

# Florida VETERINARIAN

ADVANCING ANIMAL, HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## UF | College of Veterinary Medicine

### Groundbreaking held for new small animal hospital

By Sarah Carey

“ Louise Courtelis visualized that we would have the finest hospitals in the country, which now position this college for excellence in the future as far as any of us can see. — Glen Hoffsis

Friends of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine joined administrators, faculty, alumni and students on the UF campus Nov. 21 to celebrate a red-letter day in the life of the college: a groundbreaking ceremony for its new \$58 million small animal hospital.

Members of the pet-owning public, including current and former hospital clients as well as representatives from the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, and practitioners from all over the state and political dignitaries packed the college’s Alec P. and Louise H. Courtelis Equine Hospital auditorium while various speakers offered perspective on the monumental occasion. Then the group gathered outside, adjacent to the site of the new building, officially known as the Veterinary Research and Education Center, for the symbolic breaking of the ground.



Photo by Sarah Kewell

Pictured from left to right at the groundbreaking ceremony for the University of Florida’s new small animal hospital are UF provost Joe Glover; college dean Glen Hoffsis; small animal hospital manager Sheri Holloway; UF’s vice president for research and graduate studies Win Phillips; state Sen. Steve Oelrich; sophomore veterinary student Caty Love; UF’s senior vice president for agricultural affairs Jimmy Cheek; UF’s senior vice president for health affairs Doug Barrett; University of Tennessee vice president of agricultural affairs and former UF College of Veterinary Medicine dean Joe DiPietro; and small animal clinical sciences department chairman Colin Burrows.

“I’d like to acknowledge Louise Courtelis for her many contributions in getting us where we are today,” said the college’s dean, Glen Hoffsis. He said Courtelis and her late

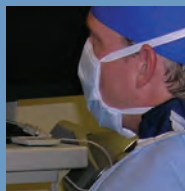
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## Message from the Dean

Florida Veterinarian is published by the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine for alumni and friends. Suggestions and comments are welcome and should be emailed to:

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Dean Glen Hoffsis

### The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

This line from Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities" truly characterizes the state of the College of Veterinary Medicine as we enter 2009. The worst of times relates to the state contribution to the college's operating budget, which could incur another devastating cut some predict could reach 10 percent. This coupled with the 14 percent reduction we endured last year would place the college in considerable jeopardy. It seems incongruous that simultaneously with this calamity, the college is experiencing some of the best of times and notable successes.

The most visible advancement relates to the new small animal hospital. Groundbreaking took place in November for this state-of-the-art, \$58 million hospital. This 90,000 square-foot facility will contain

many innovative features, including dedicated service rounds teaching rooms, a combined reception and waiting area, a cancer unit with a linear accelerator, interventional cardiology, critical care and emergency suites, and much more. It is projected to require about 18 months to complete.

Also in November, the college had its accreditation site team visit. This process is conducted by the American Veterinary Medical Association's Council on Education every seven years. The process was very educational for the faculty, staff, students, and alumni who participated in the four-day review. The preliminary report was favorable, although the council expressed concerns if our budget was cut further. I want to thank everyone who participated in the various meetings. I also want to convey a special thanks to Richard Wilkes of St. Petersburg for his excellent work as the Florida Veterinary Medical Association's representative on the site team.

The University of Florida has produced yet another dean. Dr. Eleanor Green, chairman of the department of large animal clinical sciences since 1996, was recently appointed dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University. Although we will miss her, we are very proud of her accomplishments and wish her well in this new adventure.

College faculty members continue to achieve great success in research grants, gifts and contracts to support their work. One example is the new \$4 million grant from Maddie's Fund to establish a Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at UF. The program was envisioned and led by Drs. Julie Levy and Cynda Crawford. The program will reach the far corners of the state and will provide teaching opportunities for veterinary students.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude for the tremendous support the college enjoys from its alumni, FVMA, clients and friends. We need and appreciate your support, whether the times are good or bad.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glen Hoffsis

Dean

# Underwater treadmill now available for VMC patients

By Sarah Carey

**V**eterinarians at the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center now have a new tool for helping Fido get back on his feet: an underwater treadmill.

A ribbon-cutting to celebrate the launching of this new rehabilitative treatment modality, part of the UF Veterinary Rehabilitation and Fitness Center, was held Sept. 15 and included a demonstration of the new treadmill, which is housed in the VMC between the small and large animal hospitals and adjacent to the equine treadmill room.

Several UF faculty and staff members, along with special guests Victoria Ford and Dr. Janine Tash, owner of Aalatah Veterinary Hospital and member of the UF CVM class of '83, attended the event. The treadmill was made possible through financial gifts from Ford, who is past treasurer of the Pals & Paws dog agility group in Jacksonville and a dog agility friend of Tash's.

"After competing in agility for 12 years, I observed all the injured dogs going to Aiken, S.C. for treatment and wondered why the UF veterinary school was not their choice," Ford said. "I learned that UF had no such program and the agility dogs needed special treatment."

Tash was meanwhile working on Ford's two competition dogs and mentioned the need for an underwater treadmill.

"I saw a need and was able to assist the veterinary school in acquiring it with a gift of \$60,000," Ford said.

After a meeting with college administrators, Ford learned that not only did agility dogs have rehabilitation needs -- so did other canine athletes as well as surgical and neurological patients.

She subsequently decided to support this goal by establishing the James Edmundson Ingraham Endowed Fund in Veterinary Medicine with an additional gift in memory of her great-grandfather, a businessman, entrepreneur, and railroad company executive whom Ford describes as "a moving force in the development of the state of Florida from the 1880s through the early 1900s."

"I am excited to be a part of the development of the small animal rehabilitation area in the veterinary hospital and look forward to its growth," said Ford. She also made an additional donation toward creating a small animal rehabilitation area in the soon-to-be-constructed new Veterinary Research and Education Center, which includes a new small

animal hospital.

Directing the new rehabilitation program will be staff surgeon Kristin Kirkby, a 2003 graduate of the UF veterinary college who recently completed her residency in small animal surgery. Kirkby is now pursuing a Ph.D.

Under Kirkby's direction, limited hydrotherapy services are now being offered to certain VMC clients, primarily animals suffering from joint problems or muscle loss, which often results from orthopedic or neurologic disease.

