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In the Shadows of Victory

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by Joan Capuzzi Giresi, C'86, V'98

Equine surgeon **Patricia M. Hogan, V'92**, regularly scans the *Daily Racing Form*, tracking the progress of her recuperated “alumni” to see if her medical care has made a difference.

But there’s one former patient that she’d need blinders and earplugs—and a cave in Nepal—to lose tabs on.

It’s Smarty Jones. First unbeaten Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes victor since Seattle Slew in 1977. And, recalls Hogan, who treated the three-year-old stallion for a potentially life-threatening head injury last summer, a “playful and fun-loving” horse.

Hogan and Smarty collided paths last July 28, following a frenzied call from a track veterinarian at Philadelphia Park reporting an accident in the starting gate. A horse had reared up, smashing his skull against an iron bar and, reportedly, momentarily lost consciousness. “I’m sending you a mess,” Hogan remembers the veterinarian saying.

And a mess he was: “The left side of his face was blown up like a balloon,” she says. Two inches of prolapsed conjunctiva spilled out of his left orbit. His nostrils wept blood.

Monsterlike, Smarty trotted into the barn at New Jersey Equine Clinic, in Clarksburg, N.J., “as if nothing ever happened,” Hogan remembers. “He was cool as a cucumber.”

Despite Smarty’s take-it-in-stride demeanor, Hogan worried. Although she’d handled a few of these rare starting-gate injuries in the past, she had never seen one of this magnitude. Was the horse neurologically intact? Was his vision impaired? Were his sinuses damaged enough to compromise air flow and thus athletic performance?

Upon admission, Hogan stopped the hemorrhage and performed a neurologic exam, which was normal. She ultrasounded the left eye and found it to be intact, but could not assess Smarty’s vision until about a week later, when the extraocular swelling had subsided enough to perform a thorough ophthalmic exam. And she x-rayed his skull, which contained multiple pulverized fractures around his

left eye, left zygomatic arch, and sinuses. Because his skull had virtually “exploded” in pieces below his skin, there was no way to surgically fit the fragments back together.

Fortunately, Hogan says, “Everything was still sitting in place.” So she firmly padded Smarty’s skull with three inches of bandages, dubbed him “Quasimodo,” and crossed her fingers. After a couple weeks of broad-spectrum (systemic and intra-ocular) antibiotics and anti-inflammatories, and stall rest, she discharged her good-natured patient.

Throughout the ordeal, Hogan was impressed with owners Roy and Pat Chapman, a scrappy pair who’d plied unexceptional bloodlines to produce their star stallion on their former 100-acre Someday Farm in Chester County, Pa.

Smarty’s trainer, John Servis, who had only schooled the horse for three weeks when the injury occurred, finally broached the subject of racing with Hogan. “He told me, ‘You’ve got to do something, because this horse can run.’”

“...this horse can run”: all-too-familiar words to Hogan, whose practice takes in some 3,000 cases annually—mostly racehorses (60% Thoroughbreds, 40% Standardbreds)—drawing from more than a dozen tracks in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

But coming from Servis, who stood out amongst the other trainers for his modest reserve, these words resonated with Hogan. She’d placed herself at the track from an early age, and had developed an instinct for all things horse.

“From the moment I can remember, I loved horses,” she says. “I drew them. I cut their pictures out of magazines...”

Growing up with six siblings in urban Edison, N.J., the small harness-racing track a few miles from home became her refuge. From the age of ten, she was cleaning stalls and walking horses. By 15, she was driving them. Then came summers assisting the veterinarian at Hanover Shoe Farms, the nation’s foremost Standardbred breeding operation, in Hanover, Pa.

At the University of Delaware, Hogan majored in animal science, but her plans for a career in veterinary medicine were temporarily derailed when her application to Penn Veterinary Medicine was denied. Undaunted, Hogan begged for a job at New Bolton Center, where she cleaned stalls and raised eyebrows as the only woman operating the forklift that removed carcasses.

The powers-that-be soon took notice. Dr. Thomas J. Divers gave her a job working with his bovine leukemia herd. Client and School benefactor Anne F. Thorington offered her free accommodations on her farm in exchange for foaling out her mares. And **Charles W. Raker, C'41 V'42**, promised to help her gain acceptance into the School.

She enrolled the following year and spent most of her free time—and then some—around horses. “Whenever possible, I would cut my small-animal classes so I could spend my afternoons at New Bolton, because I just had to see a horse.”

In her third and fourth years, she worked in large-animal surgeon Dr. Dean W. Richardson’s lab and raised her own professional standards. “At New Bolton Center, they demanded excellence. And you wanted to do well because you respected the people there,” she says.

Following an internship at the distinguished Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital—in Kentucky bluegrass country—and a three-year large animal surgery residency at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine, Hogan headed back to New Jersey to become an associate at New Jersey Equine Clin-

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Until Smarty Jones, the Kentucky Derby winner had not been the main subject of a *Sports Illustrated* cover for 21 years.

