

## **Next Steps**

**Congratulations to the Class of 2008, outstanding graduates of the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine. Congratulations to our superb Cornell interns and residents completing their post DVM training programs. And welcome to the proud parents, family members, and friends, and to our faculty, staff, and guests. I am delighted to welcome you to the College's Hooding Ceremony, to celebrate with you the accomplishments of these outstanding individuals, and to mark and acknowledge their transition from students to colleagues. As you know, this is my first Hooding Ceremony as Dean, and so a particularly meaningful event for me, as well as for all of you. I want to especially thank those members of our faculty and staff who have joined us to support and celebrate our graduates this afternoon.**

**A day like this with the Ithaca sun shining as it so rarely does, and the faces of our graduates beaming, brings to mind the future and next steps. To get here you dreamed about possibilities and began to define your place in the world and where you would choose to make your mark. I applaud you for your ambition and for your successes, for having the courage to dream big dreams and for having the will and skill to realize them. Your dreams were not just ambitious, though, they were aimed at a specific goal. You chose to be veterinarians, to focus your considerable intellect and talents on animal disease, either through treatment, research, or teaching. These are not dreams of wealth, power, and**

**influence; they are dreams of caring, curiosity, and compassion.**

**Congratulations. Your journey took courage, intelligence, determination, and plain hard work.**

**Along the way you have distinguished yourselves as we knew you would:**

- **You dedicated countless hours to influencing public policy at the USDA and were selected for the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service program.**
- **With Expanding Horizons you traveled to South Africa, Senegal, Peru, Thailand, Argentina and Zambia, improving conditions for animals and people there.**
- **You did research on the Maned Wolf in Brazil, on parasites infecting Zebu in Madagascar, and on bovine pleuropneumonia in cattle in India.**
- **You obtained grants from Pfizer to launch VOICE, veterinary students as one in culture and ethnicity, at the national level by helping to establish charter chapters in 6 other veterinary colleges and to expand the activities of Cornell's founding chapter.**
- **You were chosen for the intensely competitive DVM/PhD combined degree program to do cutting edge research.**
- **You organized and pulled off the Vet College Open House and the special species symposium.**

- **You set up and volunteered at the Southside Clinic, giving your energy to our community and working with faculty and alumni in a way that distinguishes all of us.**

**This is by no means a complete list of your accomplishments. Every graduate sitting among us has contributed to enhance the climate and the educational experience at Cornell and you all have much to be proud of. And now as you are ready to take your next step, I'd like to offer you a deal. Let's call it the Cornell Covenant, a compact between you and your Veterinary College.**

**I'll start with our job. Our part of the deal is to continue to make you proud of us and of your degree. To continue the tradition begun by Cornell's founders and so many of our famous faculty and alumnae. To nourish and revitalize a College with a breadth and excellence that is unmatched anywhere. To lead the profession, to forge new knowledge, to train the leaders of the future, and to work as hard as we can to live up to your vision of us.**

**Your part of the deal is to continue to make us proud of you. To give life to the values and knowledge that we have imparted, to become leaders of your profession or your practice or your company. To remember that you are Cornell veterinarians and that you carry with you that special legacy and responsibility.**

**Today, we officially become your alma mater and you officially become our alumnae, and we are bound together in that compact that will continue to influence, enhance, and shape our future. Cornell was conceived as an institution that would harness the most lofty and advanced scientific knowledge for the greatest public good. We have been a force for discovery and innovation in veterinary medicine since 1868, and it is now your privilege and your responsibility to carry that legacy forward.**

**I know that every one of you, in your own way, will look for opportunities to advance our great profession, to practice medicine in the best and most compassionate way that you can, and to relieve suffering wherever you encounter it. Our compact will add value to you, our new alumnae, and to us, your former teachers. It will continue to strengthen the value of your degree and help Cornell to continue to advance our esteemed profession.**

**Oh, and one more part of the deal – Annual Giving.**

**To the members of the Class of 2008, accomplished interns and residents, congratulations. I am proud of you and to be one of you. Cornell Veterinarians.**