

ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

# VOLVetVision

WORKING FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ANIMAL & HUMAN HEALTH

2017

As fire ravaged East Tennessee,  
the **Volunteer Spirit** persevered





# A Note from our Dean

As dean of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, it is my principal responsibility to help this College excel in five major areas: teaching, research, patient care, community outreach, and service. We teach the science and art of veterinary medicine, serve as a resource for referring veterinarians, provide compassionate healthcare, and make discoveries that advance the health and well-being of animals and people. Our faculty, staff, and students touch multiple lives every day.

In the last ten years we have expanded both our small and large animal hospitals, enabling us to remain on the cutting edge of this profession. However, I think it is important for us to never forget that it's the people who make our College great, not the bricks and mortar. That will become crystal clear as you read this issue of our magazine.

When wildfires ravaged the mountains in Sevier County and the Gatlinburg community, our people responded. Before the first of almost two dozen burn patients was transported to us, we gathered a team to evaluate our resources and to determine a course of action. In addition to providing medical care, our people responded in other ways to provide fire relief efforts. Many volunteered at the emergency shelter in Sevier County. Others organized foster care for displaced animals. HABIT volunteer teams certified in Psychological First Aid worked at the human shelters for almost two weeks. The overwhelming support from our people for others in need did not surprise me. It is who they are.

In addition to helping others, we appreciate the support we receive. In our Family section, you will learn about the Ingram Family Scholarship and what it means to the first recipient. This is the largest scholarship awarded by our College. People work hard throughout their lives to protect themselves financially, create an enjoyable lifestyle, and position themselves to give back to others. That is the case with this scholarship. Our donors' gifts are usually born from their passion to make a difference, and passion can change the world.

Thank you for taking time to read this magazine. Thank you for learning about our passion and the ways we are changing the world.

Sincerely,  
*James P. Thompson*  
James P. Thompson



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Answer from back cover

This is a Computed Tomography (CT) image of a guinea pig skull. CT images provide our specialists a cross-sectional view of inside the body. CT images help detect abnormalities in the body.



# Dr. Jim Brace in the House!

Recently, we spent a few minutes catching up with one of our beloved emeritus faculty. Dr. Jim Brace, a small animal internal medicine specialist, joined the faculty in the late 1970s and served as the College’s second associate dean for academic and student affairs (then called assistant dean of resident instruction) in 1990 until his retirement in August 2013.

**What impact did UTCVM have on you and your career?** I never planned to go back to veterinary school after I graduated from UC-Davis. I had a job lined up in California, but then I had an opportunity to teach at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Teaching at OSU was great which made the decision to move to Tennessee an extremely difficult one. However, UT’s strong student-centric atmosphere was quite impressive. It was a great decision.

**What were the biggest challenges you faced as assistant dean of resident instruction?** The entire job and all the parts it entailed, from admissions to curriculum, scholarships and awards, etc. I faced a steep learning curve (and did until the day I retired!). Dr. William Grau, my predecessor, did a good job trying to educate me on what the position entailed, but there are many “nuts and bolts” with which to familiarize myself. Initially I refused to give up clinics, but after about two years I realized it wasn’t feasible. I would be in the clinic with students and patients during the day. We would finish our rounds around 5:30 or 6:00, and I would have twenty phone calls to return and another fifteen things to do.





**What did you enjoy most about your job?** The opportunity to work with students from high school through college, many who had dreamed for years about becoming veterinarians, and then watching them acquire the skills and abilities to become good veterinarians (some with a little coaxing along the way). I also enjoyed working every day with faculty and staff who were so dedicated at seeing students become successful. The people made Tennessee what it is.


**What are you most proud of during your time at UTCVM?** The success of our students. They generally scored very well on the national exams and became very successful in their chosen profession and lives. I’m also proud I had the opportunity to work with quality faculty, such as Drs. Edwards, Legendre, and Denovo. It’s hard to beat that group.

**What is your fondest memory?** The hooding ceremony for each graduating class and seeing the excitement and joy in graduates, family, friends, faculty, and staff.

When Dr. Brace retired, a scholarship was created in his honor. For more information visit [vetmed.tennessee.edu/give](http://vetmed.tennessee.edu/give).

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University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine Alumni

February 9 · 🌐



Dr. Brace in the house!



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
Karen Armsey, Julie Albright and 202 others

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Leslie Wereszczak Always glad to see him!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 3 · February 9 at 12:39pm




Anna McRee Bakker Our vet school dad! So beyond thankful to be trained under such a fabulous Dean!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 3 · February 9 at 4:09pm




Milli Cooper Bass Thanks, Jim ... for who you are and who you have always been.

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 1 · February 9 at 9:34pm




Bryan Bingham I wonder if he still has that \$100.00 dollars to lend me

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 1 · February 10 at 9:41am




Adam Thompson Dr. Brace always could grow a mean beard.

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 7 · February 9 at 12:57pm




Whitney Heath Vickery Could totally be Gandalf with the beard...

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 2 · February 10 at 9:58pm




Adele Fletcher Mays Love him!!

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Christopher Ray The Man!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 2 · February 9 at 2:15pm




Ashley Portmann The beard suits him!!!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 2 · February 10 at 12:06pm




Cheryl Sammons-Schwarz Love to you dr brace!!!!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 2 · February 9 at 4:02pm




April Norris Marklin Great teacher!!!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 2 · February 9 at 6:32pm




Kathleen Kunkel Love him! What an inspiration!!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 2 · February 9 at 7:23pm



Allison Fields Newton Love Dr. Brace!!!!!!

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 1 · February 9 at 11:43pm



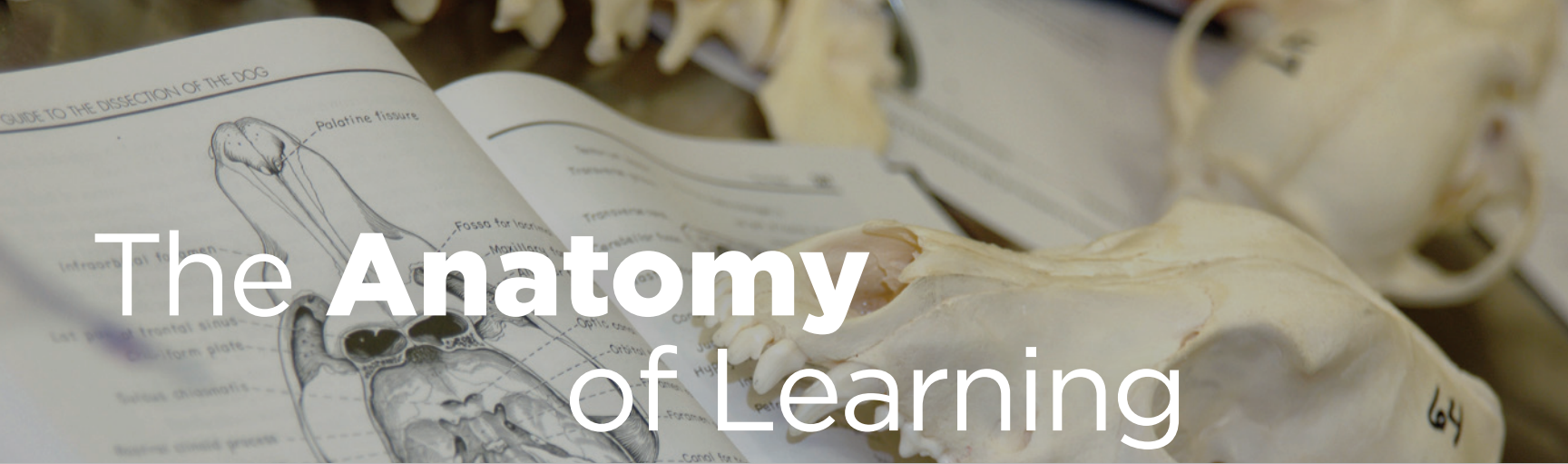
Taylor Davies Love Dr. Brace! ❤️

Like · Reply · 🗨️ 1 · February 10 at 2:37pm

*facts • sharing experience • ability to diagnose • working hard to help students, interns and residents acquire skills and knowledge so that they can provide the best possible service to the animals • synthesis • education is never complete • a good knowledge base is essential to discovering new treatments • higher education • the discipline of scholarship • searching for answers • understanding • expertise being translated to relevant education, application and outreach • power and awareness • teaching • not simply knowing, but understanding • collecting information to better interpret our findings • using our knowledge to benefit society • focus time • one health • imparting wisdom • continual improvement of professional knowledge and competence • communication of experiences • gaining and sharing information • observation • educating the next generation of veterinary professionals • comprehension • science • enlightenment • scholarly learning • figuring things out • we have the best faculty • ut college of veterinary medicine • application • facts • sharing experience • ability to diagnose • working hard to help students, interns and residents acquire skills and knowledge so that they can provide the best possible service to the animals • synthesis • education is never complete • a good knowledge base is essential to discovering new treatments • higher education • the discipline of scholarship • searching for answers • understanding • expertise being translated to relevant education, application and outreach • power and awareness • teaching • not simply knowing, but understanding • collecting information to better interpret our findings • using our knowledge to benefit society • focus time • one health • imparting wisdom • continual improvement of professional knowledge and competence • communication of experiences • gaining and sharing information • observation • educating the next generation of veterinary professionals • comprehension • science • enlightenment • scholarly learning • figuring things out • we have the best faculty • ut college of veterinary medicine • application • facts • sharing experience • ability to diagnose • working hard to help students, interns and residents acquire skills and knowledge so that they can provide the best possible service to the animals • synthesis • education is never complete • a good knowledge base is essential to discovering new treatments • higher education • the discipline of scholarship • searching for answers • understanding • expertise being translated to relevant education, application and outreach • power and awareness*

4 THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE





# The Anatomy of Learning

**G**ross anatomy class. Over the years those two words have been known to strike fear in the hearts of many veterinary students. Even the memory of the class can cause practicing veterinarians to break into a cold sweat. Dr. Robert Reed, associate professor in the Department of Biomedical and Diagnostic Sciences, is determined to change that with a summer anatomy boot camp.

Reed teaches small animal gross anatomy in the fall and large animal gross anatomy in the spring to first-year veterinary students. In the classes he presents foundational material upon which all of veterinary medicine builds. Where do you put your stethoscope head to listen for different gut sounds in the equine abdominal cavity? It all starts with anatomy, and Reed has a passion for ensuring our students understand both anatomic structure and function.



*Dr. Robert Reed created this intensive two-week summer class so that students can bone up on their anatomy.*

Dr. Jim Thompson, UTCVM dean, says the faculty continuously examine their teaching methods and strive to enhance and improve the learning experience of our students. “Over the years Robert has refined the anatomy courses, but every semester students say, ‘I wish I had anatomy before I got here,’ or ‘The anatomy class I had elsewhere didn’t help me.’ That prompted him to look for ways to prepare the students before their first year of veterinary school, and an anatomy boot camp was born.”

