

# METROPOLITAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

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## WISHING DR. NORTINGTON A HAPPY RETIREMENT

As our hospital celebrates our 30th anniversary, we are also celebrating the career of neurologist Dr. Jerry Northington. From his dedication to providing optimum quality of life for pets with neurological conditions, to his affable nature and signature whistle, he's nothing short of a legend. Dr. Northington retires this spring and will be greatly missed by colleagues and clients alike. Recently, he sat down to tell us a little bit about his journey in veterinary medicine.

**METROPOLITAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATES:** As a child, did you always know you wanted to be a veterinarian?

**JERRY NORTINGTON:** No. My father was a mixed practice veterinarian so I grew up making farm calls and working for his practice. I went to college with ideas of being a physician, but found early that was not a good fit for my life. I changed to veterinary medicine as an undergraduate student after my

discharge from the U.S. Army.

**MVA:** Why did you decide to specialize in neurology?

**JN:** As a senior veterinary student, I was introduced to the field by one of the pioneers of veterinary neurology, Dr. B.F. Horlein. He opened a door that I had not seen before. The many different facets of veterinary medicine are difficult to see until someone comes along to show the way. Dr. Horlein was instrumental in my obtaining an internship after veterinary school and from there, my course in veterinary neurology continued.

**MVA:** What do you like most about being a veterinary neurologist?

**JN:** The nervous system is a fantastic black box and the mystery of its workings are a continuing source of amazement. Today we see the advent of molecular biology along with imaging technology that advances at regular intervals.



Dr. Jerry Northington

There is always something new and different to learn or to see in the clinic.

**MVA:** What's the funniest story from your career?

**JN:** People watching has long been an interest of mine - observing the actions of humans is intriguing. People say and do the strangest things.

As a senior student in a clinical rotation, I was part of a group seeing a young woman who brought in her puppy for evaluation of a skin condition. A diagnosis of scabies was reached in just a few

“HELLO DR. JERRY! THANKS FOR YOUR HELP WITH MY CH KITTEN, SEVERAL CAT LIVES AGO... AND THANK YOU FOR MANY YEARS OF SAVING LIVES! ”

MARGARET YOUNG



EMERGENCY PET  
CARE 24/7/365  
METRO-VET.COM

# SPECIALIZED SERVICES

## CARDIOLOGY

Michael Miller, MS, VMD, ABVP  
Risa Roland, DVM, DACVIM (Cardiology)

## DENTISTRY

Corinne Durand, DVM

## DERMATOLOGY

Karen B. Farver, DVM, DACVD

## EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE

Reid Groman, DVM, DACVIM,  
DACVECC

James Buckman, PhD, VMD

Jason Chamberlin, VMD

Robert Gaunt, VMD

Jennifer McGough, VMD

Meghan Romano, DVM

Marisa Suvanvevejh, VMD

Dana Yard, VMD

## INTERNAL MEDICINE

John V. DeBiasio, DVM, DACVIM

James F. Dougherty, MS, VMD

Leslie A. Kuczynski, VMD, DACVIM

## INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY

Risa Roland, DVM, DACVIM (Cardiology)

## MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

Sherman O. Canapp Jr., DVM, MS,  
CCRT, DACVS, DACVSMR

John V. DeBiasio, DVM, DACVIM

Leslie A. Kuczynski, VMD, DACVIM

## NEUROLOGY

Jerry W. Northington, DVM

Melissa Logan, PhD, DVM, DACVIM  
(Neurology)

## ONCOLOGY

Suzanne Rau, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)

## OPHTHAMOLOGY

Amanda Corr, VMD, DACVO

Steven L. Gross, VMD, DACVO

## RADIOLOGY

Robert McLearn, VMD, DACVR

Lisa Suslak, VMD, DACVR

## SURGERY

Lori W. Cabell, DVM, DACVS

A. Jon Nannos, DVM

Jacqui Niles, BVETMED, SAS, DACVS

Catherine Popovitch, DVM, DACVS,  
DECVS

Timothy M. Schwab, VMD, DACVS-SA

Rebecca Wolf, VMD, DACVS-SA

moments. As we began to explain the diagnosis the young woman lifted her shirt and asked about the red spots on her abdomen. The connection was obvious to us, but the situation in Alabama culture of the early 70's was pretty embarrassing to us students. We did recommend she seek care from her physician as we dispensed a topical cream for the puppy. The suggestion of use of the medication on a human was not discussed in open fashion but the intent was pretty obvious.

