

One Family, Many Routes

The Karreman family illustrates the many paths a veterinary education can take

BY COREEN HAGGERTY

The University of Pennsylvania boasts countless family legacies – where students follow in the education and career path as family members before them.

But at the School of Veterinary Medicine, our legacies are a bit different. From small animal care, to human research, to military service, to government oversight of the human food supply, to biodynamic dairy herd management and more, the options for graduating students are abundant.

While parents, children, siblings, aunts and uncles may all earn the VMD degree, each individual can paint his or her own unique career path.

One family, the Karremans, illustrates this point.

In the Ocean

Born in Woods Hole, MA, **Grace Karreman, C'76, V'82**, spent her earliest years by the ocean and observing the life within it.

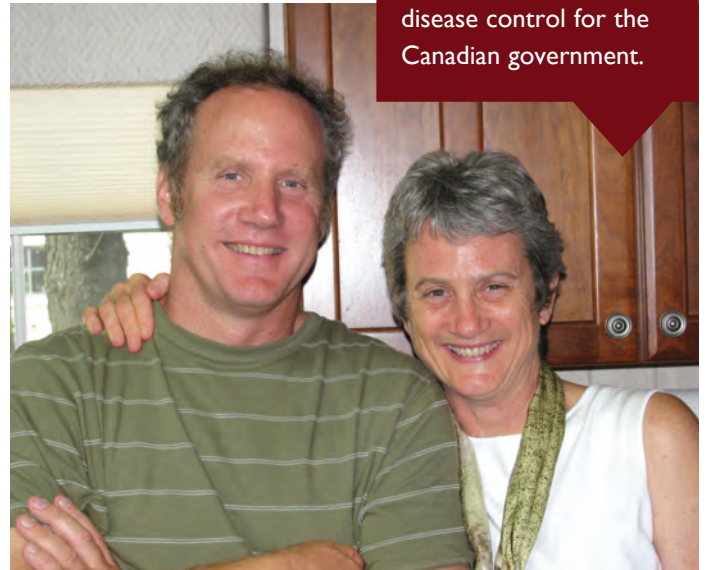
But when Grace's father, George Karreman, moved his growing family to Philadelphia to pursue a professorship at Penn Medicine, Grace's connection to the ocean was strained.

Grace entered her freshman year at Penn as a linguistics major. Soon, she realized, however, that she was not so adept at social sciences and later switched to a pre-veterinary medicine track. In 1978 she started at Penn Vet. Two years into her studies, Grace attended the AQUAVET program run by Dr. Donald Abt, V'61, GV'65, at Woods Hole, a program that married her passion for the ocean and her education.

After graduation, Grace married and moved to British Columbia, Canada to see the coast, sail the fjords, and begin a small animal practice in Vancouver.

In 1986, the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College created an aquatics program and Grace began pioneering work with remote fish farms. Here, she applied principles of livestock herd health medicine to farmed aquatics populations through a program she

Siblings Hubert, V'95, M'08 (left) is an organic dairy veterinarian in Lancaster County, PA and Grace, C'76, V'82 (right) is a national manager for aquatic animal disease control for the Canadian government.



created called Cooperative Assessment of Salmon Health (CASH).

“The most important thing is to think critically and to use first principles of veterinary medicine,” said Grace. “Whether on land or in the ocean, the environment is both life support and a conduit for infection.”

Today, Grace works for the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP), Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which looks at the infectious disease management of aquatic populations at a federal level. She is internationally recognized for her work on biosecurity and disease control, including emergency response and day-to-day disease prevention. Her work includes wild and commercially caught species.

On the Land

Hubert Karreman, V'95, M'08, George Karreman's third child, did not intend to follow in the footsteps of his siblings. Both Grace and Frank (an architect) graduated from Penn. Hubert enrolled at the University of New Hampshire and became a “back-to-the-lander.”

As a college sophomore, Hubert worked with the USDA Soil Conservation Service surveying land for conservation practices. Occasionally, he came into contact with dairy barns and cows, where he was intrigued by the food chain. How does soil affect feed? How does feed affect cows? And how do cows, which ultimately become food sources, affect us?