## ANATOMY BOOT CAMP

The problem with studying anatomy is volume—the amount of material students must learn lends itself to a tremendous amount of stress. The first anatomy boot camp (a two-week, six hours a day, noncredit course) was held last summer. One rising third-year and six rising second-year students served as teaching assistants. Designed to take away the stress and fear of anatomy, the boot camp gives students an opportunity to learn about 75 percent of the material covered in the semester dissection laboratories as well as basic dissection techniques. Reed parallels it to learning the football plays and assignment responsibilities during the summer and getting to the ballgame in the fall, ultimately alleviating some of the stress and facilitating success. Instead of hearing “caudal circumflex humeral artery” and saying, “Oh no. I’m not going to remember that,” they are familiar with it. That should help lessen the stress and give them a head start on what they are going to see during the semester.

About one-third of the incoming first-year veterinary students participated in the program. In the fall semester, Reed stationed at least one summer participant at each dissection table and quickly noticed a difference with fewer rudimentary questions, smoother labs, familiarity with laboratory techniques, and improved test grades.

Thompson says the College hopes to learn from the boot camp participants. Does it make anatomy easier? Does it decrease academic stress? Does it help with work/life balance? Does it increase students’ confidence level in anatomy? Does it enhance their academic performance? “Consistently re-evaluating our teaching methods will help us meet the needs of these and future veterinary students so we can always say teaching is job one at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine.”

# Beauty Is in the Eye of the *Bone* Holder

**I**t all started when Dr. Joe Weigel, an orthopedic surgeon, observed surgery residents having trouble placing implants such as pins and screws. “You can’t remove the bone from the body, fix it, and put it back,” explains Weigel. The surgeon doesn’t have full view of the entire structure as it’s covered by soft tissue. “So you palpate the bones, expose what you can, and then engage your mind visualizing the parts you can’t see. Where’s the joint? The end of the bone? The articular surface? When you are placing implants, you have to have a fairly decent vision in your mind of where these various structures are.”

## ART IMITATES LIFE

Throughout his forty-year tenure at UTCVM, Weigel has also realized veterinary students have a difficult time with orthopedic physical exams. Students could memorize and identify structures of the body, but not necessarily understand the relationship between muscles, joints, and bones. “They can feel the bone, but the mind has no impression where everything else is based on that palpation. That comes with practice.”

Surgery is not a completely scientific or technical practice but rather an art form. With that in mind, Weigel decided to offer an elective where students reconstruct bones themselves with clay. “To sculpt a bone, you have to have a three-dimensional understanding of the bone, its proportion, and its location.” His hypothesis was reinforced when he perused sculpting texts, amazed to learn up to a third of most books dealt strictly with anatomy. “They had pulled pictures and diagrams out of veterinary anatomy books! If they have to learn anatomy to sculpt, maybe we can sculpt to learn anatomy.” Instead of taking four years of orthopedic surgery to figure out the significant grooves or dimples on bones, maybe start a little earlier with art.

Each spring, between six and eight sophomore and junior students gather in the anatomy lab once a week. They aren’t bombarded with massive amounts of information. Rather, they look, observe, palpate, and use the



*Dr. Joseph Weigel discusses the characteristics of a bone with a student.*

artistic part of their brains to learn, becoming intimately familiar with the subtle yet clinically significant details of the structure. What’s in their mind comes out in their hands.

“When fashioning a femur, you should look very carefully at the groove where the patella sits. How deep is the groove? Which ridge is higher? When surgically correcting a patella luxation, you have to decide if the groove in this individual is deep enough. When you fashion a new groove you are a sculptor and create the new groove based on what you think the groove ought to feel like.”

The elective is only a few years old, and Weigel plans to structure a method to measure the effectiveness of engaging the artistic part of the mind while studying the art of veterinary medicine.

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# The King of Horses

## Our Three-decade Relationship with American Icons

**E**nvision slow motion video of magnificent manes billowing through the air. Powdery snow scattering as thunderous feathered hooves strike the ground. Eight perfect horses pulling a bright red wagon.

America's love affair with the Budweiser Clydesdales began more than eighty years ago when a hitch traveled across the country as a gesture of the company's goodwill celebrating the end of Prohibition, even delivering a case of beer to the White House. Today, the draft horses continue to travel the country, only now they deliver smiles and a sense of wonder.

In April 2016, the rock stars of the equine world and their entourage rolled into Knoxville for the Smoky Mountain Air Show, using the Equine Performance and Rehabilitation Center at UTCVM as their home base during the stay. Anywhere a Budweiser Clydesdales hitch travels, three 50-foot tractor trailers haul ten horses, a meticulously restored turn-of-the-century beer wagon, harnesses, and even portable stalls. And as you may expect from rock stars, the Clydesdales even travel with their own bedding and food.

*Budweiser East Coast Hitch supervisor, Dave Thomas, is accompanied by UTCVM veterinarians Dr. Steve Adair, Dr. Dallas Goble, and Dr. Dennis Geiser.*

"They are magnificent creatures," says Dr. Dallas Goble, equine surgeon and professor emeritus. "When you look up and see the 2,000-pound horse walk past, you can't help but be impressed. When you put eight together, it's incredible." And Goble should know; he was on the ground level of the College's relationship with the world-renowned Budweiser Clydesdales that began

thirty-six years ago. UTCVM first partnered with Anheuser-Busch in 1981 just before the 1982 World's Fair. "Dennis Geiser and I submitted a proposal to Clydesdale Operations in response to their seeking proposals for a national herd health program. We thought we'd do it for five years, but we're still doing it, more than three decades later."





When Goble retired, he handed the reins over to his mentee, Dr. Steve Adair, equine surgeon and director of the Equine Performance and Rehabilitation Center. Adair serves as the Herd Health Consultant for Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales Operation, which includes approximately 250 Clydesdales. “It is a privilege to be able to work on a horse of their stature,” says Adair. “Each one has a different personality.”

Besides having a friendly temperament, the iconic gentle giants must meet other physical requirements. To be a member of a traveling hitch, a Budweiser Clydesdale must be a gelding at least four years old, stand at least 18 hands tall, have a bay coat, four white legs, a white blaze, and a black mane and tail.

“They are rock stars,” says Adair, who enjoys recognizing the horses, Jack, Pee Wee, and others, during Super Bowl commercials. What almost sounds like the tone of a proud papa creeps into his voice when he talks about them. “When I was at the breeding farm a few months ago, I got to see Hope, the filly born three or four years ago who was the star of one of the commercials. She was pregnant and about to deliver her first baby. I’m sitting there saying to myself, ‘This is Hope. She was in the commercial and got to be named.’ It was pretty special.”

Twice a year Adair travels to the company’s three hitches located in St. Louis, Missouri; Merrimack, New Hampshire; Ft. Collins, Colorado; as well as the 300-plus acre breeding farm located near Boonville, Missouri. “I help them develop a herd health plan for all of them, not just the hitch geldings but their babies coming up, their youngsters in training, and their brood breeding farm,” says Adair.



Bob Brandon (right), former marketing director for Anheuser-Busch Companies, visited the UT Institute of Agriculture to give the UTCVM a replica eight-horse hitch to celebrate CVM’s three decades of care of Budweiser’s famous Clydesdales. Bob is pictured with Dr. Jim Thompson, left, and Dr. Steve Adair, center.

While they are on the road, if any questions regarding healthcare arise, they will seek a local veterinarian in the area, but Adair is consulted if any significant issue occurs at any time. “Having a single-point veterinarian familiar with the entire management operation, not just the individual horse, is beneficial.”

Each hitch horse will eat as much as 10-15 quarts of whole grains, minerals, and vitamins; consume 50-60 pounds of hay; and drink 30 gallons of water per day. Adair says overall, they are pretty healthy guys. “Probably the biggest thing we have to deal with is watching their weight. We don’t want them to get too fat and want them to stay in good shape to accomplish their jobs on a daily basis. They are athletes.”



Since the 1950s, each hitch travels with a mascot dalmatian. Barley rides shotgun on the wagon in parades. When horses were used to transport beer in the old days, a dog would guard beer on the wagon while drivers went inside to make deliveries.

During their stay in Knoxville, the East Coast Hitch had the opportunity to see Adair in his natural environment: the College’s 30,000-square-foot Equine Performance and Rehabilitation Center, complete with in-ground water treadmill, salt water spa, solarium, podiatry center, and indoor arena. Dave Thomas, supervisor of the East Coast Hitch based in Merrimack, New Hampshire, says Anheuser-Busch is committed to providing topnotch healthcare and welfare for its horses and that is where UT comes in. “It is important to have consistency in our healthcare plan. Since we travel just over ten months out of the year and work with lots of different veterinarians all over the US, it is important to have one veterinarian at one place that provides consistent information and care for our horses.”

According to Thomas, a Budweiser Clydesdale visit is akin to having a bit of American history in your hometown. “It’s always fun to go to a place we haven’t been in a while and see everyone’s reactions. Sometimes a grandparent will bring a grandchild out and talk about how they saw the horses a long time ago. It almost becomes a family tradition.”

“The Clydesdales are a beloved icon whose popularity almost rivals the American eagle in the United States,” says Dr. Jim Thompson, dean of UTCVM. “The public is enamored with the majestic breed that represents strength, commitment, and fortitude. The opportunity to care for these animals shines the light on our College’s role of educating our students in the noble profession of caring for the world’s animals.”



Electric Acupuncture

# Complementary Therapy Equine Acupuncture at UTCVM



Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine has four branches—acupuncture, diet, herbal medicine, and Tui-na (massage). Acupuncture, one of the complementary therapies available at UTCVM, is the stimulation of acupuncture points called acupoints using tiny needles to re-establish the flow of the Qi, the vital energy that gives life.

Acupuncture can be indicated for the treatment and/or management of multiple conditions such as muscle soreness, back pain, laryngeal hemiplegia, facial and radial nerve paralysis, anhidrosis, uveitis, infertility, and behavioral problems. It is also indicated for performance enhancement, general well-being, and preventative care. Acupuncture in general is safe with few side effects and is a natural form of medicine that does not oppose conventional medicine; it actually is a complement.



Aqua Acupuncture



Dry Needle Technique (for back pain)



# The Cat's Meow!

Our Community Practice has earned the “Cat Friendly Practice” certification through the American Association of Feline Practitioners. To earn the certification, clinics have to prove they have taken extra steps to assure they understand a cat’s unique needs, have implemented feline-friendly standards, and have made changes to decrease stress and provide a more calming environment. Veterinary staff have also been trained in feline-friendly handling and understanding cat behavior in order to increase the quality of care for cats.



## Veterinary College Achieves Highest Level for Emergency & Critical Care

The UTCVM Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care Service (ECC) has been certified as a Level 1 veterinary emergency and critical care facility by the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS).

UTCVM is the only certified facility in Tennessee and one of only thirty Level I facilities worldwide. A Level I emergency and critical care facility is a twenty-four-hour acute care facility with the resources and specialty training necessary to provide sophisticated emergent and critical patient care. Level I facilities provide the highest level of patient care through board-certified criticalists, board-certified specialists, emergency veterinarians, licensed veterinary technicians, and veterinary assistants. This facility is open to receive small animal emergency patients twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

Dr. Juergen Schumacher, head of the College’s Small Animal Clinical Sciences Department, says the certification is a major accomplishment and recognition. “This is an outstanding achievement for our dedicated faculty and staff, and we are very proud to provide the resources

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and expertise for state-of-the-art emergency/critical care medicine for our patients.”

