# AnimalNEWS



WHERE SCIENCE MEETS HOPE<sup>1</sup>

Targeting FIP: new hope in the fight against a deadly disease

BY: CAROL BORCHERT

Dr. Missy Simpson, Morris Animal Foundation's staff epidemiologist, recalls that one of the joys of general practice was caring for newly adopted kittens.

"People would come for their first wellness exam after getting a kitten," said Dr. Simpson. "They were so excited about their new family member. I loved being a part of that enthusiasm."

However, for some families, the news wasn't always good. Some of the kittens were ill with feline infectious peritonitis, a viral illness of cats that is 100 percent fatal. An estimated one in 300 cats is diagnosed with FIP in the United States, and it is five to 10 times more common in shelter cats and kittens.

"My heart would just sink when I saw a frail, sickly kitten come in," said Dr. Simpson. "The story was almost always the same; the kitten was recently adopted from a shelter, and seemed fine at first. After a few weeks, the owners would feel that something was wrong, and would bring the kitten in for an exam. I had to tell people that their kitten had feline infectious peritonitis. It was devastating news. I felt completely helpless."

Now, thanks to our generous donors, Morris Animal Foundation is gaining ground on FIP. For the last 15 years, our funded studies have advanced understanding in how this virus affects some cats and not others, as well as identified new targets for novel treatments.

Recent advances in molecular biology are helping us understand how FIP virus causes disease through mutations



in the coronavirus. Morris Animal Foundation wants to capitalize on these discoveries, and has made FIP an even bigger priority with a three-year, \$1.2 million commitment to fund research that will help stop FIP. Our newly funded studies include:

- two genetic studies that focus on how viral mutations help the virus invade critical cells of the immune system
- development of a novel vaccine strategy against feline enteric coronavirus, the nonlethal virus that can mutate into the FIP virus
- a clinical trial to investigate if a novel antiviral drug can cure or greatly extend the lifespan and quality of life for cats infected with the FIP virus
- investigation of two genetic mutations that may be a reliable indicator of FIP in cats, and provide the basis for development of an accurate diagnostic test

Veterinary medicine has struggled to make progress against FIP. While research has increased our knowledge, the outcome for cats diagnosed with FIP remains the same. With this concentrated effort building on what we know, with recent advances in coronavirus research, with great researchers, and with dedicated funding, we believe we can fight back against FIP and win.

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# OUR MISSION

Morris Animal Foundation improves the health and well-being of companion animals and wildlife by funding humane health studies and disseminating information about these studies.

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# Your gifts at work

For the past 68 years, Morris Animal Foundation has been a global leader in funding studies to advance animal health. Without the help of generous donors like you, we could not fulfill our mission to improve the health of dogs, cats, horses and wildlife worldwide.

# New virus identified in cats

Gammaherpesviruses have been linked to a variety of diseases, including cancer, in several species. Colorado State University researchers recently identified a previously undescribed gammaherpesvirus in domestic cats. In partnership with this team, Oregon State University investigators found that exposure to this new virus is common in the general cat population in the United States and more often found in adult males and cats with poor health. Ongoing research is evaluating if feline gammaherpesvirus infection is associated with cancer in cats.

# Advanced imaging improves brain disease diagnosis

Magnetic resonance spectroscopy, an advanced form of MRI, is easy to perform, safe and fast for patients. In a prospective pilot study, researchers from Mississippi State University evaluated the accuracy of MRS as a noninvasive method to diagnose brain diseases in animals. The team found MRS consistently can differentiate between cancerous and noncancerous brain lesions in pets as well as differentiate between different tumor types. This represents a significant advancement over traditional MRIs. More sensitive testing will lead to earlier detection and better outcomes for dogs and cats with brain diseases, including cancer.

# Adjunct drug helps treat brain worms in llamas

Parasite control is a common health challenge in llamas and alpacas. Brain worms (also known as round worms) are especially difficult to treat in alpacas. This parasite causes significant damage to the alpaca's central nervous system and infections are frequently fatal. Standard deworming agents have been ineffective in treating most infected alpacas. Researchers from Iowa State University discovered that the antibiotic drug doxycycline significantly enhances the effectiveness of two commonly used anti-worm drugs—ivermectin or dormamectin—in the alpaca's nervous system. This new, inexpensive treatment strategy can help save and protect alpacas from deadly parasitic brain worms.

# Combined testing improves diagnosis of fatal parrot disease

Proventricular dilatation disease is a fatal neurologic and gastrointestinal ailment found in more than 80 percent of parrot species. Looking to better diagnose the disease, Texas A&M researchers evaluated four available PDD tests. They found fecal RT-PCR (reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction) test in combination with either immunofluorescence or Western blot assays detected PDD infection in the majority of affected parrots and was superior over other testing strategies. A more effective diagnostic strategy will help prevent PDD transmission to other birds and allow earlier intervention before the onset of severe disease.

