza, professor & associate dean of outreach, (back row, center) with UTCVM students, volunteers, and Kenso the lion in South Africa.

Everyone was very excited because Gloria, an orphaned baby hippo, was also at the rehab center. Gloria was found abandoned a few months earlier. She loves her bottle and her sheep friend Moonie. Eventually, Gloria will be placed on a reserve because although she was cute and sweet at this age, that won't last forever!

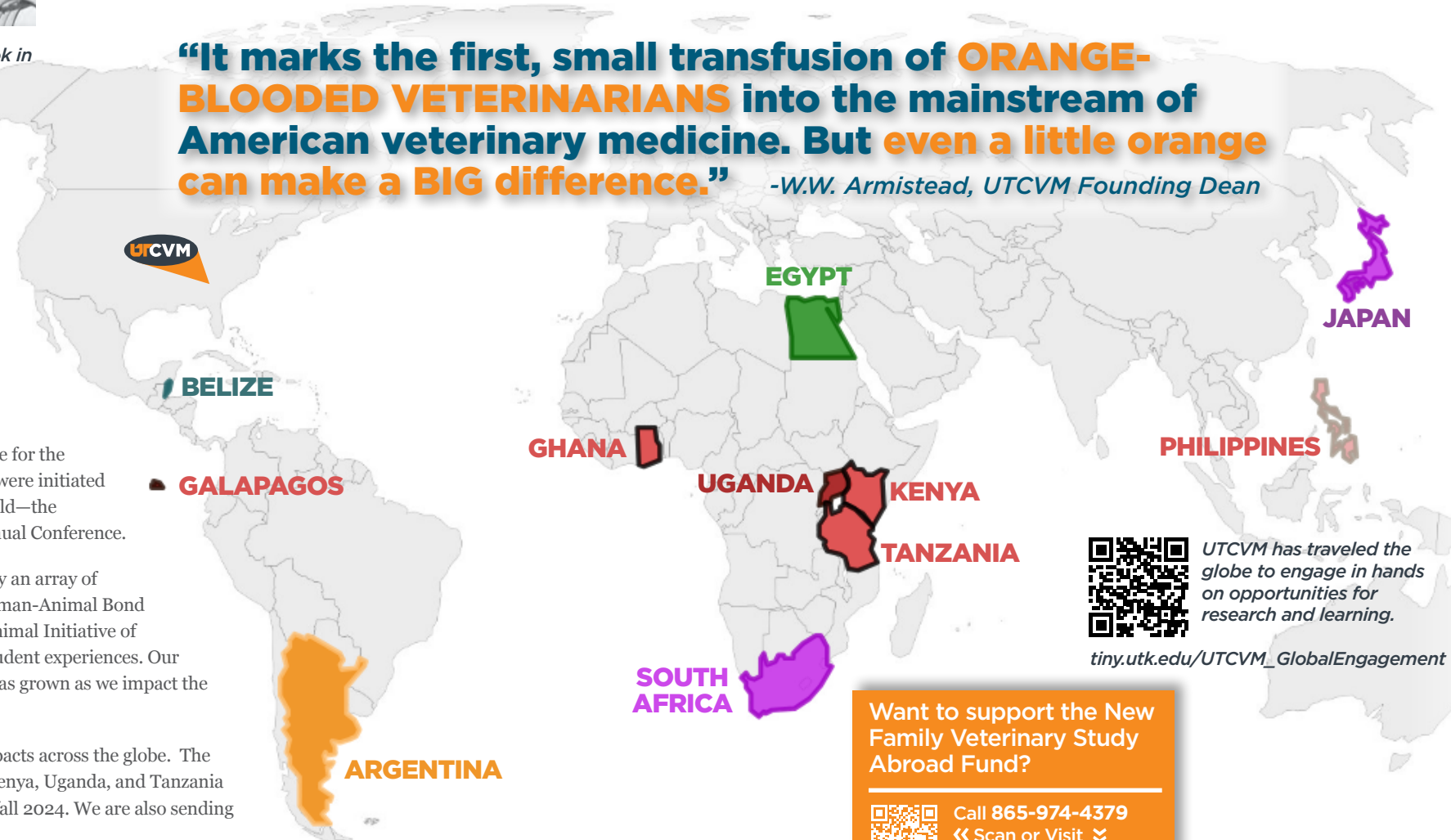
Much of the time at Moholoholo was spent taking care of non-releasable wild animals that are now part of education programs. These animals include numerous bird species, little and big cats, hyenas, African wild dogs, and honey badgers. Students also design and implement enrichment activities for the animals. When possible, veterinary procedures are performed. In 2024, Baghera the leopard was neutered by Dr. Dickson, and Kenso the lion had wound care provided by Dr. Souza.

The SAVE program is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for UTCVM students to travel to South Africa and work with native wildlife without the stress of being graded. Has anyone else hung out with a baby hippo for hours at a time? Dr. Dickson plans to take another group of students in the summer of 2025 and hopefully for years after. Where will we be in the next 50 years? 🐾

Dr. Souza with a baby hippo during a trip to South Africa.



"It marks the first, small transfusion of ORANGE-BLOODED VETERINARIANS into the mainstream of American veterinary medicine. But even a little orange can make a BIG difference." -W.W. Armistead, UTCVM Founding Dean



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Answers, Big and Small

UTCVM Faculty Answer Questions in The Conversation

The Conversation is a nonprofit, independent news organization dedicated to unlocking the knowledge of experts for the public good. They publish trustworthy and informative articles written by academic experts for the general public and edited by their team of journalists.

Why do cats' eyes glow in the dark?

- Chloe, age 10, Barkhamsted, Connecticut

Cats and many other animals, including most dogs, can reflect light from their eyes. That's why cats' eyes will usually shine brightly in photos taken in a dimly lit room or glow when illuminated in the dark by a flashlight or a car's headlights.

Species whose eyes glow have evolved to see better in low light because they either forage or need to look out for predators throughout the night, or they do most of their hunting at dawn and dusk. In fact, domesticated cats can see in conditions that are only 16% as bright as what people require.

Cats accomplish this because their pupils – the openings that appear black in the middle of their eyes that widen and narrow in response to light conditions – are special. Pupils operate like windows, with bigger ones letting more light into the eye. And a cat's pupils can become up to 50% larger than human pupils in dim light. They also have a higher number of a specific type of light-sensing cell in the back of their eyes than we do. These cells, called rods, catch low-level light.

The tapetum lucidum

In addition to having large pupils and lots of rods, cats have something people don't: a tapetum lucidum, a Latin medical term that translates to "bright or shining tapestry." The tapetum lucidum is also known as "eyeshine."

It's located in the back of the eye behind the retina – a thin layer of tissue that receives light, converts the light to an electrical signal and

sends this signal to the brain to interpret the image.

A cat's tapetum lucidum is made up of cells with crystals that, like a mirror, reflect light back to the retina. This gives the retina a second chance to absorb more light.

The feline tapetum lucidum is special because its reflective compound is riboflavin, a type of vitamin B. Riboflavin has unique properties that amplify light to a specific wavelength that cats can see well, which greatly increases the sensitivity of the retina to low light.

In cats, the tapetum most often glows yellow-green or yellow-orange, but the color varies, just like their irises – the colorful part of their eye, which can be green, yellow, blue or golden. Variation in tapetum color is not unique to cats and can be found in lots of species.

Most dogs' eyes will glow in dark spaces when a light shines on them.

Other animals' eyes glow too

Many other animals that need to see at night have a tapetum lucidum. That includes predators and prey alike, everything from wild foxes to farmed sheep and goats.

The tapetum lucidum is also useful to fish, dolphins and other aquatic animals, because it helps them see better in murky, dark water.

In the last year, two UTCVM faculty were asked to answer questions as a part of The Conversation's Curious Kids section. Curious Kids features interesting answers from experts to questions children have from all around the world.



In land animals, the tapetum is found in the top half of the eye behind the retina, because they need to see what is on the ground best. But in aquatic animals the tapetum takes up most of the eye, because they need to see all around them in the dark.

Like cats, the lemur, a small primate, and its close relative, the bush baby – also known as a "night monkey" – also have a superreflective tapetum made with riboflavin.

Even though a lot of animals have eyeshine, some small domesticated dogs lack this trait. Most animals with blue eyes and white or light-colored coats have also lost this trait.

So don't be alarmed if your dog's or cat's eyes don't glow. The list of other species without a tapetum lucidum includes pigs, birds, reptiles and most rodents and primates – including humans.

This bush baby can probably see better at night than you can.

Is there a downside?

Unfortunately, animals with a tapetum lucidum sacrifice some visual acuity for their ability to see in dim light.

That's because all that light bouncing around as it reflects off the tapetum can make what they see a little fuzzier. So, a cat needs to be seven times closer to an object to see it as sharply as a person would in a brightly lit place.

But don't worry, I'm sure your cat would rather see clearly at night than read a book. 🐾

– Dr. Braidee Foote
UTCVM Ophthalmology

<https://theconversation.com/why-do-cats-eyes-glow-in-the-dark-179531>

How many bones do penguins have?

- Sawyer, age 7, Media, Pennsylvania

As a zoo and wildlife veterinarian, I sometimes take care of penguins – both in the wild and in aquariums and zoos.

I'm always fascinated when I have to take X-rays of an injured bird that might have a broken bone, is sick or having difficulty moving. While penguins might look like simple, torpedo-shaped ice-waddlers, their bodies are actually quite complex.

Even though they look nothing like people or animals you may encounter every day – like dogs and cats – they have similar skeletons and joints. They even have knees and elbows, but have about half as many bones. A human skeleton is made up of 206 bones. A penguin has just 112 in its whole body.

All birds evolved for flight, with feathers, wings and a body that allows them to soar high in the sky. To attain liftoff, over time penguins evolved to have fewer bones in their skeletons.

How did they do that? Some of their bones actually fused together, including their ankles. Unlike humans, who have two main ankle bones, a bird's leg bone connects directly with its feet and toes.

Birds also have fewer bones in their spines than many animals. Their lower back bones joined together into just one bone, called the synsacrum. The only other animals to have this type of backbone were the dinosaurs. For the birds, this helps them keep their bodies in a horizontal position without tiring out their back muscles while flying or swimming.

Bird bones in general are unique. They are lightweight and hollow, which allows the animal to take flight. Because birds need a lot of oxygen for an intense activity like flying, their bones are filled with spaces for air and they also have nine air sacs that surround their lungs.

But wait, you might be thinking, "Penguins don't fly at all." That's right, they evolved for a life on land and in the water, and they have a unique skeleton compared to many other birds.

The first penguins, which appeared shortly after the dinosaurs went extinct about 66 million years ago, were flightless. Ten million years later, they had become great swimmers. Present-day species spend up to 75% of their time in the ocean. That meant they had to grow heavier so they could dive underwater to hunt for food.

