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Magic at Pimlico!

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by Joan Capuzzi Giresi, C'86 V'98

If he were a betting man, Allen B. Wisner, V'65, probably wouldn't have taken the odds on the anonymous little colt that came into his clinic three years ago with a bum leg.

But Magic Weisner – whose owner, Nancy Alberts, named him after Wisner as a tribute to the doctor's good medical care – healed up well and went on to success in two Triple Crown races.

The five-month-old colt, housed at a local farm in rural Maryland, presented to Wisner with acute lameness secondary to a septic fetlock joint. Wisner remembers him as being “a pleasant youngster to be around,” in contrast to most unweaned, unschooled – and generally fractious – foals.

Beyond this fleeting comparison, Wisner recalls little else of the bay: “He was just a plain brown wrapper.”

Wisner irrigated the colt's joint and maintained him on intravenous antibiotics for three days at his clinic before sending him home on intramuscular antibiotics. Although the colt responded well, Wisner recalls, “I told (Alberts) that if she wanted to race him, she was going to need some luck because this was a severe problem that could interfere with his ability to become a racehorse.”

Magic got lucky. In 2002, after a promising start that included a handful of stakes victories, the gelding longshot – whose dam Alberts purchased for \$1 when the filly was an unsound 2-year-old – took second in the Preakness Stakes, finishing just 3/4 of a length behind Kentucky Derby winner War Emblem, and fourth in the Belmont Stakes. This summer, Magic Weisner had his first graded stakes win in the Ohio Derby on July 20, and placed second again to War Emblem in the Haskell Invitational on August 4.

Wisner, who follows racing and once dabbled in the sport as a horse owner and breeder, was unaware of his former patient's athletic prowess – and his name, Magic Weisner (a misspelling by Alberts of Wisner's name) – until a veterinarian at Pimlico Race Course

alerted him to the up-and-comer last winter.

“It's been exciting to have a horse with these accomplishments named after me,” Wisner, 62, says of the tribute.

The distinction has also earned Wisner attention in the national and international press. Dean Alan M. Kelly recognized the accolade in a recent letter to Wisner: “Nancy Alberts' choice to name Magic Weisner after you is a wonderful gesture of her gratitude for the care you provided him. We are proud of your honor and the recognition it will bring to the vital role veterinarians have in improving the health and welfare of horses.”

Born and raised in the deep horse country of Chestnut Ridge, Maryland, some 25 miles north of Baltimore, Wisner – whose father was a jockey and a

“You pulled into someone's driveway and you did anything from cutting a few calves or pigs to looking at the pet dog. And then the woman of the house offered you a hot apple pie to take home.”

Three years into mixed practice, Wisner decided to limit his work to equine medicine. “When you grow up around horses,” he explains, “they get into your system.”

In 1968, Wisner opened Green Glen Equine Center in Glen Rock, Pa., just north of the Maryland-Pennsylvania border. His practice, which now includes an office, a surgical facility and two treatment barns, is situated on the 75-acre property where he lives with his wife Carolyn, who runs the office.

Engaged in track work initially, Wisner was a sole practitioner for nearly two decades. Today, his casework consists mainly of farm horses, breeding and lameness exams. He employs three other veterinarians, including his son, Wade, V'92.

While all three of Wisner's sons pursued science careers, Wade is the only one to have followed in his dad's veterinary footsteps. “Probably one of the best days in my life is when I found out I was going to be able to give Wade his vet school diploma,” says the elder Wisner.

When Wade joined the practice ten years back, he contributed his knowledge of newer medications and techniques like ultrasound

and gastroscopy. While he enjoys the occasional opportunity to work alongside Wade in surgery, Wisner spends more than half of his 60-hour work week on the road making farm calls. He hopes to turn the reins over to his son in the next few years so that he can spend time on hobbies like hunting and bass fishing.

And certainly, Wisner plans to continue following the racing career of his other junior, Magic Weisner.

Editor's note: Magic was treated at New Bolton Center in early September for West Nile virus. He is expected to make a full recovery and return to racing. D. Robert Vallance, V'70, is Magic's veterinarian at his home track, Laurel Park, in Laurel, Md.



Allen B. Wisner, V'65

trainer – spent his nascent days at the track. His happiest memory of his youth, he says, was “mixing hot mash for the horses in the wintertime.”

Young Wisner housed strays and, for as long as he can remember, dreamed of becoming a veterinarian. As a teenager, he learned to ride, and recalls being comforted by his being young enough and small enough – Wisner stands 5'2" today – to become a jockey if his veterinary pursuits faltered.

After completing a pre-veterinary science curriculum at Penn State University and the University of Maryland, Wisner began veterinary school. He says that the greatest career impact of his veterinary education at Penn came from “the guidance and contact I had with Dr. Charles Raker.”

After graduation, Wisner opened a mixed practice. He recollects these early days fondly.



Magic Weisner in the post-Preakness Stakes parade.