

# Celebrating Dean Joan Hendricks

BY MINDY HEYER, CHAIR, PENN VET BOARD OF OVERSEERS

Each May at the Penn Vet commencement ceremony, following the assemblage of graduates, faculty, and guests, Dean Joan Hendricks ascends to the lectern. The Dean is not formally introduced; of course, there is no need, for all present know that Joan Hendricks is the Dean.

However, formal introductions serve a dual purpose. Beyond connecting people who were theretofore unacquainted, the formal introduction, on occasions such as commencement, is an opportunity to present a speaker's bio, laud her accomplishments, and reflect on her service to the university.

At long last, in this special edition of *Bellwether*, I have the opportunity and honor to introduce Dean Joan Hendricks. Dean Hendricks has served as Dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, her alma mater, for 12 years. She is the first woman to serve as Dean of Penn Vet, the first woman to hold an endowed professorship at Penn Vet, and only the third woman to serve as a veterinary school dean at any school in the nation.

It is not easy to be selected as Dean of Penn Vet. The deanship is a position earned at the very pinnacle of an exemplary career. One must have demonstrated strength in a multitude of disciplines and the ability to meet a vast array of challenges. But actually *being* the Dean is an even more formidable task. She must be able to communicate effectively with many audiences, and to command the respect of faculty, the trust of the University President, and the admiration and support of alumni.

Dean Hendricks has navigated Penn Vet through challenging times. With grace, determined advocacy in Harrisburg, and whole-hearted commitment to Penn Vet, she has ushered the School through perennial budget pressure and required cost-control measures. Simultaneously, she has either initiated or expanded projects that distinguish Penn Vet as the leader in veterinary medicine. It takes a special magic to both manage a tight budget and raise capital.

Dean Hendricks has done that year after year. The ability of a dean to raise money through philanthropy requires that the donor have absolute trust in the dean. The dean has to communicate a vision for the school, build excitement

about the direction in which she is headed, and be able to demonstrate that the goals are achievable.

It is the responsibility of members of the Board of Overseers to advise, advocate, and support (both in word and in deed) the mission of the School. As the Dean's Board Chair, before making any gift to the School, I have consulted

with the Dean as to where my philanthropy would be most impactful. Dean Hendricks asked me to direct my very first gift to scholarship—specifically, to the VMD-PhD program, from which she herself graduated. Since then, members of our Board of Overseers have directed their gifts to professorships; research (the Veterinary Clinical Investigations Center and the Center for Host-Microbial Interactions); bricks and mortar (Ryan Hospital lobby renovation, emergency medicine center); clinical care (the Cancer Center and emergency medicine); community outreach (the Shelter Medicine and Working Dog programs); and to scholarship.

In other words, Dean Hendricks has bolstered all three arms of our mission at Penn Vet: education, research, and clinical care and service. She has had the vision to create, the ability to support, and the energy to champion programs that propel us to preeminence within our discipline. The enormity and complexity of the deanship, and the excellence with which Dean Hendricks has met the challenge, is to be admired, praised, and celebrated.

I hope that this very special issue of *Bellwether* will serve as the most laudatory tribute to Dean Joan Hendricks. Dean Hendricks would likely eschew the celebration of her success, and point us instead to the team effort and dedication of her faculty and staff. But every great team has a great leader, coach, and advocate.

Penn Vet has been so fortunate to have Dean Joan Hendricks.



**Joan C. Hendricks, V'79, GR'80**

*The Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine*

*The portrait of Dean Hendricks by Peter Schaumann (above) will be displayed in the lobby of Penn Vet's Rosenthal Building.*