



## **Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet® 2009 Winner Profile**

### **1. What does winning the Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet® award mean to you?**

It is such an honor to have received this award. I am fortunate to work in a society where pets are considered family members and to work in a facility where we can offer the most advanced veterinary care. As a veterinarian, I feel that we are a key factor in not only treating the sick and injured but also helping people understand and nurture their pets. Winning this award tells me that I have been successful in offering my clients an ear to listen to, a shoulder to cry on and a true understanding of the ailment affecting their family member.

### **2. When did you decide to become a vet and why?**

For as long as I can remember I wanted to be a veterinarian. I was always trying to save sick or injured wildlife and rescuing every animal that I could find. I just felt drawn to animals and wanted to spend all of my time with them. Their vulnerability and unconditional love are why I wanted to dedicate my life to helping animals. There is no other profession that I could see myself pursuing.

### **3. Who were the special animals in your life (past and current)?**

All of my animals have been rescues. James Brown is the love of my life. He is a 4-year-old pit bull mix that was slated to be euthanized when we snuck him out of the shelter in veterinary school. He is the second pit bull I have rescued, and I am in love with the breed. He can be absolutely obnoxious (as young dogs can be) but can do no wrong in my eyes. I also have Beanie, a 3-year-old Jack Russell terrier that was abandoned at the clinic. I would bring him home at night because I felt bad leaving the little guy all alone. He and James are now inseparable, and of course, the little one is in charge. Three cats also grace my home. Their names are Tubby, Sheba and Jackson. Several years ago I fostered three kittens and ended up with three cats. After they had been in my home for two seconds I couldn't possibly imagine parting with them.

### **4. What are the most memorable experiences you have had in your career?**

As a veterinary student, I was originally tracking to become a zoo veterinarian. One of my favorite experiences was being involved in a federal seizure of an illegal breeding

operation of lions and tigers. In addition to all of the adult cats, there were several cubs that were being hand reared. I had the opportunity to raise two female lion cubs in my apartment. For five weeks I had to bottle feed and care for these two cubs until they were old enough to be on their own at the zoo. Needless to say I was very popular during that time period and have fantastic pictures. I also worked at a free-range zoo that housed endangered species of hoofstock. I will never forget wrestling young bison to tag and vaccinate or pulling a calf on a sable antelope. Anesthetizing a 5,000-pound Indian rhino can be very challenging as well.

Today, however, I have memorable experiences every day working on challenging cases, meeting new people and helping pets and their families. Nothing is more rewarding than that.

**5. What is your care philosophy toward your animal patients and their owners?**

I strive to be thorough and compassionate and to treat every case individually. It is important to do what is right for the patient but to also work within the means of the owner. My general rule is to treat every client and patient as if they were part of my own family. Sometimes all anyone needs is reassurance. I enjoy researching the latest treatment options and sharing the results with the rest of my colleagues. Never be afraid to say you don't know the answer to something. I consider it an opportunity to learn new techniques and apply it to future cases.

**6. Do you encourage your clients to do their own pet health research?**

Yes, a well-educated client is a compliant client. I find they are more willing to perform the necessary diagnostics and procedures when they understand the disease processes and differentials. I am often surprised how much I can learn from their research as well. However, I always stress the importance of using peer-reviewed Web sites and searching wisely.

**7. How do you use research in your practice?**

In this ever-changing profession, it is important to stay current with continuing education. In addition to large annual meetings, I try to attend as many local meetings sponsored by pharmaceutical companies in order to keep up with new drug therapies. Veterinary Information Network (VIN) is my best friend, and I use it on a daily basis. Our clinic subscribes to several journals in order to keep up to date.

**8. What is the most rewarding aspect of your professional life?**

Knowing that the time I spend and the research I do not only help educate clients about their animals but also help their animals live better lives. At the end of the day I like to feel that I made a difference in someone's life.

**9. How has the profession changed since you became a doctor?**

Though I have only been a professional for a few years it is impressive how new technologies and treatment options expand daily. Specialty practices are also more readily available that offer advanced diagnostics and therapies that previously required driving several hours to the nearest veterinary school.