Penguins developed dense, hefty bones that don't have the air pockets that flying birds have. That helped make up for the air sacs



THE CONVERSATION

around their lungs. Their bulky bones keep them from floating up to the water's surface, like a scuba diver who straps on a weight belt to submerge.

Penguins' wings are also different because these birds need to swim, not soar into the sky. Penguins' wings morphed into what look like short, flat, stiff fins that don't bend like flying birds' do. They also have fewer bones than other birds.

Their wings act like paddles, helping them race through the water at high speeds. Gentoo penguins can swim up to 22 mph. That's much faster than Olympic champion swimmer Michael Phelps, who broke a world record for humans at 5.5 mph.

The combination of hefty bones and powerful finlike wings allows penguins to descend quickly and dive incredibly deep to hunt for fish, krill and other food. An emperor penguin can go down to at least 1,500 feet, which is about the length of five football fields.

Thanks to their fewer number of dense bones and other cool adaptations, penguins are champions of open water. 🐧

– Dr. Julie Sheldon
UTCVM Zoological Medicine

<https://theconversation.com/how-many-bones-do-penguins-have-170252>

The Evolution of Teaching the Teachers

BY DR. MISTY BAILEY



MMSU welcomed Bailey with a guest of honor neck sash that she wore while delivering a faculty development talk on strategies for effective curriculum and assessment.

The creed of the Volunteer is “One that beareth a torch shadoweth oneself to give light to others.” Although they most certainly did not realize it at the time, Drs. India Lane, Nancy Howell, and Michael Sims sparked a pilot light in veterinary education in 2008 with the establishment of the college’s Master Teacher Program. They understood that most teachers in veterinary colleges were expert veterinarians but desired growth in teaching practices. Today, the Master Teacher Program torch spreads a Big Orange glow throughout the world.

The program was initiated to support the highest quality of instruction within the various education missions of the college. Even after Howell and Sims retired, monthly sessions and intermittent workshops continued with the main goal of strengthening teaching and student learning. In 2019, the Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture enabled that goal to extend to East African veterinary schools. Through a seed grant from the Smith Center, Drs. Marcy Souza and Misty Bailey worked with Lane to package a 4-day teaching workshop in Uganda. Programming focused on essential concepts of effective teaching, such as how people learn, assessing learning, and designing educational sessions, among others. Twelve faculty members from four East African countries attended the workshop.

By 2020, the team had repackaged the workshop into an online certificate program for faculty, interns, residents, and veterinary nurses. To date, 49 college faculty and staff have enrolled. A similar self-paced certificate program in Fundamentals of Veterinary Classroom Teaching launched in 2021 and became available to those outside the college.

Our faculty and staff’s experience and reach with providing development in veterinary education positioned the college and the Smith Center to host two successful Faculty Exchange Programs for the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service—African Veterinary Sciences in 2022 and the Philippines in 2023. Souza, the coordinator for the program, welcomed another cohort of 10 faculty fellows from the Philippines to spend 4 months at UT this fall.

These USDA exchange programs focus on enhancing the teaching ability of agricultural educators from institutions in developing countries. Alumni of the program are integral in preparing the next generation of veterinary professionals to better understand the global agricultural marketplace and support evidence-based decision-making and trade policies. An expectation is that faculty mentors from the UT Institute of Agriculture will later visit the veterinary schools of their respective mentees to continue conversations and collaborations.

A bonus of the USDA exchanges has been our ability to share the online Master Teacher Program certificate with colleagues of program alumni. Who could have imagined that a flicker of passion for veterinary education could help kindle real-life solutions for 92 veterinary educators from eight countries around the world? ↻

Bailey discussed potential future collaborations with university leadership, as well as faculty and leadership from the colleges of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and Agriculture, Food and Sustainable Development (CAFSD). L-R: CVM Dean Charlie Batin, Prof. Roco M. Gearhart, Prof. Samantha Aquino (USDA fellow from Benguet State University), Anik Vasington (Eastern Connecticut State University), Bailey, University President Shirley C. Agrupis, Vice President for Academic Affairs Prima Fe R. Franco, Prof. Joan Rarogal (USDA fellow), Prof. Arlyn T. Chokowen, CVM Dean Melvin A. Bagot.



Tennessee Hosts Educational Symposium

BY DR. MISTY BAILEY & DR. NANCY HOWELL

Skills for Clinical Teaching

The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM) hosted a three-day Veterinary Educator Boot Camp in Knoxville with more than 80 participants from 10 regional veterinary schools attending. Sponsored by the Southeast Veterinary Education Consortium (SEVEC), the event featured sessions on student learning in clinical settings, creating successful clinical rounds, veterinary nurses in clinical education, developing practice readiness skills, professionalism, incorporation of veterinary social work in clinical education, and other topics.

“Designed for the early career instructor, this conference had an array of topics related to clinical education,” said Dr. India Lane, current chair of the consortium and associate dean at UTCVM. “We included a pre-conference workshop on peer review of teaching and even a ‘dolphin tank’ educational research competition,” she said.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Darcy Shaw, professor emeritus at Atlantic Veterinary College, Prince Edward Island, whose presentation was entitled “Things Were Fine ‘Til They Weren’t—Giving Good Feedback.” Keynote speaker Dr. Jeannette Guerrasio, previously a professor at the



Keynote speakers Drs. Jeanette Guerrasio and Darcy Shaw and host Dr. India Lane (right) pose after the conference.



Conference participants engage with facilitator Dr. Katie Sheats, a presenter from North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

University of Colorado Department of Medicine discussed “Remediation in Clinical Education: Diagnosing and Treating the Struggling Learner.”

The Dolphin Tank Competition encourages and cultivates collaborative educational research among SEVEC members and institutions. Written proposals were followed by three-minute pitches to the attending audience. Two grants were funded after the presentations: to investigators Dr. Victoria Morris from Lincoln Memorial University and Dr. Amy Snyder from North Carolina State University.

SEVEC was established in 2018 and includes members, leaders, and financial support from 10 southeastern veterinary colleges. It receives financial management assistance from the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges. ↻

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Opening Doors BY DR. NANCY HOWELL

Summer Learning Experiences for Aspiring Veterinarians

A UT College of Veterinary Medicine program that began in 1993 to provide opportunities to high school students to learn about veterinary medicine is now in its 31st year. The Veterinary Summer Experience Program was initiated by CVM Dean Dr. Mike Shires and Dr. Katie High, retired academic vice president of the UT System.

Since its establishment, more than 250 Tennessee high school students have completed the program, which selects students with a veterinary interest, matches them with veterinary practitioners in their area, then brings the students to UT for a week of clinical and other educational activities at the veterinary college.

The early program was specifically for African American students. Funding came from the funds resulting from the federal desegregation lawsuit involving Rita Sanders Geier, a Tennessee State University professor who was part of a large class action suit against the state of Tennessee. The so-called consent decree provided funds to develop several programs, scholarships and collaborations with TSU until the final settlement resulted in 2006. Geier, who served as associate to the UT chancellor from 2007-2011, will receive an honorary doctorate of laws from UT in the near future.

After U.S. Supreme Court rulings prohibiting race as a selection criteria, the summer program was offered to any Tennessee high school student. Each year more than 30 applicants compete for the 8-10 positions.

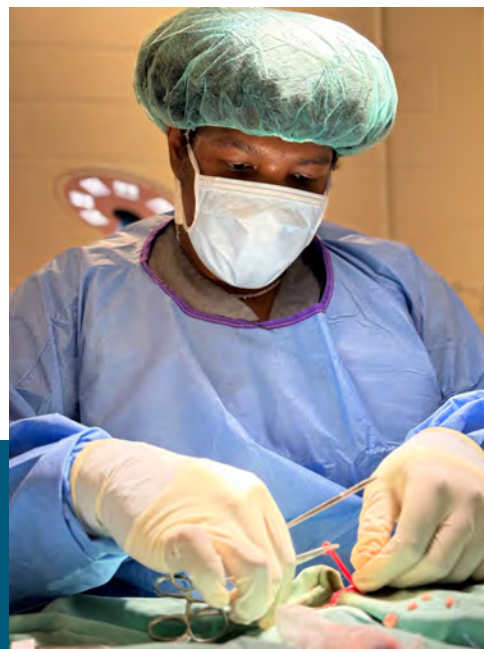
The high school veterinary program selects students from across the state, based on their academic record and essay. Throughout their weeks working in veterinary practices as paid UT employees, students see all aspects of the profession from cage cleaning, surgeries, medical care, and counseling pet owners on treatment options. During their rotations at UTCVM in the final week of the program, they learn about veterinary specialties, spend time in medicine, surgery, pathology, exotic animal, and other rotations. During the week, they learn life skills, and information about admission to veterinary college and other activities.



In 1997, eight high school veterinary interns spent one week of the eight-week session at UTCVM working.

During the first 15 years of the program, students pursued undergraduate education at a UT campus or elsewhere, in a variety of majors. Some were accepted to veterinary school at UT, Cornell, Tuskegee and other schools. Three of the first summer students to complete the DVM at UTCVM were LaTanya Money (2003), Brandi Bailey (2006), and Brittany Mathes (2012).