**MVA:** You've been a veterinarian a long time – did you always embrace technology or was it sometimes difficult?

**JN:** Technology has always been a primary interest of mine, and adoption of new and different technologies has been an exciting part of my career. E-mail came along in the very early days of its availability. The advent of CT scan and MRI was trying in terms of the learning curve with interpretation and application, but the challenge was met and embraced.

**MVA:** What song best describes your career?

**JN:** Wonderful Life by British artist Colin Vearncombe (aka Black).

**MVA:** What do you think has contributed to your success as a vet?

**JN:** Luck and dedication. Mostly luck.

**MVA:** If you weren't a veterinarian, what would you have been?

**JN:** I'd have been a zoologist.

**MVA:** What neurological condition do you wish there was an effective treatment and/or cure for?

**JN:** Degenerative myelopathy, the spinal cord disease affecting so many dog breeds these days. No real treatment is known for canine patients with this condition.

**MVA:** What sort of tips or advice might you give a beginning veterinary neurologist?

**JN:** Always keep an open mind and watch for new avenues of both treatment and diagnosis. The excitement of new and different never ceases in this field, so be prepared.

**MVA:** What are you most looking forward to in the coming years? Any special places you are hoping to travel?

**JN:** There are many facets of life that are not well explored while working. I'm looking forward to more involvement in local activities and social action. I'm also hoping to return to Europe and do more travel in the continental U.S., where the American southwest holds particular interest.

**MVA:** If there was a movie produced about your life, who would play you and why?

**JN:** This is impossible. For many years I have not been a movie or video watcher. The names and characteristics of modern actors are beyond my range of knowledge.

**MVA:** Finally – an extremely important question – are you a dog person or a cat person?

**JN:** Both in fact. I've been a dog and cat owner for many years. The current population is just cats, but a dog may return to my household one day. 🐾

## WONDERFUL LIFE BY BLACK

Here I go out to sea again  
The sunshine fills my hair  
And dreams hang in the air  
Gulls in the sky and in my blue eyes  
You know it feels unfair  
There's magic everywhere

Look at me standing  
Here on my own again  
Up straight in the sunshine  
No need to run and hide  
It's a wonderful, wonderful life  
No need to laugh and cry  
It's a wonderful, wonderful life

Sun in your eyes  
The heat is in your hair  
They seem to hate you  
Because you're there  
And I need a friend  
Oh, I need a friend  
To make me happy  
Not stand here on my own

Look at me standing  
Here on my own again  
Up straight in the sunshine

No need to run and hide  
It's a wonderful, wonderful life  
No need to laugh and cry  
It's a wonderful, wonderful life



Dr. Jerry Northington at Sproutfest

## HONORED BY SPROUTFEST 2015

BY GRACE KELLY HERBERT FOUNDER OF FINDING SHELTER ANIMAL RESCUE

When I think of all of the veterinarians who care for our personal and rescue animals, the first person that comes to mind is Dr. Jerry Northington. He has been caring for our dogs since 2010, when we walked into Metropolitan with our recently rescued, blind dog Sprout, who had started having seizures. He diagnosed Sprout with hydrocephalus, and an MRI confirmed 1mm of functioning brain. Through our journey with Sproutie, Dr. Northington was always honest with us and never gave up on Sprout. He took the time to meet with us, answered our calls and emails, and taught us so much about hydrocephalus, and how life might unfold for the dog we adored – and who changed our lives. He cared enough to take the time and be patient with us, and was there to console us when the end was drawing near. Though some may not have expected Sprout to live more than a couple of weeks, he surprised us all and thrived in our family for over two years. Our little miracle dog responded very well for a long time to the therapies put in place by Dr. Northington, and exceeded all of our expectations on what he could physically do. Sprout touched so many lives – from being rescued and inspiring

us to start Finding Shelter, until the day he died. We are ever grateful to Dr. Northington for everything he did to make Sprout's life better.

