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Veterinary Degree Opens Door to Many Career Opportunities

An interview with an alumnus

Although many students enter veterinary school with the goal of practicing veterinary medicine, a surprising number of Penn veterinary graduates have pursued dynamic careers in other fields. An example of this trend is Dr. Paul W. Pratt, V'73. "In veterinary school I assumed I would practice veterinary medicine for 30 or 35 years before retiring. I never could have predicted the twists and turns my career has taken," said Dr. Pratt.

After graduating Dr. Pratt worked as an associate veterinarian in several small animal and mixed-species practices. "Practice was interesting and challenging. I loved working with the animals, but the financial constraints of veterinary care were often frustrating," he said.

"While researching alternatives to veterinary practice, I discovered that a degree in veterinary medicine is more than just a prerequisite for veterinary practice. It's a springboard to numerous other careers."

After four years in private practice Dr. Pratt served as a Veterinary Medical Officer with the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine. "FDA veterinarians have a grave responsibility to consumers, animal owners, and veterinary patients. They must carefully evaluate pharmacologic data to decide which drugs are safe and effective for use by veterinarians, and which should be withdrawn from the market or not initially approved for sale. Regulatory veterinarians are not on the 'front lines' of veterinary practice, but they must have clinical knowledge and good judgment," he explained.

A year later Dr. Pratt was appointed editor at American Veterinary Publications, which published periodicals and texts for veterinary practitioners and technicians. "I was very fortunate to become a veterinary editor, as few such jobs are available. It was an ideal posi-

tion that combined my veterinary education and clinical experience with my love of writing."

Dr. Pratt eventually became Publisher and CEO at American Veterinary Publications. In 1994 he was appointed Executive Editor for Mosby Yearbook, a large international publishing company. "I supervised publication of texts written by specialists in every aspect of veterinary medicine," he said. "It was a privilege to get to know the authorities who had written the texts we used in veterinary school, and also to foster the 'rising stars' in veterinary publishing."

During his spare time he obtained a certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). "Before entering veterinary school I taught in the Philadelphia School System. I find teaching very gratifying. My TEFL certificate allows me to teach English in foreign countries," he explained.

After 20 years in publishing, Dr. Pratt accepted a new challenge. In 1998 he became a volunteer with the U.S. Peace Corps. He is nearing completion of a 27-month assignment as a business consultant in Bulgaria. "I'm no longer involved with veterinary medicine, but my business experience in veterinary practice and publishing has been invaluable in

my consulting work in Bulgaria. This is ironic, as I once considered the business aspects of veterinary practice a tedious bother. Now I advise Bulgarian entrepreneurs on starting their own business. I also teach Introductory Business at the local School of Economics, and Business English at the Language School. Occasionally I present business seminars at Veliko Turnovo University, and also help train new Peace Corps Volunteers coming to Bulgaria.

"Years ago people had only two or three jobs in a lifetime. Frequent job changes were viewed as a sign of instability. Changing careers was radical," said Dr. Pratt. "Now employers consider career diversification an asset, rather than a liability. They view people with broad experience as seasoned professionals and desirable candidates for employment. I had no brilliant career strategy, but I'm pleased that my career has evolved in such a rewarding way.

"I don't know what's on the horizon after I complete my assignment with the Peace Corps. I'm enjoying the luxury of choosing among many appealing options. I feel very fortunate to have had such a diverse, interesting career. And it's not over yet!" 

New Development Officers

Jane Simone and Joshua Liss joined the staff of the School's development office. Jane Simone was appointed as director of development at New Bolton Center and Joshua Liss was appointed director of alumni relations and annual giving.

Jane comes to the School from Albright College where she served as director of corporate and foundation relations. Prior to that, she was a major gifts officer at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh and participated in their very successful \$100 million capital cam-

paign. Jane is an accomplished rider and holds a British Horse Society certificate in Horsemanship, Stable Management and Teaching.

Joshua served as director of annual giving at Ursinus College for three years. He developed an on-campus telefundraising program, designed and maintained an award-winning development web site, and managed a comprehensive annual giving program. Joshua and his wife are owned by two toy Manchester terriers and three cats.