"There is a huge benefit for dogs with spinal cord injury that are unable to or have difficulty walking on land," Kirkby said.

Large animal patients are also benefiting from the new treadmill.

"The goal is to reduce pressure on the muscle groups and to allow for weightless movements as part of physical therapy to improve muscle strength," said equine resident Johanna Elfenbein (class of '07), adding that the major problem with recumbence -- the inability to stand -- in large animals is that their large muscle groups have decreased blood flow, causing muscles to die over time.

"Certainly having the treadmill available to us for this purpose is great," Elfenbein said.

Kirkby would like to see the service expand in the near future make use of other rehabilitation modalities such as low level laser therapy, therapeutic ultrasound and shock wave therapy.

"One of the big things we plan to push for is weight loss," she said. "Most overweight dogs have some form of arthritis; picture the overweight Lab with bad hips. We envision a wellness center that would provide exercise



Dr. Kristin Kirkby smiles at her dog, Bailey, while veterinary technician Wendy Davies monitors operation of the new underwater treadmill. Bailey gamely participated in the treadmill demonstration during the ribbon-cutting event.

and nutrition therapy, along with pain management and rehabilitation."

Kirkby said the buoyancy of the water decreases the impact of an animal's weight on its joints, and the resistance provided by walking in water builds muscle.

"Depending on the height of the water, you can target different muscle areas and joints," she said.

Many other veterinary colleges and hospitals are now making use of aquatic therapy for small animals, but UF is the only one in South Georgia and North Florida.

"My vision is that we will become very much a leader in clinical services but also in research to validate why we're doing this," Kirkby said, adding that part of her doctoral work will involve evaluating objective outcome measures to be used with rehabilitation.

"For example, is the underwater treadmill at elbow height for 10 minutes better than for five minutes at carpal height? Certainly thus far, there are big gaps in evidence and there has been very little objective data provided to prove this technique works." ❦

# Interventional therapy saves dogs with liver conditions

By Sarah Carey

**W**hen Delilah, a 6-month-old Labrador Retriever, came to the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center in July, she was much smaller than normal size for her breed and her liver had almost completely stopped functioning.

“From the beginning, we noticed that she was very sick,” said Delilah’s owner, Robin Fish of New Port Richey, adding that the AKC-registered chocolate Lab was one of 11 puppies in a litter the Fish family helped raise. “She’d snap back for awhile, but never played like the other puppies and she was very listless. Soon after their second shots, she became extremely ill, with severe fevers.”

Delilah had a congenital intrahepatic portosystemic liver shunt, a life-threatening condition through which blood bypasses the liver, leading to organ failure. Because surgery to treat these types of cases is extremely difficult and often not an option, as was the case with Delilah, UF veterinarians took a different approach, using minimally invasive interventional therapy to perform a transvenous coil occlusion of the shunt, enabling the circulatory blood flow to be redirected through its normal channels.

Today, Delilah is one of two canine patients to have been successfully treated at UF for this condition through the use of interventional therapy, which employs diagnostic imaging to guide minimally invasive procedures. Typically the imaging modalities used for interventional procedures are ultrasound and fluoroscopy, but sometimes they involve CT and MRI.

In fact, Fish was so excited by Delilah’s outcome at UF that she mentioned it to another couple she met at a social function whose dog suffered from the same condition.

That dog soon became UF’s second success story for this particular type of treatment.

“People are excited about these new interventional techniques, but few veterinarians have the ability to do it just by themselves,” said veterinary cardiologist Herb Maisenbacher, a clinical assistant professor of cardiology at the UF VMC whose primary interest is in vascular procedures. “I wouldn’t attempt this unless surgeons or radiologists were there to help me. We all bring different skill sets to the table, which makes it possible.”

Various specialized needles, introducers, catheters, guidewires and other devices are used to access the body in interventional therapies. Although interventional techniques have been used for years in human medicine, its use in veterinary medicine is in its infancy in many respects, with only one formal training program in existence

at the University of Pennsylvania — UF’s VMC has implemented a team approach in which several specialty services are involved in the planning and execution of many interventional therapies.

“This approach has only improved the care of our patients and our ability to offer cutting edge treatment,” Maisenbacher said. “It’s a realm with a lot of promise and very few limitations. There are many organ system diseases that can be treated by these procedures.”

UF cardiologists were trained three years ago by interventional

veterinary specialist Chick Weiss from the University of Pennsylvania. Delilah’s case gave the UF team its first opportunity to make use of these new skills. The procedure involves placing a widebore catheter in the jugular vein; using fluoroscopy, or real-time X-rays, to locate the vascular shunt; placing a metal stent in the vena cava and finally deploying coils to create the occlusion.

Interventional therapies generally include shorter hospital stays and reduced mortality rates, but most importantly, these techniques offer alternative treatments of conditions for which no standard treatments may exist, or for which the standard treatment — usually surgery — offers unacceptable risk. But the procedure’s cost can be in the thousands of dollars.

“The metal stent alone costs \$1,500,” Maisenbacher said. “The good thing is, we can take a dog that is very sick and turn it into a healthy dog.”

Veterinary radiologist Shannon Holmes said that currently interventional radiology is used at UF to treat intrahepatic portosystemic vascular anomalies, patent ductus arteriosus, tracheal collapse, urethral obstructions and to deliver regional chemotherapy via arteries supplying a tumor.

“It truly is a team approach, as many specialists are often involved in the procedure,” Holmes said. “It requires an excellent knowledge of three-dimensional radiologic anatomy and is an exciting field of radiologic practice that is rapidly expanding, especially in veterinary medicine.”

As for Delilah, Fish said she is “doing beautifully.”

“I told the doctors at UF, I didn’t know what to do for them or how to thank them, so I just sent them another liver shunt dog so they could save another life,” Fish said. “I was blessed enough to be able to give them another dog to help.”



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Shannon Holmes, left, Dr. Herb Maisenbacher, center, and Dr. Mandi Schmidt, right, are shown watching screens that show fluoroscopic images of a catheter that goes from the jugular vein into the liver with fluoroscopic guidance. The screens that the team is watching show the fluoroscopic images of the catheter in the body, allowing them to move it into position within the desired vessel.