Because we learned so much from Dr. Northington while caring for Sprout, we rescued and took chances on dogs who might have neurological issues, knowing that Dr. Northington would give us an accurate diagnosis, and support the caregivers and adopters who would welcome these special dogs into their lives.

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**“ WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO DR. NORTINGTON FOR EVERYTHING HE DID TO MAKE SPROUT'S LIFE BETTER. ”**

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To honor Sprout's memory and to fill an aching hole in our hearts, we adopted two puppies from a puppy mill – Ollie and Tooch. And the first person we introduced them to was Dr. Northington. With wide open fontanelles, Dr. Northington confirmed that both boys have severe hydrocephalus and 3mm of functioning brain. Yet through the guidance of the doctor we love and trust so much, our

happy and sweet boys have thrived for four years and counting, going trick or treating every year at MVA just to visit Dr. Northington! We have also added two more neurological dogs to our family – Abby and Penelope – and fostered others with the confidence that we could manage care and have the support of Dr. Northington, no matter what the diagnosis or how long the dog might live.

We know that it takes a great deal of intelligence and skill to become a veterinarian, particularly a specialist. But it takes the compassion of a wonderful person to make clients feel as though their appointments do not have a scheduled end time, that they are welcome from the moment they enter the waiting room, and that they will have support through the toughest times. It is why Finding Shelter honored Dr. Northington with our inaugural “Veterinarian of the Year” award at the 6th Annual Sproutfest.

Dr. Northington is so very special to us and to Finding Shelter. We love him for the care he provides and for his wonderful friendship, and hope that he enjoys every minute of his retirement. Good luck, Dr. Northington! We love you! 🐾

## MVA SAYS GOODBYE TO DR. NORTHINGTON

"Bronson says thanks for everything! Thanks to you and Dr. Nannos he's running again one year later!"

**HEATHER MORGAN ZELL**

"Thank you for your care and compassion, Dr. Northington. Will never forget how great you were in treating our boxer, Oliver."

**MONICA MATILLA KRAFT**



"Hello from Frankie! I actually took this picture to show my friends how he stares at me when he knows it's 'medicine time! He enjoys taking his pills with a spoonful of pumpkin."

**STEPHANIE NOVAK**

"Hello Dr. Northington. From your old patient Miss Wynette."

**DONNA ANN**



"Happy Birthday Dr. Northington. Thank you for all the great work on our last tribe of 5. So far so good. All 5 of the new guys are good. We know where to go if they need help. Thank you for being a great Doc!"

**ALL THE STERNSONS**



"Bertie says thank you."

**KATHLEEN SHEEHAN**

"I remember when MVA started and at first used the Vet hospital I was working in. I helped Dr. Northington with his myelograms. He is a wonderful Dr."

**SHELLEY PETTINATO**



"Both boys have severe hydrocephalus yet are thriving and enjoying every day of their lives. But we are the luckiest ones as we share our lives with them. They continue to bring us a world of joy and laughter. Thank you, Dr. Northington & MVA, for being there for them and for us!"

**GRACE KELLY HERBERT**

"Congratulations to both! Thanks to all three founders! Dr. Northington treated my CH kitty, Lacey, who only lived for 10 months and died from an unknown cause. I felt that we were in very good hands, as always, at Metro!"

**MARGARET YOUNG**



"Hello from Finnegan! Thank you for all your help!"

**ASHLEY GRUBE FOGARTY**



"Hello Dr Northington! I still remember the great care you gave to my Yankee, so many years ago."

**MARY KAMINSKI**