

# Florida Veterinarian

ADVANCING ANIMAL, HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

SPRING 2015



**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
FLORIDA

# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Dean James W. Lloyd

Greetings! As I approach the two-year mark of my time here at the college, I have the pleasure of becoming acquainted with many of you personally, as I have traveled throughout the state and the country, visiting practices, attending meetings, and sharing the story of our college and its outstanding people and programs.

And what an extraordinary and inspiring story it is!

Back in 1980, we graduated 37 DVMs — the first veterinarians ever to be trained in the state of Florida. Today, we proudly boast more than 2,800 alumni, located both here in Florida and around the world. Our graduates are transforming the veterinary medical profession as we know it, including our valued relationships with animals across species, and are working to reinvent the very core of biomedical science. I am extremely proud of our college, your college, and am determined, along with my colleagues, to make the next chapter of our story even more remarkable. As always, we are focused on promoting world-class research, clinical service and community engagement and there are far too many exciting things taking place on our campus to fully address in this column.

We have talked a lot about the college's strategic plan, which is being implemented with significant momentum in all areas of our mission — research, education and clinical services. We will continue to keep you updated on our progress, but you can also watch for updates on our website at [www.vetmed.ufl.edu](http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu).

There are two key initiatives, however, that I do want to mention. First, we are in the process of launching a critical program to enrich the relationship between UFCVM and our alumni. Now that we have a full complement of alumni working across this great profession, we recognize that it's time to explore how we might enhance our partnership with alumni, so that we are all more successful at what we do. We've already initiated a conversation in this regard with the thought leaders from Alumni Council, and we'll be rolling out a process for broader and more active alumni engagement in the coming weeks and months. As we consider ways to enhance these relationships, all alumni will have the opportunity for input. It may sound cliché, but the outcome will be a solid win-win.

Secondly, we recognize the growing impact of increasing student debt levels on the veterinary medical profession today. To that end, we have just launched a major new scholarship initiative, which will be the first of its magnitude in the history of the veterinary medical profession. Through this campaign for scholarships, we intend to reverse the trend of climbing student debt for the average CVM student. As the project unfolds, we will keep everyone updated so stay tuned for more information about our progress.

I am so proud to announce that spearheading this new initiative will be our own Patricia Wlasuk. Many of you know Patricia, who has been a key member of our development staff for several years now, working closely with Karen Legato. I am thrilled that Patricia has accepted this new position and am confident that she will lead us capably through this effort, with your help, to break the stranglehold of escalating student debt loads for future veterinarians.

Please feel free to contact me about these two critical ventures, and by all means, look for opportunities to become involved. Together, we look forward to another outstanding year at our college. Please come see us if you're in town and certainly don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions, suggestions, or if we can ever be of assistance.

Go Gators!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "James W. Lloyd".

Dean James W. Lloyd



## CLIENT SPONSORS ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Richard Knellinger, a local attorney, recently lost his beloved border collie, Buddy. Buddy was well known and loved by UFCVM clinicians, residents and students who cared for him throughout his life. In appreciation of that care, Mr. Knellinger hosted an ice cream social inside the UF Small Animal Hospital on Oct. 25 for those involved in Buddy's treatment. He brought Shane, Buddy's companion, as well as a poster visually showing some of the highlights of Buddy's life.



Photo by Sarah Carey

UF veterinary students Christine Ashman and Caitlin Spindler enjoy ice cream during the social hosted by Richard Knellinger in honor of his late dog, Buddy, a longtime patient of the UF Small Animal Hospital.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Richard Knellinger, right, visits with a group of UF veterinary students while holding Shane, who was a companion of Knellinger's dog, Buddy.

## 15 Colleges collaborate to help cat through unique dental procedure

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Photo by Tyler Jones

Dr. Paul Nicoletti, center, is shown in the lobby of the UF Small Animal Hospital with several UF veterinary students, all of whom are scholarship recipients. Nicoletti's challenge gift of \$100,000 helped kick off a new UFCVM scholarship initiative to reduce student debt. (See story, p. 21)

## Florida Veterinarian

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# NEW GRADING SYSTEM COULD IMPROVE SURVIVAL IN SOME HORSES WITH COLIC

By Sarah Carey

A novel approach to managing a challenging form of equine colic could save the lives of many horses and also save horse owners the cost and uncertainty of major surgery, say University of Florida veterinary researchers.

The approach, developed by David Freeman, M.V.B., Ph.D., a professor of large animal surgery at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, and his team relies heavily on a surgeon's judgment during surgery to assess the viability of strangulated small intestine, an obstruction that impedes blood flow.

If the affected tissue shows improvements in intestinal color and muscle activity after corrective measures, the organ has an excellent chance of recovering function, and costly surgery to remove the intestinal obstruction is avoided, the researchers say.

"In general, the treatment for small intestinal strangulation isn't as successful as for many other forms of colic," said Freeman, who also is the director of the college's Island Whirl Equine Colic Laboratory. "The question we always ask is, do we need to remove this piece of intestine or not?"

Freeman and his colleagues concluded that if certain criteria are met, in many cases, the answer would be no.

Their research appeared last fall in the *Equine Veterinary Journal* and was presented in July at the 11th annual Equine Colic Research Symposium in Dublin.

The findings are based on a review of data from 35 cases that used the technique involving horses treated at two university veterinary hospitals between 1996 and 2011.

"I was very interested in this issue, so in each case, I recorded the severity of the small intestinal changes," Freeman said. "I started off with a grading system, which was tweaked and modified along the way."

Gradually, the team came up with the system UF is using today in equine clinical cases.

"Once we have established the degree of intestinal injury, we can now say: This is the cutoff. If it's worse than this, we will have to remove that part of the intestine, but if it's better, we can leave it in place," Freeman said.

All horses in the study were discharged after recovery, with only a few developing serious but manageable complications. Many horses survived more than 10 years, and some survived for up to 15 years.

"These long-term survival data are very encouraging and might exceed what have been reported previously for this type of colic," he said. "This study shows that in many cases, these horses can do very well with the affected intestine left in place."



Photo by Sarah Carey

Rae Marie Smith is shown with her horse, Tsensation, at the Smith farm near Ocala. Tsensation was treated at UF using the technique for colic assessment developed by Dr. David Freeman.