# Equine reproduction service going mobile

By Sarah Carey

**A** mobile service for equine reproduction at the University of Florida aims to better serve area horse breeders while simultaneously moving students at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine more frequently into the field.

“The approach to medicine on the road is different than in the hospital, regardless of what service you are associated with,” said Scott Bailey, D.V.M., a Kansas State University veterinary alumnus who recently completed his residency in theriogenology at UF’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

Bailey, a board-certified reproduction specialist, spent 10 months at Hagyard Equine Medical Institute in Lexington, Ky., during his residency. He hopes to expand the ambulatory service in mid-February, at the start of Thoroughbred breeding season.

“I think our students will benefit greatly from seeing how routine breeding is handled in the field, as opposed to the more advanced kinds of cases they would typically see at the UF Veterinary Medical Center,” Bailey said. Because the UF VMC is primarily a referral center, a more typical horse reproduction case seen in the hospital might consist of a mare at high risk for losing a foal.

Breeding management is also not typically as intense in the field as in the hospital, where most patients are sent to address fertility problems.

“Although there are different ways to get a mare pregnant depending on the breed of the horse and the owner’s wishes, field breeding management would typically involve three to five prebreeding examinations, as well as postbreeding health checks and subsequent pregnancy examinations,” Bailey said.

With Thoroughbreds, a breed in which artificial insemination is prohibited, ovulation must be predicted far enough in advance to “book the stallion,” Bailey said. In the case of Arabians, quarter horses, and warmbloods, artificial insemination is the preferred breeding method. The veterinarian’s role would then be to examine the mare to predict ovulation and inseminate the mare. Post-ovulation checks are recommended to monitor the mare’s uterine health and subsequent examinations would be performed throughout the horse’s pregnancy.

“There is increasing demand in Alachua County and northward in the state for specialty services,” Bailey said. “Specialty care on an ambulatory basis is much more available south of Gainesville than north of here.”

He added that although many equine veterinarians offer excellent breeding management services, specialists in the area have additional expertise to offer.

Although UF used to provide an ambulatory reproduction service, in recent years the time spent on such calls has dwindled and only two university-

owned farms are presently served.

As a clinical instructor, Bailey says he has the interest and flexibility to make a mobile reproduction service work.

“I’m pretty excited about it,” he said. “The No. 1 complaint we hear from students has been that there is a lack of real-world experience at the university — at any university. I think our students will benefit from obtaining a more varied view of how veterinary practice is conducted in the field.”

No additional overhead costs were needed to begin the program, since UF already owns the needed vehicles and medical equipment, Bailey said.

“What will happen is that students who are on their two-week theriogenology rotation will spend an entire week going out to private farms on the ambulatory service versus going to the UF-owned Horse Research Center only a few times,” Bailey said.

He hopes to enlist a handful of farms with 15 to 20 mares that the service could visit regularly throughout the horse breeding season, but says he won’t limit the service if he received requests from farms with fewer horses.

Anyone seeking more information about the mobile equine reproduction program should call 352-392-2229 and ask for Scott Bailey. 📞



Dr. Scott Bailey

### ■ E-mail address updates needed

In order to meet the University of Florida’s Green Initiatives, more of the college print publications will become electronic publications or Web-based publications. Communications via e-mail are becoming increasingly important, as well as being the ‘green’ thing to do. Be sure your e-mail address is up-to-date so you aren’t left out.

Information we need from alumni includes name, class year, and e-mail address. All others, we need name and e-mail address and some reference to your affiliation to the college, i.e. you are a donor, a friend, a client, etc.

You can confirm your e-mail address by sending a note to [cvmalumniaffairs@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:cvmalumniaffairs@vetmed.ufl.edu) or faxing this info to 352-392-8351.

## Emeritus professor honored by alma mater



Photo courtesy of ISU

Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine dean John Thomson, left, presents Dr. Maarten Drost with the Stange Award in late October.

Maarten Drost, D.V.M., an emeritus professor of theriogenology at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, has received the prestigious 2008 Stange Award from his alma mater, Iowa State University.

The award was presented Oct. 25 at ISU in Ames, Iowa.

Created in honor of the late Charles H. Stange, D.V.M., a former ISU College of Veterinary Medicine dean, the award is that institution's premier recognition given to veterinary medical alumni. Recipients are recognized for outstanding professional achievements in education, government, industry, practice or other professional endeavors in veterinary medicine.

A 1962 graduate of the ISU veterinary college, Drost served on the faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis, at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine and at State University in Utrecht, the Netherlands. He was a visiting professor at Colorado State University's embryo transfer unit, worked in private practice and served as a captain in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps before joining UF's veterinary college as a founding faculty member in 1977.

A world-renowned expert in the field of ruminant reproduction, including embryo transfer technology, Drost was a pioneer in the area of fetal surgery and demonstrated the role of the fetus in parturition in sheep by performing bilateral adrenalectomies in 1968. Drost's team at UF was responsible for the world's first embryo transfer to result in the birth of a water buffalo calf in 1983, a landmark achievement that led to production of the first buffalo calves in Europe in 1985 using the same technique.

Drost retired in 2003 but has remained involved in the profession through his development of a slide database as a teaching tool for veterinarians and veterinary students.

His Web site, "The Drost Project Visual Guide," includes guides to bubaline, equine and canine reproduction and provides visuals for veterinarians and veterinary students wanting information about the male or female bovine reproductive systems as well as learning opportunities for those who wish to brush up on reproductive technology — embryo transfer, artificial insemination or ultrasonography, to name a few.

## Small animal surgery resident honored for research



Photo courtesy of ACVIS

Dr. Julie M. Duval, chair of the Small Animal Residents' Forum, presents the First Place Research Presentation Award to Dr. Stanley Kim from the University of Florida.

Stanley Kim's presentation, titled "Effect of Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy and Tibial Tuberosity Advancement on Three Dimensional Stifle Kinematics" received first place in the research category of the residents competition at the annual American College of Veterinary Surgeons meeting, held Oct. 23-25 in San Diego.

The presentation was an extension of Kim's master's thesis project, which he is working on in collaboration with Drs. Antonio Pozzi and Dan Lewis and the newly established Comparative Orthopaedics laboratory.

"Stan's presentation set the standard for visual special effects in the residents' competition, but he also handled some pretty difficult questions from two reviewers in superb fashion," said Dr. Gary Ellison, small animal surgery chief.