# Current studies offer hope in treatment of feline aortic thromboembolism

BY: KELLY DIEHL, DVM, MS, ACVIM

Few conditions are more frustrating for veterinarians to treat than aortic arterial thromboembolism in cats. The disease, characterized by abnormal formation of blood clots, often strikes patients without warning, treatment can be costly, and mortality rates are high. Even in cats that recover from an episode, long-term therapy is needed and recurrence is common. Veterinarians desperately need new treatments that are practical and effective.

Cardiomyopathy (an abnormal heart muscle) is the most common predisposing condition for aortic ATE. Experts report up to 21 percent of cats with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy develop ATE in their lifetime.

Prognosis is poor both for short- and long-term survival of feline ATE. A 2003 study found a mean survival time of only four months in cats with distal aortic ATE. Ten percent to 15 percent of cats that recover from aortic ATE will have permanent musculoskeletal problems, and the disease has a reported recurrence rate between 17 percent and 50 percent.

During the last six years, Morris Animal Foundation has made a significant investment in research projects focused on aortic ATE in cats, with promising preliminary results. More treatment options are available for feline patients, and prognosis is slowly improving. In addition, the development of new drugs to treat and prevent strokes in people may have translational benefits for feline patients.

A study completed in 2013, known as FATCAT, looked at the difference in ATE recurrence rate between cats given aspirin and those given clopidogrel. The research team showed cats receiving clopidogrel had longer median recurrence-free time compared to cats receiving aspirin (443 days vs. 192 days, respectively).

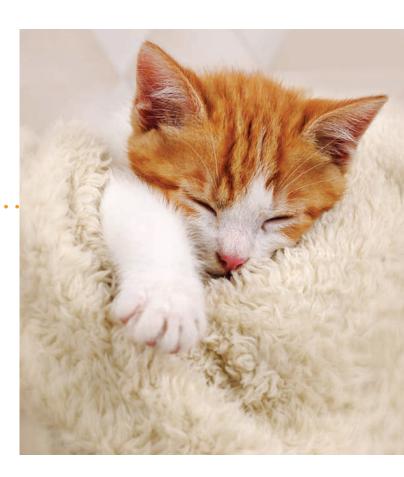
An ongoing study is looking closely at the pharmacokinetics of clopidogrel in healthy cats. Preliminary results from this

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study confirm previous observations that it takes three to four days to achieve full platelet inhibitory effects. The researchers hope to determine better dosing recommendations in order to shorten this time period. Another current study is re-examining the potential of tissue plasminogen activator use in aortic ATE. Enrollment is ongoing but preliminary results are encouraging.

Two exciting new studies look at the potential of rivaroxaban, an anticoagulant, for use in cats with ATE. Rivaroxaban inhibits activated Factor X, and in humans rivaroxaban is equal to or superior to other anticoagulants. Preliminary results of the initial study suggest that the drug is safe for use in cats, and a new study just begun by the same study team is comparing clopidogrel to rivaroxaban in the prevention of recurrent ATE.

Given the poor prognosis for ATE in cats, Morris Animal Foundation is committed to investing in the most promising research aimed at finding better treatments to help cats not only survive an episode of ATE, but thrive. +

Join us on Facebook at facebook.com/morrisanimal.



# **Golden Retriever Lifetime Study Update**

# For two foundation staff members, the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study is personal

BY: KELLY DIEHL, DVM, MS, ACVIM

Morris Animal Foundation staff members Wes Hamlyn and Dr. Sharon Albright are a bit unique. The pair not only work as part of the foundation's scientific programs section, they also have dogs participating in the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study.

When Wes joined Morris Animal Foundation, the foundation was seven months into enrollment of the newly established Golden Retriever Lifetime Study. Wes had one golden retriever, Hazel, but she was 11 years old and not eligible to enroll. Still, as a golden retriever owner, Wes was intrigued by the study and its ambitious goals. As an employee, he had a front row seat to watch as the study unfolded.

Sadly for Wes and his family, Hazel died in 2013 from hemangiosarcoma. When Wes and his family felt ready to open their home to another dog, they faced a dilemma. The family wanted to adopt a dog from a local rescue group, but also wanted to help the study reach its goal of 3,000 dogs. Wes's family decided to get a golden retriever puppy, Finn, and adopt a rescue dog, Annie! Wes also has a 9-year-old Australian shepherd, Shea, that escapes from his rambunctious dog siblings by accompanying Wes to work each day.



