Alumni Updates: Checking in with Penn Vet Graduates Around the World

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Alumni Updates
Checking in with Penn Vet graduates around the world

By Kristen McMullen

JESSICA DIMUZIO, CW’74, V’78
A high-energy veterinarian, Dr. Jessica Dimuzio wears many hats: wildlife veterinarian, conservation educator, writer, children’s book author, speaker, and owner of Nature Tales and Trails, LLC.

As a veterinarian, Dimuzio specialized in wildlife preservation. Soon after her studies of wild baboons in Kenya, Africa ended, the baboons’ home range was sold to a cooperative of small farmers who regarded baboons as pests. The only way to save the baboons was to relocate them to a remote area of the country. The realization that land preservation was as vital as species studies led her, with her husband Dr. Tim Halverson, to design holistic conservation education programs—incorporating animal studies, land use, culture, and economics. They conducted these conservation programs for college students and wildlife biologists in the United States, Africa, and Asia.

The enthusiasm of students in naturalist programs she led in the U.S. and abroad encouraged her to engage even more young people through writing as well as speaking and storytelling engagements. In her tenth year as founder and leader of the Milestones Children’s Critique Circle, Dimuzio recognizes that she has come full circle in her quest to preserve wildlife. The books she read as a child about animals and nature inspired her to respect and protect wildlife. Now, “Dr. D” writes to inspire the next generation.

Her book Bark! Bark! Bark for My Park! is told from the viewpoint of her five-pound Papillon dog, Johnny Angel. The book recounts a true struggle to save a 690-acre farm park from destruction, demonstrating that no matter what size, age, or even species you are, you have the power to make a difference. The book won the Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators International Kimberly Colen Memorial Grant Award, received a Mom’s Choice Award, and was endorsed by actress and animal activist Betty White.

Her second book, Bow Wow Wow! Green Beans Now?, also a Mom’s Choice Award recipient, follows the quest of canine conservation hero Johnny Angel for his favorite treat—garden-fresh green beans. The little dog humorously introduces children to organic gardening and the joy of eating vegetables. Mike McGrath, host of the NPR show You Bet Your Garden, has endorsed it.

As a published children’s book author, invited speaker, storyteller, and nature guide, she offers “Stories from the Wild: Programs for Your Child” through her company, Nature Tales and Trails, LLC. Her latest project, African Animals’ Lullaby (expected fall of 2016), is an immersive approach to sharing her experiences living in the bush in Kenya. Learn more at www.naturetalesandtrails.com.

COME MEET DR. JESSICA DIMUZIO AT HER BOOK-SIGNING TABLE DURING THE SPRING ALUMNI PICNIC ON MAY 14 AT NEW BOLTON CENTER!

ROBERT MOFFATT, V’87
Cape May Point, New Jersey, is a beautiful seaside community at the tip of the Cape May Peninsula and home to the Cape May Lighthouse. On January 6, 2015, Dr. Robert Moffatt was selected by the Cape May Point Borough Commission to serve as Cape May Point’s Mayor. He will be responsible for leading municipal meetings and general oversight of community affairs.

Moffatt, a native Philadelphian, was raised in the Germantown section of the city. In 1974, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from La Salle University. After graduation, he relocated to Boston, where he worked in the hospitality industry. Upon his return to Philadelphia, he attended Temple University in order to meet the prerequisite science courses necessary for veterinary school. He graduated from Penn Vet in 1987.
Moffatt entered small animal practice in Center City Philadelphia and subsequently worked as an associate veterinarian for many years in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. In 1993, he was one of the founders of Philly Paws (Philadelphia Pets are Wonderful Support), an organization that provided medical and general care for the pets of people who were critically ill with HIV/AIDS. In 1997, Moffatt was named one of the area’s Great Vets by Philadelphia magazine. After many years of commuting weekly to Cape May, he made the move to full-time resident in 2000 to become a Cape May veterinarian.

**ADAM DENISH, V’93, AND MARNE PLATT, V’93**

Dr. Adam Denish is pictured here with classmate Dr. Marne Platt, standing in front of a French veterinary hospital last July. Denish and his family were traveling through Europe and spent three days with Platt in Switzerland. Over fondue and wine, the classmates discussed the current state of veterinary medicine, politics, and world affairs.

Platt has been a resident of Basel, Switzerland, for over five years. Denish is the owner of Rhawnhurst Animal Hospital and Elkins Park Veterinary Hospital/Boarding Kennel. He is the staff veterinarian at the Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown, Pennsylvania, and has a special interest in exotic animal medicine and surgery.

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**SAVE THE DATE FOR YOUR CLASS REUNION**

**MAY 13-15, 2016**

**Reunions for classes ending in a “6” or a “1”**

Mark your calendar to celebrate with your Penn Vet classmates! Activities include class dinners, tours of New Bolton Center and Ryan Hospital, a Dean’s Reception, a Spring Alumni Picnic on the New Bolton Center grounds, and much more! Watch the Alumni tab at www.vet.upenn.edu for more information.