Ellison added that he appreciated the support given by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies for the four-year combined master's/ residency program, which was only established a few years ago.

## New interim department chair named

Paul Davenport, Ph.D., a professor in the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, has been named acting chairman of the college's department of physiological sciences.

His appointment was effective Oct. 1.

College Dean Glen Hoffsis appointed Davenport, who had been associate department chairman, to the acting chairman position after former department chairman, John Harvey, D.V.M., Ph.D., was named executive associate dean of the UF veterinary college.

A physiologist, Davenport's work focuses primarily on the study of animal and human behavioral control of breathing and respiratory rehabilitation.

His work relating to respiratory function has benefited Parkinson's patients, asthmatic children, U.S. Navy divers and the actor Christopher Reeve, among others.

Davenport was the recipient of the Pfizer Award for Research Excellence in the UF College of Veterinary Medicine in 2001. In 2003, he received the UF Research Foundation professorship, sponsored by the university's Division of Sponsored Research.

He has been a member of the UF veterinary college faculty since 1981.

## New senior development director named

Karen Legato has been named senior director of development and alumni affairs at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine. Legato has 25 years of fundraising experience in higher education, nine of which have been at UF's veterinary college. She has worked with donor events, corporate solicitations and campus campaigns and was formerly the college's director of development and



Dr. Paul Davenport



Karen Legato

alumni affairs. She replaces Zoe Seale, who has become the new senior director of development and alumni affairs at UF's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Legato's promotion was effective Oct. 27.

A member of the UF veterinary college's development staff since 1999, Legato holds a bachelor's degree in communication from Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pa. She worked from 1984-1999 at Slippery Rock as both an executive assistant and a special events coordinator in the university's advancement office. Prior to that, she worked for seven years as a farm manager and equine trainer at Arcadian Arabians in Slippery Rock, and for nine years as the executive secretary to the president of General Nutrition Corporation in Pittsburgh.

In her most recent position at the veterinary college, in addition to fundraising for the college, Legato was responsible for cultivating relationships among several constituencies, including alumni, donors, grateful clients of UF's veterinary hospitals and others from various animal-oriented clubs and industry groups.

Most people think of development as "just fundraising" but there is more to it than that, Legato said.

"My goal is to educate people who already have an interest in the college's mission of teaching, research and patient care about ways in which their contributions can meaningfully advance that mission," Legato said. "We aren't just asking people for money; we are establishing and nurturing relationships and providing opportunities for people to give financially to a cause they already believe in."

In the nine years Legato has been at UF, the college has consistently been ranked in the top 10 of the 28 fundraising units across campus, both in terms of money raised and percentage of goal achieved.



## UF scientist speaks at centenary conference

University of Florida infectious disease specialist Anthony Barbet, Ph.D., has attended many professional meetings in his 30-year career, but never anything quite like the Onderstepoort Centenary Pan African Veterinary Conference and Celebration, held Oct. 6-9 in South Africa.

The Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute's 100 years of existence is a big enough deal that South Africa issued a special postage stamp in honor of it. Even the country's president showed up as guest of honor.

"When South Africa was being settled, they needed animals for several reasons, including transport in the region," said Barbet, a professor in the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's department of infectious diseases and pathology who was one of only two United States scientists invited to speak at the conference.

"As settlements began moving northward, all kinds of animal diseases were discovered, including rinderpest, babesiosis, anaplasmosis, heartwater, African horse sickness, trypanosomiasis and others. Many people who were moving northward lost a lot of their animals; rinderpest wiped out most of the cattle in the country and African horse sickness wiped out most of the horses," he said.

Onderstepoort's first director, Sir Arnold Theiler, is known as the father of veterinary science in South Africa. A veterinary bacteriologist who also was a researcher, a teacher and an administrator in his lifetime, Theiler in 1896 created a vaccine to combat the dreaded disease of rinderpest. As a direct result of his efforts, the disease was controlled in South Africa. Under Theiler's leadership, many local diseases were researched and vaccines developed at Onderstepoort, which remains an important part of South African academic and professional culture.

Among the guests at the conference were several of Theiler's descendants, including his granddaughter, Elizabeth Theiler-Martin, daughter of Max Theiler, who won the Nobel Prize for developing a vaccine for yellow fever.

Barbet said he and Theiler-Martin struck up an interesting conversation in which he told her that the West Nile virus vaccine for horses developed by Dr. Maureen Long of UF actually involves the insertion of West Nile virus genes into her father's yellow fever virus vaccine.

"You can actually trace the origin of her West Nile vaccine back to Max Theiler's vaccine since it is a combination of both viruses," Barbet said. "Ms. Theiler-Martin did not know about this, and I'll bet Max wouldn't have thought his vaccine would wind up being used in a vaccine that helped the United States combat a different disease."

Barbet, whose research interest is in defining molecular mechanisms of pathogenesis in tropical and emerging diseases, development of recombinant vaccines and improved diagnostics, presented an abstract on "Persistence Mechanisms in Tick-Borne Diseases."

"I talked about some of the work Dr. (David) Allred has been doing on Babesia and I've been doing on Anaplasma and heartwater, and about some of the work I did before I came to UF relating to African sleeping sickness," Barbet said. "Most of these organisms have similar methods to be persistent in animals."

He said he hoped to cultivate future relationships with South African scientists, hopefully through collaborations with the UF veterinary college.

"They actually have quite a need to train up some of their scientists in some of the interests we have here at UF," Barbet said. He felt there were training opportunities for South African students to pursue graduate research degrees in Veterinary Medicine and the new Emerging Pathogens Institute.



Dr. Tony Barbet

Collage courtesy of Dr. Tony Barbet



At left in this photo collage is the postage stamp issued by the South African government in honor of the 100th anniversary of the creation of Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute. At right in the photo is a frontal view of the Institute.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Sophomore veterinary student Caty Love, left, spoke during the groundbreaking ceremony, representing the student body. With her is classmate Shannon McDonald.

husband, Alec, helped to mobilize donors on behalf of the college years ago, leading to the present project's ultimate success as well as other endeavors that preceeded it, including the equine hospital built in 1994.

"She visualized that we would have the finest hospitals in the country, which now position this college for excellence in the future as far as any of us can see," Hoffsis said.