The ECC service provides advanced care of critically ill, injured, and postoperative cases. The service utilizes advanced technologies to treat patients in need, including oxygen cages, telemetric ECG, mechanical ventilation,

blood pressure monitoring, and blood transfusion products. Advanced imaging modalities are available such as x-ray, ultrasound, echocardiography, CT, and MRI. The ECC service treats a wide variety of cases from trauma and toxicities to gastrointestinal, metabolic, neurologic, and respiratory diseases, to name a few.

“Being certified as a Level I VECCS facility shows our clients that we are committed to providing their pets with the very best of care through advanced facilities and equipment, complemented with the finest emergency/critical care team available,” says Leslie Wereszczak, LVMT, VTS (ECC) supervisor, ECC Service. In addition to licensed veterinary technicians and residents, the Emergency and Critical Care Service team includes Drs. Dianne Mawby, Adesola Odunayo, Amanda Rainey, and Julie Schildt.

While emergency service is available twenty-four hours a day, daytime emergencies are by veterinarian referral. For after-hour emergencies, the service contacts the client’s primary veterinarian the next business day to coordinate follow-up care.

empathy, caring, and kindness • we are compassionate with not only our patients, but also with their owners • seeing issues through our client’s eyes • supportive environment • we advocate for the wellbeing of the animals as we also strive to comfort the people that are bonded with them • heart • we love our people • veterinary social work • not only concern and caring, but empathy • good works • pet-loss support • loyalty to each other • companion animal initiative • ut college of veterinary medicine • prevent and relieve animal suffering • listen intently • navigating difficult times together • connecting time • one health • walk a mile in someone else’s shoes • going out of your way to help those in need • understanding the needs of our people, our clients and our patients • support • find ways to make the world a better place • protection of animal health and welfare • compassionate care is our top priority • we are kind to each other • learning to read people’s emotions so that we can better respond to their needs • we appreciate the efforts of our team • showing grace in the face of adversity • an altruistic heart • worth of all species • work-life balance • understanding • human-animal bond • intervention • empathy, caring, and kindness • we are compassionate with not only our patients, but also with their owners • seeing issues through our client’s eyes • supportive environment • we advocate for the wellbeing of the animals as we also strive to comfort the people that are bonded with them • heart • we love our people • veterinary social work • not only concern and caring, but empathy • good works • pet-loss support • loyalty to each other • companion animal initiative • ut college of veterinary medicine • prevent and relieve animal suffering • listen intently • navigating difficult times together • connecting time • one health • walk a mile in someone else’s shoes • going out of your way to help those in need • understanding the needs of our people, our clients and our patients • support • find ways to make the world a better place • protection of animal health and welfare • compassionate care is our top priority • we are kind to each other • learning to read people’s emotions so that we can better respond to their needs • we appreciate the efforts of our team • showing grace in the face of adversity • an altruistic heart • worth of all species • work-life balance • understanding • human-animal bond • intervention • empathy, caring, and kindness • we are compassionate with not only our patients, but also with their owners • seeing issues through our client’s eyes • supportive environment • we advocate

# COMPASSION

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# LAYKA

## the War Hero



A fierce warrior.  
A decorated war hero.  
A loyal companion.  
A family member.

Layka, a military combat dog, lost her leg when she was shot four times with an AK-47 while saving American lives in Afghanistan in 2012. Working with a Special Forces team, the Belgian malinois was clearing a building when she was wounded. Even after being shot at point-blank range, Layka attacked and subdued the enemy shooter, protecting her handler and other members of the team as they entered the building. Her heroics earned her a Medal of Honor and landed her on the cover of the National Geographic magazine.

“Her level of care on the battlefield is what I would have received. She was treated like a soldier and rushed to surgery,” remembers Staff Sgt. Trent McDonald. Layka underwent a seven-hour surgery to remove a front limb and another seven hours to repair the tricep muscle on her remaining front limb.

McDonald adopted Layka and brought her stateside to Oklahoma. In 2015, a freak ATV accident at home threatened her other front leg. McDonald was searching for the right medical team when he received a call. “Mrs. Switzer told me there was a phenomenal staff at UT and thought it was what I was looking for.” Becky Switzer, former University of Oklahoma women’s gymnastics coach and advocate for a statewide canine search and rescue program, had attended a canine sports medicine conference at the UTCVM while in Knoxville with husband Barry, former head football coach for the Dallas Cowboys and Oklahoma. They flew Layka and McDonald on a private jet from Oklahoma to the UT College of Veterinary Medicine for surgery and therapy at its Canine Arthritis Rehabilitation Exercise and Sports Medicine (CARES) Center. “Within fifteen minutes of talking to



Trent McDonald plays with Layka at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine.

Dawn Hickey, pictured on opposite page with Layka in the water treadmill, led a college-wide effort to purchase a brick (right) for the War Dog Memorial honoring Layka for her service. The memorial faces the Tennessee River in front of the veterinary college.



Layka’s recovery from emergency surgery, including amputation, after being wounded during combat in 2012.

Photo courtesy of Trent McDonald

Dr. Darryl Millis, I felt real comfortable leaving my dog in his hands. That’s kind of a big deal,” says McDonald. “I had never left her like this since she’d been shot. Some of the equipment there I’d never seen in my life. Dr. Millis runs a serious operation.”

“It is amazing what she’s gone through,” says Dr. Darryl Millis, an orthopedic surgeon and charter member of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. “She is extremely lucky those bullets missed her heart and her head; she can live without a leg. There’s no stop in that dog.” But the possible loss of her other front leg three years after the amputation could have been a possible death sentence for Layka.

The ATV accident had damaged Layka’s carpus (wrist), and it was too unstable to bear weight. The day after Layka’s arrival at UT was filled with x-rays, CT scans, and orthopedic surgery. Millis and the surgical team repaired as many ligaments and tendons as possible, performed a partial arthrodesis, and inserted a plate to stabilize the bones.





Layka and her medical team at Neyland Stadium.

## KNOWING SHE WAS IN GOOD HANDS, MCDONALD FLEW HOME. ALONE.

When treating a military working dog, the medical team has to not only manage the injuries but also the demeanor of the dog. “You’ve got a high-drive animal who is used to having all four limbs and being in control of everything—and Layka is a control dog—and now part of it is missing. That had to be a shock to her. She can’t manipulate her body the way she once did, and all of a sudden she’s vulnerable.”

With McDonald by her side, Layka allowed people to touch her, pet her, muzzle her. She followed all of McDonald’s commands without hesitation. Following surgery, Layka had to eat, which meant the muzzle had to come off. While remaining leery of Millis, his orthopedic fellow, and fourth-year student, Layka chowed down her meal. She was hurting in a strange place with strange people. Unfortunately, the muzzle had shifted farther into the cage than intended, and it had to be put back on Layka; otherwise, she would shred the cast protecting her leg. Millis called McDonald. “We have a little problem. Is there a command or something we can use to get the muzzle back on? Trent had me put him on speaker phone and Layka perked right up and zoned in on the phone as if to say, ‘Where are you?’” Treats in the muzzle and her owner’s voice on the phone helped the team ease the muzzle back in place. “I have a very healthy respect for her,” Millis says with a chuckle. “She’s great and would jump on my lap, but she’s the one who comes to me. I don’t get in her space unless she wants me to. That’s good advice I think.”

“Belgian malinois and German shepherds have that drive. They know what they are supposed to do, and nothing stops them,” says Dawn Hickey, a licensed veterinary technician on the CARES service who is also certified in canine rehabilitation. She became Layka’s primary caregiver. The bandages had to be changed daily to prevent infection and to allow doctors to inspect the wound and treat it with ice and laser therapy. That couldn’t be done without sedation. “We couldn’t keep a catheter in Layka so we opted for a sedative we rubbed on her gums.” The first few days, they tried putting it on with Q-tips, then Hickey decided to try using her finger. “I thought, ‘ok, we’re going to see what happens.’ (laughs)

Want to help get other animals back in motion?  
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We had bonded by that time. I would sit outside with her every morning, and she came to trust me.” Layka didn’t flinch when Hickey rubbed her gums with the medication. Near the end of her two-month rehabilitation, Hickey was able to change the bandages with no medication at all. At other times Hickey says Layka was quite the diva. “You can pet me, but don’t do anything I don’t like or you’ll not be in my good graces.” According to Hickey, it was rare that she was not in Layka’s good graces. “I pretty much let her do anything she wanted except chew her foot off and bite me.”

As Layka gradually returned to weight-bearing, rehabilitation included the land treadmill, underwater treadmill, and playing soccer with her rubber hand grenade after the other patients left for the day. Millis says she became quite the soccer player. “We would toss the ball and she’d whack it with the cast. She had great aim and would get mad if we didn’t kick it back to her.” But her rehab also included the swimming pool. Layka was vulnerable in the pool. “She was scared,” says Hickey. “She wasn’t used to it and knew she was weak and not in complete control, but she did it because I asked her to, and I was in there with her.”

When asked why she loves Layka so much, Hickey smiles. “I tend to be drawn to bad dogs. She is so easy to love and has an incredible zest for life and level of intensity in everything—her enjoyment of food, of play, of love, and her intense loyalty.”

One hundred thousand Volunteer football fans got to witness that loyalty and thank Layka for her service during the last home game at Neyland Stadium when UT honors veterans. In November 2015, they honored Layka and her medical team. As the video on the jumbotron highlighted Layka’s military service and her refusal to quit while undergoing rehab, a sea of orange rose and gave her a standing ovation. “A chill ran down my spine as I witnessed that many people recognize what an incredible creature she is,” says Millis, adding that her team was much larger than those with her on the field. “It’s a team approach: the radiologists performing the CT, the anesthesiologists keeping her comfortable, all the students involved in her care, Dr. Drum in rehab, and Dr. Guevara and others who assisted in surgery. The individual parts make a successful team.”

After going back to Oklahoma with McDonald after her rehab at UTCVM, Layka continued to gain strength. The pair returned for a follow-up visit in February 2016. While Hickey’s heart was breaking a second time knowing Layka would be leaving for good this time, she embraced the dog’s new-found strength. This time Layka swam in the pool on her own. She had no fear in her eyes, just determination as she chased the ball in the water.

McDonald says Layka is like a daughter to him and an inspiration. “Look at her. She has every reason not to be right, but she is one of the most perfect animals you can have running around the house. I feel like if she can do it then I can do it.”

# A LIFE Lived with Purpose

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, one-third of all North American bird species are in decline and need urgent conservation action.

JoAnn Thompson, a licensed songbird rehabilitator in Oak Ridge for sixteen years, believes everything on earth is connected and everyone needs to preserve it. “There is a spiritual connection to all of this. I see the environment as sacred, and that’s what makes it such a joy for me to rehab. It feeds my soul. When you help one thing you can help another. When we help the birds we are helping ourselves, too. I want a life lived with purpose.”

While Thompson would love to be in Africa working with baby elephants or cheetahs, rehabbing songbirds is something she can do in East Tennessee at her own house. Each March through September, she devotes her life to helping up to 200 sick, injured, and orphaned birds. It costs about ten dollars to rehab a bird, and other than the \$600 or so in donations, Thompson shoulders the rest of the financial burden. “Birds are fascinating, mysterious, and wonderful. They are so rewarding to work with; they never complain, they try and never give up.” Neither does Thompson.

