



# ALUMNI E-NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

July/August 2021



AP Photo/Sergei Grits

## From Wisconsin to Africa, Confronting COVID-19

On two different sides of the world, two alumnae of the UW School of Veterinary Medicine were just getting settled into new professional roles when the novel coronavirus struck. They rolled up their sleeves, called upon the relationships, resources and skills they've developed, and led efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic – all the while advancing other public health priorities as well. **Stephanie Salyer DVM'11**, technical advisor to Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and **Darlene Konkle DVM'93, MS'97**, Wisconsin state veterinarian, discuss their experiences.

Read  
More

# School News

*The latest updates on research, faculty and staff, and other happenings at the school.*

**Breaking new ground:** Friday, June 18 marked the beginning of a new chapter for the UW School of Veterinary Medicine, as we [broke ground on our building expansion](#) and celebrated the project's future impact. Thank you to you, our alumni, for your generous support of this critical new space. [View the groundbreaking video and photos.](#)



## Sculpting SVM Spirit: Double Your Impact With the Margo and Jack Edl Match

Join with fellow alumni to support the creation of an iconic bronze sculpture, [Forward Together](#), depicting the spirit of education, research, and community at the SVM. Scheduled for completion in 2023, the sculpture by artist and veterinarian **John Hallett DVM'90** will be prominently displayed in the school's new front entrance courtyard.

Thanks to a \$100,000 matching gift from **Margo and Jack Edl**, longtime clients and friends of the school, all SVM sculpture gifts will be matched dollar-for-dollar. As Hallett is donating his time and talents to the project, your support will go directly to the physical costs of creation and installation of the sculpture. [Make a gift today](#) to bring this vision to life.

### Recent research advancements:

- A study led by UW School of Veterinary Medicine Clinical Assistant Professor **Erin Lashnits** provides new insights into [how best to diagnose Bartonella infection in dogs](#). The researchers evaluated the clinical accuracy of six different diagnostic tests, finding that the most commonly used tests had very low sensitivity, which can lead to false negative results. At the same time, a less common test method was highly accurate. Lashnits says the findings address “a big open question in veterinary medicine.”
- School of Veterinary Medicine Professor **David Vail** was part of [research published in July](#) to report that combining targeted radiopharmaceutical therapy with immunotherapy significantly boosts eradication of metastatic cancer in mice, even when the radiation is given in doses too low to destroy the cancer outright. Vail and colleagues tried the combination of targeted radionuclide therapy and immunotherapy as a treatment in pet dogs who had naturally occurring metastatic cancer. The dogs tolerated this treatment combination well, without toxic side effects.
- As part of efforts to create an [international pandemic prevention institute](#), the Rockefeller Foundation will support Regional Accelerators for Genomic Surveillance, which includes the UW–Madison AIDS Vaccine Research Laboratory (AVRL). Since last year, AVRL researchers, including School of Veterinary Medicine Professor **Thomas Friedrich**, have performed a [high level of genomic sequencing](#) on the virus that causes COVID-19. **Related:** Friedrich was part of a team that taught nurses and personnel at more than 100 Dane County schools [how to conduct rapid antigen testing](#) for COVID-19.
- Researchers in the U.S. and Japan, led by School of Veterinary Medicine Professor **Yoshihiro Kawaoka**, have found that vaccination with an mRNA vaccine [induces antibody responses](#) that would protect humans from infection with the gamma/P.1 variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which has now spread across the world. The findings suggest that previous SARS-CoV-2 infection and vaccines that are based on earlier strains of the virus still provide protection against infection with gamma.

---

## Alumni Updates

*The latest news about your classmates and items of special interest to alumni.*

**Ruthanne Chun DVM'91** was honored with the 2021 [LaMarr Billups Community-University](#)

[Engagement Award](#), which recognizes a member of the Greater Madison community who has made outstanding contributions to campus-community partnership initiatives. Chun was recognized for co-founding and helping to grow [Wisconsin Companion Animal Resources, Education and Social Services](#) (WisCARES), a community veterinary clinic for low-income and homeless families, considered a national model for community outreach and collaboration.

**Melissa Sheth DVM'21**, recipient of the [Patricia L. Lowrie Diversity Leadership Award](#), was a recent guest on the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges podcast [Diversity & Inclusion On Air](#). Sheth discussed her efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in veterinary medicine as a student at UW-Madison.

**Mary Thurber DVM'14**, a clinical instructor of zoological medicine at the UW School of Veterinary Medicine, [spoke with the Wisconsin State Journal](#) about plans at Dane County's Henry Vilas Zoo to vaccinate select species against the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 with an experimental drug from Zoetis.



## YOUR PERSPECTIVE

**“If there’s one silver lining in what we’ve learned the past year during the pandemic, it’s if we wash our hands, don’t touch our mouths, don’t touch our eyes, most zoonotic disease will not transfer to us.”**

*-Doug Kratt DVM'98, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association, speaking with [Network Indiana](#) about practicing good hygiene, particularly around animal exhibits at fairs.*

---

## Upcoming Events

**September 7**

**WVC Alumni Reception**

7-9 p.m.

Border Grill, Mandalay Bay

*For more information, please contact [Kristi Thorson](#).*

**September 11**

**SVM Alumni Palooza**

3-6 p.m.

UW School of Veterinary Medicine

[More information](#)

All alumni and families are welcome to the return of the school's annual tailgate, which will also celebrate graduates from the classes of:

1990 · 1995 · 2000 · 2005 · 2010 · 2015

And celebrate in person with our recent graduates from the classes of 2020 and 2021.

Reconnect with your classmates, enjoy traditional Wisconsin tailgate fare, explore progress on the Forward Together sculpture project and more! Tickets to the Wisconsin vs. East Michigan football game at Camp Randall (6 p.m. kickoff) will also be available for purchase.

## Ongoing Clinical Trials



### Bladder Cancer Risk Factors

UW Veterinary Care's Small Animal Internal Medicine and Oncology Services are recruiting dogs of any breed with bladder tumors for a study that aims to determine whether urinary exposure to certain environmental chemicals contributes to bladder cancer risk in dogs, and whether owners of dogs with bladder cancer have similar urinary chemical exposures.

Any dog diagnosed with transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder or urethra, or any dog that is identified as an unaffected matched control, is eligible. Dogs should ideally be enrolled prior to any surgery or chemotherapy.

[More Studies](#)



## DID YOU KNOW

The UW School of Veterinary Medicine was recently honored with the **2021 Communications Excellence Award** from the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) for overall programmatic excellence and work surrounding a historic 2020 Super Bowl commercial featuring the SVM's veterinary oncology program. The award is designed to recognize the important role communication programs play in advancing academic veterinary medicine and the profession.