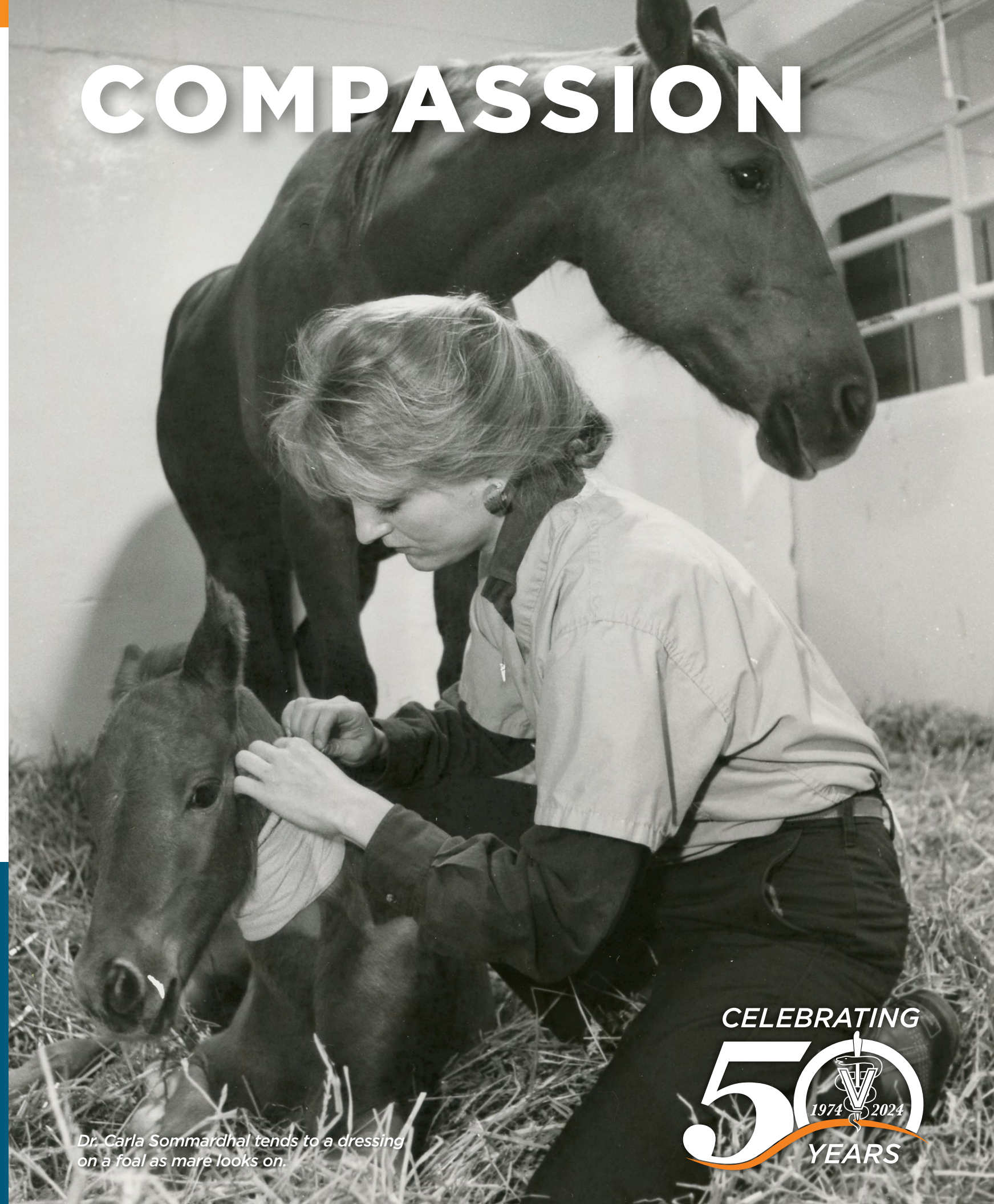
The program was initially directed by Dr. Christine Jenkins. After she accepted another position, Dr. Nancy Howell directed the program for several years until Dr. William Hill became director. Upon Dr. Hill's departure, Dr. Mike Jones assumed directing the program. Dr. ShaRonda Cooper, assistant dean, is now director of the summer program following Jones' retirement.



Terey Edwards, now in his clinical year at UTCVM, participated as a high school student in the Veterinary Summer

Experience Program (VSEP) in 2014. He worked at Southwind Animal Clinic in Memphis, TN. "I had always wanted experience in veterinary medicine; I wanted to be a veterinarian since the age of six. I felt like it was a good way to dip my feet into the veterinary field and that it would look good when applying for vet schools in the future." During the program, Terey worked for five weeks at Southwind Animal Clinic, then spent one week in Knoxville where he and other VSEP participants shadowed various services in the Veterinary Medical Center and also did a presentation on an interesting case he followed in Memphis. Terey will graduate in 2025.

COMPASSION



Dr. Carla Sommardhal tends to a dressing on a foal as mare looks on.



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During her summer internship program, Melady Malone of Memphis, examines a horse under the supervision of veterinary dean, Dr. Mike Shires.

From Client to Benefactor

Fostering the Volunteer Spirit

BY LAUREN HENRY



It is a relationship that began with a sick dog. For both the Tickle and the Whartons, the journey to heal a beloved canine ultimately led to a strong partnership of philanthropy and two named hospitals.

Both the John and Ann Tickle Small Animal Hospital and the Charles and Julie Wharton Large Animal Hospital are a testament to the transformative power of the human-animal bond, including the important role of caretaker. And that is one role that the UT College of Veterinary Medicine has done better than most through their Veterinary Medical Center. And as we celebrate fifty years of UTCVM, we cannot do so without telling the story of these two hospitals and the families whose names are etched into the very walls.

For both the Tickle and the Whartons the female half of the partnership were the ones to first step foot into vet School. The late Julie Wharton had driven her sick dog Sugar Pie all the way from Texas to Tennessee — by herself — to get the dog the care it needed. Ann Tickle’s trip wasn’t quite as long, but both women were blown away by the compassionate and quality care they encountered.

Before Bob Denovo was interim dean of UTCVM, the small animal internal medicine specialist worked long shifts in the small animal hospital. Denovo remembers the case that crossed his path with the Tickle. The body of a ten-month-old Westie named Palmer had been sent from Bristol for necropsy. While Palmer had passed away, he had a brother, Nicklaus, who was still very much alive.

“It was Ann who really started the relationship with the vet school,” said John Tickle, a 1965 engineering UT grad.

“I look at Charles as someone who genuinely loves animals and really takes an interest in their care and also the education of veterinary students.” -Dr. Steve Adair



Honoring John and Ann Tickle at the Teaching Learning Center ribbon cutting ceremony. (Left to right) Dean Jim Thompson, John Tickle, UT President Randy Boyd, Chancellor Donde Plowman. Photo of Ann and John Tickle with their beloved Westie.

“It was important to find out what happened to Palmer because we needed to make sure his brother Nicklaus was going to be ok,” explained the 1965 education graduate and wife of John Tickle for thirty years.

Ann Tickle remembers leaving the hospital with Palmer’s remains only to be stopped in the parking lot by a man in a lab coat running after her.

“Are you Mrs. Tickle?” Denovo asked.

“It was Bob Denovo,” Ann tells the story, “He wanted to be sure to let me know what they found in the autopsy before I left. Here was a doctor who has taken the time to find me and tell me exactly what happened. That was the beginning of a relationship that would lead us time and again to coming back to UT for our pet care.”

For Ann Tickle, philanthropy is born of passion and connection to a cause. It is the result of relationships built on trust. It is trust built through compassionate care and empathetic practitioners. That is what the Tickle found in Bob Denovo, small animal internal medicine specialist Claudia Kirk and so many others at UTCVM.

“I realized that everyone in the facility seemed to be dedicated to what they were doing not only to the patient, but to the owner as well,” Ann said.

The Tickle also credit the former Dean of the college with the continuation of their philanthropic relationship with UTCVM. Jim Thompson had a vision for the College of Veterinary Medicine could be and shared that vision with individuals like the Tickle, the Whartons, and others.

“He is the one responsible for keeping us inspired and challenged,” Ann said.

Thompson engaged the Tickle and the Whartons in how they could ensure a brighter future for the college.

“So, when the decision was made to commit money to the University of Tennessee and decide how it would be dispersed, we decided a portion must go the Veterinary School. I see that as a part of the University that is exceptional. What they do for the state and the community is absolutely off the charts. The way they are training their students is impressive above all else.”

For the Whartons the start was similar. Instead of Westies, it was a sick bulldog that first brought Charles and his late wife Julie Wharton to the vet school. Veterinarians in Houston, Texas, where the couple lived tried to diagnose why Sugar Pie was unable to keep food down, but they had exhausted all their resources so the couple brought the dog to UT where

(Left) Honoring Charles and Julie Wharton at the renaming ceremony for the Charles and Julie Wharton Large Animal Hospital in 2022, Jim Thompson presents a plaque and artwork to Charles and Lori Wharton.

“Even a small gift was extremely important to them. It was graciously received and acknowledged.” -Ann Tickle

Julie met DJ Krahwinkel, a longtime veterinarian. One of Julie’s earliest memories of the veterinary college was Krahwinkel sitting on the floor playing with their dog.

“Once DJ gets his hooks into you, you are a UT Vet fan for life,” Wharton says about the connection between Krahwinkel and his late wife through the careful care of Sugar Pie.

Once again, compassionate care led to friendship, trust, and later philanthropy.

But the Wharton’s philanthropic relationship didn’t begin there. It began the year he graduated, and he hasn’t missed a year since 1965. Even when he left his engineering job to pursue his Master’s degree, Charles sent a \$5 check to the University with a letter apologizing for not having the means to send more. And it has continued to today, including his current wife, Lori Wharton, and her love of animals and the veterinary college’s outreach program, Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee. Paying back to a university that has done so much is important to the Whartons.

“I got one of the nicest letters back from UT that year I only gave \$5 thanking me for my support,” Charles remembers.

Ann Tickle remembers a similar occurrence of great gratitude in the face of humble means. Her first gift to UTCVM was at the suggestion of her husband John. “Write a check, and I will match the amount,” he told her.

“Even a small gift was extremely important to them. It was graciously received and acknowledged. The size didn’t seem to matter. Still, it was an important gift,” Ann remembers.

For the Wharton’s the care they received for their bulldogs then transitioned to care for Tennessee Walking horses and a friendship with Dr. Steve Adair.

“We always think about donors and their money,” says Adair, “But I look at Charles as someone who genuinely loves animals and really takes an interest in their care and also the education of veterinary students.”

One such way that has had impacts over the years has been the Whartons’



investment in faculty development. Adair himself has been a recipient of that support.

“Having private individuals care enough about the college provides the extra we need to keep us on the cutting edge, keep faculty up-to-date, equipment updated, to make sure we have the facilities to do the most advance medical research and clinical cases and to provide the best possible patient care,” says Adair.

Charles Wharton married Julie in 1967 and together they developed a passion for the majestic Tennessee Walking Horses and a passion for changing some of the industry’s practices. The Wharton’s own beloved horses received their veterinary care at the UT Veterinary Hospital.

When you review the fifty-year history of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, both the Whartons and the Tickle are at the heart. But more importantly, their support and investment over the years are ensuring the next fifty and beyond.

Interested in supporting our mission with a gift to UTCVM?

Contact Laura Zimbrick with the UTIA Office of Advancement at 865.974.4340 or lzimbrick@utfi.org



(Left to right) Russ and Florence Johnston (good friends and neighbors of Charles and Lori Wharton), Charles and Lori Wharton, Caroline Chamberlain, Dr. Carla Sommardahl, and Dr. Steve Adair enjoy a tour of the Charles and Julie Wharton Large Animal Hospital.

VOL is a Verb

BY SANDRA HARBISON



Dr. Diane Hendrix and her daughter Emma are both graduates of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, and they both "VOLunteered" for mission trips to Bolivia and Costa Rica.

To many, being a Volunteer means being passionate about more than the work in the classroom. It's also helping out when a need arises and serving the community, even when the community is global.