A typical day begins with feeding baby birds at 8:00 a.m. The morning meal can take as long as two hours with some of the smaller birds needing to be fed every twenty minutes. Until sunset the cycle continues: feeding, cleaning, making formula, getting worms out, filling medicines, and making sure the environmental temperature is just right. While fledglings may stay with her ten to fourteen days, a hatchling can take about three weeks to mature, and nothing is released that isn’t self-feeding. She releases birds in areas that do not have outdoor cats. “In twenty-one days that tiny bird’s got to grow feathers and fly up into a tree! It’s so wonderful and miraculous to watch that happen,” Thompson exclaims. Once released, some of Thompson’s feathered friends return to visit. “My first release, a flicker, came back. He was eating ants but needed more than he was finding, and I’ll throw worms on the ground for robins. Now, doves will sit out there and wait for you to go out the door, and the wrens will *knock* on the door,” she says with the laugh of a proud momma.

Thompson says rehab makes her think about life, death, and immortality. “When you see a flower bloom, it’s worth all that work. It’s the same way with a songbird and protecting their numbers. My heavens, if we aren’t smart enough to understand what we have and protect it, we will lose it.”



## Songbird Habitat Necessities

- **Food:** In addition to feeders placed close to “safety cover,” plant a diversity of native fruit-bearing trees or shrubs and limit the use of pesticides.
- **Water:** Shallow birdbath (with a basin that can be cleaned easily) or other water source.
- **Shelter:** Area with dense shrubs or hedge (prune before March), brush piles.



# AFTER THE Smoke CLEARS

The Volunteer Spirit Perseveres

**“***t was like driving through the streets of hell. Trees were falling, and everything was on fire.” Katrina Cannon describes the late November night when fire forced her family from their home. “As I ran out of my house I was praying my hair didn’t catch on fire from the burning leaves and debris flying past. It was insane. An inferno.”*

**As they opened the door to flee the burning home, Topper, her orange tabby, bolted into the woods.**



*After thinking Topper had perished in the fire, Katrina Cannon cradles him in the Intensive Care Unit.*

**T**he ferocious wildfires that ravaged the mountains in Sevier County and the Gatlinburg community last November are something seen on the nightly news that happens somewhere else: earthquakes in California, tornadoes in the Midwest, hurricanes on the East Coast. This time, that story was here at home. Hurricane-force winds, monumental drought conditions, and fire created the perfect storm resulting in death and destruction. Wind gusts in excess of sixty miles per hour carried flames from a small fire at Chimney Tops in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park throughout the park and into the Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge areas. Fourteen lives were lost, thousands of acres burned, and nearly \$1 billion in insurance claims filed to date. The Sevier County Humane Society was forced to evacuate its animal shelter and set up an emergency shelter at the county fairgrounds. In what resembled a MASH unit, animals were triaged with the help of local volunteer veterinarians and veterinary technicians, and the most serious cases were sent to the UTCVM veterinary medical center. Before the first burn patient was transported to UT, the veterinary medical center gathered a team to evaluate available resources and determine a course of action.

One of the first animals the shelter sent to the veterinary medical center was a burned orange tabby in critical condition. “Do we give him the night or euthanize? His feet were so severely burned,” says intern Dr. Julie Sheldon. “He didn’t have an owner to speak for him so we didn’t know his situation. But his vitals were pretty stable, and we wanted to give him a chance.” That included an oxygen cage in the intensive care unit, as well as general anesthesia to debride his wounds and place a feeding tube. Animals severely burned have profound nutritional needs. Calories and protein are essential to helping a burned body heal.

A microchip with an old name and a Facebook post ultimately helped with identification. Cannon, who had lost all earthly possessions in the fire, had found her cat only to think she was going to lose him again. “My heart sank seeing him that way in the ICU. I still remember it like it was yesterday,” she says with a catch in her throat. “I didn’t think he was going to make it and was pretty sure that visit was my goodbye.” But she placed full trust in his medical team.

During the weeks following the fire, nineteen cats with severe burns to their paw pads, and some with facial burns, and a dog with smoke inhalation were treated in the small animal intensive care unit.



In the large animal hospital, medical teams treated a pig with lungs damaged by smoke inhalation and severe burns to his hooves and another pig with wounds sustained when he ran away the day of the fires. During Topper’s reunion with his owner there wasn’t a dry eye in the ICU. He became a symbol of hope for the medical teams treating all the animals injured in the fires.

“When Topper saw his owner, he responded really well to her, and I think he fought harder when he knew she was there,” says Sheldon. And Cannon was there every day. When surgeon Dr. Jeff Biskup noticed she had worn the same outfit several days in a row, he gathered clothes from his car to give her. Senior veterinary student Elizabeth Franklin, one of the first on Topper’s case, organized a clothing and toy drive among her classmates. But the road to recovery for Topper was fraught with setbacks and second guessing. Bones were exposed on all four limbs, and a week into his stay in the ICU, Biskup remained worried. “We had some tough days and would be close to saying he’d been through enough and then we would get that little bit of hope,” says Biskup. With very little written in veterinary literature about managing those types of wounds, treating Topper and the other eighteen cats injured in the fire was new territory. “Balancing what’s the most humane

and loving thing for Topper versus how far we push this medically and surgically remained the line we were walking the entire time. There were things we could do. The question was, ‘should we?’”

Pain management, wound management, risk of infection, and keeping the cats hydrated were just a few of the challenges the medical team faced. “It was truly a team effort and perhaps the first test of our veterinary medical center’s new certification as a Level 1 Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care facility (see page 12),” says Leslie Wereszczak, supervisor in the Emergency and Critical Care Service. “Our Emergency and Critical Care Service coordinated the overall care, while the anesthesia service developed individualized protocols for pain management and sedation for wound debridement; our soft tissue surgeons played a great role in wound debridement and wound management. Our physical rehabilitation service was instrumental during the recovery period with laser therapy and hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) treatments, even coming in on weekends to provide HBOT since wound healing happens on weekends, too. Neurology and internal medicine were involved as was nutrition: every cat had a customized nutritional plan based on body weight and unique needs. When the cats no longer needed intensive care, our Community Practice helped care for them.” Wereszczak said Sarina Manifold,

a licensed clinical social worker with Veterinary Social Work, was instrumental in keeping the crew sane. “It was an incredibly emotional time for everyone. People whose cats were still missing would call, desperately hoping their cat was one of the ones we were caring for. Sarina was always in ICU, listening to us tell the same story over and over as new cats were admitted. And she never came empty-handed. Chocolate can be good medicine for the caregivers!”

Caring for the cats was labor intensive, and they demanded extensive nursing care. With severely burned feet the cats couldn’t walk or get to the litter box. The medical team had to basically teach the cats to use the bathroom as they were held over the litter box, and two of the cats had feeding tubes. Daily bandage changes and wound debridement on the paws of nineteen cats added to an already busy caseload in the ICU. But everyone rose to the challenge. “It was emotionally hard too because we all live in East Tennessee. We love Gatlinburg, we love the Smokies, and it was hard knowing those cats had owners who had lost everything in the fire,” explains Dr. Adesola Odunayo, a critical care specialist. “We were bonded to the struggles and the challenges happening in our community, too, and I think most of us put in everything we had to try to help those cats. In our way, it was our way of giving back to the community.”

*Decked out in his holiday bandages, Topper stands for the first time after weeks in the hospital.*



*While Topper is sedated, Dr. Jeff Biskup debrides the wounds on his feet.*



*Two months after his release from the hospital, Topper visits with senior student, Elizabeth Franklin.*





*Veterinary students volunteered their time at the shelters.*



*A HABIT dog sits with a young child who was displaced by the fire.*

## A College-wide Effort

*The veterinary college responded in many ways to provide fire relief efforts. Many faculty, staff, and students volunteered at the emergency shelter, including a veterinary assistant who took a vacation day from work to volunteer. Students also volunteered at the shelter.*

*Our Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT) was in almost daily contact with the shelter and coordinated needed supplies as well as worked with pharmaceutical representatives for other medical supplies, such as pet oxygen masks, medications, syringes, thermometers, fluids, and other items. CAIT also coordinated Foster Vols foster care for some of the shelter's animals. Human Animal Bond in Tennessee (HABIT) has a Memo of Understanding with the East Tennessee Red Cross Chapter, and four HABIT teams (human and dog) that had undergone Psychological First Aid certification worked at the human shelters for almost two weeks.*



For the fourth-year veterinary students, it was an unparalleled opportunity to learn about burn therapy, bandaging techniques, teamwork, and facing difficult decisions. “I felt there were many times we didn’t know if there was hope for Topper, and it was hard to weigh his best interests,” says Elizabeth Franklin. Fellow student Cason McInturff agrees. “It was nice to see a multitude of medical techniques complement Topper’s healing. Some days were better than others, but he kept hanging in there!”

Wildfires forced Rob Holmes and his family to run through dangling power lines and snapped trees to escape their home with just the clothes on their backs. They had to leave everything behind including their pet pig Charles. Their home and everything around it burned to the ground, but Charles was able to survive by burrowing in the mud surrounded by scorched earth. Everyone, including members of the medical team treating him at the veterinary medical center, was amazed he survived the inferno. He suffered lung injuries due to smoke inhalation and severe burns on his stomach and feet. “When Charles first came to us he had a lot of trouble breathing,” says Farm Animal medicine specialist Dr. Ricardo Videla. Charles was lethargic, depressed, not eating, and his vital signs were not good. “In all honesty, we weren’t certain he was going to make it.” Charles’ prognosis was day-to-day. His skin began healing but his feet worsened, and he refused to stand. For Videla, one of the beautiful aspects of working with animals is discovery.

“We tend to underestimate animals because we can’t communicate effectively with them. I’m always very surprised at the things they can do.” Through hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatments, laser therapy, and daily visits from his family, Charles turned the corner and began the slow healing process as more than 11,500 Facebook fans ([facebook.com/charlesthempig](https://facebook.com/charlesthempig)) cheered him on. “It was nice to work with the owners who never lost faith. This is not just about helping the animal, it’s also the people that care for the animals. I am glad that our team got to make a small contribution in such a devastating situation like the fire in Gatlinburg.”

Because of the magnitude of loss the fire victims faced, the UTCVM Administration decided none of the owners nor the animal shelter would be charged for the medical care their animals received. Members of the community, both local and global, donated money to help cover the costs of treating the burn victims.

In all, two of the nineteen cats had to be euthanized due to the severity of their injuries. The last fire cat was discharged January 3, more than a month after the fires. In late February, Cannon brought Topper (and a big pan of homemade lasagna) to the veterinary medical center to say thank you. Topper had risen from the ashes. “Let’s see some action. I need to see how a cat with no pads walks,” says Biskup as Topper gazes all around at the smiling faces. To no one in particular he added, “Before Topper, if you had told me a cat would walk with no pads I would have honestly said ‘no, I don’t think so.’” Cannon explained that Topper joins her while she cooks and sits in a chair waiting on a bite of chicken. Recently he jumped from the floor to the back of a recliner. “He’s the king of the house,” she laughs, adding, “He’s perfect.”

