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Alumni Profile: Dr. Ted Hill (V'74)

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Dr. Ted Hill (V'74)

BY JANE SIMONE

Dr. Ted Hill (V'74) has spent his entire life immersed in the horse world. From growing up with a father who was deeply involved with Standardbreds and Quarter Horses, to his junior high years, when he showed horses in Delaware, to his veterinary education at Penn and years as a private equine practitioner, race track veterinarian and ultimately, Jockey Club Steward, horses have been Ted's life from early childhood.

Ted recalls spending a lot of time observing veterinarians working on his family's horses and the horses his father trained. Over time, Ted says, he thought it would be a very interesting profession to pursue. As a Delaware resident, Penn was the logical school for him.

"I applied to a couple of other schools, and was granted interviews, but was accepted at Penn – the decision was easy," said Ted.

Ted has fond memories of his Penn Vet education, characterizing those four years as the "most memorable and enjoyable" of his life.

"I was exposed to such great teaching staff! I'm sure today's students will say the same thing, but to have studied under people like Charlie Raker, Loren Evans, R.O. Davies and so many others – all of whom clearly wanted their students to succeed. They were stern and challenging, but always there for you."

Ted spent the best part of his third and fourth years at New Bolton Center and describes it as "such a great time!" He recalls that New Bolton Center was especially busy during those years and fondly recounted the weekly visits to Dr. and Mrs. Boucher's house, where Mrs. Boucher would serve milk and cookies and the students would relax in a family atmosphere.

Rounds early on Saturday morning were held in the old cattle barn and Dr. Boucher would stand with the students and other faculty and engage in extensive debates.

"We would all expound our theories about everything," said Ted, "and then Dr. Boucher would step in and say, 'That's all very well – but we'll find out more on the post-mortem floor!' He had such great common sense and after all our high-flying interpretations he would bring us firmly back to earth. These are wonderful memories and I formed so many great friendships during those years, many of which endure to this day."

After graduating, Ted went into private equine practice in Miami, Fla. It was a large practice and he remembers it as a great experience during which he was able to work with outstanding people. He is still in touch with them. His next professional move was to go into private practice with Dr. Jim Hill, then part-owner of the great *Seattle Slew*. This meant a move to New York.

During that time he was approached by Dr. Manual Alan Gilman (V'45) to work as an official track veterinarian. Dr. Gilman spent 32 years as chief examining veterinarian at New York racetracks and later served as Jockey Club Steward at Aqueduct, Belmont and Saratoga racetracks. Ted enjoyed private practice and wasn't sure about going to work at the track as an official. Ultimately, he



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– Dr. Ted Hill, V'74

committed to giving Dr. Gilman a year, which became a 20-year career.

It was Ogden Mills “Dinny” Phipps who approached Ted about becoming a Jockey Club Steward. Ted recalls that it represented a drastic change from what he was doing and loved and he was unsure about pursuing it.

“The deciding factor for me was that Mr. Phipps wanted me to remain very active in the veterinary profession – not just being a race day steward, but staying active in my work, the AAEP and all the veterinary issues that arise at the race track,” said Ted.

Ted speaks highly of the values and standards expected by Mr. Phipps.

“There are no compromises. The principles by which he operates are very straightforward – do the right thing, be fair with everyone regardless of rank or position and always take the high road. My father worked by those principles – it is easy to work for someone when you know there are no gray areas.”

Some of the difficulties of being a track veterinarian or Jockey Club Steward are the conflicting opinions of many people.

“As a veterinarian or steward I make decisions and stand by them,” said Ted. “You may seek advice from other professionals but when you are there protecting the horse, and laymen challenge your position, I always return to the fact that the horse’s welfare is my top priority. You are there to protect the horse, and that necessarily means you are protecting the owner, the trainer, the race-going public, whether they understand that or not.”

Ted is very proud of his affiliation with the International Conference of Racing Analysts and Veterinarians (ICRAV). This unique conference takes place every two years and has just concluded in Philadelphia. For the past six years, Ted has chaired the veterinary group of this conference in places as diverse as New Zealand and Turkey. It is, he says, a one-of-a-kind meeting at which there is probably more relevant analytical and regulatory information shared than at any other professional gathering – a very special, valuable and worthwhile enterprise.

This year he steps down as Chairman, but cheerfully observed that in 2014 the conference will be held in Mauritius, which will allow him to indulge in another of his passions – scuba-diving.

When he is not calling major races at Saratoga and elsewhere, he and his wife Caroline love to scuba-dive, boat and play with their two standard poodles on the Florida or Delaware beaches, where Ted still has his boyhood home to return to. For this busy and influential Penn Vet graduate, there is no sign of a slow-down. The veterinary profession is fortunate indeed to have a person of Dr. Hill’s experience and caliber in its midst. 

New Bolton Center Woerner Amphitheatre from 6:30-7:30 PM

Though the lectures are free, seating is limited. To reserve a seat, please RSVP to 610-925-6500 or email Barbara Belt at beltb@vet.upenn.edu. Please check our website for updates to the lecture schedule later in the year.

November 6, 2012, 6:30-7:30 PM

Headshaking Syndrome in Horses

*Dr. Louise Southwood, DVM, MS, PhD
Emergency & Critical Care*

December 4, 2012, 6:30-7:30 PM

The Critically Ill Foal

Jonathan Palmer, V.M.D., DACVIM, Medicine

January 8, 2013, 6:30-7:30 PM

Easy Keepers – Metabolic Disease in Horses

Santiago Garcia, MVZ

February 5, 2013, 6:30-7:30 PM

Eye Cancer in Horses: What Does It Look Like and What You Can Do About It?

Mary Utter, DVM, DACVO, Ophthalmology

Ryan Hospital

For more detailed information about each lecture and to make a reservation to attend, please visit our website at www.vet.upenn.edu/AnimalLoversLecture or call 215-898-1480.

November 10, 2012, 10:00-11:30 AM

Basic First Aid for Your Pet

*Dana Clarke, DVM, DACVIM,
Lecturer, Interventional Radiology and Critical Care
Dog Training Club of Chester Co., Exton, PA*

December 8, 2012, 10:00-11:30 AM

Caring for Your Aging Pet

*Ann Caulfield, V.M.D., Clinician, Rehabilitation Medicine
Penn Med at Radnor, Radnor PA*

January 12, 2013, 10:00-11:30 AM

Caring for Your Furry, Feathered or Scaled Pet

*Nicole Wyre, DVM, Chief of Service,
Exotic Companion Animal Medicine and Surgery
La'Toya Latney, DVM, Lecturer,
Exotic Companion Animal Medicine and Surgery
Hill Pavilion, Philadelphia, PA*

February 9, 2013, 10:00-11:30 AM

Creating a Non-Toxic Environment for Your Pets

*Lisa Murphy, V.M.D.,
Assistant Professor of Toxicology
TriState Bird Rescue, Newark DE*