Since the 1980's, original UTCVM faculty member Dr. DJ Krahwinkel has traveled to close to twenty countries in Africa and South America with organizations like Christian Veterinary Mission (with and without veterinary students) to underserved regions like Zanzibar, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Paraguay, Bolivia and Djibouti. For the retired small animal department head, these trips aren't just about treating animals; they also involve educating local communities on animal health and welfare, and helping to preserve the livelihood of people whose lives are animal-dependent. "Vaccinating horses during an encephalitis outbreak in Ecuador helps coffee bean farmers who use those animals to get their crops down the steep mountains. Vaccinating against foot and mouth disease helps a family not lose half its cattle herd. Livestock isn't a hobby for people in many of these countries, it's their life," says Krahwinkel. "Is it right to sit here with all our resources and keep them to ourselves?"

Krahwinkel would task students on the trips to give impromptu presentations on vital topics like preventing the spread of tapeworms through proper sanitation practices. Through these mission trips, students gain invaluable hands-on experience while making a tangible difference in people's lives. They come to understand that helping animals directly translates to improving human well-being and making a difference in the world is more about possessing expertise; it's about sharing that expertise with those less fortunate.

That Volunteer spirit has continued throughout the college's history. Krahwinkel encouraged Dr. Sara Phipps (CVM '97) to volunteer with Christian Veterinary Mission as a veterinary student. Now she and her

husband Jason serve as missionaries in Bolivia. CVM mother-daughter team, Diane and Emma Hendrix were able to participate together on a short-term mission trip to Bolivia in 2022. "Participating on Christian Veterinary Mission trips allows us to serve others even though it takes us a little out of our comfort zone," says Hendrix. "Veterinary medicine is so broad and directly touches the lives of so many people that mission trips are a wonderful way to share our knowledge and time while helping others."

Emma Hendrix (CVM '24) was introduced to veterinary medicine at a young age. She and her sister, Anna, would sometimes join their mom, Dr. Diane Hendrix (CVM '90), when she was called in for late-night ophthalmology emergencies. Hendrix is a professor of ophthalmology and Small Animal Clinical Sciences interim department head at UTCVM.

"I never purposefully influenced the kids in what profession they wanted to pursue, but I always shared an excitement for science. My daughter Anna, is in the middle of a pediatric residency at the University of Utah at Salt Lake City."

While she got to see cool things associated with the profession at an early age, ultimately, Emma opted for the diverse field of veterinary medicine because it offers many career options.

While attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for a Bachelor of Science degree, Emma, along with more than 1,000 students applied for a seat in the UTCVM Class of 2024.



Dr. Krahwinkel with students and other veterinarians in Zanzibar.

"I was very proud when Emma was accepted, although I had no doubt she would be – she's an exceptional student who did what she was supposed to do with getting her shadowing and research experience. I was a little concerned because vet school is really hard, and I knew it would be stressful." But Hendrix offered her daughter sound advice, "Keep studying, be nice, help your classmates out when you can, and in turn, they will help you out because four years is a long time, and everyone will need help at some point along the way. Be there for your friends when they need it. I'm here for your friends and classmates if they need it."

And need it they did. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Class of 2024 didn't have the opportunity to take part in team-building exercises, the Tennessee Welcome, or the white coat ceremony before beginning their professional educational journey. In the fall of 2020, they started vet school via Zoom and watched their professors adjust to the transformation of delivering the curriculum online. The only class they were on campus for the entire first year was anatomy, and even then, students were placed in small groups. They didn't know they would not be meeting their classmates in person until their second year when they were a quarter of the way through veterinary school.

"I kept telling her and her friends it would all be ok, we will figure out a way to deliver your education," Hendrix remembers. "They were concerned. They were told they had to stay within their anatomy groups and couldn't socialize outside those anatomy groups. Emma's group would come for dinner and study and bake cookies." Emma says the class bonded through their struggles.



Students help vaccinate cattle in South America.

Having Emma at UTCVM helped Hendrix develop a deeper understanding of the importance of mentorship for those who may not have a solid support network in place. "Those students need to be able to turn to faculty and mentors for advice. We need to make sure we are set up as faculty and a university to be that support they can come to if they can't get it from family." Hendrix says mentorship isn't one size fits all. "We need to identify the ones who need involved mentors."



Students perform a cesarean section on a cow in Zanzibar.

Emma began the next chapter in her life as a small animal intern at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine – the same place her mom completed an internship. "To this day, I remember the stress of applying for an internship and then a residency and then taking boards. I am concerned my daughter will face those same stresses." It's neurology, not ophthalmology, that sparks Emma's interest. "I haven't been able to make her see the light and open her eyes to ophthalmology!" jokes Hendrix.

Regardless of which path Emma takes, Hendrix looks forward to more mission trips with her both for the fun and the bonding that results from being a VOLunteer. 🐾

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Volunteer Spirit

BY SANDRA HARBISON



UTCVM students showcase how giving back is integral to their identity and professional development.



Students volunteer to pick up trash along Third Creek.



“I took away new skills, friendships, and memories of a life time, while leaving behind a meaningful impact on the communities we served.”

- Samuel Good, UTCVM Class of 2024



The VOICE Club tie dyes bandannas for shelter animals to increase their “adoption appeal.”



Want to support the SCAVMA Support Fund?

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Since UTCVM’s inception, veterinary students have truly embodied the Volunteer spirit, demonstrating that “Vol is a Verb” through their active involvement in community service. In addition to their rigorous studies, students volunteer countless hours in diverse settings. Whether working with Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee’s monthly Vets for Pets of Homeless Owners, making tie-dye scarves and toys for animals in shelters, or picking up trash along waterways, they exemplify compassion and leadership. Their commitment enhances their educational experience and strengthens bonds with the community, reflecting the college’s core values of knowledge, compassion, and discovery.

“I was able to think outside the box at every opportunity while still providing veterinary care, this helped improve my trust in myself and remember how much veterinary medicine fills my heart!”

- Miriam Raquel Espino Gonzalez, UTCVM Class of 2024



Students craft blankets and toys for shelter animals.



Students volunteer with ChainFree Knoxville to provide enclosures and other services for pets in need to help eliminate the practice of continuous tethering.



Animal Sheltering Today

A Cross-species Crisis

BY DR. JENNIFER WEISENT

In 2023, U.S. animal shelters saw a quarter million more animals than in previous years. Coupled with low adoption rates and overcrowding the sheltering world is caught in a chronic, post-pandemic crisis. Economic struggle, housing deficits, lifestyle and employment changes, and a substantial rise in the cost of pet food and veterinary care contribute to this new norm. While great strides have been made over the past 20-30 years to alleviate problems of animal homelessness, neglect and abuse, data from the last two years paint an ominous picture.

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) nationwide surveys found that 1 in 5 households in the United States acquired a cat or dog during the pandemic. By May 2021, 85% of adopted cats and 90% of dogs were still in the home, and owners intended to keep them. Despite these hopeful statistics, shelters began to fill with animals, and with adoptions on the decline, by 2022 a national crisis of animal

overcrowding ensued. From California to Illinois, Florida to New York, shelters were packed, euthanasia rates rose, and to this day there is little relief in sight.


Here in East Tennessee, animal shelters face the same plight. A lack of sufficient resources: cages and kennels, staff, volunteers, food, money, and spay and neuter services overburden the system, culminating in increased risk of disease and death. Worse yet, sheltering organizations are now faced with the heartbreaking decision to euthanize animals due to lack of space.

In the best of circumstances, shelters garner support from local media, government, and their respective communities. They often rely on a transport system to move excess animals to locations where they are in demand, and robust foster programs to bide time for adoption, especially for the very young or those with medical needs. They may also host

programs to help people in need keep their pets at home by providing pet food and other services. But shelters run on tight, often insufficient budgets, and operate under constant pressure to seek donations and grants, and when the scales tip in the wrong direction, margins narrow and conditions deteriorate.

As a society, we've seen how the pandemic took a toll on the mental and financial health of individuals, families, and communities alike, but as humans struggle onward to heal and recuperate, animal sheltering faces a ubiquitous state of overwhelm. Whatever the reason, post-pandemic conditions have made it difficult and often impossible for many people to keep their pets, a gut-wrenching reality. Companion animals, whether lost, abandoned, or relinquished to shelters, pay a harrowing price right alongside the shelter staff who are charged with protecting their health, safety, and well-being. Workers face frustration, stress, and a subsequent numbing to protect themselves from despair while their furry inmates languish for months upon months in clamorous conditions, designed only as a short-term sanctuary from hunger and the elements.

In 2023, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, whose priority is to improve community animal health and well-being, spotlighted the struggles of front line animal workers nationwide in a position statement aimed at recognizing and addressing the human welfare issues present in animal sheltering. But what can we do here in East Tennessee to prevent animal homelessness and alleviate the current strain on our shelters and their workforce?

The solution can be a win-win: First, we show up, in whatever way we are available. I am writing this to you, dear reader, in the hopes that you will hear the call. Find a shelter, get to know their needs, and contribute in a way that works for you. Foster, donate, volunteer. Spay and neuter. Lend your skills, expertise, and resources. Appreciate animal shelter directors and staff. Provide supplies or enrichment, fund a project, or help write a grant. And of course, adopt. According to the ASPCA, only 30% of companion animals are adopted from shelters. We can shift the culture of pedigree and brand by caring for those who have been abandoned and neglected. Compassion for others enriches our lives and deepens the bonds we form with both our human and animal companions. The problem is here and now, and right in our backyard, but so is the solution: be aware, make a difference, and choose to save a life. 

Dr. Jennifer Weisent,
UTCVM Clinical Assistant
Professor of Shelter Medicine

After completing her DVM she worked in shelter medicine, small animal practice, and several high volume, high quality spay-neuter clinics. Her interest in preventive medicine and public health brought her to Knoxville, where she completed a PhD in Epidemiology. She is passionate about research and teaching that interfaces with human, animal, and environmental health and welfare.

UTCVM's outreach program, Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT), was created to improve the lives of companion animals and reduce the homeless pet population in Tennessee by promoting humane education and spay/neuter initiatives.

CAIT is funded solely through the generous support of our community members and corporate grants.



Donate to CAIT 
tiny.utk.edu/givetocait

Attending to the Welfare of All Species

BY SANDRA HARBISON

A thirty-seven-year collaborative partnership between the University of Tennessee College of Social Work and the College of Veterinary Medicine has culminated in the establishment of the Center for Veterinary Social Work (CVSW). The center focuses on attending to the welfare of all species through excellence in global interprofessional practice. A hybrid celebration with attendees from around the world kicked off the CVSW last summer at the veterinary college.

The groundbreaking discipline of veterinary social work was established in 2002 by Elizabeth Strand, the All Creatures Great and Small Endowed Clinical Associate Professor in Veterinary Social Work. This area of social work practice tends to the human needs that arise at the intersection of veterinary medicine and social work practice. The areas of veterinary social work include grief and pet loss, animal-assisted interaction, the link between human and animal violence, as well as intentional well-being, formally called “compassion fatigue and conflict management.” The field is rapidly growing with more veterinary social workers in veterinary clinics across the United States than ever before.