Cannon was shocked when she took Topper to visit the ICU team. “I had no idea so many people were involved with his care and loved him so much. I can’t imagine what he and everyone caring for him went through. They are a godsend! There aren’t words good enough to say to them or to everyone who donated for the medical care. He’s here because of them. I have my baby back because of them. I’m beyond grateful.”

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*Charles the Pig received regular visits from his family while he was in the hospital.*



*Blackie, in the hospital more than a month after the fire, was the last cat to go home.*



# The Receiving End

A story about perspective from UTCVM veterinary technician and former HABIT volunteer, Leslie Wereszczak

Having been a HABIT volunteer several years ago, I realize that HABIT animals bring joy and comfort to those in need of a bright spot in their day when life may be cloudy. I never dreamed that I would ever have the need to be on the receiving end.

My daughter, Olivia, was admitted to East Tennessee Children’s Hospital for a mystery illness that had come from out of nowhere. Just days earlier, she had been her normal, vibrant, athletic self, yet now, she was limp and lethargic with horrific headaches, nausea, and residual back pain from a spinal tap. Walking a few steps was exhausting. She became distant and withdrawn from her ordeal.

Every knock at her hospital room door announced the potential for unpleasantness: frequent vital signs, medication injections, specialists examining her, CT scans, MRIs, blood draws, more specialists, more blood draws. Every knock meant potential dread until one knock in particular. There was a light, polite knock and then the door slowly opened a crack. There was a woman who peered in. She didn’t wear scrubs or a white lab coat. She began her introduction, “Hello, I’m a HABIT volunteer and...” before she could finish, the door opened wider—by the head of a beautiful chocolate lab with the typical perpetual chocolate lab’s smiling face and wagging tail. “Millie” was politely impatient with her human’s introduction and opened the door herself as if to make sure that whoever was on the other side of that door would affirm the need for her visit.

For the first time in over a week, the smile that had been absent from Olivia’s face reappeared. Her hospital stay had also separated her from her own animals, with whom she shares a tremendous bond. Millie graciously complied with Olivia’s request to join her in bed, and for the remainder of Millie’s visit, Olivia was able to relax and forget about being sick and just enjoy Millie’s company. If Olivia stopped petting her, Millie did the nose nudge to her hand, which made everyone laugh. At some point during Millie’s visit, I realized that everyone in the room was smiling, even my husband and me.

The doctors and nurses at Children’s Hospital are amazing, and through their healing knowledge, Olivia is back to normal. I will be forever grateful for the technology and medical advances that made this possible. As for Millie, her healing powers can be measured in tail wags and nose nudges. Powers that touched my daughter’s soul and gave us back her smile. Thank you, Millie. Good dog!



Millie the HABIT dog joins Olivia Wereszczak in her hospital bed at East Tennessee Children’s Hospital.



## Making Music for MACY

HABIT dog, Macy, visits with Jerry Bryant.

Tuesdays are marked on Jerry Bryant’s calendar. That’s the day Macy visits him at Shannondale Health Care Center. What is it about Macy? “First of all, she appears to like me,” Bryant says with a smile, eyes twinkling as his hand rests on Macy’s blonde head. “She’ll lie down on my bed and go right to sleep.” Macy, a cocker spaniel and her person, Joan Cohn, are volunteers with Human Animal Bond in Tennessee (HABIT), an outreach program at the veterinary college that sponsors animal-assisted therapy programs for all ages in a variety of settings such as nursing and retirement homes, assisted-living centers, hospitals, physical rehabilitation centers, and area schools.

Throughout his life Bryant has loved dogs and “downsized” over the years from golden retrievers to yorkies. “He has always either owned one or been adopted by his neighbor’s dogs,” explains Sandi Lawless, Bryant’s sister. After he moved to Shannondale for health reasons, she felt having dogs in his life would help him adjust

to the facility. “I was desperate to find something to perk him up and just happened to call the right veterinarian to inquire of any program that involved animal visitation. She gave me Ruth Sapp’s number at HABIT, and I can’t begin to tell you how relieved I was! It was as if it were meant to be!”

Macy’s visits achieved what Lawless had hoped: Bryant became more engaged with life at Shannondale. According to Lawless, “He gets excited before, during, and after the visits. HABIT has changed his whole attitude. He laughs more, and Shannondale seems more like home for him.” Bryant, who had earned a degree in music from Carson-Newman University and played the piano his entire life, began tickling the ivories once again. He would join others in the dining room, and after finishing his dinner he would take his seat at the piano and play music, mostly church hymns he knows by heart. “They’ll sit down as long as I’ll play,” he says. Bryant looks forward to Macy’s Tuesday visits

(and the Thursday visits from Henry, another HABIT furry volunteer that Bryant calls a rascal), which have added fun and structure to his life. “Macy and Joan are family. It means everything to have Macy visit. She calms me down and relaxes me. And she’s smart! She knows the way to my room. She could be just let out of the elevator and would come straight to me.”

Cohn, a HABIT volunteer for twenty-five years, is used to playing second fiddle on the other end of the leash. “From the very first visit, those two have had a special bond. She means so much to Jerry.” Cohn’s reward is the satisfaction of seeing someone enjoy Macy. “As much as I love her, there’s nothing like seeing how she affects everyone positively. Her whole body starts moving, and they start laughing and talking.” Cohn says it’s very uplifting to know how her dog can affect someone and make someone’s day. “I’m embarrassed when people say ‘thank you for coming.’ I thank *them* for letting me come.”





# Our GLOBAL Neighborhood

## UT Veterinary Public Health and CAIT visit Uganda



In this ever-shrinking world, people and animals are often connected by a single day’s travel. Diseases of both humans and animals can travel as quickly as we can. Veterinarians can play a prominent role in the health of humans and animals globally, but without adequate exposure to different cultures and levels of development, our students will have a difficult time adapting to future health threats.

In July 2016, Dr. Marcy Souza, director of Veterinary Public Health at the UTCVM, traveled to Uganda with Teresa Fisher and Jaime Norris, members of the UT Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT) and two rising third-year veterinary students. The goal of this trip was to determine the feasibility of an annual trip with students to the northern parts of Uganda to learn about the role of veterinary medicine in a developing nation. Through the experience, the students gained a different outlook on life and began asking what they can do to make an impact, no matter the size, on global health issues.

During their two-and-a-half week stay in Uganda, they visited with faculty members from the veterinary college at Makerere University in Kampala. Spay/neuter, vaccinations, swine fever, Foot and Mouth, population control, tick-borne diseases, wildlife (elephants, zebras, primates, etc.) management, public health—they discussed it all. “We met with the wildlife veterinarian of Murchison Falls National Park and heard stories of chasing animals through the bush to remove a snare that had injured the animal as a result of poaching for bush meat,” says Souza. “We spent a few days with the district veterinary officer of the Gulu region and learned about livestock farming with a focus on dairy farms; the students saw diseases that they only learn about from books at home.”

The UTCVM team also worked with The Big Fix Uganda, a nonprofit organization that provides free or low-cost spay, neuter, and vaccinations to the people of rural northern Uganda. Dog overpopulation and the resulting human health issue, rabies, is a real fact of life. Record keeping is poor, but thousands of people and dogs die from rabies annually in Uganda, a disease that is 100 percent preventable through appropriate vaccination. The Big Fix sets up shop in remote villages, and people who have very little money for their own medical care and no money for veterinary care, travel up to ten kilometers by foot, bicycle, or motorbike with their dogs. The surgery “suite” was a folding table under a small pop-up tent, no field autoclave, no operating lights, and treatment was weather-dependent. “Our students performed surgeries and learned how to practice medicine with limited resources and a language barrier. During our time with The Big Fix Uganda, we also worked with two veterinary students from Makerere University, which was a wonderful opportunity for all of the students to learn from each other, both with regard to culture and veterinary knowledge.”

Souza is hopeful for a long-term partnership between UTCVM, The Big Fix Uganda, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, and Makerere University. “Our students would gain exposure and experience with academic, wildlife, livestock, and dog/cat medicine in a developing country. Ultimately, our students will be better citizens of the world and able to better contribute to global health concerns of both humans and animals.”



*The UTCVM team visits a dairy in Uganda.*



*People travel miles, often by foot, to seek veterinary care for their animals.*

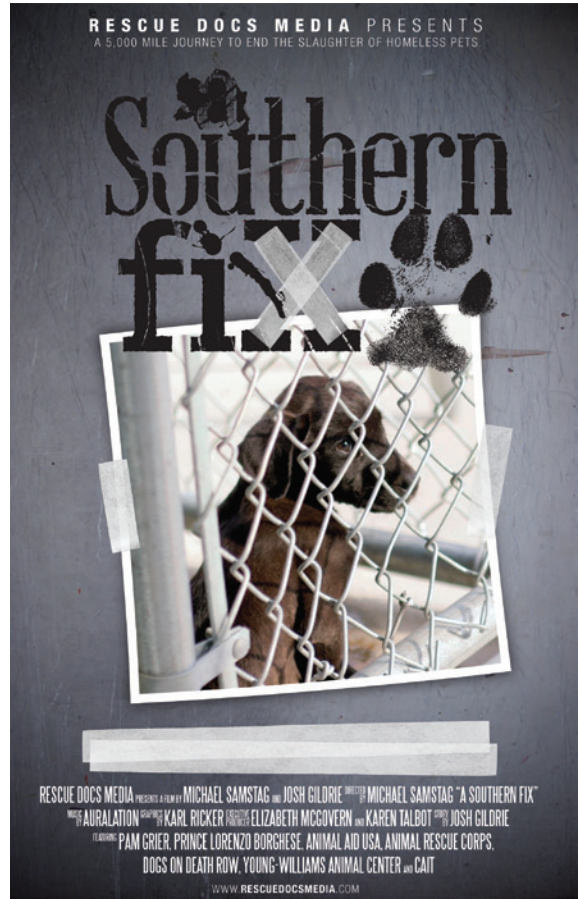
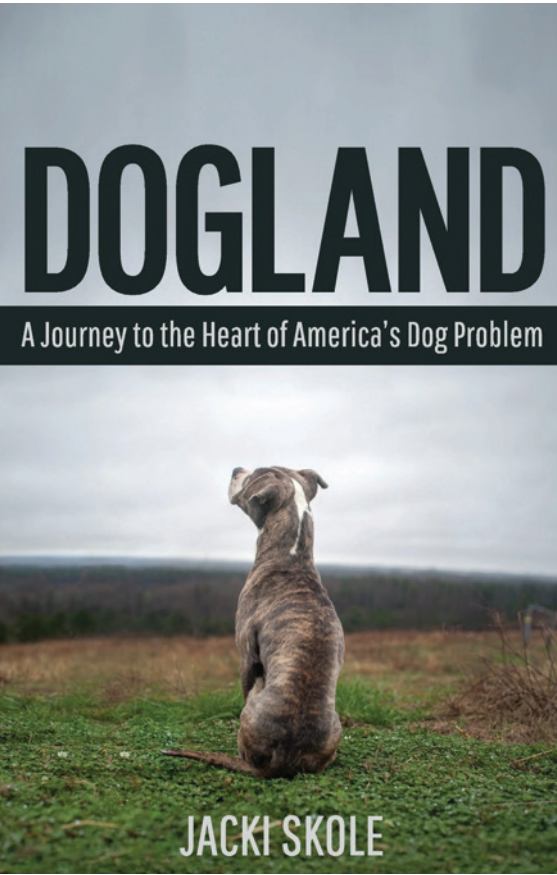




# UTCVM Expertise Tapped

Our faculty and staff are interviewed regularly for news stories, specialty magazines, and trade publications. They also generously share their time and expertise to more involved projects, such as television series, documentaries, and books.