One of the early fundraising efforts Courtelis led was known as "No More Band-aids," symbolizing the end of temporary solutions to the small animal hospital's overcrowding problems. Previously the idea was so daunting to college administrators that only sporadic renovations to the existing hospital, in business since the college opened in 1977, were thought possible.

Over a period of several years, the college was able to raise \$4.4 million in private gifts, which was then supplemented by state equipment and matching funds to meet the projected cost of construction.

Former college dean Joseph DiPietro, who left UF two years ago to become vice president of agriculture at the University of Tennessee, returned to Gainesville for the groundbreaking. He, too, shared memories of the long road to success and paid tribute to the Courtelises.

"I remember that we were on the heels of the 'It's Performance that Counts' UF Capital Campaign, which was named after the slogan the Courtelises use at their farm," DiPietro said. That particular fundraising campaign took place in the late 1990s.

"We had a meeting with Mrs. C., which is what I called her. She may have been a bull-dog when she got behind something, but I have always called her a fairy godmother for this college."

That meeting led to more discussion about what was needed and how it could be financed, DiPietro recalled.

"Then we developed a spirit, and then it was one fundraising event after the other," he said.

Dr. Colin Burrows, chairman of the department of small animal clinical sciences and chief of staff of the small animal hospital, acknowledged the efforts of DiPietro and Hoffsis, as well as former executive associate dean Dr. Jim Thompson, for the "countless hours" they spent to bring the project to fruition.

He also paid tribute to the small animal clinical sciences faculty with lines from a sonnet by John Milton.

"They also serve who only stand and wait," Burrows said. "This faculty and staff has served for more than 30 years. I don't know how



Dr. Julio Ibanez, a member of the college's charter class of '80 and former alumni council president, and his wife, Maria, drove to Gainesville from Miami for the event.

many animals we have treated; it has to be in the hundreds of thousands. We have served, but we have stood and waited."

Soon after the college's inception in the late 1970s, it experienced sick building syndrome was placed on limited accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association. A new equine hospital and veterinary academic building were constructed subsequently, and hospital services now include cardiology and oncology, among others, Burrows said.

"We've grown not only our patients, but the services we offer, and we are now parallel with human medicine in many areas," he said. "It wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many people."

Caty Love, a sophomore veterinary student who is her class president, said her class would be the first to experience some part of their clinical education in the new building.

"A more impressive hospital makes for more and better veterinarians, and that is the ultimate goal," Love said.

The new facility is expected to be completed by late 2010.

Photo by Sarah Carey



# Transplantation background aids student's UF studies

By Sarah Carey

After graduation from the University of Southern California in 1992, at the time most veterinary students are entering D.V.M. programs, Max Polyak planned to be a diplomat. Toward that end, he participated in a medical relief team, flying critically injured civilians out of Bosnia during that country's civil war.

The experience changed him forever.

"The longer I was there, the more I realized it was the diplomats who were screwing things up," said Polyak, now a sophomore veterinary student at UF. "The people having the biggest impact were the physicians and nurses -- the medical folks on the ground."

Polyak continued to nurture his overseas travel bug, traveling to England where he received a master's degree in natural sciences at the University of Cambridge. With an eye on medical school, Polyak wound up back in the U.S., working in Cornell University's transplant surgery department.

The 10 years he would spend there allowed him to cultivate a unique niche.

Focusing on techniques to improve the function of transplanted organs, Polyak developed the department's clinical and research laboratory, which became the largest of its kind in the country. He focused on the time period when a donor organ is outside of the body prior to being transplanted into the organ recipient.

"We formulated different types of drugs that we would infuse into organs so they'd function better," Polyak said. "When you watch ER, you see an Igloo cooler with an organ inside of it being rushed to the emergency room. We changed that paradigm. We would hook the organ up to a machine to trick it into thinking it is still inside the body."

This technique, now in practice at several transplantation centers in the U.S., gives medical personnel more time to test the organ for viability and to share the organ with recipients across the country.

Polyak's personal research involved developing the drug solution that is used to perfuse the organ and perfecting the machine used to optimize organ viability.

"I was really close to going to medical school and the surgeons I worked with really wanted me to stay," said Polyak. "But I knew it wasn't for me."

Now 39 and the father of a 4-year-old son, Polyak said he always wanted to be a



Photo courtesy of Max Polyak

Sophomore veterinary student Max Polyak is shown at work at the organ perfusion laboratory at UF & Shands.

veterinarian – like his own father and brother.

"This was a different route for going back to when I was a kid, so I decided not to pursue human medical school and to apply to vet school," Polyak said.

He applied to the University of California/Davis, the University of Pennsylvania and UF, and was accepted at all three schools. But Polyak was Florida bound.

"There were two main things," he said. "I wanted a warm climate and Florida had relatively small classes, unlike the other places. Plus, I'd heard from so many people about their positive experiences at UF, and I knew of the reputation of the equine program. Ultimately, I just had the right feeling about being here."

Soon after moving to Gainesville, Polyak was contacted by some of his UF contacts from the human transplant world.

"They said, 'we heard you were here in Gainesville and we want to start a clinical service to machine-perfuse donor kidneys for our patients,'" Polyak recalled. "They knew about my experience and asked if I would help set up an organ perfusion lab, so we started talking and got everything approved."

In the past year, the Shands Transplant Center at UF's organ perfusion laboratory, which Polyak directs, has increased the number of kidney transplants performed at UF & Shands by 120 percent.

"When you have this capability, you have a way to predict the success of the transplant," said Polyak. "We are now taking organs we wouldn't have even considered years ago and actually using them. It's remarkable to see when someone unusually healthy and gracious enough to be an organ donor, who can be 70 or 80 years old, can still save someone's life by donating a kidney or two kidneys or a liver."

Being a veterinary student and simultaneously holding down a job directing the perfusion lab is not as difficult as it might appear, primarily because many procedures can be scheduled and he works with a committed staff, Polyak said.

Although he has a proven track record and publications in several peer-reviewed journals relating to human transplantation, Polyak recently has worked closely with UF large animal surgeons David Freeman and Ali Morton on publications relating to equine colic.