## STUDY: TARGETED FERAL CAT STERILIZATION PROGRAM YIELDS MULTIPLE BENEFITS

*Volunteers are shown performing spay-neuter procedures on cats during an Operation Catnip clinic. The Operation Catnip program offers monthly clinics, through which free spay/neuter and vaccine services are provided for free-roaming unowned cats in Alachua County.*

*By Sarah Carey*

A University of Florida study of a feline trap-neuter-return program found that a targeted approach helped effectively manage the feral cat population and reduce shelter euthanasia rates in the area. This approach has the potential to save the lives of some of the millions of animals euthanized each year in shelters across the country.

Results of the two-year study showed that sterilizing feral cats in a region of historically high animal-control impoundments led to a steep decline in the number of cats that were admitted to and euthanized at the local shelter.

“We investigated whether we ever could neuter enough cats to slow their intake into animal control,” said Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., the Maddie’s professor of shelter medicine at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and principal investigator on the study, which was published recently in *The Veterinary Journal*.

“Neutering a few cats here and there wasn’t making a big impact, so we wanted to pick a focused area and throw all our resources into it,” she said.

The region selected for the study is in Alachua County adjacent to the UF campus and includes the downtown Gainesville business district, several residential neighborhoods, a mobile home park, two homeless shelters, industrial parks and a veterinary clinic. The zone has higher unemployment and poverty levels, as well as lower household income and rates of home ownership than the county as a whole.

The results were dramatic. During the study, 2,366 stray and feral community cats — approximately 54 percent of the estimated feral cat population in the targeted area — were trapped and neutered. Afterward, they were returned to their environment or adopted.

Levy and her team found that in the target area, Animal Control cat intake declined 70 percent from a baseline of 13 cats per 1,000 residents to four cats per 1,000 residents at the end of the study. In the non-target area — the rest of the county — cat intake declined only 13 percent from a baseline of 16 cats per 1,000 residents to 14 cats per 1,000 residents.



In the target area, euthanasia declined 95 percent from a baseline of eight cats per 1,000 residents to less than one per 1,000 residents at the end of the study. In the non-target area, cat euthanasia declined 30 percent from a baseline of 10 cats per 1,000 residents to seven cats per 1,000 residents.

"The figures were incredible as were the adoptions," Levy said. "Adoption wasn't part of the original plan, but it happened organically as residents offered to take in kittens and the friendlier adults."

Cats weren't the only ones to find new homes. While unclaimed cats were the focus of the study, surprisingly, the shelter intake rates of dogs also declined in the targeted area.

"That was just an extra win," she said. "As we went door-to-door, we talked to people about how to care for all their animals, including other resources available for their pets."

Funded through a \$250,000 grant from Maddie's Fund, the study initially used direct advertising to promote the free spay-neuter surgery available through Operation Catnip, the trap-neuter-return program based at UF.

"But the cats didn't arrive in large numbers like we'd expected," Levy said. "They were out there, but this is a community that doesn't just take stray cats to a spay-neuter clinic." So Levy hired a neighborhood resident to knock on doors.

"It's not enough for an agency like ours to just make services available. You must get into a community and talk to people to find out what they need," she said. "If we go in with the right resources and attitudes, we can save animals from animal control and from being euthanized."

"The animal welfare community as a whole has realized that we can't be solely shelter-centric," Levy said. "The next step in our work is to connect with communities, find out their needs and how we can help."

However, the resources needed to complete the project were intensive.

"It's not realistic to provide this level of coverage throughout the community in an untargeted way. To expand what we did in the target area to the entire county would cost millions of dollars," she said. "But like all daunting problems, you bite off the greatest need and start there."

SAVE THE DATE  
UF CVM HOMECOMING  
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# VIRUS DISCOVERED IN LONE STAR TICK

Photo by Mindy Cherisse Miller

*This lone star tick specimen is similar to other ticks collected as part of Dr. Katherine Sayler's research.*

By Sarah Carey

University of Florida researchers have discovered that a tick common to the southeastern United States may harbor an unusual virus that belongs to the family Arenaviridae. Some arenaviruses are associated with severe hemorrhagic disease and significant mortality in people in South America and sub-Saharan Africa.

Known as Tacaribe virus, the virus discovered in ticks has never before been found in an animal or human species in the United States, report scientists from the UF colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Public Health and Health Professions in a study that appeared in the journal PLOS ONE in December. The researchers found evidence of the virus in nearly 10 percent of the ticks that they collected and were able to culture the virus from ticks trapped in North Central Florida.

Although Tacaribe virus is not specifically known to cause human infections, the association of other viruses in the arenavirus family with human illness, its relative rarity and unknown host in nature intrigue the study's authors.

"This finding is exciting because it expands the range in which these viruses might be circulating in the environment," said Katherine Sayler, Ph.D., who completed her doctoral degree from the UF veterinary college in December and is the study's lead author. "It also raises some really interesting questions about human risk."

One of 29 distinct mammalian viruses that are part of the arenavirus family, Tacaribe virus was last isolated in bats during a rabies surveillance survey conducted in Trinidad in the late 1950s. Only one sample of Tacaribe virus from that survey remains, and molecular testing confirmed that the new tick-derived viral specimen was nearly identical genetically to that remaining sample, the study states.

"We never thought we would find an arenavirus in a tick," Sayler said. "These types of viruses are usually transmitted by rodents."

The UF researchers first saw the virus in cell cultures from a pool of 100 ticks that were collected from state parks as part of Sayler's doctoral project, which focused on pathogens transmitted by the lone star tick.

Although Tacaribe virus had previously been found in bats, recent studies indicate that bats are not the natural reservoir host, and extensive efforts by others to find the virus in other mammals, mostly rodents, have failed, according to the study.

"We still don't know which animal is the natural host of this virus, and whether ticks have harbored the virus for a long time, or if this is something new," Sayler said. "Without knowing if local rodents are a major reservoir of the virus, the extent that Floridians are sickened by the virus, and whether ticks can transmit the virus to humans, it makes it hard for



us to know if and when there would be an outbreak. Clearly, much more work must be done.”

Sayler, who will continue her work at UF as a postdoctoral associate, said her future research will include searching for more isolates of the virus for genetic comparison.

“We need to use some of the tools that we have at UF to determine if the virus has been around and circulating for a long time, or if it has been absent from Florida and was introduced,” she said.

Lone star ticks are found throughout the southeastern United States. Although they are aggressive human biters, they do not transmit Lyme disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Patients bitten by lone star ticks will occasionally develop a circular rash that resembles the rash associated with early Lyme disease, however, and

can develop symptoms including fatigue, headache, fever and joint pain.

Lone star ticks can also cause an infectious disease known as ehrlichiosis in people and in pets.

