

The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine

Contact: Sandra Harbison, 865/974-7377 or 865/660/0255
sharbiso@utk.edu

For immediate release

What: Kick-off Celebration

Where: Brick foyer, Veterinary Teaching Hospital, agricultural campus

When: Noon-12:50 Friday, March 19, 2004

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

What do you give a veterinary college that turns 30? The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine will kick off its 30th birthday with the dean serving cake to faculty, staff and students. To help celebrate this anniversary, Knoxville and Knox County have proclaimed the week of March 14-20 UT College of Veterinary Medicine Week. While the cake cutting will officially kick off a year of celebration, other events to commemorate the milestone are scheduled throughout the year.

The college was created on March 19, 1974, with broad support from the Tennessee Farm Bureau and state legislators, to alleviate the shortage of veterinarians communities faced throughout Tennessee. Since the college's creation, the ratio of veterinarians in Tennessee has increased from nine per 100,000 people in 1973 to 24 per 100,000 today. The college opened its doors to students in 1976, and has graduated almost 1,400 veterinarians and treated more than 860,000 animals during its existence.

Dr. Michael Blackwell, veterinary college dean, said much of the college's success can be attributed to its founders, "The early leaders of this college nurtured it, supported it with passion and laid the strong foundation that allows us to continue to be successful. They guarded the gates and kept the spirit alive." Blackwell said the tradition continues, "We will continue to develop a good learning culture. We can do just about anything we choose because of our mix of talent. This is a great place to show up to work." Blackwell added the recent statewide recognition the college received as further proof it remains on the right track.

The college, continually striving for excellence as it ages, recently received the 2003 Commitment Award from the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence. The Center's annual award process recognizes organizations that have demonstrated, through their practices and achievements, the highest standards of excellence.

UT College of Veterinary Medicine is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States.