"We are delighted to have him involved in our research on improving survival in ischemic-injured equine colon," said Freeman, who is associate chairman of the department of large animal clinical sciences, associate chief of staff of the Alec P. and Louise H. Courtelis Equine Hospital and director of the Island Whirl Colic Research Laboratory.

"Max is a remarkable individual and has accomplished more before he earns his professional degree than many accomplish afterwards, in veterinary or human medicine."

He said Polyak was "great to work with," calling him a "true team player with an honest and realistic approach to his work, backed by a deep knowledge of transplant technology."

Polyak said he is excited about the possibility of future human and veterinary medicine collaborations in the area of transplantation technology.

"We now have a series of experiments that are ongoing," he said. "The goal is to use techniques that are proven in the human organ transplant field to improve healing in surgical colic cases."

In the future, Polyak said he may consider pursuing a Ph.D. and likes contemplating a career in academic veterinary medicine or possibly equine practice.

"The area of equine veterinary medicine is certainly the most attractive to me," he said.

## Dr. Jim Himes, longtime dean of students, dies at 89

By Sarah Carey

### Dr. James Albert Himes 1919-2008

*Beloved friend, mentor, colleague*



Filled with sadness for the passing of a man who helped define the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, friends and family transformed a memorial service Nov. 19 into a passionate celebration of the life of longtime faculty member and dean of students Dr. Jim Himes.

Past and present CVM students, faculty and administrators as well as members of Himes' family shared their memories of a man who was born in Ohio, but who called Gainesville home for more than 40 years.

People reminisced and paid further tribute to the late dean emeritus of students and instruction at the college, who meant more than words could express to so many of them. The Office of Students and Instruction arranged a tribute to Himes inside the lobby of the VAB, with photos taken over the years and awards that had been important to him.

Himes came to UF in 1965 as an assistant professor of veterinary science in the College of Agriculture and in 1973 received a joint appointment in the newly-forming College of Veterinary Medicine. He was appointed director of the Office of Veterinary Medical Education for the college in 1975 and served as assistant dean and later associate dean in charge of students and instruction until he retired in 1992.

Even after retirement, he kept the college close to his heart.

"He was just an extraordinary person who made this college his family until about a month ago," recalled the college's dean, Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M.

"He made eye contact; he looked directly at you and smiled," recalled Alexa McDermott, senior class president.

Link Welborn, D.V.M., a member of the college's class of '82 and a driving force behind the college alumni council's creation of the James A. Himes Alumni Scholarship, remembered meeting Himes while a pre-veterinary student in 1977. At that time, Himes was the college's associate dean for students and instruction.

"The period of preparation for veterinary school, and the application and interview process, is a stressful time for every student, and it was no different for me," he said. "However, Dr. Himes' quiet, warm, reassuring manner relieved as much of the anxiety as was possible. He made every student feel as if he cared for them and I'm convinced that he did genuinely care for all of us."

Welborn said the creation of the Himes Alumni Scholarship came after a suggestion from the college's former dean, Joe DiPietro, to the alumni council about a scholarship fund. The scholarship idea languished a bit, until it was connected to Himes.

"In 1998, it occurred to me that if fundraising was to be successful, we needed to create an emotional attachment to the scholarship," Welborn said. "Naming it to honor Himes was obvious, since he had touched the lives of virtually every alumnus in such a positive way."

In 2008, the Himes Alumni Scholarship reached the \$100,000 threshold needed to qualify for state matching dollars, thanks to support from the many College of Veterinary Medicine alumni and friends who remember him so well.

**Editor's Note:** For longer version of story, go to the December issue of the *Veterinary Page* at: [http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu/college/pr/documents/December08\\_001.pdf](http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu/college/pr/documents/December08_001.pdf)



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Glen Hoffsis, Dr. Jim Himes and Dr. Link Welborn stand together following the announcement at 2008 NAVC alumni reception that the \$100,000 threshold had been reached to endow the James Himes Alumni Scholarship.

# Recollecting Dr. Jim Himes

By Emerson Besch, Ph.D.



Dr. Emerson Besch

I have many recollections of my friendship with Dr. Jim Himes, which began in early 1974. His unpretentious demeanor masked a profound, thoughtful, and substantive individual. One interesting recollection is as follows.

Early in 1981, when I was acting dean of the UFCVM, I received a phone call from the former astronaut, Sen. John Glenn of Ohio. He told me that the son of some personal friends had applied for admission to the UFCVM. This family had asked him to inquire about the process of selecting students for interview and admission to our college.

I told Senator Glenn that, as dean, I was responsible for selecting the veterinary class based on recommendations of the Faculty Admissions

Committee. Prior to receiving that recommendation, I did not involve myself in the specifics of any of the applicants or their files. Anyway, student (including applicant) files were confidential and protected under the Buckley Amendment. Senator Glenn told me that the purpose of his call was not to try to influence any applicant's selection, but rather he wanted to understand the process by which we selected applicants for interview and eventual admission.

Obviously, Dr. Himes was the one who knew all of the details of the admissions process, and I asked him to come to my office (at the time, his office was across the VMTH entry way from mine). I briefed Dr. Himes as to who was on the phone and the nature of the inquiry.

Dr. Himes took the phone from me and said into the mouthpiece, "Hello, John; how are you doing?" Pause. "I am surprised that you did not remember."

There was more conversation, and Dr. Himes hung up the phone.

As he turned to me, I said, "What was that all about?"

Dr. Himes responded, "John Glenn and I were classmates at Muskingum College in Ohio, and I told him that I was surprised he did not remember me. After he connected my name to that of his former classmate, he said that he did not need any more information about our selection process. He told me that he was going to call his friends and tell them that their son would get fair and equitable treatment from the UFCVM admissions process, because he personally knew the assistant dean for student services, and he was an honest, sincere, and honorable person."

My response was, "Jim, you never cease to amaze me."

He smiled. ☺

**Editor's Note:** Emerson Besch, Ph.D., an emeritus professor of physiology in the college's department of physiological sciences, was a professor of physiology and mechanical engineering at UF from 1974-1993. He served as the UF veterinary college's founding associate dean for academic affairs from 1974-1980 and executive associate dean from 1981-1988. He was acting head of the department of physiological sciences from 1974-76 and acting dean from 1980-81, following founding Dean Charles Cornelius's retirement from the Dean's Office. He was also acting associate dean for research and graduate studies in 1987. Besch and his wife make their home in San Antonio, Texas.

