



Grayson-Jockey Club

RESEARCH TODAY

The Newsletter for Benefactors of Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation, Inc.

Veterinary Practice and Research An Interview with Johnny Mac Smith

(Editor's Note:

After years of distinguished service, Dr. Woody Asbury has retired as Veterinary Consultant to Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation.

We are pleased and fortunate that he has been succeeded by Dr. Johnny Mac Smith, whose years as practitioner and knowledge of the veterinary and research community create a seamless transition.

Dr. Smith will coordinate with recipients of research grants, to expedite the timely completion of the projects and eventual publication of peer-reviewed papers, as well as assist Dr. Larry Bramlage, chairman of the Foundation's Research Advisory Committee. He is working with the president of the Foundation, Edward L. Bowen, and Mrs. Resia Ayres, who recently succeeded Rebecca McCloud as Operations Administrator.)

***Elastikon Research Award
and Storm Cat Career
Development Awards
Announced on Page 3***



After graduation, did you go immediately to farm work or were you on the race track?

I practiced one season at what was then Florida Downs, now Tampa Bay in Tampa, FL. After that year I went back to Ocala and worked for Lyall & Lyall Equine for two years. I then started my own practice and in 1980 joined with Dr. John Peterson to form a group practice.

DR. JOHNNY MAC SMITH

Born:

July, 19, 1948, Andalusia, AL

Education:

Dozier High School;
Troy University, B.S.;
Auburn University School of
Veterinary Medicine, D.V.M.

Please describe the practice you and Dr. Peterson had in Ocala, when established, specialties, size of practice, etc.

In 1983, Dr Peterson and I built and opened Peterson and Smith Equine Hospital with the five veterinarians we had in the practice at the time. The practice was the first private equine practice to employ a board-certified surgeon. It is one of the only private practices to have a surgery residency leading to board certification, in cooperation with the University of Florida. The practice is a full service facility with surgery, medicine, neonatal care, sports medicine, digital radiography, ultrasound, and full farm services. Nuclear scintigraphy and a high speed treadmill aid in diagnosis, as well. The Peterson and Smith Equine Reproduction Center is a stand alone facility in southern Marion County dedicated to reproduction issues. services including stallion evaluation.

The practice serves the many broodmare farms as well as the growing number of training facilities in Ocala and the surrounding area. The practice serves other breeds besides the

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821 Corporate Dr., Lexington, KY 40503

Ph: 859-224-2850 • Fax: 859-224-2853

40 East 52nd St., New York, NY 10022

Ph: 212-371-5970 • Fax: 212-371-6123

<http://www.grayson-jockeyclub.org>

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Thoroughbred also. The practice receives referrals from all over Florida and surrounding states. Currently there are around 30 veterinarians in the practice. It ranks third in size in the country.

What prompted your move to Kentucky?

I came to Kentucky in 1994 after some health issues forced me into an abbreviated early retirement. My wife Lucy is a native of Woodford County, and we had purchased a farm here in the early 1980s, where we now reside. We raised our three sons here and we now entertain our six-year-old granddaughter Hannah, who loves the farm and the animals.

In addition to your work with Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation, what are your other present professional involvements?

I am now involved mostly in consulting work as far as practice goes. I work as a consultant with a couple of farms in Florida and manage a racing stable for one of those. I have been active in several horse related partnerships over the last several years. I do help in surgery with Dr. Paul Thorpe and Dr. Gary Priest frequently during busy times for them as anesthesiologist. I also help manage our farming operations in Woodford County, which consist of beef cattle and my wife's flower operation. My wife tells me I am her best cowboy. We have two other farms, one of which is in Alabama, and I manage the timber resources on these as well as hunting leases.

What has been your overall evaluation through your career of how the academic community relates with the practitioners?

Before we began hiring specialists of our own in the practice, we had a very close relationship with the faculty at University of Florida. We found them to be very helpful in reproduction and medicine aspects. They were responsive to our needs as best they could be. Overall, though, I think there has always been a slight disconnect between the academic community and the practitioner. I am afraid that some of this comes from the publish-or-perish rule that most academicians work under. Much of the work given at the AAEP meetings years ago were statistically lacking in number of cases and the most useful knowledge was gathered from your fellow practitioners in the hall outside of the meeting, when you could get them to confess what they were having success or trouble with!

I think this has improved over the years. I know having met the members of the Foundation's Research Advisory Committee has convinced me that the talent is there, and our organization is one in which the paths for practice and research are closer than in the past. I also know that the practitioner was, and is, dependent on these specialists for the continued growth of his or her knowledge base. With the rapid advances in our profession, there is no way busy practitioners can keep abreast of the changes on their own. I think this dependency can be a beneficial partnership when lines of communication are established between the two groups. I also recognize that this a two-way street and practitioners share much of the responsibility here.

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ELASTIKON™ EQUINE AWARD



The second annual Elastikon™ Equine Research Award has been awarded to Dr. Wayne McIlwraith of Colorado State University and Dr. Mick Peterson of the University of Maine for their research designed to enhance the safety of racetracks for horses. The \$43,000 project is supported by a grant made by Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Company to Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation.

