



Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Event recognizes the rich history of Cornell's Small Animal Community Practice

🐾 Wednesday, October 17, 2018 - 4:02pm



Dr. William Hornbuckle attended the ceremony and offered a brief history of the service. All photos by the College of Veterinary Medicine.

After moving into one of the most modern buildings on campus this summer, the community practice service (CPS) in the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA) reflected on its more humble roots during the official opening ceremony for the Small Animal Community Practice on October 5.

“The creation of the Small Animal Community Practice allows the college to build on the established teaching model by continuing to provide exceptional care to animals in our community while also providing fourth-year D.V.M. students with real-life experiences in running a veterinary clinic,” said Lorin Warnick, D.V.M., Ph.D. '94, the Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine. “It also marks the final addition under the 91.5 million-dollar class expansion project.”



Drs. Thompson, Hornbuckle and Warnick pose next to a work-in-progress history wall detailing the origins of the Small Animal Community Practice.

CPS had its beginnings at Cornell in the 1980s. The internal medicine faculty, spearheaded by Dr. Sharon Center, proposed an independent primary care service that would meet these changing views and the evolving role of the hospital. Dr. Robert Playter, director of the teaching hospital from 1985-1990, supported their proposal and worked with Drs. Center; W. Jay Gould, D.V.M. '76; William Hornbuckle; Robert Kirk, D.V.M. '46; John Randolph, D.V.M. '77; and James Zimmer to establish a primary care service in the Small Animal Clinic.

Hornbuckle, the Rudolph J. and Katherine L. Steffen Professor of Veterinary Medicine emeritus, attended the ceremony and offered a brief history of the service. "I'd like to congratulate Dr. Thompson, Dean Warnick and the rest of the administration who supported the building of this clinic, and I wish my associates – new and old – good luck in the future ahead," he said.



Acknowledging the two community members who contributed to the naming of the Small Animal Community Practice.

CPS became a formal rotation for veterinary students in 1987. It was predominately a medical service during the first decade of its existence and third and fourth-year students performed simple, non-invasive surgical and dentistry procedures. In his brief history, Hornbuckle noted that the presence of experienced licensed veterinary technicians (LVTs) was particularly important. LVTs trained dozens of work study students and increased efficiency for students and faculty alike.

In 2008, Dr. Michael Kotlikoff, dean of the college from 2007-2015, and Warnick, who was assistant dean of education at the time, led an initiative for veterinary students to receive even more training in surgical procedures. The surgical experience of CPS students was expanded to include neuters, spays, tumor removals and laceration closures.



Attendees participated in a tour of the Small Animal Community Practice.

The service has experienced several moves since the mid-1980s, traveling from the hospital to a building near the farrier shop and back. It made its latest move to the Small Animal Community Practice in summer 2018, occupying this facility with shelter medicine. The new building has five exam rooms, a treatment room and an area for hospitalizing animals. The addition of two dental workstations means that the practice can now offer full dental services. The clinic contains its own surgery and X-ray facilities, and is completely feline-friendly. Situated independently from the rest of the hospital facilities, the new practice is an effort to prepare students for the day-to-day challenges of running a general practice.

“Even the design of the building is optimized to give students a range of experiences,” said Dr. Meg Thompson, CUHA director and associate dean for hospital operations and corporate relations, who noted exam room designs, surgery room features and unique cages at the event.

Said Warnick, “The new Small Animal Community Practice uniquely blends entrepreneurial education with hands-on clinical training to meet the demands of a changing field.”



During a tour of the Small Animal Community Practice.

By Melanie Greaver Cordova