Sayler added that hikers, hunters, park biologists or others who frequent the outdoors and are bitten by a tick should try to save the tick for further analysis by a medical professional.

“Health care professionals should also be aware of the potential tick-transmitted pathogens that occur besides the one that causes Lyme disease,” Sayler said. “Medical doctors can’t be aware of every emerging tropical disease, but if we have greater awareness of emerging diseases, we can move forward from a proactive surveillance effort instead of from a reactive effort, when there is suddenly a huge outbreak and a crisis situation.”



Photo by Mirely Chénisse Miller

Dr. Katherine Sayler demonstrates how she uses a white sheet, one of her tick collection methods, on Jan. 6 at San Felasco State Park in Gainesville.

## RENOVATED DERMATOLOGY LAB MARKS UNIQUE NEW RESEARCH COLLABORATION



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Vladimir Vincek, second from left, and Dr. Rosanna Marsella, right, are shown viewing slides in the dermatology suite at UF Health Springhill on Oct. 16. With them is a colleague.

By Sarah Carey

With the cut of a bright blue ribbon, a newly renovated dermatology laboratory at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine officially opened its doors on Oct. 21, marking a new era and a possibly unprecedented level of collaboration between veterinarians and physicians who share a common interest in skin diseases.

The laboratory will provide the infrastructure to enhance interdisciplinary dermatology research between the two colleges, administrators said. Under the co-direction of Rosanna Marsella, D.V.M., Ph.D., a professor of small animal dermatology at UF, and Vladimir Vincek, M.D., Ph.D., head of the UF College of Medicine's department of dermatology, faculty members and residents-in-training from Vincek's department, which historically has been clinically oriented, will be able to develop and hone their research skills.

"I'm not aware of anything like this going on anywhere else, so what we are doing is truly unique," Marsella said. "In the past, people looked at two types of medicine, veterinary and human, as really separate. As we learn more, however, we are realizing more about diseases, and the causes of diseases, that can be shared across species."

Although medical students with an interest in research have unofficially spent time in Marsella's laboratory in the past, an agreement that went into effect earlier this year formalizes the arrangement and extends access to faculty members and residents, Marsella said.

"I look at it as, we had a period of engagement and now we're married," she said. "Because the bulk of the people in the dermatology department are clinicians, they don't have time

to do research. So we wanted to facilitate this agreement so that they can run their clinical trials while we provide the expertise so that they can do this more effectively."

From conducting specific projects to testing samples and learning how to perform cell cultures, the human dermatologists making use of the renovated laboratory will now have a dedicated space at the veterinary college while taking advantage of Marsella's scientific expertise and renowned track record in research.

Marsella will also be accessible to these individuals at their academic departmental home at UF Health Springhill in northwest Gainesville. She now splits her time between the UF veterinary college, where she oversees dermatology research and continues to see animal patients, and the Springhill location.

At Springhill, Marsella will have a "mini-research office," through which staff members who assist in preparing grants at the veterinary college will spend dedicated time to share their expertise in searching for funding and in the grant writing process.

The collaboration between Marsella and Vincek began almost three years ago, when Vincek attended a talk Marsella gave on the dermatology model she developed in beagles. At the time, the dermatology department was a division within the College of Medicine. Soon after, it became a department, and Vincek was named chairman.

His focus was initially on building the department's clinical expertise, but he also recognizes that an enhanced research component bodes well on many levels for its future.



"With an animal model in dogs, we see very similar things to what we see in humans," Vincek said. "So if you have any type of drug that is tested in animals, you are more likely to recruit people interested in this type of research."

He added, "Although these people will probably never be bench scientists, if we provide them with this opportunity, we hope they will like that component and become academic dermatologists."



Photo by Sarah Carey

At a ceremony held at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine on Oct. 21, Dr. Rossana Marsella, a professor of veterinary dermatology, and Dr. Vladimir Vincek, chairman and professor in the College of Medicine's department of dermatology, prepare to cut a ribbon marking completion of renovations made to the College of Veterinary Medicine's dermatology laboratory. The lab renovations are a key development in a unique new collaboration between the two colleges to advance dermatological research in animal and human medicine.

## FOR THE

## #GATORGOOD

*Some people dream about making the world a better place. Gators are out there doing it. Every day.*

*Through intellect and effort, Gators pull together, inspire each other and move the world forward. The more impossible a challenge seems, the harder a Gator will work to overcome it. Whether it's advancing treatments for juvenile diabetes or protecting the orange crop, we approach every day with a singular purpose. One that's bigger than ourselves.*

*Because we are Gators.*

*Always.*

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## Pet Memorial Program



To participate in the program please e-mail [petmemorial@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:petmemorial@vetmed.ufl.edu) or call 352.294.4256.

For submissions, please visit our website at [givingandalumni.vetmed.ufl.edu/pet-memorial](http://givingandalumni.vetmed.ufl.edu/pet-memorial).



## VETERINARY PROFESSION HELPED BROTHERS BLEND LOVE OF ANIMALS AND MEDICINE

Photo by Richard Diaz

*Drs. Rick and Jerry Diaz, both members of the college's Class of 1990, are shown on horseback near their home in South Florida.*

By Sarah Carey

For twin brothers with South Florida roots, the choice of veterinary medicine as a profession was natural, even organic. At the same time, they have carved a unique niche in their family history.

Drs. Rick and Jerry Diaz, both members of the UFCVM's Class of 1990, grew up near Miami Beach with dogs and horses in a medically oriented environment with a father, uncle and grandfather who were all OB/GYN physicians.

Jerry is the owner of Briarwood Animal Hospital in Miami, where he practices jointly with his wife, Dr. Miriam Mendez ('90). Rick owns the Pet Care Clinic of Doral.

The brothers, who have spent their professional lives practicing veterinary medicine near their original home, are

both active in their local veterinary association and remain committed to their chosen profession and the people who helped guide them there.

As kids, the Diaz brothers were given an Appaloosa pony. Their love of animals grew as they did, along with their interest in medicine and surgery.

When their household expanded to include an eight-horse stable with goats, chickens and a menagerie of animals, veterinary visits became more frequent and were always interesting and fascinating to both boys, although their path to the veterinary profession was slightly different.

For Jerry, the death of his stallion Rodney from sand colic was a traumatic, if insightful, catalyst.



"Our veterinarian's dedication, commitment and perseverance to try to save that horse was a true inspiration, and led me to become convinced that veterinary medicine would become my profession," Jerry said.

Although Rick initially started out attending medical school, he later joined his brother in his pursuit of a veterinary medical degree.