## Alumni celebrated Himes' life at this year's North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando



Dean Glen Hoffsis and professor emeritus Dr. Paul Nicoletti catch up on the day's events.



Dr. Justin Sabota, '08, and Dr. Courtney Riley, '07, were among the guests.



Dr. Diane Richter, '92, and Dr. Beth Murphy, '82, arrived early at the reception.



Dr. Jo Ann Daniels, '03, Dr. Paul Gibbs, professor of infectious diseases at UF, and Dr. Tara Anderson, '03.

## New forensics program to investigate crimes against animals

By Czerne Reid

Call it “CSI: Animal Edition.” But this isn’t television. In this real-life drama, necropsies, assessment of skeletal remains for abuse and trauma, and crime scene analysis of hair, fibers and bloodstains are used to solve cases of cruelty to animals.

University of Florida officials announced in January that they are partnering with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to form the first Veterinary Forensic Sciences Program dedicated to the teaching, research and application of forensic science in the investigation and prosecution of crimes against animals. The program will handle cases from around the country — possibly up to 200 within the first two years — and provide consultancy and training. Additional details were presented at the North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando.

The collaboration between the university and the ASPCA started a year ago, when the two institutions organized a conference on the use of forensic science to investigate animal cruelty. Coordinators expected only a few dozen attendees, but instead were met by nearly 200 people from across the United States and nine other countries.

That unanticipated interest helped fuel the development of the new program.

“This is a newly emerging field,” said forensic toxicologist Bruce Goldberger, Ph.D., director of the William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine at UF. “We are translating our knowledge of forensic science to a new field devoted to solving crimes against animals.”

The Veterinary Forensic Sciences Program will dramatically increase the number of professionals trained in forensic investigation of animal cruelty cases — by potentially hundreds each year, Goldberger said. In so doing, it could also help uncover instances where the abusers are also targeting people, experts say.

Housed at the Maples Center, the new program is being established with a \$450,000 gift — \$150,000 a year for the next three years — from the ASPCA.

Over the last few years, the number and stringency of laws relating to animal cruelty has increased. Penalties can include extended prison time, such as in the high-profile dog



Dr. Bruce Goldberger, director of the William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine at UF.

fighting case involving professional football player Michael Vick.

“That means the standards of investigations and of the science used in documenting what has happened to animals are much, much higher than even five years ago,” said Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., ASPCA senior vice president for anti-cruelty field services.

There is no national tracking of animal cruelty cases — the new Veterinary Forensic Sciences Program will allow for better collection of such data. On the basis of media accounts, the animal advocacy Web site [pet-abuse.com](http://pet-abuse.com) reports 1,620 cases in 2008. The ASPCA investigates at least 200 cruelty cases a year. Scenarios include simple neglect, abandonment, animal hoarding and blood sports such as dog fighting.

Lt. Sherry Schlueter, who calls herself the “original animal cop,” is credited with starting — in the early 1980s — the first animal cruelty investigation unit within a law enforcement agency. Today she is section supervisor of the Special Victims and Family Crimes section of the Broward County (Florida) Sheriff’s Office. She said the new program will help protect not only animals, but also

humans who might be harmed by the same assailants. She heads one of the first police units in the country in which officers are “cross-trained” to recognize and investigate links between animal abuse and violence against humans, including child abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

She works to educate fellow officers and others about that link.

“My goal was always to get law enforcement to recognize animal cruelty for the crime it is,” she said. “Victims are victims — and batterers are batterers — and it shouldn’t matter what species, what age, what gender.”

The new program at University of Florida will offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses and continuing education for veterinarians, law enforcement personnel, animal control officers and others. Courses include forensic entomology, buried-remains excavation, bloodstain pattern analysis, bite-mark analysis and animal crime scene processing. Trainings will be done in classroom settings, online and through the just-formed International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association.

One such course — to be offered next

## Gracie graces the Swamp



Dr. Moody McCall (class of '86) is pictured with UF President Bernie Machen in the President's Box during the Oct. 25 UF homecoming game, along with Gracie, a service dog McCall has trained through the Canine Companions for Independence group.

CCI trains service dogs for children and adults with disabilities other than blindness. Gracie's trip to the sky box was unprecedented for a service dog. McCall said she was quite an attraction and enabled him to educate several people in the box about the CCI program.

## Honored for skills with exotic pets



Dr. Kevin Wright, class of '88, was recently named 2008 Exotic DVM of the Year, an honor bestowed annually to an outstanding exotic animal practitioner selected from nominations made by the readers of Exotic DVM magazine. The award was presented Oct. 15 during the annual meeting of the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians. Wright is a cofounder of the Arizona Exotic Animal Hospital in Mesa, Ariz. He is shown here with Dr. Wilbur Amand, executive director of ARAV and the first recipient of the award in 1999.

spring through the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine — will include seminars on various forensics topics, as well as a mock trial in which students will play the defendants in animal-cruelty cases. Real prosecutors and media professionals will take part to enhance the learning experience.

Often, veterinarians presented with cases of animal abuse or neglect are not sure what to look for to establish cause and manner of death, or to prove that a crime was committed.

“Veterinarians are frequently asked to participate in cruelty investigations, yet we don't receive special training on that in veterinary school,” said Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., director of Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Florida. “There is a substantial unmet need for that training to be provided to veterinarians.”



Dr. Julie Levy

## Gator vets gather for food and fun

UF CVM alumni got into the Gator spirit with faculty, students and staff during the traditional UF Homecoming barbecue prior to the football game, which pitted UF against the Kentucky Wildcats. Final score: UF, 63; Kentucky, 5.

Little did we know UF would become the 2008 BCS football champions!

Photo by Sarah Carey



Dr. Susan Anderson, class of '83, and Dr. Karen Zimmerman, class of '87.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Dawn Keenan and Gina Ushi both served as student ambassadors from the class of 2009.