*Scaly Adventures* is a family-friendly action and adventure broadcast television series that highlights organizations and people who are passionate about impacting the world in a positive way. The series featured UTCVM in “Who Let the Docs Out?” during its third season in 2015. The family returned to the veterinary college in 2016 to film “General Houndspital” that aired in the series’ fourth season. Visit [scalyadventures.com](http://scalyadventures.com) to learn what channels air the show and for information regarding additional segments found on its YouTube channel.



Approximately 3 to 4 million companion animals are euthanized each year throughout the United States with a disproportionate number occurring in the South. *A Southern Fix* is a documentary focused on finding a solution. While searching for answers, Rescue Dogs Media traveled more than 5,000 miles interviewing advocates, veterinarians, and rescue coordinators. During their journey they tapped the expertise of several people at UTCVM, including Teresa Fisher, director of Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT); Elizabeth Strand, director of Veterinary Social Work; and Dr. Amanda Dykstra, clinical assistant professor of Shelter Medicine. The film has been screened in Knoxville, Atlanta, Philadelphia, and other places. Visit [asouthernfixfilm.com](http://asouthernfixfilm.com) to learn more.

New Jersey author Jacki Skole visited UTCVM in 2013 as she gathered information for her

book *Dogland: A Journey to the Heart of America’s Dog Problem*. Her adoption of a rescue puppy was the inspiration for the book, which explores the serious issues facing shelter dogs in America and highlights the work being done by animal advocates. Skole interviewed Teresa Fisher, director of UTCVM’s Companion Animal Initiative of Tennessee (CAIT), and Dr. Julie Albright, UTCVM’s PetSafe Chair of Small Animal Behavioral Research. She also spent time with CAIT at its monthly Vets for Pets of Homeless Owners outreach initiative. More information about the book can be found at [ashlandcreekpress.com](http://ashlandcreekpress.com).

seeking, searching, and finding • eureka • research and development of new tools to make improvements • searching for new answers all the time • original research • specialists of different disciplines or fields collaborate to explore and test new alternatives to problems affecting animal health • expansion • making the world a better place • one health • ut college of veterinary medicine • listen intently • to find not only answers, but to find ourselves in the lives of others • excellence • loyal to the cause • scholarly research • empowering our people to make change • enlarging our knowledge • seek then share • following your passion • the understanding of things previously thought to be magic • science • when we work together, the results can be exponentially better • generation of new ideas, proving the validity of those ideas, and putting them into action • ethical • advancing medical knowledge • figuring things out • looking for solutions • let’s see what happens • working together to further both animal and human health • learning from each other • synthesis

# DISCOVERY

• researching ideas • analyzing others’ findings • evidence-based research • hmm, that’s odd • seeking, searching, and finding • eureka • research and development of new tools to make improvements • searching for new answers all the time • original research • specialists of different disciplines or fields collaborate to explore and test new alternatives to problems affecting animal health • expansion • making the world a better place • one health • ut college of veterinary medicine • listen intently • to find not only answers, but to find ourselves in the lives of others • excellence • loyal to the cause • scholarly research • empowering our people to make change • enlarging our knowledge • seek then share • following your passion • the understanding of things previously thought to be magic • science • when we work together, the results can be exponentially better • generation of new ideas, proving the validity of those ideas, and putting them into action • ethical • advancing medical knowledge • figuring things out • looking for solutions • let’s see what happens • working together to further both animal and human health • learning from each other • synthesis • researching ideas • analyzing others’ findings • evidence-based research • hmm, that’s odd • seeking, searching, and finding • eureka • research and development of new tools to make improvements • searching for new answers all the time • original research • specialists of different disciplines or fields collaborate to explore and test new alternatives



# Sound Approach

## A New Way to Test for Deafness in Dogs



Drs. Sims, Harkrider, and Plyler (right to left) examine one of the puppies as a part of the audiology study.

Pictured below is the handheld unit that has been shown to be just as effective in measuring deafness in dogs as the BAER test.



Hearing problems aren’t always readily apparent in children and infants. The same holds true for puppies. While some deafness is caused by chronic ear infections or injury, dozens of dog breeds are affected by hereditary deafness. Sometimes owners don’t suspect a problem until the dog begins to mature and fails to respond to verbal commands. Other symptoms may include lack of response to squeaky toys or a tendency to startle when touched from behind.

Veterinarians refer suspected deaf dogs to a college of veterinary medicine or a specialty practice for a definitive diagnosis. Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response (BAER) is one of the tests most commonly used to determine deafness. BAER requires specialized training and expensive equipment. “Sounds are produced in the external ear canal and electrical activity is recorded from the brainstem using extremely sensitive equipment and signal averaging to show how the peripheral and central nervous system are processing the sound,” says Dr. Michael Sims, recently retired professor of physiology and past director of the UTCVM Electrodiagnostic Laboratory. He has performed hundreds of BAER tests on animals throughout his career. “BAER provides physiologic data to determine if the ‘cochlear’ is functioning.” But the BAER test can be expensive and traveling to a referral center can be cumbersome and costly for pet owners. Dr. Sims wanted to make testing more accessible to veterinary practitioners and turned to the UT Health Science Center’s Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology to explore the possibility of using a handheld otoacoustic auditory emissions screener to detect deafness in puppies.

Sims has had a working relationship with that department since his laboratory was established in 1976. He worked with Dr. Ashley Harkrider,

professor and chair, as well as pediatric audiologist and associate professor Dr. Erin Plyler when they were students. “The handheld unit is proven to detect deafness in infants and children, and we wanted to evaluate its use in veterinary medicine,” says Sims. Their research, which is published in the July/August 2017 issue of the *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association*, shows it is as effective as the BAER test. “We can help veterinary practitioners to improve their ability to assess auditory function. When a client asks if the veterinarian can test a puppy’s ability to hear, it can be done right there in the office.”

“This collaboration among our faculty and the veterinary college is a perfect example of interdisciplinary research leading to better clinical practice—for both people and animals,” says Harkrider. “The more access veterinarians have to the noninvasive, cost-efficient, and quick testing procedures highlighted in this publication, the better they will be able to serve our furry friends. That makes us all very happy!”

The subject matter didn’t hurt either. Plyler says, “Testing the puppies was a very similar experience to our everyday work when testing babies. Both are adorable and you want to snuggle with them! In order to complete a successful hearing test with either group, building trust is the foundation.”

Sims wants to spread the word about the handheld screener’s effectiveness. “The earlier dog owners realize their dog is deaf, the earlier they can begin training with hand signals rather than verbal commands and develop strategies for keeping their pet safe.”

Help us discover tomorrow’s solutions.  
Call 865-974-4379 or visit [vetmed.tennessee.edu/give](http://vetmed.tennessee.edu/give)

# DOGS and KIDS: Good Medicine?

## Exploring ways to lower sedation levels in children undergoing surgery

The Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) has awarded a \$79,000 grant to the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine for a new study titled, *The Effect of Animal-Assisted Intervention on Preoperative Anxiety and Dose of Sedation in Children*. This study will examine the effect of animal-assisted intervention (AAI) on children’s anxiety levels and sedation medication dosages prior to surgery.

“The goal of this study is to determine if interaction with a therapy dog twenty minutes prior to surgery has a significant effect on reducing a child’s anxiety levels and, in turn, lowering the dose of medication necessary for sedation,” says the study’s principal investigator, UTCVM’s Dr. Zenithson Y. Ng. “The results of this study may be further used

to justify and advocate for AAI in various medical situations and open doors for additional research on measurable medical outcomes associated with AAI.”

The three-year, crossover-designed study will examine seventy-two children between the ages of two and seventeen and randomly determine whether the children receive a therapy dog or an iPad tablet twenty minutes before sedation. Ng and coinvestigators Dr. Julia Albright and Dr. Marcy Souza will then evaluate heart rate, blood pressure, and medicine levels for sedation and compare the amounts of each group. It is expected that children provided with a therapy dog prior to surgery will have significantly lower preoperative anxiety and will require a decreased amount of medication for sedation compared to children who do not interact with a therapy dog.



“Scientific research has shown that therapy dogs in hospital settings can have a calming effect, ease stress, and provide reassurance to patients young and old, and to their families as well,” says HABRI Executive Director Steven Feldman. “HABRI’s grant to the University of Tennessee will help advance the science on the benefits of companion animals in hospital settings. The more we can demonstrate the positive role pets can play in human health, the more people can benefit from the healing power of the human-animal bond.”



The HABRI Foundation maintains the world’s largest online library of human-animal bond research and information; funds innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals; and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society. For more information about the HABRI Foundation, visit [habri.org](http://habri.org).



# The Acree Chair in Small Animal Research Named

## A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity



Dr. Whittemore stands with the War Dog Memorial outside the UTCVM Veterinary Medical Center. The War Dog Memorial is an exact replica of the statue that was originally erected in Guam in 1994. It was donated by Dr. Acree and dedicated in July of 1998 as a tribute to the unique bond between dogs and humans.

The UT College of Veterinary Medicine is proud to announce the appointment of Dr. Jacquie Whittemore as the Acree Chair in Small Animal Medicine. Dr. Maurice M. Acree Jr., created an endowment at UTCVM to support research dedicated to the prevention and treatment of companion animal diseases and to advance that knowledge into human medicine when possible. Acree was particularly devoted to doberman pinschers and had a passionate desire to extend medical knowledge related to cardiomyopathy, cervical vertebral instability, hypothyroidism, malignant melanoma, chronic hepatitis, and von Willebrand’s disease.

Whittemore shares her thoughts on the five-year appointment that provides her direct access to a research account fund that will be used to advance Acree’s vision to create an invigorating hospital climate conducive to solving problems that are unique to the practice of small animal medicine.

**What does this appointment mean to you?** Given the shrinking pool of funds available for veterinary research and exploding demand, it

is very challenging to lay the broad foundation necessary to successfully develop a meaningful, long-reaching research program in companion animals. This is particularly true for issues where the dog (or cat) cannot be used as a model for people. Given his vocation as a human doctor, Acree was uniquely positioned to see this significant impediment to advancing veterinary research frontiers—and both motivated and equipped to take action to help remove it. I am incredibly humbled by his long-sighted view and philanthropy and grateful for this exciting opportunity to develop my research program and deepen its impact.