President's Message

Only one event can lead my report of happenings since my last message: the April groundbreaking of the School's new Teaching and Research Building. I wish every graduate could have attended this memorable event, which took place on a beautiful spring day in the Old Quadrangle Courtyard—an area where all of us have walked, talked, laughed, and perhaps cried. The new building will be the first for the School in Philadelphia in 25 years, the fifth in 120 years—and as such, its place in history is assured.

Excellence in teaching and research—that is where we came from, that is who we are. Without it, we risk losing our identity as top-notch VMDs. On that historic day in April, University President **Judith Rodin, CW'66**, recognized “[the School's] wonderful alumni, who do so much in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” and thanked us “for keeping Penn's name bright.” In addition, Russell Redding, the Executive Deputy Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, reaffirmed the School's critical role in Pennsylvania agriculture, the state's largest industry.

The 2004 Alumni Liaison Committee met at New Bolton Center in March. This year, as part of its review, the Committee focused on the Department of Clinical Studies—New Bolton Center. You will read a report of their findings in the next issue of *Bellwether*. Serving on the Committee is a great opportunity to interact with the School's administration, faculty, and students, and I encourage every alumnus to consider serving on the Committee. If you are interested in serving in the future, please contact **Marilyn B. Weber, V'75**, Alumni Liaison Committee Chairperson, at (732) 449-9224 or via email at seagirtah@msn.com.

This past year, the VMAS Executive Board's committees accomplished several important projects. The Off Campus Involvement Committee, chaired by **Elizabeth M. McMurtrie, V'88**, helped recruit alumni to volunteer at the

School's booth at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time this year, and we hope more will participate next year.

The On Campus Involvement Committee, chaired by **Jack Bregman, V'66**, is focusing its energies on Alumni Weekend 2004, Saturday, October 2, at New Bolton Center. The new autumn date offers many opportunities for enjoyment and will reduce the conflicts for alumni with the many weddings and graduations in May. In addition to the VMAS Annual Meeting, alumni picnic, seminars on Penn undergraduate admissions and veterinary school admissions, we also hope to offer hayrides with pumpkin picking, children's music, and storytelling during the day. In the evening, the alumni dinner will be held at the Stone Barn, a large, rustic, and beautiful facility with outstanding food, only 15 minutes from New Bolton Center. (An alumni golf outing may be held on Sunday, October 3.)

As the School's FY'04 Commonwealth

appropriation was reduced by five percent or nearly \$1.9 million from its FY'03 appropriation and as the FY'05 appropriation is not expected to include an increase for inflation, the generosity of our alumni and friends is more important than ever. These cuts have an adverse effect on the School in the form of higher tuition, a lower cap on faculty raises compared to the rest of the University, and more deferred maintenance.

As a result, opportunities like the Landeau Challenge must not be missed. **Laurie J. Landeau, V'84 WG'84**, will give \$150,000 to the School if alumni contribute \$150,000 in new and increased gifts to the Veterinary Student Scholarship Fund before June 30, the end of Penn's fiscal year. As of April 30, the contributions of more than 600 alumni have totaled \$135,000 toward meeting the Landeau Challenge. If you have already made your gift, you have my heartfelt thanks. If not, please be as generous as you can to help us meet the Landeau Challenge before June 30.

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ic, among the East Coast's most prominent, and busiest, equine hospitals catering to racehorses.

At the 140-acre, 44-stall hospital, which is owned by American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) president-elect **Scott Palmer, V'76**, Hogan, 39, performs four or five surgeries daily and sees the occasional noncritical medicine case.

And yes, Hogan—who is married to successful Standardbred trainer Eddie Lohmeyer and breeds her own Standardbreds—follows the ponies, particularly the ones who once had lain before her in the O.R. Her clients include a half dozen or so trainers involved in the last Kentucky Derby.

And then there's that standout patient who comes along once in a career: Smarty Jones, who graduated from Hogan's care last August to make his debut as a two-year-old in November. Although five months late to the starting gate as a result of both tragedy (his previous trainer was murdered) and injury, Smarty ran undefeated in his first eight races until he fell one victory short, by one length in the Belmont Stakes, of being the first Triple Crown winner since 1978.

“I said to the staff, ‘Hey you guys, remember

Quasimodo?!’” Hogan, who covers New Jersey horse races as part of the AAEP's “On Call” program, which provides veterinary information to the broadcast and print media during all live-broadcast racing events, started a bulletin board at the clinic to post newspaper clippings from Smarty's races.

Following the Derby win, word got out that she had treated Smarty's head injury, and Hogan's clinic soon became inundated by media calls and film crews. And Hogan herself became rushed with praise. Smarty's owners, the Chapmans, “thanked me a million times.” Her boss, Scott Palmer, also had kind words: “This horse had all the natural ability to be a champion, but might not have had the opportunity if this injury were not treated and rehabbed so well.”

Hogan modestly spreads the credit amongst the team, including Smarty. “I'm just so proud of him and my staff, and also of our client John Servis for making all the right choices,” she gushes. “This is the pinnacle for someone who works with Thoroughbred racehorses.”

*Editor's Note: Smarty Jones's regular veterinarian is **Roger B. Clymans, V'71**, who is based at Philadelphia Park.*



James V. Stewart, V'68,
President, Veterinary
Medical Alumni Society