The researchers use a drop hammer and ground-penetrating radar to analyze racing surfaces. Uniformity of a racetrack surface is a key component to keeping horses sound, and the McIlwraith and Peterson project will assist track superintendents in achieving that goal, both for dirt and synthetic surfaces.

“Elastikon™ is pleased to support research which has a great potential to reduce injuries,” said Jack Weakley, director of the Sports Medicine Group of Johnson & Johnson’s Consumer Products Company. “When Grayson-Jockey Club told us this project had been highly evaluated and recommended by its board and its Research Advisory Committee, we felt strongly that it was an excellent project for us to join in supporting. The safety of the competitors is inherent in Elastikon™’d very role in the industry, as is true of Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation’s.”

Elastikon™ brand elastic tape and other company products are staples among horsemen and veterinarians.

STORM CAT CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD

The third annual Storm Cat Career Development Award is supporting a project at Colorado State University, where Dr. Christianne Magee is conducting a comprehensive study of the role of a certain type of peptide in equine fertility. The \$20,000 Storm Cat award is underwritten by Mrs. Lucy Young Hamilton, a board member of Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation. The program is named in honor of the distinguished stallion Storm Cat, which was bred by Mrs. Hamilton’s father, W. T. Young, and stood at the family’s Overbrook Farm in Kentucky.

The Storm Cat Career Development Award was created to provide an early boost to an individual considering a career in equine research. Dr. Magee, a PhD graduate student, is working with a team of professors on her project, which is a comprehensive study program to elucidate the role of kisspeptin in equine estrus and fertility. Preliminary studies lead scientists to believe that kisspeptin has a gatekeeper role in reproductive processes and can act as both inhibitor and catalyst to fertility. Fuller understanding of its function would make possible the management of kisspeptin for its beneficial influence.

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How did you as a practitioner learn of new knowledge generated by university research?

The Continuing Education programs offered through state and national associations has been our primary route, along with periodicals from the same. The American Association of Equine Practitioners has been a mainstay in this respect for the horse industry.

Is this flow of information to the end user something that needs acceleration, or is the flow adequate?

I have learned a lot about this aspect since being here at G-JCRF. I realize now more of what goes into a research project and what a complicated effort researchers have to make in order to successfully compete for funds and complete their work. The flow will always be too slow to satisfy some practitioners and owners, but I would not like to see time become a more governing factor than quality of results. Horsemen should recognize the correlation of time to results in their own efforts with the horses.

What are key improvements in horse care which have come along during your career?

I will date myself here and say the first for me was arthroscopic surgery. More recently, all of the digital technology, x-ray, ultrasound, scintigraphy, etc., for diagnostics has been the leader. The development of group practices capable of staffing and equipping referral hospitals to better service the industry has to be another.

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What aspects of veterinary knowledge, or tools, are lagging behind?

The area of new medicines has lagged somewhat. Parasitism has become a concern again for lack of a new class or group of anthelmintics since ivermectins 20 years ago. Antibiotic development is lagging in both human and animal medicine. Truly efficacious vaccines are still needed for age- old diseases like strangles and newer needs such as leptospirosis. Laminitis has been around a long time as well, and we are making strides in the understanding of this fatal condition, but we are not there yet. Understanding and repair of upper airway conditions such as roaring and soft palate displacement, will lead to better methods of dealing

with these career-ending problems. The Foundation continues to play its role in creating progress in these areas.

Who are some horses you have worked with that generated the greatest satisfaction, either by their success or by just being able to be saved for a useful life?

I have been blessed to have worked on many good horses in my career. I guess the ones that stand out the most are the ones that had good careers themselves as racers, stallions, and broodmares, whether I cared for them as babies or as performers. We foaled and raised as a yearling Twilight Ridge, Breeders Cup Juvenile Filly winner, at our farm in Ocala. I had Unbridled as a baby at Tartan Farms as well as Smile as a race horse,

Fappiano and In Reality as stallions. I cared for Nodouble as leading sire (bred over 100 mares, unheard of in those days) and kept his sire Noholme II breeding well into his twenties at Lasater Farms. I had Horse of the Year Holy Bull, as a baby through breaking, at Bonnie Heath Farm.

I cared for Lil E. Tee as a baby at Jouneyman Farm. He was a little rat then. I loved it when he won the Derby for Mr. [Cal] Partee, a real gentleman of the sport. I also worked on Carls Bird, the winner of the \$1,700,000 Woodrow Wilson Pace for Carl Allen Stables in 1983. There have been many. I guess if you do it long enough you get to work on some good ones and for a farm kid from lower Alabama who loved horses it has all been very satisfying.



Rokeby Circle Members

In honor of the generosity to the Foundation by the late Paul Mellon, Grayson-Jockey Club designates inclusion in the Rokeby Circle for those donors/members at the \$10,000-plus level within the year. The honor is named for Rokeby Farm, Mr. Mellon's estate in Virginia. Current members of the Rokeby Circle as of June 2008.

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Notice: Upon request, a copy of the latest Annual Report filed by Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation, Inc. with the New York Secretary of State may be obtained from the Foundation (821 Corporate Drive, Lexington, KY 40503) or from the Secretary of State (162 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12231).