Lori Messinger, dean of the College of Social Work, says the interdisciplinary center is dedicated to research, education, and service in the interprofessional space of veterinary social work, which is a One



(Left to right) Javonda Williams-Moss, PhD, MSW, assoc. dean of academic affairs, College of Social Work and Elizabeth Strand, PhD, MSSW, All Creatures Great and Small, endowed clinical professor, director of the Center for Veterinary Social Work.

Health human-animal interactions model. “Under Dr. Strand’s leadership, the center will provide people in our community and across our University a recognized framework to support further academic and professional opportunities in veterinary social work.”

Dr. Strand is fiercely protective of those in the veterinary profession. She realizes at the end of every leash or the head of every herd is a person. Veterinarians are highly trained to address animal issues, but human beings are a whole other factor. The work of the center enhances the understanding of the complex relationships between humans and animals.

Both colleges share faculty, staff, and fiscal responsibility for the creation and functioning of the Center for Veterinary Social Work as they focus on problems as well as solutions.

Other programs connected to the center include the College of Social Work’s Program for Pet Health Equity as well as Human Animal Bond in Tennessee (HABIT), Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT), and Shelter Medicine from the College of Veterinary Medicine.



(Left to right) Sheila McNeil, CVM’s budget director, Karen Armsey, HABIT program administrator, and Sandy Pandora, visiting with Karen’s HABIT dog, Shiloh.



DISCOVERY



Dr. Hugo Eiler is professor emeritus in the Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences Department.



ARMISTEAD THE ARCHITECT

BY DR. BOB DENOVO

“He shaped our profession and guided our college.”

That is how Dr. Ed Claiborne (CVM '80) describes Dr. Willis William (W.W.) Armistead, founding dean of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine.

Armistead did that, and much more. He actually guided three veterinary colleges, serving as dean at Texas A&M University from 1953-57 and then at Michigan State University from 1957-74 before being appointed founding dean at UTCVM in 1974. Armistead took the helm of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture in 1979 as the 2nd vice president of UTIA, a position he held until his retirement in 1987.

A consistent leader in the profession, Armistead was very active throughout his career in the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), serving on its Board of Governors, Judicial Council, Joint Committee of Veterinary Education, and as president from 1957-58. He was a founding member and two-term president of the Association

of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, where he also chaired the Committee on Professional Education. He was a member and president of the Texas, Michigan, and Tennessee Veterinary Medical Associations, and served in several other health profession and education organizations at the local, state, and national levels. His first publishing experience was in 1938 when, as a veterinary student at Texas A&M University, he was appointed art editor for student publication, *The Battalion*. He advanced to the position of associate editor of the *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association* (1964-70) and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* (1974-80).

W.W. Armistead was a respected representative of, and a well-recognized voice for the veterinary profession and was asked to serve in an advisory capacity for more than twenty-five state and national organizations. Most notable of these assignments included national consultant for the U.S. Air Force Surgeon General (1960-62); consultant for the White House Conference on Health (1965); and consultant for feasibility studies for the establishment of veterinary medical schools in Connecticut, Wisconsin, Florida, and Tennessee. He served on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation and of the Tennessee 4-H Club Foundation.

Perhaps Armistead's most significant impact on the veterinary profession began in May 1973, when he was asked by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to conduct and lead a feasibility study for the establishment of a veterinary medical school in Tennessee. His report to the state legislature on the prospects for a veterinary college ultimately became the planning document for the design and construction of our veterinary college. On January 31, 1974, TN Senate Bill No. 1522 authorized the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to establish the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and to begin operations no later than September 1976. Armistead was appointed dean, and the rest is our history.

“He did far more than watch and approve what the architects and builders did,” says Armistead's son, Jack. “He actually drew up first drafts of the floor plans, traffic flow patterns (human, animal, and vehicular), and equipment specifications that would be needed. But his vision did not stop there.” Jack recounts his father's design of the three-year curriculum that was used at UTCVM from 1976-89: “I'm sure you already know about his vision for a reformed curriculum, now, I suspect, a thing of

the past.” Armistead was far ahead of his peers when, starting in the 1970s and extending into the next three decades, he identified the rising cost of veterinary medical education as a major threat to the profession. The primary goal of Armistead's three-year curriculum was to contain these costs for the benefit of the students, the college, and the state. In Armistead's words, “There is nothing magical or sacred about the use of four years as the standard for university degrees. It is time that veterinary educators, increasingly pressed by spiraling costs and too little time, begin to think outside the box of traditional curriculum formats.” (*JAVMA*, Vol 221, No. 12, December 15, 2002).

Another issue for which Armistead “thought outside the box” was conventional veterinary curricula. In a 1972 address to the profession (*Practicing Veterinarian* 44[4], p. 20-22), he cited a critical need for “innovation and experimentation in veterinary medical education, improved methods of teaching and evaluation of student progress, increase curriculum flexibility to provide more options for the student, and greatly expanded programs for post-DVM education.” His call for “increasing dependence of the veterinary medical school upon federal support” in order to decrease the funding gap that he predicted would occur due to “inadequacy of state appropriations” were prophetic of the critical issues that our profession is wrestling with today.

Armistead's leadership skills were legendary among those who knew and worked with him. Most significant in this regard was his selection of the first nineteen members of the UTCVM administration and faculty. His ideals for the conduct and appearance of veterinary faculty were clearly articulated, and he hand-picked individuals who shared his values for teaching excellence and professionalism to guide the college through its formative years. He chose well, and the college today still enjoys a reputation as being a place where teaching is job number one, and collegiality is a core value. His well-known and uncompromising standard for excellence was best illustrated to me when, in welcoming a new class of students to the CVM, he told them that “among other things, you will learn that ‘VETERINARIAN’ is a six-syllable word.” He was not hesitant to correct anyone at any time who mispronounced the name of his profession.

For those who did not know him well, Armistead's professional demeanor sometimes overshadowed his approachability, witty sense of humor, and persistent optimism. The first time I met him we were attending the wedding of a mutual friend. I was a resident in internal medicine at the University of Georgia, while he was one of the most respected individuals in the profession and a three-time dean of international reputation.

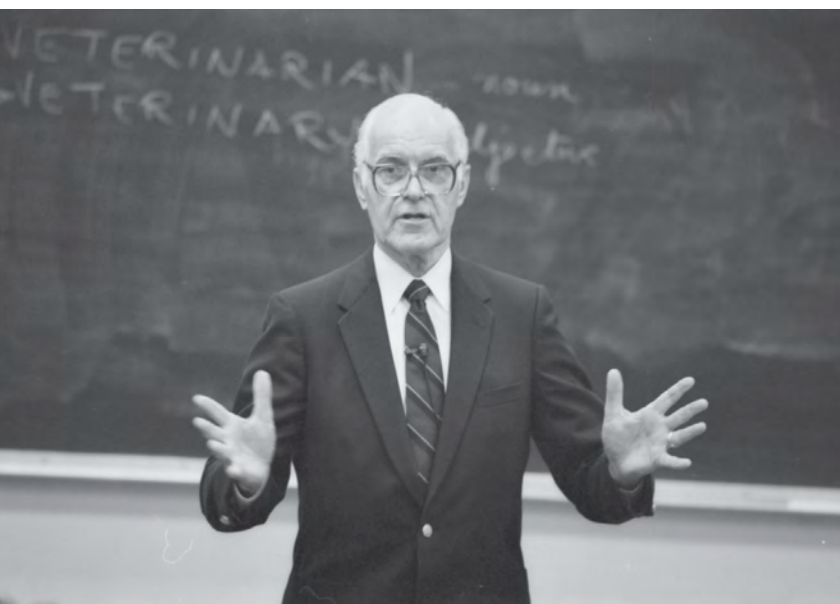
Armistead walked up and introduced himself. He inquired about my training, my professional goals, my family, and my interests. He made me feel like I was the most important young veterinarian in the country. He was genuine. That is the kind of person he was, and it occurred to me at the time that he would be a great person for whom to work. I did not realize that the recruitment process had already begun.

Dr. Jack Armistead shared a glimpse of his father as a young man and family man. “He was a great lover of dogs, music and musical comedies, movies, and automobiles. He had a wonderful singing voice and could tap dance like a vaudevillian. He and his brother, as older teenagers, performed on the vaudeville stage in Houston, Texas—he played the violin, his brother played the piano, both tap danced and sang. He was a gifted draughtsman and artist as well as an accomplished writer/editor. As a student at Texas A&M, he was a popular cartoonist for the college magazine, and early in his academic career he illustrated medical books, especially those dealing with surgery.”

Armistead entered practice in Dallas, Texas, in 1938, but left to join the faculty of Texas A&M University's CVM in 1942. Shortly thereafter, he took a leave of absence to serve as a Major in the Army Veterinary Corps from 1942-46, serving in Oklahoma, North Africa, and Italy. He remained in academia for the duration of his career as one of the most influential veterinary medical educators in the history of the profession.



Dr. Armistead is honored at the naming of the W.W. Armistead Veterinary Teaching Hospital in August of 2004. The hospital would change names again in July of 2010 to the W.W. Armistead Veterinary Medical Center.



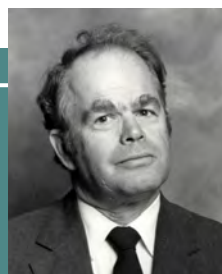
Dr. Armistead teaches the proper pronunciation of “veterinarian” and “veterinary” to students in the early years of UTCVM.

UTCVM HISTORY OF

Deans



Dr. W.W. Armistead was the founding dean at UTCVM, serving from 1974 until 1979 when he was named Vice President of UTIA, then retiring in 1987.



Dr. Hiram Kitchen was named the second dean of UTCVM in 1980, until his death in 1990.



Dr. Michael Shires was named the third dean of UTCVM in 1990, after serving as interim dean for 10 months. He then served for 10 years, and retired in 2000.



Dr. Michael Blackwell was named the fourth dean of UTCVM in 2000. He served for 8 years until his retirement in 2008.



Dr. James Thompson was named the fifth dean of UTCVM in 2008. He served as dean until his retirement in 2023. With 15 years of service, he is the longest serving dean at UTCVM.



Dr. Paul Plummer was named the sixth dean of UTCVM in 2024. He is a UTCVM alumni and his first day acting as dean was July 27th, 2024.