**"FOLLOW THE ISSUES  
AFFECTING YOUR  
PROFESSION AND  
BE PART OF THE  
SOLUTIONS."  
-JERRY DIAZ**

"A lot of defining moments happened during those four years," Jerry said of his time in veterinary school at UF. "However, two ring true today. Our father died during senior year rotations and we needed to head home. The CVM family was exceptional in providing support and understanding during a very difficult time."

College faculty made sure the brothers met all of their academic requirements to graduate on time with their class, he said.

Another defining moment for Jerry was meeting his wife, Miriam, in veterinary school. The two work together in mixed animal practice, treating small animal as well as equine cases. The brothers fondly remember several CVM faculty members as being influential in their lives today.

"Drs. Ellis Greiner, Paul Nicoletti, Gary Ellison, Manuel Zertuche and Michael Schaer all come to mind," Jerry said. As a past president of the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, Nicoletti was instrumental in Jerry's decision to become involved with FVMA early in his career and eventually to serve as the organization's president himself.

Rick called his former professor Schaer's axioms for successful practice — commonly known as "Uncle Mikey's Maxims" — "as relevant today as they were in 1990."

Organized veterinary medicine has played a key role in both brothers' lives.

Rick, a past president of the South Florida Veterinary Medical Association, is currently working as the group's governmental liaison to Miami-Dade County. In that capacity, he monitors

issues that may affect veterinary practitioners in that region. He also is a member of the Dean's Circle of Excellence at the college. Jerry has served on the SFVMA board as well as with the Dade County Foundation, and has been president of both groups. In addition to being a past FVMA president, he held other committee duties with the group and served on its executive board.

He said he owed a debt to his mentor and fellow UFCVM alumnus Julio Ibanez, D.V.M. ('80).

"An ardent supporter of the college and a Dean's Circle of Excellence member, he showed me by words and deeds what it truly means to be a UF veterinarian," Jerry said.

The biggest challenge Jerry deals with in the profession is working with unwanted or abandoned pets and horses. For him the greatest reward is "stomping out disease and pestilence in the animal world."

Rick says his greatest reward today is what it was when he first began practicing veterinary medicine: the sense of satisfaction he gets through helping animals overcome illness.

"A case well managed, with a positive outcome and a satisfied client" make Rick's days worthwhile, he said.

The brothers had this advice to share to UF's veterinarians of the future.

**"GET INVOLVED, STAY  
CURRENT, DON'T BE  
AFRAID TO SAY 'I DON'T  
KNOW,' THEN GO GET THE  
ANSWER."  
-RICK DIAZ**

"Get involved, stay current, don't be afraid to say 'I don't know,' then go get the answer," said Rick, adding, "Make your family a priority. No one ever dies saying 'I should have spent more time at the office.'"

Jerry offered similar words of wisdom.

"The minute you graduate, it is your profession," he said. "Get involved, shape it, improve it and promote it. Follow the issues affecting your profession and be part of the solutions. And make time to spend with family and friends."



## UF SMALL ANIMAL HOSPITAL NOW LEVEL 1 EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE FACILITY



*The UF Small Animal Hospital offers emergency and critical care services to pets 24/7.*

By Sarah Carey

The University of Florida's Small Animal Hospital has been certified as a Level 1 veterinary emergency and critical care facility by the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society, becoming the state's only facility to hold the designation.

"The Level 1 emergency and critical care certification is the highest level of care a hospital can receive in this certification program," said Carsten Bandt, D.V.M., chief of the hospital's emergency and critical care service. "We achieved this certification due to our capabilities and high standards of our emergency and critical care facilities."

The certification program is part of an effort by the group to raise awareness for emergency critical care services and to give the public a way to compare different emergency and critical facilities.

According to the society's website, a Level 1 emergency and critical care facility is a 24-hour acute care facility with the resources and specialty training necessary to provide sophisticated emergency and critical patient care. Facilities receiving the Level 1 designation are open to receive small animal emergency patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

In addition, Level 1 facilities must have at least one diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care — a board-certified specialist who is dedicated to treating life-threatening conditions — employed full time and available for consultation either on-site or by phone 24/7.

The UF Small Animal Hospital's emergency and critical care service employs six such specialists who manage everything from trauma and acute kidney disease to lacerations and exposure to toxins.

The service treats more than 4,000 small animal patients each year, according to Dana Zimmer, D.V.M., a clinical associate professor of large animal internal medicine and chief of staff of the UF Veterinary Hospitals.

"In collaboration with our surgery service, our hospital can provide emergency neurosurgery and general surgery, as well as reproductive, ophthalmic and orthopedic surgery," Zimmer said. "We welcome both referral and walk-in emergencies of any kind."



# COLLEGES COLLABORATE TO HELP CAT THROUGH UNIQUE DENTAL PROCEDURE

*Dr. Amy Stone, center, assists Dr. Wong, right, in a procedure to repair a hole in a cat's palate on Sept. 20.*

*By Sarah Carey*

A Siamese-mix cat named Darryl is recuperating well after receiving a metal prosthesis to correct a palate injury in his mouth, thanks to a unique collaborative dental procedure performed Oct. 29 at the University of Florida Small Animal Hospital.

The procedure involved affixing a metal prosthesis to the roof of Darryl's mouth to close a gaping hole between his oral and his nasal cavities. Fong Wong, D.D.S., an associate professor of prosthodontics and maxillofacial prosthetics in UF's College of Dentistry, conducted the procedure and was assisted by Amy Stone, D.V.M., Ph.D., a clinical assistant professor in UF's College of Veterinary Medicine.

This is a procedure Wong routinely performs in human patients with cleft palates or defects after cancer surgery.

"This was a different approach than has ever been done before," said Stone, who also serves as chief of the veterinary college's primary care and dentistry service. "We have not had an exact procedure for palate issues that is entirely successful for every species, and Darryl's problem was one likely caused, or at least exacerbated, by injury. There were also other complications, so his situation required something a bit different."

Added Wong, "Usually medical procedures are first tried in animals, and then, when successful, used in human patients. In this case, it was the animal that benefited from a procedure that is routine in humans but has not been part of routine veterinary medicine."

Darryl was originally rescued from Alachua County Animal Services, where he had been slated for euthanasia, by the Alachua County Humane Society. Even though the massive hole in his hard palate was obvious, Darryl quickly became a staff favorite, said Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., a professor of shelter medicine at UF who fostered Darryl and later adopted him.

"Every bite of food he took was painful, and he had constant nasal infections," Levy said. "Despite struggling to eat and being extremely messy with his food, he was always affectionate and craved attention from staff and volunteers."

