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Vet School Goes Green in its 125th Year

BY MARY R. BERGER

For decades, Penn Vet's class reunion giving tradition has provided financial support to the School for scholarships, programs and capital projects. Seventeen class reunion funds now exist; the most recent is the gift of the Classes of 1958, 1959 and 1960. In celebration of their combined 50th reunions, members of these three classes have provided the funding for the start of the "Greening of the Courtyard" project which began in early August, 2009. The transformation of the space from a parking lot to a park-like setting returns it to an earlier incarnation.

When the Old Vet Quadrangle was completed in 1913, the building surrounded a central grass courtyard which was a focal point for education and treatment. It was the place where sick animals were transported by way of the horse-drawn animal ambulance and where lame horses and sick cows were brought for medical assistance. **Dr. Sheldon Farber, V'44**, remembers when a famous patient, Borden's Elsie the Cow, was brought to the Courtyard for examination. Everyone was sworn to secrecy because the company didn't want anyone to know that Elsie was ill.

According to Dr. Farber, "There were two purposes for the grass oval in the courtyard. First, it was a place for animals to relieve themselves, hence the nickname 'Fecal Field.' Second, it was used for the examination of lame horses. The vet student would run the horse around the oval so that the veterinarian could determine the cause of the lameness." By the time Dr. Farber was a student at Penn Vet, the local SPCA had a motorized ambulance that brought large animals to the Vet Hospital and the School's horse-drawn ambulance was a thing of the past.

As the School grew into the two-campus facility that exists today, its space needs changed. Parking was at a premium and to preserve space for client parking, the courtyard grass was replaced by asphalt and tire-stops to accommodate faculty and staff parking. The only notable grass on campus was a small area behind the Ryan Veterinary Hospital on Pine Street. With green space on the Vet school's campus limited the 'greening of the courtyard' restored the grassy area in the Courtyard to provide more outdoor community space.

The project is expected to be completed by Alumni Weekend, May 14-17, 2010, when the official dedication will take place with alumni class donors. The project includes the following renovations:



Top, horse-drawn ambulance enters courtyard with large animal patient. Bottom, "Greening of the Courtyard" project began on August 3, 2009.

- > *A sod patch of 40 x 70 feet* planted in the center of the Courtyard.
- > *Card-access at the wrought-iron gate*, replacing the key/lock system, to ensure safety for students and staff entering the Old Vet Courtyard through the gated entrance. Alumni will continue to have access to all of the School buildings via the Ryan Veterinary Hospital, Hill Pavilion and Rosenthal Building entrances.
- > *Picnic tables, benches, game equipment and trash receptacles*, supported in large part, by students.
- > *Repaving* of the former parking lot. ♣