**How do you balance being a teacher, researcher, and clinician?** Balancing the challenges of research, clinical practice, and teaching is, indeed, challenging! However, the joys of each are unique, and so it is a fun challenge! I envision, perhaps idealistically, that serving as the Acree chair will enhance my performance in all three facets of my daily activities. The resources associated with this appointment will ideally position me to expand my work in identification and mitigation

of gastrointestinal disease secondary to medical therapies. Because these are clinical problems, they should yield many opportunities to expand clinical research and, thus, directly and immediately benefit patients of the veterinary medical center. Finally, one of the expectations and opportunities of being the Acree chair is to develop an ongoing graduate and/or postdoctoral program. The chance to cultivate new researchers thrills me!

**What is your vision for the appointment?** I see it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a pioneering, vibrant research program, teeming with creativity, clinical impact, and new great minds. I hope to build a solid foundation during my tenure as Acree chair on the bedrock of UT innovation and collaboration so I will be well-positioned to further grow and outstrip previous accomplishments for years to come after the appointment ends. My primary focus will be on characterizing negative gastrointestinal effects of common medical therapies, such as antibiotics and antiplatelet therapies, and developing strategies to prevent their occurrence or minimize their deleterious effects.

acceptance and support • our college is a family • food • the support of the college is what makes our other missions possible • respect • volunteer pride • a lifelong commitment to celebrate each other’s successes and accept each other’s short-comings without judgment or prejudice • love and support • we have the best staff • connecting time • vol for life • not only those you live with, but those you live for • we have a lot of fun • loyalty • we help and support each other during difficult times as we promote and celebrate growth and accomplishments • teamwork makes the dream work • we take care of each other • knoxville • a well-balanced life • celebrating each other • community • veterinary medicine • working together • we love our people • ut college of veterinary medicine • downtime • our tribe • the success of one is the success of all • vfl • laughing together and crying together • fun times • the volunteer spirit • everyone helps everyone • striving for excellence • no matter what you do, there’s always someone there to help you • letting others

help you when you’re overwhelmed • partying together • late nights and early mornings • a level playing field • east tennessee • everyone is equal • more than just work friends • everyone knows everyone • diverse • tailgate • acceptance and support • our college is a family • food • the support of the college is what makes our other missions possible • respect • volunteer pride • a lifelong commitment to celebrate each other’s successes and accept each other’s short-comings without judgment or prejudice • love and support • we have the best staff • connecting time • vol for life • not only those you live with, but those you live for

• we have a lot of fun • loyalty • we help and support each other during difficult times as we promote and celebrate growth and accomplishments • teamwork makes the dream work • we take care of each other • knoxville • a well-balanced life • celebrating each other • community • veterinary medicine • working together • we love our people • ut college of veterinary medicine • downtime • our tribe • the success of one is the success of all • vfl • laughing together and crying together • fun times • the volunteer spirit • everyone helps everyone • striving for excellence • no matter what you do, there’s always someone there to help you • letting others help you when you’re overwhelmed • partying together • late nights and early mornings • a level playing field • east tennessee • everyone is equal • more than just work friends • everyone knows everyone • diverse • tailgate • acceptance



# Beloved Tinkerbell

## A Mother’s Story

Tinkerbell is the natural embodiment of her name. Feisty and flitting about everywhere and getting into things. Lose a gold earring? No worries, Tinkerbell can find it. Does her brother Pepper Junior (PJ) have a toy or treat Tinkerbell wants? All she has to do is stand next to him and whine, and before you can scatter fairy dust through the air, PJ turns the item over to his sister.

“Tinkerbell is everything I’m not,” says Carmen Clark, pet mother to dogs Tinkerbell and PJ. “She’s energetic, brave, and happy all the time. The one thing we do share is a strong sense of independence!” Clark will tell her girl to go left, Tinkerbell goes right. Put something down? Nope, she’ll pick it up. “I’ve never felt any deficit not having kids; these two are my children. I am definitely a mother!”

In January 2015, Clark was loving on Tinkerbell (who tolerates it for sessions lasting less than ten minutes) when she felt swollen lymph nodes. An immediate visit to her veterinarian confirmed Clark’s fears. When she heard Tinkerbell’s diagnosis, stage 5 lymphoma, she froze. Tinkerbell’s journey with the Oncology Service at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine began as Clark prayed for Tinkerbell to make it to Christmas that year.

Tinkerbell doesn’t know she’s sick. “I never tell her she’s sick or how much treatment costs,” says Clark. After the diagnosis, Clark traveled to Knoxville from Lawrenceville, Georgia, for chemotherapy treatments once a week for twenty-five weeks, with insurance covering the bulk of the cost. “She didn’t lose her hair or get sick from the chemotherapy. If you are standing there she will just twist and strut right by as if you were invisible!” Tinkerbell’s cancer went into remission.

Tinkerbell continues to strut her stuff in the fight against cancer, exceeding the survival rate of nine to twelve months. She came out of remission in April 2016, and her oncology team began treating her with a rescue protocol. But insurance no longer covered costs as claims exceeded coverage.

In 2016, the Petco Foundation and Blue Buffalo Foundation announced a \$1.05 million investment as part of a multiyear university partnership to support pet cancer treatment initiatives. UTCVM is one of six veterinary colleges in the country chosen to participate in the Petco Foundation and Blue Buffalo Foundation Cancer Treatment Support Fund, which provides subsidized support for cancer treatments for pets whose owners would not otherwise be able to afford the cost of treatment. UTCVM will receive \$350,000 through 2018.

“I’m very grateful for the financial help, but I don’t want to take it if it means there aren’t enough funds to help someone else. I always ask about that at each visit,” says Clark. “Everyone here understands what we are all



facing. People in the waiting room talk to each other. We are never truly alone when it comes to caring for our kids.” And each of them are hoping for another holiday with their family.

*Postscript: Tinkerbell lived through Christmas 2016, but lost her battle with cancer in February 2017. She is dearly missed by Clark, PJ, and her oncology team. Every time Clark thinks of her, she thinks of the purest love that ever existed.*



## A Passionate Fight

By Olya A. Martin, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)  
UTCVM clinical assistant professor, Oncology Section Chief

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in older pets. Approximately 50% of dogs and 30% of cats over the age of 10 will die of cancer. **We are passionate about fighting cancer. We know that every day with our pets is precious and important and we want to help.** Our goal is to provide comprehensive diagnostic and treatment options to all pets that have been diagnosed with cancer.

In this day and age, cancer diagnosis is not an automatic death sentence, there are many treatment options. Unfortunately, diagnostic tests and cancer treatments can be cost prohibitive. It is heartbreaking when an owner comes to us to learn about how his/her pet can be helped and simply cannot afford the care we offer. This grant from Petco Foundation and Blue Buffalo Cancer Foundation allows us to extend care to these

pets, care that may lead to curing their cancer or putting it into a prolonged remission. We are incredibly excited to have this opportunity and are hoping to impact many lives.

There are several cancers that can be cured if detected early and treated appropriately. The best examples are low-grade soft tissue sarcomas and mast cell tumors. Often these cancers are cured with surgery or a combination of surgery and radiation therapy.

There are still many cancers we do not cure but we do put in remission, meaning that sick pets get back to feeling well and enjoy normal life for a period of time. One of the best examples of this is lymphoma. Chemotherapy can be incredibly successful for some dogs and cats with this disease. For example, a dog with B-cell lymphoma will achieve complete

remission with chemotherapy and will live for an average of 1 year. That is a whole another year of love, adventures and memories! There are always pets that beat the odds and live much longer than average with appropriate treatment. The bottom line is, we often don’t know what the outcome will be until we try treatment. We will be able to offer hope to people who love their pets dearly and want, but cannot afford, cancer treatment. That is incredibly heartwarming and gratifying.

### Guidelines for receiving assistance:

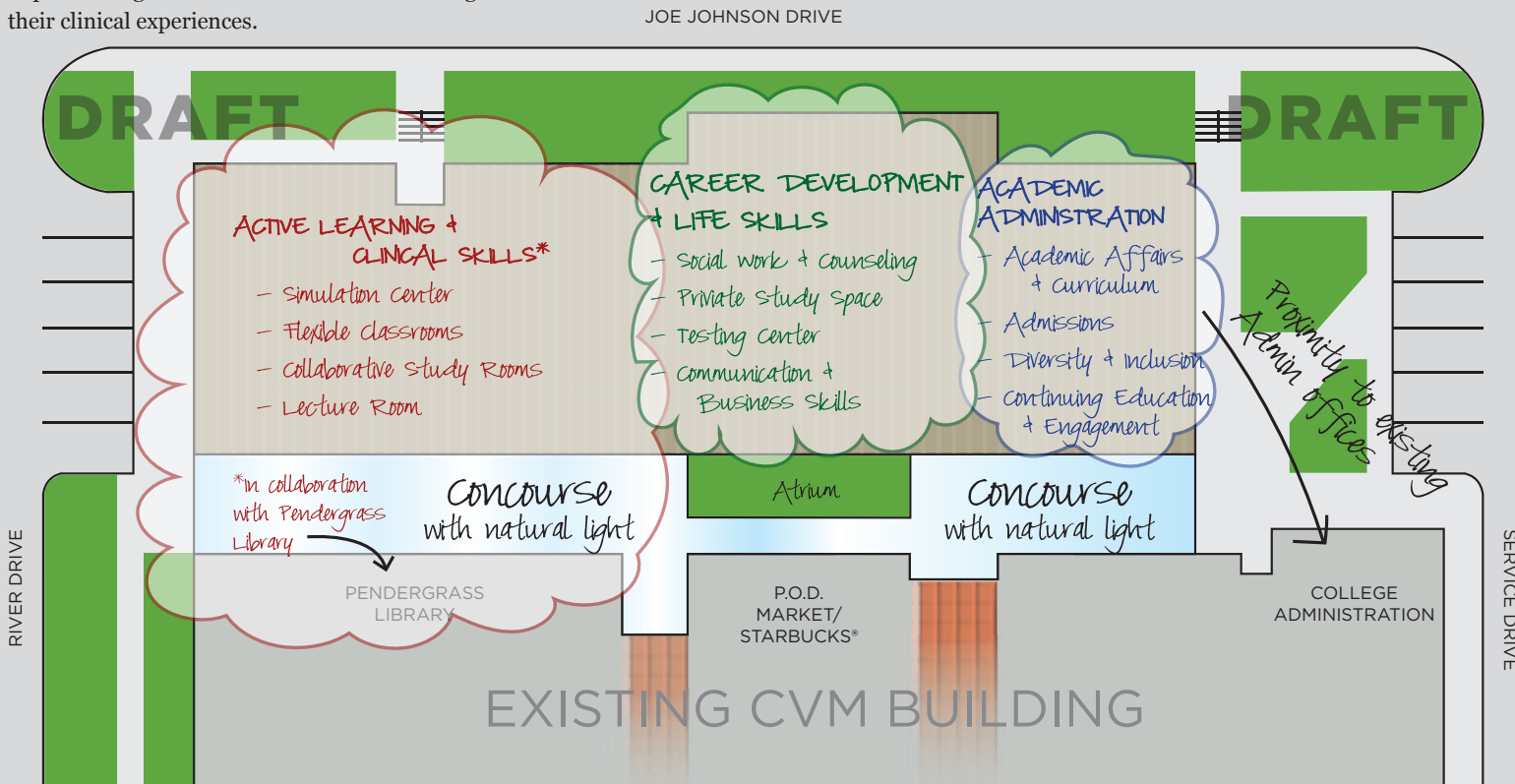
- Good prognosis for the cancer, if treated
- Financial need
- Some financial commitment from the owner toward treatment
- Ability to comply with UTCVM’s treatment recommendations

## Some TLC Expansion plans for a Teaching & Learning Center

The proposed Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine will enhance our educational and interactive environment and support the professional and personal growth of all students. The centerpiece of the TLC is a simulation center, an innovative teaching tool that offers students the opportunity to become proficient and confident in performing technical skills before and during their clinical experiences.