But his condition made adoption impossible, so Darryl became a long-term resident of the Humane Society. Levy meanwhile began investigating solutions to his palate problem and transferred the cat to the Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at UF.

Various specialists at UF examined Darryl. Katherine Polak, D.V.M., a former UF shelter medicine resident, performed an examination in February. Then Nick Bacon, Vet.M.B., an associate professor of small animal oncology, conducted a biopsy of an oral lesion to rule out cancer. A feeding tube was inserted a few months later, allowing Darryl to gain weight and for his mouth to heal without the trauma of eating and drinking.

By April, Levy had taken Darryl into her home as her foster pet in order to provide the intensive care she knew was needed to bring him back to health. Various specialists weighed in, or attempted to heal Darryl's palate defect. Soon after Levy

contacted UF's College of Dentistry seeking assistance, Wong got involved.



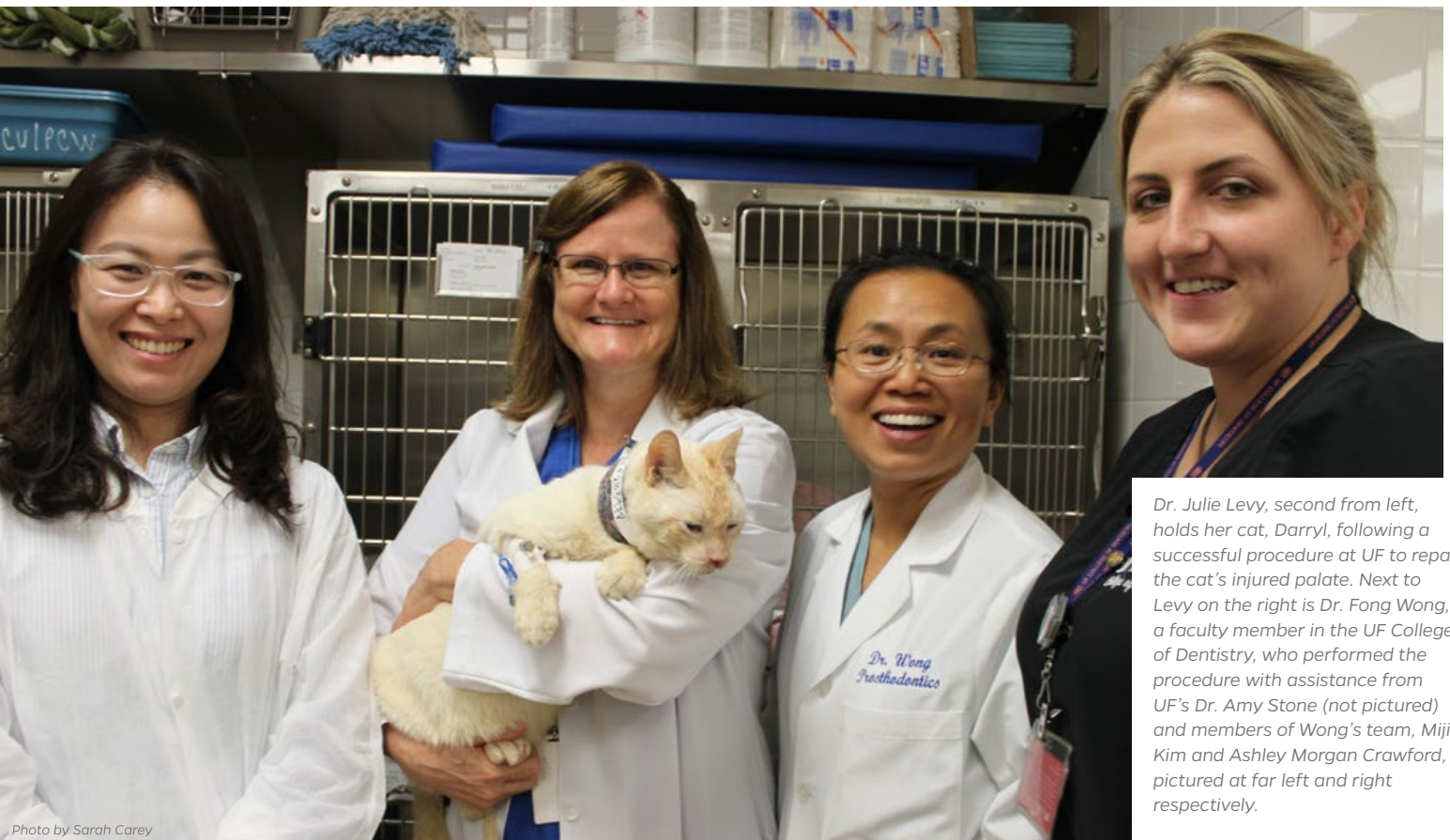
Photo by Mindy Cherrise Miller

Team members show the prosthetic device that was implanted to repair the cat's palate injury.

After performing a separate examination, she proposed a prosthodontic solution. In August, she made a cast of Darryl's mouth and crafted a custom acrylic appliance to cover the defect. The appliance was sutured into place on a trial basis to see if the approach would work in a cat.

The approach was successful, and on Oct. 29, Darryl's permanent metal prosthesis was installed. His feeding tube was removed two days after the procedure and he was able to eat normally for the first time in more than a year.

"He is doing great," Levy said. "Many thanks to the entire team who pitched in to help this lovely cat."



Dr. Julie Levy, second from left, holds her cat, Darryl, following a successful procedure at UF to repair the cat's injured palate. Next to Levy on the right is Dr. Fong Wong, a faculty member in the UF College of Dentistry, who performed the procedure with assistance from UF's Dr. Amy Stone (not pictured) and members of Wong's team, Mijin Kim and Ashley Morgan Crawford, pictured at far left and right respectively.

Photo by Sarah Carey



## PET ZEBU RECUPERATES AFTER TREATMENT AT UF FOR KIDNEY INJURY

By Sarah Carey

A family's beloved pet miniature zebu is recuperating at his home after receiving life-saving hemodialysis treatment for severe kidney injury at the University of Florida Veterinary Hospitals in November.

The 1-year-old animal's nearly fatal kidney injury was likely caused by eating acorns from oak trees on the family's farm in Montverde, Florida, UF veterinarians said.

The miniature zebu, named Brutus, is believed to be the first bovine patient to have ever received hemodialysis for treatment of acute disease, said Sarah Reuss, V.M.D., a clinical assistant professor of large animal medicine at UF and one of the veterinarians who treated the animal after he arrived at UF on Nov. 18.