Interim Deans

Dr. Charles F. Reed
Interim Dean 1979-1980

Dr. Leon N.D. Potgieter
Interim Dean 2008

Dr. Robert DeNovo
Interim Dean 2024

Preventive Surgery Helps Keep K9 Units on the Job

BY ELIZABETH A. DAVIS

UTCVM partners with police department to protect health of the dogs who protect us

The canine teams of the Metro-Nashville Police Department deploy at a moment's notice at any time, any day of the week, and any day of the year. Dogs trained to apprehend suspects or detect bombs or narcotics are very active, fearless, motivated, and duty-bound. These characteristics combined with the body type of German shepherds and Belgian Malinois breeds makes them susceptible to gastric dilatation-volvulus (GDV), a dangerous condition that can quickly turn fatal.

The good news is a minimally invasive surgery can prevent GDV, commonly known as bloat, and a partnership between MNPd and the UT College of Veterinary Medicine is helping keep canine units on the job.

Since 2022, UTCVM has performed laparoscopic-assisted prophylactic gastropexy surgeries on eligible dogs in the MNPd canine unit, potentially saving lives and reducing the time in recovery and away from work. After surgery, the dogs are restricted from exercise such as running or playing for ten days with another four days of increased but no high-impact activity or training.

"Our unit provides 24-7-365 coverage. We have to get the dogs back on the streets as quickly as possible," says Sgt. David Hacker, who supervises the canine unit's second shift. "This is a quick turnaround. With UT, we scheduled one dog a month. When one dog recovers, another dog has the surgery."

Cassie Lux, small animal surgery specialist and associate professor of surgery, has performed all the surgeries, which involves tacking the stomach wall to keep it from twisting. This type of gastropexy is less common in private practices and requires special training, which means observing and participating is beneficial for UTCVM graduate students.

"Dogs undergoing prophylactic gastropexy are taken to surgery when they are as healthy as possible, often at a younger age for the general population, because it's often an elective surgery. So, their anesthetic events and surgery are safer because they're systemically stable and healthy," she says. "Complications are uncommon."

MNPd plans to have any new dogs undergo this preventative surgery after they complete their training. "We always want to do what is best for the dogs," Hacker says. "The No. 1 issue is to keep them active. They are go, go, go all the time."



Metro-Nashville Officer Steven Meador waits with K-9 Tito at UTCVM before his laparoscopic-assisted prophylactic gastropexy surgery.

Tragic circumstances led the police department to connect with UTCVM. Hacker's partner, a 5-year-old German shepherd named Doc, died in 2022 during emergency surgery for GDV. A few hours after feeding Doc one evening, Hacker recognized the signs of bloat and rushed Doc to an emergency vet.

"It was obvious what was happening. You don't want to find your dog like that," Hacker says.

When GDV occurs, the stomach dilates and expands, which can reduce the flow of blood and/or impact breathing. Other complications include the twisting of the stomach and spleen.

"When the twist happens, you're on the clock," Lux says. "The anesthetic and recovery process for GDV is much more risky. The dogs are often very systemically unstable when they present to the hospital, sometimes they have life-threatening heart arrhythmias, they are painful, and can have reduced blood flow to their vital organs."

Between 10-15 percent of dogs with GDV will have death of their stomach wall due to lack of blood flow, and after death of the stomach wall, the chance of the dogs dying during surgery or recovery is as high as 30 percent. If there is no death of the stomach wall, the mortality rate with GDV ranges from 10 to 30 percent, Lux says. "The prognosis is generally a bit better if the stomach wall is healthy, but that is something we usually don't know until we open the abdomen for surgery," she says.

And that's another reason preventative surgery is optimal. In the last 15 years, five MNPd canines experienced GDV, and three died. After Doc died, Hacker and others in the department sought help from veterinary practices and advice from other police departments. "For the next couple of months, we learned about how bloat occurs, and we knew if we could do the preventative surgery on the other dogs, we'd do it," he says. After getting little response to their first requests for assistance, the department contacted then-UTCVM Dean Jim Thompson, and the first surgery was scheduled a month later.

Hacker's new K9 partner is Digo, a 5-year-old German shepherd/Belgian Malinois mix. Digo had an arthritic hip when he retired from the military, and UTCVM performed a hip replacement on him in August 2023.

Hacker says taking canines to the vet for any reason, including a check-up, is difficult. "They don't enjoy it," he says. For the gastropexy surgery, the handlers are on hand during sedation and in recovery to help the dogs and for the safety of all involved. Feedback from MNPd has been very positive with no complications or side effects.

Ofc. Steven Meador accompanied his K9 partner, Tito, for surgery at UTCVM. "He obviously enjoys working—likes to go to work and doesn't like to sit around. Even in the car, you can tell when we are getting close to our training field so he can go outside, go play ball, jump our hurdles," Meador says of Tito.

"This is my second dog. No matter what, they will always have your back, and they love going to work. They don't care about anything else other than being with you and pleasing you. They don't understand what danger is and will go into darkness around that corner without any hesitation."

For Lux, all patients are important, but the ones from MNPd are certainly special because of their importance to law enforcement.


"We treat them with the reverence they deserve given how they serve their community," she says. "We deeply respect the officers who handle these dogs and treat them as family." 🐾





RESEARCH DAY 2024

In addition to the Veterinary Scholars Symposium, students also had the opportunity to present their research at the college's annual Research Day. This event is designed to serve as a venue for students and new investigators to gain experience in showcasing their research while also providing potential collaboration and networking opportunities. Twenty-one of the college's Comparative and Experimental Medicine (CEM) graduate students and 23 of the college's professional veterinary students delivered oral presentations. College post-docs delivered three presentations. The top post-doc presentation was given by Dr. Prachi Namjoshi. Other Post-doc presenters included, Dr. Mahesh Puthiyottu Poyil and Dr. Biswajit Bhowmick. Residents presented three presentations. The top resident presentation was given by Dr. Lily Davis. Other resident presenters included Dr. Connor Hayes and Dr. Mayzie Miller.

Student presentations were scored based on their performance, and six Summer Veterinary Research Program participants took home awards on Research Day for their research conducted throughout the program. In the veterinary student presenter category, MaCayla Clements (Class of 2027) was awarded 1st place; Selina Boone (Class of 2026), Haley Richardson (Class of 2027), and Micah Roberts (Class of 2026) tied for 2nd place; Annalisa Wager (Class of 2026) and Evie Yazbec (Class of 2027) tied for 3rd place. In the Dual DVM-CEM student category Grace Malla (DVM-MS Class of 2026) was awarded 1st place with the Phi Zeta Award for Excellence in Animal Health Research, Lindsey Rice (DVM-MS Class of 2026) was awarded 2nd place, and Olivia Escher-Price (DVM-PhD Class of 2028) was awarded 3rd place. Many presenters also expressed interest in presenting their work at more national venues in the future. 



VOLVet Discovery in ACTION

BY EMILY FORD



SUMMER SCHOLAR RESEARCH PROGRAM

Summer is always a busy time for veterinary students who participate in the UTCVM Summer Scholar Research Program. During the program, students work with faculty mentors to engage in research projects that suit their interests. In addition, students attend seminars throughout the program that focus on a variety of topics including how to perform a literature search, animal welfare, ethics, how researchers influence industry, how to prepare a research presentation, and how to prepare a research poster.

This summer, twenty-two veterinary students participated in the ten-week program. Rather than presenting talks on their summer research, students presented posters in the UTCVM Teaching and Learning Center concourse where they were able to engage with faculty, staff, and other students one-on-one about their projects. Six UTCVM students supported by Boehringer-Ingelheim presented their summer research at the Veterinary Scholar Symposium held at St. Paul, Minnesota in early August. The symposium brought together more than 600 veterinary students from US Veterinary colleges who shared their summer research activities.



Dr. David Anderson (Left) presents Dr. Sree Rajeev, professor of microbiology, the UTCVM Boehringer Ingelheim Faculty Research Mentoring Award at the 2024 Research Day awards ceremony. The Boehringer Ingelheim Faculty Research Mentoring Award is awarded annually to a faculty member who excels in teaching, training, and sharing their knowledge with students pursuing advanced degrees in research at UTCVM.



Dr. Joe Smith, assistant professor of Farm Animal Medicine, with Dr. David Anderson (Left). Smith received the 2024 UTCVM Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence which recognizes outstanding research effort, productivity, and the advancement of knowledge in areas relevant to veterinary medicine.

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Dr. Mike Jones, professor emeritus, keeps Challenger calm while the surgical team prepares for his cataract surgery.

Up to the Challenge

BY SANDRA HARBISON

Twenty-five years after UTCVM performed the first cataract surgery on a bald eagle, the Nation's most famous bald eagle educational ambassador, underwent eye surgery.

Challenger, the iconic bald eagle who has long been a soaring emblem of wildlife conservation, recently embarked on a different kind of flight – one toward better vision. The avian ambassador underwent life-enhancing phacoemulsification (cataract surgery) at the University of Tennessee



Dr. Braidee Foote examines Challenger's eyes at a post-surgery appointment.

College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM), in June. While it was Dr. Braidee Foote's first cataract surgery on a raptor, it wasn't the first at the college. In 1999, then veterinary ophthalmology resident, Dr. Barbara Cawrse performed the first cataract surgery on a bald eagle.

As an eaglet, Challenger was blown from his nest in 1989. Well-meaning humans found him and cared for him. His rescue saved his life but altered his destiny -- he imprinted on people and couldn't be released into the wild. Authorities took him to the American Eagle Foundation (AEF) which cares for and rehabilitates birds of prey. The foundation has released over 190 eagles back into the wild.

Since 1991, Challenger helped AEF educate people about the plight of the bald eagle which had been added to the Endangered Species List in 1978. Trained to free fly, Challenger soared over many events including a presidential inauguration, the World Series, NFL Pro Bowls, NCAA College Football National Championships, Neyland Stadium, and the Daytona 500. Challenger was at the White House ceremony when bald eagles were removed from the Endangered Species List in 2007. Many of Challenger's historic flights and appearances can be found on the AEF YouTube channel.

The staff at American Eagle Foundation closely monitor the health

of over 80 birds of prey. With routine assessments and physicals, Challenger was retired from free-flighted programs due to the onset of cataracts in 2019. Just like humans, animals can also develop cataracts. Over time, these cataracts have gradually impacted Challenger's day-to-day quality of life. An expert in the veterinary care of raptors, Dr. Michael Jones has been Challenger's veterinarian for close to thirty years. When he retired from UTCVM in 2022, he joined AEF where he continued to treat Challenger. "We noticed that he wasn't doing some of the normal activities in flights that we were expecting to see." The altered behavior was a telltale sign: "When he couldn't see as well, he was maybe going to people that he should not have necessarily gone to or that he didn't recognize."



After careful consideration and consultation with avian care staff, veterinary experts, and organizational leadership, AEF decided to proceed with cataract surgery; it was time to give Challenger eagle eyes once more.