The TLC addition will be located between the UTCVM building (on the Pendergrass Library side) and Joe Johnson Drive where a parking lot currently exists. In addition to the Simulation Center, the new space will include a large lecture room, fitness and locker rooms, study areas and counseling suites, plus brand-new areas to house our academic affairs offices and social

work program. The construction proposal has been submitted for university and legislative approval. Partial funding through generous donations has been secured. Please contact Blake Hudson, director of advancement for UTCVM, at 865-974-4379 if you would like to support this initiative or have questions regarding project development.





# Pay It Forward

## Largest scholarship in UTCVM history

### *Julieann Vose's story, in her own words*

**M**y brother and I were raised in a single-parent household by a physically disabled mother, who completed an eighth-grade education and attained a GED. Although we got by, we were still unable to afford the common luxuries of a car, air conditioning, or other things that people take for granted every day. At age fifteen I started working full-time every summer and part-time during the regular school year. By the time I reached my late teen years, I was supplementing the household income while trying to attend community college. After transferring to a four-year state college, I graduated with a double major in biology and animal science. With my family commitments and full-time work schedule throughout my degree, I did not receive the grades I thought appropriate for vet school and my dreams of becoming a veterinarian were halted.

Over the next several years, I worked on gathering various animal experiences to deepen my understanding of the veterinary profession. In addition to working as a veterinary technician full time, I would spend most of my free time volunteering at nonprofit exotic rescues. Working as a technician, as most veterinarians and technicians can tell you, is not a glamorous job; you often work long hours with little pay, and the battle with compassion fatigue is ever-present. In the face of these challenges, however, I knew that the veterinary profession was where I belonged.

Knowing that I wanted to make a difference and practice medicine, I began filling out the VMCAS (Veterinary Medical College Application Service) application with cautious



optimism. I knew that even the best students were not necessarily accepted into veterinary school on their first try (some not even on their second or third), so how would an unconventional student such as myself prove that I was good enough for acceptance into the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine? Statistically speaking, children raised in a single-parent household are less likely to complete a college degree due to the socioeconomic challenges of income and class. But on February 24, 2016, I knew I had beat those odds when I received my congratulatory letter of acceptance to UTCVM.

Several months later, the news of my acceptance was surmounted by the news that I had been selected as the Ingram Scholar. The Ingram Scholarship was offered to Tennessee residents

demonstrating financial need and characteristics deemed important to the Ingram family such as "...exceptional work ethic, strong personal integrity and professionalism, compassion, a service commitment to their community and society, leadership skills, and resilience, among other factors." To be selected for such a distinguished scholarship is a true honor, and I could not be more thankful for the support of Mrs. Ingram for her selfless gift.

With this scholarship, I will be able to focus my efforts toward my veterinary school education and becoming a competitive candidate for residency. I want to thank the Ingram family for accepting me into their family, and I would also like to tell anyone who comes from less-than-ideal circumstances to never give up trying to become the person you want to be.

# ALUMNI PROFILES

Dr. Hayley Adams (DVM '01 and PhD '07) received the 2016 Distinguished Alumna First Decade Achievement Award. With nearly twenty years of experience in wildlife veterinary medicine, conservation, and issues related to One Health in Africa, Adams has worked with a variety of domestic and wild animals and has a particular interest in endangered species conservation and studying disease at the human/domestic animal/wildlife interface. Through her career in Africa, she recognized a fundamental link that was often missing in fieldwork—the lack of sustainable supplies that veterinary and conservation operations must have to be successful. Adams created Silent Heroes in 2010 to fill that void.



She completed a clinical internship in small animal and emergency medicine and worked briefly in small animal private practice before returning to her alma mater to work on her PhD in Comparative and Experimental Medicine. Her doctoral research focused on the molecular epidemiology and diagnosis of lentiviruses of free-ranging lions in southern Africa. She is a board-certified Diplomate in the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine (specialties of environmental health, infectious and parasitic diseases, food safety, epidemiology and biostatistics, and public health administration and education) and the American College of Veterinary Microbiology (specialties include virology, bacteriology/mycology, and immunology).

**Hayley R. Adams**  
DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVPM,  
Diplomate ACVM



**Charles R. Halford**  
DVM

Dr. Charles Halford (UTCVM '81) received the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus in Private Practice Award. A practicing veterinarian and owner of Walnut Grove Animal Clinic in Memphis, Halford is a member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Task Force One as the canine team veterinarian and has been certified for deployment as a technical support specialist. As the primary care veterinarian for the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Canine unit, Halford has been managing the medical care for a large population of search-and-rescue canines for more than twenty-five years. He also provides the veterinary care for the canine units of Memphis; Crittenden County, Arkansas; Memphis Airport Authority; Shelby County Sheriff's Department; and Federal Express. He provides consulting services to several other law enforcement agencies in the Mid-South area as needed. Halford is regularly utilized as a trainer for FEMA Task Force canine units primarily in the areas of medical care, first aid, wellness assessment, and field care for the canine handlers. He also conducts required training for Task Force physicians who are required to provide first aid for canines during deployment.

Leadership roles have played a large part in Halford's professional service, and in addition to volunteering on several local boards, he has served as president of the Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association. In addition to his professional work, Halford serves his community extensively through mission work and faith-based organizations.



# A Bandit Who Stole Hearts

The care UTCVM veterinarians provided for Bandit Amidon during his fight against brain cancer inspired the Bandit Amidon Scholarship, which supports students aspiring to pursue rural practice.

Claudia and Tom Amidon’s journey to scholarship donation began with a cat’s fight against brain cancer.

It was one of those rare snow-white January days when Claudia Amidon first met Bandit. The tiny black-and-white kitten was attempting to escape the cold, wet snow by jumping through the window of an abandoned grocery store in their rural home of White Pine, Tennessee.

“I made a promise to [my husband] that I would take him to the animal shelter once the snow was over,” Claudia remembers.

But the next morning, her husband Tom knew Bandit wasn’t leaving the family. Claudia had spent the night by Bandit, armed with a heat lamp, blankets, and magazines. The tiny creature’s only flaw was a deformed front paw. To walk, Bandit would throw his leg forward. He couldn’t flex the muscles.

“He’s the most incredible pet we’ve ever had,” Tom says. “I think he knew or thought he knew we saved him. Maybe the circumstances made it a closer bond.”

Bandit was thirteen years old when he had his first surgery to remove a cancerous growth in his brain. When the local emergency vet clinic could offer no answers or solutions for Bandit’s

seizures, the Amidons made the hour or so trip to the UT College of Veterinary Medicine.

“If you want to know where it all really truly began was the compassion she [Dr. Lindsey Williamson, neurology resident] had that day and laying out what the choices were and explaining what it all would mean,” says Claudia.

Brain surgery for a cat isn’t something you hear about every day, but the prognosis was positive and the Amidons were willing to pursue all options that could mean the potential for continued quality of life for Bandit.

Their dedication to the feline’s well being was matched by the level of care and compassion demonstrated by UTCVM staff and students. Claudia remembers the horror she felt when Bandit received the cancer diagnosis, but she also remembers the calls after business hours, the access she had to simply hold her sick kitty, and the empathetic comments.

“We really had two more years with Bandit that we would not have had,” Claudia says. “It was a lot of money spent but well spent. We had two more years with a wonderful boy.”

All in all, Bandit endured two brain surgeries and sixteen rounds of radiation. The cancer went in remission for two

years between the surgeries, and Bandit’s life went back to yarn balls and sun naps.

Bandit died February 3, 2015, from heart and kidney failure.

His life and the compassionate care of UTCVM staff and students inspired the Bandit Amidon Veterinary Medicine Scholarship for Rural Practice, which provides \$5,000 each year to two students. Claudia’s employer offers gift matches, which doubled the couple’s impact.

“I don’t know that our impact is really that big, but our piece of the puzzle, with someone else’s piece of the puzzle, and someone else’s piece of the puzzle, will really make a difference in someone’s life or the university’s,” says Claudia, who now serves on the UTCVM advisory board.

“It has given us an attachment to the agriculture school and veterinary community that otherwise we would not have had,” says Tom.

For more information about how to support student scholarships or other financial needs at UTCVM, contact Blake Hudson at 865-974-6477 or [whudson@utfi.org](mailto:whudson@utfi.org). Be sure to check with your employer about potential matching gifts.

Want to support future veterinarians?  
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## A Concentrated Effort

UTCVM is helping local communities with their overpopulation of feral/ community cats thanks to an \$80,000 grant from the Petco Foundation and \$15,000 from the UT Alliance of Women Philanthropists. The grants enable the shelter medicine service to concentrate large-scale spay/neuter efforts in Jefferson and Anderson counties in Tennessee. The College’s mobile spay/neuter unit visits the counties weekly to spay and neuter unowned, free-roaming community cats that live within the counties. The cats receive rabies and feline distemper vaccinations and are treated for parasites.



“We can’t adopt our way out of the problem, and there simply are not enough rescue or transport options out there for all these cats,” says Dr. Amanda Dykstra, clinical assistant professor of shelter medicine. She

explains the goal of this program is to improve the welfare of all cats in the targeted counties by decreasing overpopulation through a spay/ neuter program. Dykstra says the program also benefits shelters and the community as a whole. “There are many secondary goals including decreasing infectious disease rates, decreasing euthanasia and employee compassion fatigue at shelters, lowering the amount of nuisance calls to animal control agencies, decreasing the risk of zoonotic disease spread, and improving the community views of feral colonies.”

Students on the shelter medicine rotation also benefit from the program, gaining hands-on experience in physical examinations and surgical skills as well as seeing in person the effects of overpopulation on both animals and humans. The funds will help alter up to 5,000 unowned community cats.



## Ways to Give to UTCVM



### Pledges

Establishing a pledge is a popular way to make a specific commitment. To make a pledge, a donor determines his or her total pledge amount, the designation of the gift, the period of time over which the pledge will be paid, and the frequency of payments. The University of Tennessee Foundation will send pledge reminders each time a payment is due.



### Outright Gifts

**GIVE NOW ONLINE (Credit Card)**  
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### Planned Gifts

Planned gifts provide future support for the University and may be made without any immediate financial impact to the donor.



### Matching Gifts

Many companies will match your gifts to The University of Tennessee. Please consult the benefits office at your place of employment to learn more.



### Stock Gifts

There can be significant tax advantages for donors choosing to transfer highly appreciated (long-term) securities to the University as a charitable gift. The value of your gift depends upon the market price of your assets when they are given.

**Blake Hudson**  
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If you would like to discuss your options for giving to the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine, please get in touch with us!





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*All our veterinarians, including our avian and exotic animal specialists,  
have access to advanced imaging to diagnose and treat medical issues.*