The world's smallest breed of cattle, miniature zebras are relatively rare, exotic animals that are frequently kept as pets. Some, such as Brutus, are even trained for the show ring. His proud owners, Mark and Rachel Duncan, plan to show Brutus at the state fair in Tampa in February.

But today, the little guy is lucky to be alive.

"He'd had a two-day history of lethargy, not eating and constipation," said Rob MacKay, BV.Sc., Ph.D., a professor of large animal medicine at UF. "When he arrived at UF, his vital signs were stable, but he was not having the stomach contractions that move food from the stomach into the intestines, and he wasn't producing urine. He also was lethargic and trembling."

Bloodwork and ultrasound revealed that Brutus had acute kidney injury, he said.

"On further discussion with the owners, it was revealed that there were oak trees in Brutus' pasture and that they had seen him eating acorns," MacKay said. "Unfortunately, unbeknownst to his owners, oak leaves and acorns are toxic to cattle, causing both renal and gastrointestinal damage."

Veterinarians began treating Brutus with intravenous fluids and diuretics to try to prompt his kidneys to begin functioning and making urine. He also received rumen transfaunation — basically the transfer of digestive material — from a UF donor steer, which improved Brutus' appetite and stomach motility.

"Fluid balance is very challenging in these patients, as it is easy to give them too much fluid if their kidneys can't excrete it," Reuss said. "He did begin to pass urine, but his indicators of kidney failure continued to increase."

So the large animal medicine team consulted with Carsten Bandt, D.V.M., chief of the college's small animal emergency and critical care service, about the possibility of hemodialysis.

"To the best of our knowledge, this procedure has never previously been performed on a bovine patient outside of a research setting, but Brutus was the perfect candidate based upon his condition of acute toxicity, his size and his very agreeable temperament," Reuss said.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Rob MacKay, Dr. Rachel Davy and Dr. Carsten Bandt monitor a zebu while he receives hemodialysis treatment for kidney injury.

The small animal dialysis team at UF then quickly prepared and inserted a special dialysis catheter into Brutus, who received his first hemodialysis session on Nov. 20.

"He tolerated it like a superstar, quietly standing with hay and lots of scratching," Reuss said.

Overnight, Brutus seemed comfortable and was eating more. After just over a week of treatment at UF, during which time he received two hemodialysis treatments — and became possibly the most doted-on animal ever to be a part-time resident of the UF Small Animal Hospital's intensive care unit — Brutus was discharged Nov. 28 with close-to-normal kidney values and

every expectation of complete recovery.

Rachel Duncan said their family had fallen in love with miniature zebras while attending a festival in Bushnell with her 16-year-old daughter.

"We looked for local breeders, and along came Brutus," she said, adding that the family also owns another zebu, Jameson, who has become Brutus' buddy and accompanied him to UF on several occasions to keep him company. Jameson also had bloodwork checked to make sure he had also not eaten too many acorns, but fortunately, everything was normal.

Duncan hopes to reach out to the zebu community to raise awareness about acorn toxicity.

## DESIRE TO SERVE ANIMALS IN LASTING WAY DRIVES FIRST-EVER ALUMNI GIFT OF \$1 MILLION

By Sarah Carey

As a kid growing up in a small Brooklyn apartment, Philip Paront, D.V.M. ('94) knew he wanted to help animals, but wasn't quite sure where his vision would take him. He eventually applied for and was accepted into veterinary school at the University of Florida, but even after graduation, struggled to find a niche in which to best fill that need.

He cared for animal patients while serving in the Army, and explored private practice for a time in Gainesville. But Paront, who retired three years ago at 56, ended up spending most of his remaining career working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a supervisor in a food safety role.

Although the job offered security and benefits he is grateful for, he always felt compelled to do more for animals than his chosen field within the veterinary profession allowed him to.

"I had an enduring sense of longing to serve the animals that I've always had a strong affinity for," said Paront, who now lives in Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

With a recent bequest gift to the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, Paront became the college's first alumnus to break the \$1 million gift threshold. In doing so, he finally received the satisfaction he'd been

emotionally seeking for many years — the knowledge of knowing his contributions would make a lasting difference in the lives of animals.

"Perhaps I'm emotionally compensating for not having the illustrious career in clinical veterinary medicine that

I set out for early on," Paront said in his typically direct, self-deprecating manner. "But I really wanted to do something that would directly benefit the animals themselves."

Paront's gift will be equally split between providing veterinary care to shelter animals and helping to provide life-saving treatment for animals whose owners can't afford the costs of care.

The fact that Paront is unmarried and has no children factored into the calculus of his decision to include the UF veterinary college in his will, he said. But while he recognizes that people donate to the college for different reasons, he is comfortable with his own.

"You can't take it with you when you go," Paront said. "I will probably not wind up taking care of animals directly again, but this gift allows me to feel that I can contribute to their well-being in another lasting way. And that makes me feel really good."



Photo courtesy of Philip Paront

Dr. Philip Paront, '94, at his home in Broken Bow, Oklahoma.



## PROFESSOR LISTED IN NATIONAL ACADEMY



Dr. Janet Yamamoto

Janet Yamamoto, Ph.D., a professor at the college, is one of three UF scientists newly listed among 170 new Fellows of the National Academy of Inventors, which recognizes the contributions of researchers from universities and non-profit organizations who are named inventors on U.S. patents.

Yamamoto, a world-renowned immunologist in the college's department of infectious diseases and pathology, is a co-discoverer of the deadly feline immunodeficiency virus in cats and developed the first FIV vaccine. She holds patents on key practical technologies related to the FIV virus. Yamamoto is also applying her discoveries in cats to the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS.

Election to NAI Fellow status is a major professional distinction accorded to academic inventors who have demonstrated a prolific spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society.

Those named to the academy on Dec. 16 bring the total number of NAI Fellows to 414, representing more than 150 prestigious research universities as well as governmental and non-profit research institutions.

## DROST INDUCTED INTO GROUP'S HALL OF FAME



Dr. Maarten Drost

Maarten Drost, D.V.M., a professor emeritus at the college, was recently inducted into the Cattle Production Veterinarian Hall of Fame.