Ophthalmologists at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM) evaluated Challenger and determined he was a viable candidate for the cataract procedure. Dr. Braidee Foote, an ophthalmology specialist at the veterinary college, was honored to serve as Challenger's surgeon. "He is an American figure and symbol of wildlife conservation at its best. Cataracts can significantly diminish the quality of life, especially for these majestic birds who depend heavily on their vision. We were hopeful for a successful outcome that would improve Challenger's vision." Challenger's medical team also included specialists from UTCVM's zoological companion animal service and anesthesia service.

Surgical intervention is never without risks. However, all indications suggested that this surgery was a necessary step in safeguarding Challenger's continued quality of life. "This surgery is more than a medical procedure," says Jessica Hall, AEF executive director. "It's about giving back to an individual who has inspired countless others across our nation. We are committed to providing the highest level of care and ensuring Challenger's story continues to inspire us all."

Challenger has soared through his recovery. His next recheck at UTCVM is scheduled for October. While he remains retired from free-flighted programs, the bald eagle is again spreading his wings and flying in his aviary at AEF in Kodak, Tennessee. 🦅



The surgery team removes Challenger's cataracts at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

FAMILY

Foundational Impacts

BY AARON ARGALL

David Brian, an inspirational professor, mentor, imaginative cook, and researcher, joined the UT College of Veterinary Medicine as its first faculty member in 1976. The rural Michigan native, who earned a DVM and PhD from Michigan State University, was a pioneer in the field of virology. Sadly, Brian passed away in 2014. However, he left a legacy of scientific work that will continue to propel the work of the research community.

As one of the college's first faculty members, Brian developed a veterinary virology course as well as a research program focused on the coronavirus family—well before strains of the virus made SARS and COVID-19 the subject of headlines. With resources from the UT Department of Microbiology and UTCVM, he was able to open his own lab with an emphasis on virology research.


"Coronavirus was important at that point, but there wasn't very much known about it, so it was a beginning field," said Donna Brian, who was married to David Brian, in an interview with Manchester College. "When he started out he was studying diarrhea in baby pigs that was caused by coronavirus."

That initial research led to a wealth of knowledge. When a SARS outbreak happened in 2002, it was Brian who was quoted in multiple national publications on his perspective on how these viruses spread from one species to another. Brian and his team later worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify a new SARS strain in 2003.

Brian sought to design a sequence-based diagnostic kit that would test for a certain strain and help mitigate the spread of the virus. He and his team received national recognition for their contributions.

"Veterinarians have known for a long time that coronaviruses can cause very, very nasty diseases," said Brian, in a 2003 interview with DVM360. "We've often said if anything ever happened in humans that would mimic any of these diseases in animals—pigs, cats, chickens, or cattle—it would be a major public health problem. Here it is."

And it wouldn't be the last time a coronavirus caused a major public health problem. It would make headlines again years later, this time as COVID-19. When the pandemic hit, Brian's work became more important than ever. It served as the foundation for multiple COVID-19 protocols and findings, and it still serves researchers today, as they continue important discovery work around the virus.

Brian's legacy also continues in the classroom. His career is marked by not only his notable published works on the coronavirus, but by the legacy of the researchers whose careers he helped to grow. Known as "Doc", Brian mentored multiple graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, many of whom thought of him as a second father. At least four of his doctoral graduates have become faculty with funded research programs at other universities. Brian was an example of what a professor could be; he held the values of UT highly. He was connected with students and was always learning. He was a true Volunteer. 



CELEBRATING

50 YEARS
1974-2024

The class of 2019 kicks off their veterinary education with the traditional white coat ceremony August 14, 2015.

Always Faithful

BY EMILY FORD

A 25th Anniversary Salute to UTCVM's War Dog Memorial

On July 21, 1944, over 59,000 soldiers, 60 canine protectors, and 110 handlers went into combat during World War II to liberate the island of Guam which had been captured by the Japanese almost three years prior. While the liberation was successful just a few weeks later, many soldiers and their faithful canine counterparts selflessly sacrificed their lives.

During the liberation, the Marine Corps' 2nd and 3rd War Dog Platoons were deployed. Dogs within these platoons were mostly Doberman pinschers; however, other breeds such as German shepherds and Labrador retrievers served in the platoons as well. In combat, the dogs served as sentries, messengers, and scouts and explored caves, detected mines, and detected booby traps.

Throughout the nearly three-week-long Battle of Guam, the War Dog Platoons saved hundreds of soldiers' lives. Because of their faithful service to their country, the National War Dog Cemetery and "Always Faithful" War Dog Memorial were established in Guam on the 50th anniversary of the island's recapture in 1994. The "Always Faithful" Doberman pinscher statue commemorates the 25 loyal and noble canines who sacrificed

their lives during the second Battle of Guam. The memorial features Kurt, the first military working dog killed in action on Guam. In total, the War Dogs who helped liberate the island received 40 Purple Hearts.

This moment in history resonated with Maurice Acree, MD, who was a Korean War veteran and client of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. After bringing his two Doberman pinscher dogs to the Veterinary Medical Center for specialized treatment for some time, Dr. Acree contacted the sculptor of the original "Always Faithful" War Dog Memorial, Susan Bahary who created an exact replica of the original memorial statue. Dr. Acree donated the replica to the college on July 17, 1998, nearly 25 years after the end of the second Battle of Guam. Doberman pinschers always had a special place in Dr. Acree's heart, and so did the valorous acts of the 2nd and 3rd Marine Corps War Dog Platoons. Dr. Acree passed away in 2013, but his generous donation continues to provide education about the heroic acts of War Dogs while also recognizing the bond between people and dogs. He also created an endowment, the Acree Chair in Small Animal Medicine, at the college to support research dedicated to the prevention and treatment of companion animal diseases and the advancement of that knowledge into human medicine when possible.

In July 2023, the college hosted a re-dedication ceremony to commemorate both the 2nd Battle of Guam and the donation of the "Always Faithful" War Dog Memorial. Over 140 people were in attendance at the event, which began with an educational program about the war in Guam, an overview of the history of the monument, and educational programs highlighting the importance of war dogs in the military.



Mark McDonald, Colonel (R) and treasurer of the University of Tennessee Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Alumni Council participates in the outdoor re-dedication ceremony of the War Dog Memorial at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine in 2023.



A red, white, and blue floral wreath lays at the foot of the War Dog Memorial located in front of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.



The event had very special guests in attendance, such as Susan Bahary, the original sculptor of the "Always Faithful" Memorial in Guam; Marilyn Childress, president of the Veterans Heritage Site Foundation in Knoxville; Geoff Freeman, retired Brigadier General and current president of the UT Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Alumni Council; John Homa, United States Air Force security police K9 handler and member of the board of directors at the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum; Albert Johnson, United States Marine Corps dog handler and president of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum in Newport, Tennessee; Mark McDonald, retired Colonel and present treasurer



Kate Stanford (CVM '22) examines the dog tags attached to the collar of Kurt, who was the first military working dog killed in action in Guam.

of the University of Tennessee Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Alumni Council; and Julian McDonald, retired Staff Sergeant for the United States Army.

In addition, several individuals from the University of Tennessee also had important roles in the event's festivities. Participants include Chris Magra, director of the UT Center for the Study of Tennesseans and War; DJ Krahwinkle, professor emeritus of UTCVM; and Kate Stanford, DVM (CVM '22), retired Marine Corps handler and is pursuing her residency in small animal Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation at UTCVM.

The second half of the event was hosted at the War Dog Memorial on site at UTCVM. Bahary delivered remarks about the original "Always Faithful" monument, Stanford delivered remarks about her experiences as a former K9 handler with the Marine Corps, Geoff Freeman facilitated the bell-ringing ceremony, Johnson and McDonald led the laying of the wreath ceremony; the East Tennessee Veterans Honor Guard facilitated the 21-gun salute; and Mark McDonald facilitated the "Taps" bugle call. A reception inside of the UTCVM Teaching and Learning Center took place after the program concluded.

After the indoor events took place, event participants went outside to the memorial and participated in a bell-ringing ceremony, laying of the wreath, 21-gun salute, Taps, and a helicopter flyover by the Knox County Sheriff's Office.



A HOWLING Good Time

BY SANDRA HARBISON

This fall marks the eleventh anniversary of Howl-O-Ween, an event co-sponsored by UT Gardens and the veterinary college that caters to dogs and dog lovers with something fur everyone.

Each October, more than 1,300 people and 400 or so dogs attend the pawsitively amazing event that features a pooch parade and pet expo. Local dog lover Erin Donovan emcees the costumed pet parade; judged categories include bad to the bone (scariest), funny bone (funniest), do(g) it yourself (homemade), pup culture (pop culture/character), and Judges' Choice awards, including Bone-a-Fido (best in show).

The puparazzi goes crazy over the timeless wiener dog getup to the creative costumes that have included Baby Yoda, a Tennessee cheerleader, a gladiator, moonshining bloodhounds, and creations that incorporate mobility devices for dogs on wheels such as the Pupmobile. Group costumes that incorporate humans, such as the cast of Wizard of Oz, are also crowd favorites and generate a round of a-paws for the participants.

The event also features an expo of educational booths, pet businesses, and rescue groups. Each year attendees are encouraged to participate in a food drive to benefit the Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT), an outreach program at the veterinary college that works to improve the lives of companion animals and reduce the homeless pet population in Tennessee by promoting humane education and spay/neuter initiatives.

The event is held in the UT Gardens located at 2518 Jacob Drive. It is free to attend, but if you think you have a supawstar, there is a small fee to be entered in the pooch parade. Each year, event details are available at tiny.utk.edu/howloween.



Always a VOLVet

UTCVM Distinguished Alumni

In 1994, the UTCVM Distinguished Alumni Awards were created to recognize some of the outstanding graduates of the college. Nominees are UTCVM graduates who excel in at least one of the five areas of veterinary medicine: private practice, teaching, research, public service, or organized veterinary medicine. In addition to these

two awards, an award for First Decade Achievement is also given to a graduate of UTCVM with a DVM degree within the last ten years. The awards are presented at the graduation and hooding ceremony each spring.

2024 FIRST DECADE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

KATHRYN DUNCAN, DVM, PHD, DACVM (PARASITOLOGY)

Dr. Kathryn Duncan is a Knoxville native and graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in 2018. During her time at UTCVM, she participated in the summer research program and developed an interest in parasitology. Because of this experience, she went on to complete her residency in parasitology through the National Center for Veterinary Parasitology and to obtain a PhD in biomedical sciences at Oklahoma State University. In 2022, Dr. Duncan became a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Microbiologists, board-certified in parasitology. Now, she serves as assistant professor in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology at Oklahoma State University and as Co-Director of the National Center for Veterinary

Parasitology. She maintains a research lab that focuses on parasitic diseases of domestic animals and teaches in the graduate program and the veterinary curriculum. Dr. Duncan is often asked to deliver continuing education to veterinarians across the United States, and she has authored numerous publications discussing parasites and parasitic diseases of importance to animals and humans, such as ticks, tick-borne diseases, and gastrointestinal parasites.



