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Alumni Profile: Laurie Landeau, V'84, W'84

Helma Weeks
University of Pennsylvania

School of Veterinary Medicine Alumna joins University Trustees

BY HELMA WEEKS

Dr. Laurie Landeau, V'84, W'84, leads a busy life. Currently, she is the Associate Director of Aquavet® (a summer educational program in aquatic veterinary medicine presented by Penn and Cornell), acts as capital campaign chair for the Veterinary School and as a member of the School's Search Committee for a new Dean, serves on various other boards in addition to her regular job as general manager of a New York company, and pursues a wide range of interests, including raising horses, driving carriages, riding, cooking and putting up preserves. But Laurie now has another, very important charge—one that no other veterinarian has ever had at Penn: This year, she was appointed a University Trustee, not only the first vet, but also the first alumna to succeed her father—the late Ralph Landeau, CHE'37, HON'93—on the Board.

Being a pioneer is not new to Laurie. At Penn, she earned the first combined-degree VMD/MBA in the country; in fact, with the help of a former dean, Laurie created the program. "When I was going to apply to vet school, I came to [Dean] **Bob Marshak** and asked: 'How easy is it to take courses in business since Wharton is right across the street?' At the time, my family owned a big international company, and as an only child, I knew I would need to learn enough to know what was going on in it. Bob said: 'Well, it really is not that easy, given your schedule. But have you ever thought of maybe applying to both schools?' I hadn't really. So we looked into it, and Wharton said if you apply to each school and get accepted, we will work with you to create a joint-degree program. So, that's what happened."

Now, as a Trustee, Laurie is part of a team that delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the University to the administration and the President. The Trustees are a bridge between the University and the world—interpreting Penn to the public, but also bringing experience gained outside the University. They are leaders in identifying and developing financial resources. With the President, the Trustees determine the long-range alloca-

tion of resources, making decisions in the context of the needs and expectations of the University's constituencies and of society.

"Because of Amy Gutmann's idea that we are moving from excellence to eminence, I like to say the Veterinary School is already eminent," explained Laurie. "There needs to be recognition at the level of the Trustees of this, and there needs to be somebody who can basically fight for the needs of the Veterinary School, but without forgetting that there is a whole rest of the University. When you go on the Board of Trustees, obviously you are expected to have the entire University as your portfolio."

Long before becoming a Trustee, before earning any degree, Laurie knew she wanted to be a veterinarian—as early as the third grade. Growing up on the water in Asharoken, N.Y., she developed an interest in aquatic animals.

"I did all kinds of things on the water, shellfishing mostly, and I kept hermit crabs as pets. It is a very interesting thing that in my little village of 500 people, in my cohort of kids, three of us out of about 20 are female veterinarians, and two of us are in aquatic animal medicine."

At Penn, Laurie found the faculty particularly helpful during such a transitional period in her life. Not only did Dean Marshak assist her with the VMD/MBA program, but at the same time **Dr. Leon Weiss**, professor of cell biology, was helping her navigate through the difficulties of that crucial

first year. **Dr. Donald Abt, V'61**, emeritus professor of aquatic animal medicine, "was a career influence, and somebody whom I worked with; he has been an advisor, a friend, a confidant."

Laurie continued, "I always say that **Mark Allam** [Dean from 1953 to 1973] in some ways had the biggest influence on me because he taught me to drive horses. That became an absolutely life-long passion and I have done it ever since. It was a privilege to know him. As a graduate, **Dean Kelly** has been a great influence on me. He has been a model in every way for class and dignity and love of the Vet School. And [**Dr. Gerry Schad** [professor of parasitology] has been like a member of my



The late Ralph Landeau with daughter Laurie.

A Goodbye to Wil Weber

family for two decades and has been a shining example of the best of humanity.”

At Aquavet, Laurie encourages young veterinary students and veterinarians to pursue aquatic animal medicine as a career. “The program has been important to the practice of aquatic veterinary medicine in the sense that today almost everyone of a certain age who works in aquatic animal medicine has come through Aquavet. If you look at public display aquaria on the East Coast—Boston, Baltimore, the Carolinas, Camden—most of the veterinarians are graduates of Aquavet.

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“The two growth areas we see [in aquatic veterinary medicine today] are lab-animal medicine and aquaculture. Increasingly fish and shellfish are being used as laboratory models, and therefore you need laboratory-animal veterinarians who know aquatic animals, which up to now, no vet really did. . . . The problem we have is that most people go into that program thinking they want to work with dolphins and whales, but that’s not really a growth industry. So we try to steer them in other directions.”

Off the job, it’s not just sea animals that Laurie spends time with. She and her husband, Bob Maze, share their home with a chow-border collie mix “who was completely feral, caught out of a dog pack.” They also have two cats: a polydactyl tabby Laurie adopted from a humane society and a kitten recently rescued in a parking lot in Huntington, N.Y. By land or by sea, Laurie Landeau truly is a veterinary renaissance woman. ■

Dr. Wilfried T. Weber, emeritus professor of pathology, died June 28, 2005 after a long battle with lymphoma. The Veterinary School students and faculty lost a beloved teacher, colleague and friend.

The oldest of six children, Dr. Weber spent his early years in Rosenheim, Germany. At 18, he traveled to the United States to attend Cornell University, where he earned his Bachelor’s degree and DVM degree.

In 1966 he earned a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania and subsequently became an assistant professor of pathology. Dr. Weber was promoted to associate professor of pathology in 1969 and became professor of pathology in 1975. From 1983 to 1989, Dr. Weber served as chair of the Pathology Department. He was named emeritus professor in 2004.

During a transatlantic crossing, Dr. Weber met his future wife, Irmgard Rother. Their two children, Andrew and Christine, pursued careers in health care: Andrew is a radiologist in North Carolina and Christine a nurse practitioner in Colorado. Both children also share their father’s love for skiing. Dr. Weber was an avid and accomplished skier who enjoyed the slopes in Colorado as well as those in Europe. He loved travel and hiking. One of his favorite and most memorable trips was to see African wildlife.

Although he enjoyed teaching and working in the laboratory, Dr. Weber found getting acquainted with students outside the classroom very rewarding. He forged many friendships during Friday happy hours outside Room 13. The coveted prize of an evening with Dr. Weber at a local pub always fetched a high bid at the annual SCAVMA auction. Dr. Weber was honored with both the Lindback and Norden awards for distinguished teaching, a reflection of his popularity among students. He also received the Class of 2004 teaching award. Former dean Alan M. Kelly, a longtime colleague, reflected, “Wil Weber was an inspiration for the way he continued to teach, and teach well, despite a severe, debilitating illness. His fortitude and devotion to students was very moving.”

Dr. Weber is survived by his son and daughter, five siblings, and three grandchildren.

—MINDY COHAN, V’93



Dr. Wil Weber with Mindy Cohan, V’93.