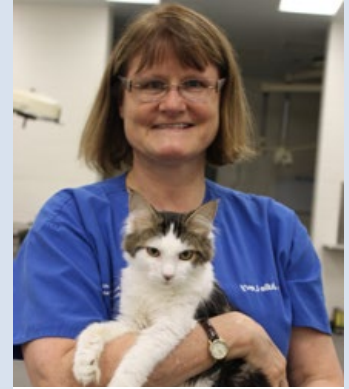
The presentation was made during the American Association of Bovine Practitioners' annual conference, held Sept. 18-20 in Albuquerque. In addition to the AABP, five other organizations, including the Academy of Veterinary Consultants, Bovine Veterinarian, Merck Animal Health and Osborn Barr sponsor the award.

Drost retired as a professor in the college's department of large animal clinical sciences in 2003. A board-certified theriogenologist, he is known for his groundbreaking work in embryo transfer technology and the mechanisms of pregnancy recognition and fertility management in cattle.

His team at UF was responsible for the world's first embryo transfer to result in the birth of a water buffalo calf, a landmark achievement that led him to collaborate in production of the first buffalo calves using the same technique in Europe.

Following his retirement, Drost developed an online visual guide to reproduction in animals, known as The Drost Project Visual Guide, ([www.drostproject.org](http://www.drostproject.org).) Drost has continued to maintain the guide as a teaching tool for future veterinarians.

## LEVY NAMED FELLOW IN NATIONAL GROUP



Dr. Julie Levy

Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., Maddie's Professor of Shelter Medicine at the college, has been named a distinguished fellow of the National Academies of Practice.

Levy was recognized for her work with animal shelters, homeless animals and the pursuit of One Health, where free-roaming animals, humans, and the environment intersect. Her research and clinical interests center on the health and welfare of animals in shelters, feline infectious diseases and humane alternatives for cat population control.

Levy is a founder of Operation Catnip, a trap-neuter-return program aimed at reducing the overpopulation of homeless and stray cats. She joined the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's faculty in 1997.

The National Academies of Practice is an interdisciplinary organization of health care practitioners and scholars.

The mission of the National Academies of Practice is to promote excellence in practice of health care professionals, and quality health care for all through interprofessional collaboration in service delivery, research, education and public policy advocacy.



Dr. Bonnie Gatson

## ANESTHESIA RESIDENT HONORED AT NATIONAL MEETING

annual conference, held Sept. 9-14 in Indianapolis.

Her project was completed with her mentor, Andre Shih, D.V.M., an associate professor of anesthesiology and pain management at the college.

“Performing chest compressions is a mainstay of CPR for both humans and for veterinary species,” Gatson said. “Previous studies in people and animals have suggested that the quality of these chest compressions can affect the probability that a patient will survive CPR following cardiac arrest. Part of what affects the quality of chest compressions is muscle fatigue of the rescuer.”

As the rescuer exerts him or herself, the number of effective chest compressions

declines over time, which could alter the chances of patient survival, she said.

“Using a variety of tools to assess muscle fatigue, including thermal camera imaging, we determined that muscle fatigue occurs sooner using a technique where the rescuer uses the thumbs of both hands to compress the chest, compared to a technique where the rescuer uses two fingers of a single hand to compress the chest,” she said.

Very little research has been performed on the effect that rescuer fatigue has on the quality of chest compressions, and even less is known regarding its effect on human neonatal patients and in smaller veterinary patients”, Gatson said.

An anesthesia and pain management resident with the college has received recognition from a national organization for her research, which identifies the CPR chest compression technique that causes the most muscle fatigue.

Bonnie Gatson, D.V.M., received the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia’s 2014 Smith Medical/SurgiVet Resident Abstract award. The award is given for the best abstract submitted to the group’s



Dr. Natalie Isaza

## ISAZA RECEIVES ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP

Shelter Medicine Suite was created at UF in 2012.

“The Greviors were so impressed with Dr. Isaza’s work with shelter and rescue animals that they made a gift to establish the professorship,” said Karen Legato, the college’s senior director of development and alumni affairs.

Endowed professorships are among the most significant awards conferred to faculty and are intended to be the university’s most prestigious recognition for continued scholarly achievement and distinction.

“In the selection of an individual for these appointments, teaching ability, character and dedication to the mission of the program and the college are taken into consideration,” Legato

said. “Dr. Isaza certainly exhibits these characteristics.”

Isaza is a 1994 graduate of the UF veterinary college. She joined UF’s faculty in 2003 and immediately developed the Merial Shelter Medicine Clerkship Program, now known as the Veterinary Community Outreach Program.

The program is an elective rotation through which UF veterinary students gain valuable hands-on experience with spay-neuter surgery and community veterinary medicine. Students also gain additional surgical and medical treatment experience through a donor-funded program Isaza administers, known as HAARTS (Helping Alachua’s Animals Requiring Treatment and Surgery.)

Natalie Isaza, D.V.M. (‘94), a faculty member at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, has been named the Grevior Shelter Medicine Community Outreach Professor.

The professorship was created through a gift from Barbara and Arnold Grevior, a Ft. Lauderdale couple who are longtime advocates for shelter medicine programs in their community as well as at UF. Through their generosity, the Grevior





Dr. Paul Nicoletti

## FORMER PROFESSOR MAKES CHALLENGE GIFT TO SUPPORT NEW SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

college and a longtime supporter of student scholarships, is providing a \$100,000 challenge gift.

“For thirty years, Dr. Paul Nicoletti taught, mentored and advised UF veterinary medical students, shaping the lives and careers of thousands of students,” said college development director Patricia Wlasuk, who is spearheading the new initiative.

“Even in retirement, Dr. Nicoletti understands the difficulties veterinary medical students face as they incur an ever-increasing debt load to finish their veterinary medical education. Since retiring, Dr. Nicoletti has established three endowed scholarships, including a million dollar pledge,” Wlasuk said.

Wlasuk said the college’s goal is to meet Nicoletti’s \$100,000 challenge

by May 15. Nicoletti will match all donations, dollar-for-dollar, to the UFCVM Dean’s Scholarship Endowment Fund, up to a total of \$100,000.

“Please join him and help support the college and the veterinary profession by investing in our students, the veterinarians of tomorrow,” Wlasuk said.

Nicoletti served on the college’s faculty for 28 years before retiring in 2003. He worked both in government and in academia in his career and has greatly influenced Florida’s agricultural industry. His contributions to agriculture in the 1970s, primarily through his expertise in brucellosis, a major threat to livestock at that time, are widely believed to have saved Florida’s cattle industry.

The UF College of Veterinary Medicine has launched a new dean’s scholarship endowment initiative to reverse the escalating student debt load trend and, ultimately, generate a ten-fold increase in the amount of scholarship dollars awarded to our students annually.