2024 NON-PRIVATE PRACTICE AWARD

SAMUEL JONES, DVM, PHD

Dr. Samuel Jones graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in 1988, completed an internship in large animal medicine and surgery at Texas A&M University, and a residency in equine internal medicine at the University of California, Davis. He was board certified by the ACVIM in 1995. He received a PhD in Immunology from Washington University School of Medicine in 1997, where he studied the mechanisms of neutrophil integrin activation. He joined North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1998 and was appointed as the first Herbert Benjamin Distinguished Professor at NC State University in 2012.

Dr. Jones' clinical interests include inflammatory diseases and gastroenterology. He continues research investigating mechanisms of neutrophil activation in order to identify new targets for anti-inflammatory drug development. Jones is also investigating

phytochemical modifiers of inflammation. He has published over 100 research papers and book chapters in the areas of neutrophil biology, inflammation, and equine gastroenterology.

Dr. Jones leads several efforts at NC State to develop new research training programs for veterinary students and veterinarians, aimed at meeting the critical national need for veterinary clinician scientists with expertise in basic and translational research. He is currently Director of the Summer Research Internship Program for veterinary students, the Combined DVM/PhD Program, and the Comparative Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program at NC State.



2024 PRIVATE PRACTICE AWARD

JERRY V. WILHITE, DVM

Dr. Jerry V. Wilhite is the co-owner of Old Hatchie Veterinary Hospital in Bolivar TN, a practice started by his father, Dr. Richard E. Wilhite, in 1953. Born and raised in Bolivar, Dr. Wilhite graduated from the University of Tennessee Martin in 1978 with a degree in animal science and went on to earn a Master's degree in ruminant nutrition from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1980 and his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from UTCVM in 1983. Recently retired, Dr. Wilhite still maintains an active presence at Old Hatchie, which has grown from a one man practice in 1953 to a five doctor clinic that includes his youngest brother, Dr. Frank Wilhite, and his niece, Dr. Whitney Wilhite Jones. To honor his late father and his family's legacy in the field of veterinary medicine, Jerry established the Richard E. Wilhite Scholarship Endowment for students who are accepted to UTCVM after completing

undergraduate work at UTM, the first scholarship of its kind to link students between the two schools.

Dr. Wilhite is a longtime member of the TVMA where he served on the Executive Board and recently was awarded Practitioner of the Year (2024). He has also served on the Tennessee Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

Dr. Jerry Wilhite has been an active supporter of the University of Tennessee over the years. He serves as a senior member on the UTCVM Board of Advisors and is proud to call UT his alma mater.



2024 PRIVATE PRACTICE AWARD

ELIZABETH SHULL, DVM, DACVIM (NEUROLOGY), DACVB

Dr. Elizabeth A. Shull is a Tennessee native, the daughter of a country physician from Whitwell, TN. She was honored to be accepted into the first class at UTCVM in 1976, graduating in 1979. Prior to veterinary college she received a BS degree in zoology and attended graduate school in animal behavior at UTK.

She completed a small animal internship at Michigan State University and a neurology residency at UTCVM. During the residency she established the Veterinary Behavior clinical service and the elective behavior course. She achieved board certification in ACVIM-Neurology (1986) and became a charter diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behavior (1993). Dr. Shull served on the faculty at UTCVM (1983-2000) teaching neurology and behavior clinical services and classes in behavior and neurology. After leaving for private practice,

she continued as adjunct faculty, teaching courses in behavior and psychopharmacology.

Dr. Shull was on the organizing committee and became President of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (2002-2004). She served in other organizations as well, including: AVMA, ACVIM-Neurology, American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior and Knoxville Veterinary Medical Association. In 2000, Dr Shull established Appalachian Veterinary Specialists, a referral practice in Knoxville. She currently is a consultant in neurology and behavior for Antech Diagnostic Laboratory.

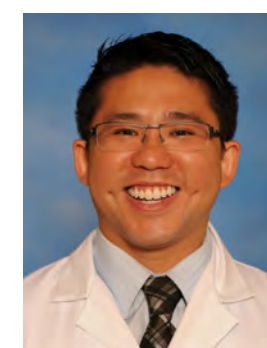


Congratulations!

Awards

Four UTCVM Faculty Receive National Awards in 2024

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Excellence Awards honor individuals for their contributions to both animal and human health. These annual awards recognize excellence in every aspect of veterinary medicine and are sponsored by Merck.



The Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award, named for the late Leo K. Bustad, DVM, PhD. This award recognizes a distinguished AVMA member veterinarian for outstanding work in preserving and protecting the human-animal bond. Dr. Zenithson Ng works tirelessly to learn more about the human-animal bond and the importance of how the human-animal bond can influence the well-being of people. He is truly deserving of this prestigious award. Dr. Ng also received the John C. New

Service Award at the Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association's Music City Conference. The award is presented to a person who promotes the well-being of people, through the interaction of people and animals. It is named after Dr. John New, a UTCVM faculty member whose visionary work helped shape the understanding of the human-animal bond.

The AVMA Clinical Research Award recognizes an AVMA member veterinarian for achievements in patient-oriented research, including the study of mechanisms of disease, therapeutic interventions, clinical trials, development of new technologies, and epidemiological studies. This award is presented to an active AVMA member who has made significant contributions to the diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of diseases in animals. Dr. Karen Tobias is an internationally renowned expert in small animal soft tissue surgery and a world-leading authority on congenital vascular liver disease, focusing on canine portosystemic shunts and portovascular anomalies. Specifically, she has 21 publications related to diagnosis and treatment of portosystemic shunts.



The AVMA Lifetime Excellence in Research Award recognizes a veterinarian researcher based on achievement in basic, applied, or clinical research. Considering his total career impact on the veterinary or biomedical professions, Dr. David Anderson is a wealth of knowledge and a wonderful resource at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Anderson already has an impeccable research program and career, and yet, he continues to strive for innovation and continual research advancement. In addition, the American

Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has elected him to the rank of AAAS Fellow for his distinguished contributions in resident and student mentoring, as well as advancements in biomedical research and technology, especially in surgical diseases and biomaterial composites for tissue regeneration and drug delivery.

The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) has named Dr. India Lane the winner of the 2024 Billy E. Hooper Award for Distinguished Service. Lane, associate dean for academic and student affairs at UTCVM, has helped transform academic veterinary medical education not only at the college but throughout the profession. The national award recognizes an individual whose leadership and vision has made a significant contribution to academic veterinary medicine. Lane has worked to promote inclusion and place more of an emphasis on communication skills, self-care, and mental health issues within the veterinary curriculum.



Awards

The 2024 UTIA Horizon Award winner, Dr. Addie Reinhard, is the founder and CEO of MentorVet, a rapidly growing entity that leverages evidence-based approaches to empower individuals to thrive within veterinary medicine. A veterinary wellbeing researcher, her research focuses on developing and evaluating innovative interventions to support mental health and well-being within the veterinary profession, and she is on the research team for the Merck Animal Health Veterinary Wellbeing Study. In 2021, she completed a master's degree in Community and Leadership Development and a graduate certificate in College Teaching and Learning from the University of Kentucky, and holds a Veterinary Social Work certificate in Veterinary Human Support from the University of Tennessee.



For 2023, UTIA is presenting its Meritorious Service Award to Dr. Robert Barry (Bob) Coley, a veterinarian and beef cattle producer from New Market, Tennessee. Coley is a 1974 graduate of the Herbert College of Agriculture and has served Tennessee agriculture in various capacities including as a large-animal veterinarian, a 4-H volunteer, and a member of the Governor's Council on Agriculture and Forestry in 1995. He is also a member of the UT Beef and Forage Center Advisory Board and has served on the UT Animal Science Advisory Board, as an adjunct clinical instructor with the College of Veterinary Medicine and as a long-time CVM Advisory Board Associate member.



The 2023 TVMA Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dr. Dennis Geiser. A veterinarian who has generously contributed to the advancement of TVMA, Tennessee's veterinary community, and the profession for at least thirty (30) years. Dr. Geiser was the Assistant Dean for Organizational Development and Outreach, he is one of the founding members of the Hyperbaric Medicine Society. He is honored for his public acceptance, civic participation, professional knowledge, and activities with fellow veterinarians.



UTCVM faculty Dr. India Lane (below), professor of internal medicine and associate dean for academic and student affairs, and Dr. Misty Bailey (left), assistant professor of practice and curriculum and assessment coordinator, have been named Founding Distinguished Experts for the International Academy of Veterinary Educators (AVE).

The AVE is a nonprofit educational organization forming a community of practice that will be focused on veterinary education and working toward elevating the discipline of veterinary medical education. Lane and Bailey were chosen for their accomplishments in inspiring, connecting, guiding, and encouraging learners in their respective fields.

They join two dozen other founding members and will help refine and finalize the credentialing process for AVE. According to the AVE, "This cohort of experts was not chosen lightly," and was established with the idea that "education is a broad topic that includes fields beyond traditional classroom or clinical instruction, but also education coordination, curriculum design, outreach, and so much more."



The 2023 TVMA Outstanding Technician Award was presented to Laura Fischer. As a veterinary technician, she has shown outstanding achievement in veterinary technology. Laura is a veterinary technician in the large animal hospital at UTCVM. Laura is being honored for her excellent patient care, her willingness to take others under her wing, her adaptive teaching style, and for creating a family atmosphere with her fellow technicians and students.

Dr. Marcy Souza received the inaugural UT Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture UTIA Faculty Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes a faculty member who has made significant and sustained contributions in teaching, research, and/or extension across their UT career in support of the UT's global vision of a world enriched by the power of ideas, made better through action, and inspired by the Volunteer spirit of service and leadership.



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A Final Salute to a **WAR HERO**



A fierce warrior. A decorated war hero. A loyal companion. A family member. Layka, a military working dog, lost her leg when she was shot four times with an AK-47 while saving American lives in Afghanistan in 2012. Even after being shot, Layka attacked and subdued the enemy shooter. Her heroics earned her a Medal of Honor and landed her on the cover of the National Geographic magazine. After retirement, an ATV accident brought her to UTCVM three years later and she remained a longtime physical rehabilitation patient. When it came time for her to cross the Rainbow Bridge, Layka received a final farewell at the veterinary college's War Dog Memorial, surrounded by her combat partner, local K-9 officers, and her dedicated medical team.

"I will protect you with my last breath. When all others have left you and the loneliness of the night closes in, I will be at your side."

Guardians of the Night