Photo by Sarah Carey

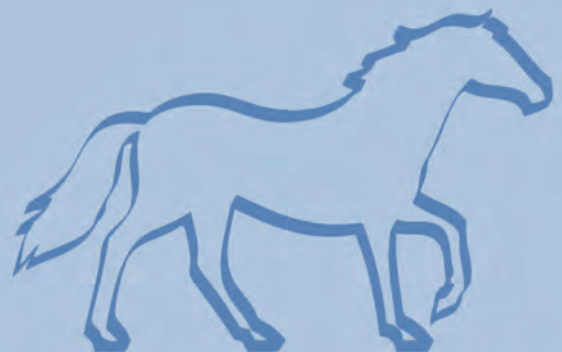


Student ambassadors Chetika Maus and Cassie Carroll, both from the class of 2009, helped keep things moving during the event by assisting with a variety of tasks.

Photo by Sarah Carey



Heidi Goss, class of '89, and her former classmate, Laurie Covington Phillips, '89, catch up on old times.



## UF scientists to play key roles in National Children's Health Study

By Sarah Carey

Two scientists with the University of Florida colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Public Health and Health Professions will help monitor environmental testing and exposure assessments for Florida's component in an unprecedented national study aimed at improving the health of America's children.



Dr. Nancy Szabo

UF's component of the \$54 million Florida contract amounts to approximately \$10 million, administrators said.

Nancy Szabo, Ph.D., director of the Analytical Toxicology Corps Laboratory and a research assistant professor with the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Natalie Freeman, Ph.D., associate professor and interim director of the College of Public Health and Health Professions' environmental health program — both of whom are affiliated with UF's Center for Environmental and Human Toxicology — will partner with lead investigator Mark Hudak, M.D., a UF pediatrician at Shands-Jacksonville, on UF's piece of the project known as the National Children's Study.

One of the largest collaborative efforts in health-related research ever, the NCS will involve a consortium of federal partners including the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The NCS's goal is to ultimately enroll 100,000 children nationally. To that end, the NIH has selected 105 counties in the country, including four in Florida, to participate. Each urban county selected will ultimately assemble a group of 1,000 children and rural counties will assemble a group of 600 children all of whom will be followed prenatally and through the first 21 years of life.

In Florida, the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine will be taking the lead role as the Florida coordinating center. The University of South Florida and the University of Central Florida are also involved. UF's efforts will primarily focus on 600 children from Baker County, although Freeman and Szabo will also participate in the Orange and Hillsborough county sites.

"Having Mark Hudak as principal investigator of the Baker location makes a lot of sense during the first years of the study, since the primary focus will be on recruiting women before and during pregnancy and following them through delivery," said Freeman, whose background is in residential exposure assessment with a particular focus on children. She and Szabo also are excited about the potential for additional intercollege collaborations that may ensue at UF from spin-off studies.

Freeman said the NCS is essentially an observational exposure assessment study as well as a longitudinal epidemiology study. Environmental assessments will include household, air, water and soil around the household. More specific decisions relating to which contaminants will be analyzed are expected to be finalized in the next few months. Specific contaminants to be tested will vary by region.

"We will gather information about lifestyle activities and collect environmental samples for analysis of a wide range of agents," Freeman said. "Hopefully this data will provide information about what children are exposed to and how it impacts their health."

She added that the Florida contract should provide for many jobs in Dade, Hillsborough, Orange and Baker counties, and ought to be a welcome boon for the entire state in lean economic times.

"It is expected that the folks manning the phone banks, trained for home visits and the collection of various environmental/biological samples will come largely from the area," said Szabo, whose primary role will be to provide quality control and quality assurance for the Baker County piece of the study.

"This extends beyond the collection or manipulation of data; it involves verification and evaluation of the personnel involved, biological and environmental protocols, sampling and site activities and verification/evaluation of corrective actions," Szabo said.

Although most of the time-consuming, routine efforts for Baker County — such as phone banks, surveys, site visits for collection of biological and/or environmental samples, have been subcontracted to a company that has its own quality control system, its activities will still be monitored and confirmed by UF personnel.

The NCS coordinating center has not yet finalized decisions regarding what analyses

will be conducted or who will provide those analyses on collected environmental and biological samples.

Freeman said that besides Szabo's role in monitoring quality assurance and control — which Freeman called "critical" for a study of this size — it was possible that other veterinary medical faculty who conduct research relevant to both humans and animals might at some point be involved in other aspects of the NCS.

"One of the focuses of the NCS is trying to understand the development of asthma," Freeman said. "In the veterinary college, there



Dr. Natalie Freeman

already is an established group conducting asthma-related research."

Along with asthma, however, diabetes, obesity and autism are specifically stated interests within the NCS. Szabo and Freeman both said all these areas could afford the possibility of future intracollege collaborations at UF.

"As time goes by and the Florida branch of the NCS gets started, other opportunities of this nature will surely appear," Szabo said.

**Feb. 26** A new equine lecture series for the horse-owning public will kick off with a presentation on “Lameness in the Horse,” by Dr. Matt Brokken. All lectures will be held at UF’s Alec P. and Louise H. Courtelis Equine Hospital in the auditorium. Other lectures are scheduled monthly through May. For more information, go to: <http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu/extension/equine/>.

**April 18** The Class of 1984 will celebrate its Silver Society Weekend, sponsored by the UF Alumni Association. Go to: [www.ufalumni.ufl.edu](http://www.ufalumni.ufl.edu) and look for Silver Society. For more information, e-mail [winnj@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@vetmed.ufl.edu) or call (352) 392-2213, ext. 5013.

**May 9** The college will hold its annual professional coating ceremony for the Class of 2011 at University Auditorium. For more information, e-mail [winnj@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:winnj@vetmed.ufl.edu), or call (352) 392-2213, ext. 5013.

**May 23** Commencement exercises for the Class of 2009 will be held at UF’s Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. For more information, e-mail [sanetze@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:sanetze@vetmed.ufl.edu).

[www.vetmed.ufl.edu](http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu)



Photo by Sarah Kiewel

### *Fly like an eagle*

Lynda White, EagleWatach coordinator for Audubon of Florida (left) and Dr. Copper Aitken-Palmer, a zoological medicine resident at UF’s College of Veterinary Medicine, prepare to release an American Bald Eagle into the wild near Cross Creek, Fla., on Oct. 14. The eagle walked several steps before it flew to the top of a nearby tree, where it was joined by another eagle. Originally, a good Samaritan found the bird in the same area, unable to walk, and transported it to UF’s Veterinary Medical Center for treatment until it regained its strength and was released to Audubon for further rehabilitation.

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