To jump start this effort, Paul Nicoletti, D.V.M., a professor emeritus of infectious diseases at the UF veterinary

## GROUP NAMES RESIDENT VETERINARIAN OF THE YEAR

American Bouvier Rescue League’s 2014 Veterinarian of the Year Award for her efforts to save the leg of a dog named Amitz.

The presentation was a complete surprise to Wallace, who had only minutes before been upstairs in the Banfield Room, giving a seminar. Unbeknownst to her, rescue league members had coordinated the visit with college administration and surgery faculty member Gary Ellison, D.V.M.

The group had commissioned two separate award plaques — a large one and a smaller one — to present

to Wallace, and had arranged for Amitz’ new owner, John Braaten, to be present, along with Amitz himself. Two representatives from the rescue league, including Anne Allen, the volunteer who fostered him, were on hand as well.

Wallace had not seen Amitz, whose traumatic injury to his paw is now not even obvious, since she had cared for him several months ago at UF, working with a team of surgeons to help Amitz fight infection, prepare him for surgery and getting him through the procedure and home to recuperate.



Photo by Sarah Carey

National director of the American Bouvier Rescue League Marcia Proud, left, is shown with Dr. Mandy Wallace, John Braaten, Amitz and Dr. Matt Johnson at the UF Small Animal Hospital on Nov. 19. The league presented Wallace with its Veterinarian of the Year Award for her care of Amitz.

Mandy Wallace, D.V.M., a small animal surgery resident at UF, received the

## STUDENT WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR BUSINESS APTITUDE



Photo courtesy of Simmons and Associates

UF veterinary student Geoff Landau, right, stands with Dr. Doyle Watson of Simmons and Associates.

By Sarah Carey

A University of Florida veterinary student has won a national competition that recognizes business excellence in veterinary medicine.

Geoffrey Landau, a fourth-year student at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, was named the winner of the Simmons Business Aptitude Award in January during the national Veterinary Business Management Association's annual meeting in Orlando.

The \$15,000 award, which is given to senior students, is intended to bring attention to the importance of business education in veterinary practice.

As UF's nominee for the award, Landau submitted a marketing project in a national contest among all of the various school nominees from veterinary colleges throughout the United States as well as overseas. He was selected from among 17 national and international candidates.

Landau's project involved crafting a marketing plan for a hypothetical veterinary hospital and focused on how technology would help keep current clients and make the hospital visible to future clients.

"While putting together my marketing plan for the SEF Award competition, it became very clear that today's marketing tools are constantly changing," he said. "It is extremely important to track analytics for each strategy and re-evaluate what is most effective for each individual practice."

After graduation, Landau plans to join a small animal clinic in the Atlanta area as an associate. His long-term goal is to own a veterinary practice.

Martha Mallicote, D.V.M., a clinical assistant professor of large animal clinical sciences at UF and an instructor in the college's business certificate program, said the award reflects the substantial work Landau has put into the business certificate program and the marketing project he submitted.

The college's business certificate program offers veterinary students a means of strengthening their skills in the business aspects of veterinary medicine through completion of a series of courses and a summer practice management clerkship.

The award is funded through the Simmons Educational Fund, a nonprofit corporation founded in 2002 by Simmons and Associates, a company that specializes exclusively in veterinary practice sales, valuations and negotiations.

"We at the SEF continue to be incredibly impressed by the effort, thoughtfulness and quality of work that all of the entrants display in their projects," said Dave Gerber, D.V.M., a fund trustee. "The finalists were hard to separate due to the excellence of each of their projects. With students of this caliber, our profession will remain in good hands for years to come."



# HONORING MISHKA AND HER CARE TEAM

By Sarah Carey

Mishka is an 11-year-old Boston terrier that has captured the heart of many clinicians, students and technicians from UF who have cared for her throughout her various surgical and medical procedures. They have also helped Mishka build strength and lose weight through extensive rehabilitative therapy over a period of several months.



Photo by Sarah Carey  
Dave Heine with his dog, Mishka, during a check-up visit at UF's Small Animal Hospital on Feb. 24, 2015.

Mishka's owners, Dave and Tatia Heine of Orlando, showed their appreciation on Oct. 24 by treating several of those clinicians to a special lunch at the UF Small Animal Hospital. They even presented several of Mishka's veterinarians with plaques and tearfully expressed their gratitude.

"I was told a long time ago that every animal has a job to do," Heine said. "Maybe Mishka's job was to get the message out about UF College of Veterinary Medicine and its great team of doctors, residents and Interns, and that no matter what obstacle is placed before us,



Photo by Sarah Carey  
Tatia Heine, Dave Heine, Dr. Stan Kim, Dr. Kelly Fishburne and Dr. Justin Shmalberg are shown beside a poster featuring a history of the Heines' dog, Mishka's life and health odyssey. Mishka has been a longtime patient of the UF Small Animal Hospital and the Heines sponsored a luncheon to honor members of her care team.

with perseverance and fortitude, we can overcome those challenges."

He added, "If an 11-year-old dog can survive all she has been through, it serves as an inspiration that we humans can overcome our challenges as well."

Heine said this belief was reconfirmed the evening before the luncheon, when while at dinner with Natalie Isaza, D.V.M. ('94), UF's Grevior Shelter Medicine Community Outreach Professor, she learned about an unexpected donation the Heines had made to a program called Helping Alachua's Animals Receive Treatment and Surgery.

"She told me that with this contribution, she could save more animals, that it was all about saving the animals," Heine said.

Mishka continues to recuperate well, he said.

# 2015 Calendar



*Photo courtesy of John Haven*

UF veterinary student Rikki Schwarz, a member of the UF Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service technical rescue team, descends a limerock hole Jan. 17 as part of a training drill. The team put a dog mannequin down the hole, which required advanced technical rescue techniques for effective extrication.

## April 10-12

The annual CVM alumni reception will be held at the Florida Veterinary Medical Association's annual meeting on April 11, in Orlando. Contact Jo Ann Winn: [winnj@ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@ufl.edu).

## April 11

The college's traditional Open House will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Watch our website, [www.vetmed.ufl.edu](http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu) for more information.

## April 11

UF's annual Spring Weekend features the traditional Orange and Blue Game and the UF Alumni Association's Outstanding Young Alumni Award Ceremony. Contact Jo Ann Winn: [winnj@ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@ufl.edu).

## May 8

The college's sophomore professional coating ceremony will be held at 2 p.m. at UF's Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

## May 23

Commencement exercises for the UFCVM's Class of 2015 and the college's Distinguished Awards presentation will be held at 2 p.m. at UF's Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.



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