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Alumni Profile: Nancy Brown, V'73

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All in the Family

A Penn Vet alumna follows in her father's footsteps... while her son follows in hers

BY JILLIAN MARCUSSEN

While many students know early on that they want to pursue veterinary medicine, this was not the case for **Nancy Brown, V'73**.

The daughter of Penn Vet alum William J. Brown, V'42, Nancy grew up in a house situated on top of her father's practice and kennel (the site known as Mt. Airy Veterinary Hospital). Now known as Pennsylvania Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Associates at Hickory Veterinary Hospital, located in Plymouth Meeting, the original facility (built by her father) was completely revamped by Nancy and her husband William James Kay, DVM, Diplomate ACVIM Neurology, Diplomate ABVP.

Although surrounded by animals, she chose occupational therapy (OT) as her career, receiving a master's of science degree from the University of Southern California. It wasn't until after she had worked in the OT field for two years that she decided to pursue her veterinary degree.

As one of only 18 females in the class of V'73, and with a different professional background than many of her classmates, Nancy found her education to be tough — but rewarding. Interning at the Animal Medical Center (AMC) in New York following graduation, she realized how much her education had prepared her for life outside the classroom and she gained valuable exposure to surgery, oncology and research. It was also where she met Bill and both worked there for many years.

Ultimately, however, Nancy returned to Philadelphia to transform what had once been her father's rural practice into the modern facility that now exists. Before taking over the practice she served as an adjunct professor at Penn Vet. While she enjoyed the experience, it reinforced what she had sensed all along — that her primary passion was neither teaching nor research, but rather the hands-on, clinical practice that now occupies much of her time. A Diplomate of ACVS and ACVIM, Oncology, Nancy enjoys the many facets of advanced clinical care.

Most recently, Nancy's connection to Penn Vet has also taken on a new significance through both her involvement with the Dean's Alumni Council (DAC) and her new role as a Penn Vet parent to **Will, V'14**. The two are linked in Nancy's mind, since a primary purpose of the DAC is to serve as a critical link between students and the broader alumni community.

“If we can introduce students to the veterinary profession in a positive, meaningful way, we can have a huge impact on their lives and on the profession as a whole,” Nancy said.

She also advises students to take every opportunity to be exposed to the many different areas of veterinary medicine — research, clinical service and work with both large and small animals, among others — before setting on their career path.

Ultimately, Nancy credits Penn Vet with giving her the tools to be successful in her veterinary career and hopes that she — and other members of the DAC — can now give back to students like Will, providing connections that will allow them to lead the profession in years to come. ♥

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