After traveling to Holland where he learned to milk cows and goats, Hubert came back to New Hampshire to test soil for commercial builders. But then he had

an epiphany: he wanted to manage soil for cows – not houses – and through a series of events decided to pursue veterinary medicine. Seven Stars Farm in Kimberton/Phoenixville, an organic farm with 45 cows and 400 acres, laid the groundwork for Hubert’s veterinary career. As a biodynamic organic farm, the operation used only natural treatments on the milking herd and natural remedies to ensure rich soil life for crop production. In 1995, Hubert earned his VMD where he was especially interested in clinical medicine and herd health. Like his sister, he wanted to understand how the animals are affected by natural resources.

Today, Hubert is an expert in organic dairy health care and served on the AVMA Task Force on Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine. In 2005, he was appointed by the USDA Secretary to the National Organic Standards Board for a five-year term, and was chair of the Livestock Committee. He has also given lectures at Penn Vet.

Although a clinical practitioner in Lancaster County, PA, Hubert has also worked with hundreds of certified organic farms in various countries and encourages farmers to enhance soil productivity, herd health and control pests by using natural medicines and soil fertilizers.

“Organic agriculture feeds right into One Medicine,” he said.

The Family’s Veterinary Legacy

For Grace and Hubert, the paths of their veterinary careers may be different, but they share something in addition to their degree: they are both catalysts of change.

“The difference is in how my brother and I have expressed our veterinary passion professionally,” said Grace, “but the common thread is that he is a groundbreaker, and so am I. We are not afraid to take on new challenges and to use veterinary medicine to make things happen.”

Dear Fellow Alumni,

In March 2011 my term as president of the Veterinary Medical Alumni Society will come to a close.

As I write my last *Bellwether* letter, I’d like to reflect on the past two years, during which one word surfaced again and again: “Change.” I have, during my tenure, witnessed some of the most dramatic changes within Penn Vet, its alumni, staff and students.

Of course one of the most major impacts on the School has been the challenging economic times, which has affected everyone in some way, shape or form. For Penn Vet, it meant a major state budget cut and decreased case loads in the hospitals, compelling the School to rethink its operations.

Although the process of operational change is difficult, it has resulted in positive enhancements and enthusiasm to move forward.

We have also been faced with finding solutions to the changes occurring within the veterinary profession and ensuring that our students’ education continues to not only be relevant, but be trail-blazing. One area that is especially important to recognize is the growing demand for veterinary professionals in the public health and government sectors. This evolution has led our faculty to find innovative curricula solutions and options in order to attract students to a career path related to food animal and global health, making Penn Vet graduates as competitive as ever.

Finally, alumni involvement has been one of another of the most noted changes I’ve seen during my two years

vmaspresident’s letter

as VMAS president. I’ve seen alumni’s annual giving increase and have taken pride in noting that my peers have also carved out resources and time to support specific priorities and goals. More than ever, we are supporting student scholarships, volunteering time with committees and working with faculty, Dean Hendricks and the Alumni Office. In addition, alumni have been more proactive in fostering relationships with current Penn Vet students by providing externships with students and serving as mentors.

As I sat on the stage at the 2010 Penn Veterinary Medicine Commencement, I was impressed and inspired by the diversity of our students. Penn has always been a leader in diversity recognizing that it is through different backgrounds and experiences that new ideas are borne. This alone – the diversity of the Penn Vet student body – breeds a change in how we think about veterinary medicine – and about how we, as veterinarians, have an opportunity to impact the world around us for the better.

It has been an honor to serve as your president and to be a part of Penn Vet’s heritage and its future. My commitment to Penn Vet and its students, however, is far from over. Beyond this presidency, I will continue to be committed to their success. I hope you’ll join me in that mission.

—CARLA CHIEFFO, V’86 GR’98
PRESIDENT, VETERINARY
MEDICAL ALUMNI SOCIETY