Dr. Sharon Albright, our Golden Retriever Lifetime Study veterinarian, also has a dog participating in the study. Blaze (AKA Audeo's Off Road Adventure), is Sharon's fourth golden retriever, and one of the last dogs enrolled in the study. Sharon's love of golden retrievers began when she was a college undergraduate working for a local veterinarian. Shadow, Sharon's first

golden retriever, was an unruly 1 year old that was placed for adoption by a clinic client who had medical issues. Sharon recalls that on the day she picked him up, she attended her first obedience class the same night! Needless to say, it was a bit chaotic, but Sharon was soon hooked on the breed and competing in obedience and hunt tests.

Sharon first learned about the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study through her interaction with various golden retriever club members. As a veterinarian and golden retriever lover, Sharon thought the study was a great opportunity to learn more about the factors influencing disease development in the breed. Sharon's experiences as veterinarian, study dog owner, and Golden Retriever Lifetime Study team member, give her unique insight into the challenges faced by study veterinarians and participating owners.

Both Wes and Sharon play a vital role not only in the day-to-day operations of the foundation, but as active participants in one of the most farreaching and ambitious studies ever undertaken in veterinary medicine. Their insights help shape our understanding of the challenges faced by our study veterinarians and participating owners, and the foundation is grateful for their contributions toward making the study a success. 🕂

Several members of the Golden Retriever Lifetime study team celebrated with study participants and their owners at the Golden Retriever Club of America's 2015 National Specialty in Wilmington, Ohio, Sept. 26 – Oct. 4. The team had a great time watching the show and participating in the Parade of Hero Dogs, honoring all those dogs and their owners who are participating in the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study.

BE A PART OF VETERINARY MEDICAL HISTORY.



# February is National Pet Dental Health Month

Good dental hygiene is important for our dogs' health and the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study should provide some clues on how to best keep dogs' mouths in top condition throughout their lives. Diseases of the oral cavity are not only painful, but can affect other organs, such as the heart and kidneys. Having a healthy mouth is more than good breath and white teeth, it can be an important part of preventing chronic infections as well.



We've already begun to learn a few things about the dogs in our study, and have a few interesting tidbits to share about their oral hygiene. As expected in this young group of dogs, our baseline data on the oral health of our Golden Retriever Lifetime Study participants revealed few reported problems. Thirty-nine dogs needed a tooth extracted, and only 6 percent of our study dogs have had any noticeable tartar or gingivitis on oral examination.

We weren't surprised that our diligent group of owners are examining their dog's mouth, but we were impressed that a whopping 98 percent of study dogs have an oral examination done by their owners at least once a month. Fifty-eight percent of study dogs get their teeth brushed with some regularity, with a few owners adding in mouth rinses and dental chews.

As study dogs enter middle age, oral health problems will become more common. The study provides researchers with a unique window into the patterns of oral health issues that develop throughout a dog's life. Having extensive background data on each dog will allow us to look for associations between environmental, genetic, nutritional and even behavioral factors that influence development of oral cavity disease. Knowing these factors should lead to better preventive dental care guidelines for all dogs and other pets as well.

Until 30 years ago, dentistry for pets was limited to pulling teeth or doing the occasional cleaning, all performed by a family veterinarian. However, veterinary dentistry has exploded in the last few decades. Using tools and techniques adopted from human dentistry, veterinary specialists are able to perform a variety of different procedures on our pets that until recently were only available to people. With what we learn from the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study and advances in veterinary dental care, our pets can look forward to having healthier mouths for healthier lives. +

# Corporate sponsors share in our pursuit: healthier lives for animals today and tomorrow

BLUE

Thanks in part to the generosity of our corporate partners, Morris Animal Foundation is able to fund more critical research and scientific initiatives that truly make a difference in animal health. By supporting Morris Animal Foundation, companies reach their current and potential consumers in a deep and meaningful way, as well as demonstrate their commitment to corporate philanthropy.

Corporate partners give to Morris Animal Foundation in a many ways including corporate fundraising teams that support the K9 Walk series, grants for scientific studies and initiatives, cause campaigns, and workplace giving. A few organizations that have supported Morris Animal Foundation for many years, and contributed significantly to our mission, include:

# The Blue Buffalo Foundation for Cancer Research

The Blue Buffalo Foundation for Cancer Research is thrilled to support Morris Animal Foundation's breakthrough research studies around the world. Nine years and nearly \$6 million later, the BBFCR has become a platinum partner in the Morris Animal

Foundation's groundbreaking Golden Retriever Lifetime Study and Osteosarcoma Initiative. Through this dynamic partnership, BBFCR hopes to help eradicate pet cancer and preserve the well-being of our furry friends everywhere.

# **Coastal Pet Products**

As the quality leader in the pet industry, Coastal Pet Products has been manufacturing pet products and

providing exceptional customer service since 1968. A familyowned American manufacturer, Coastal Pet is committed to

urer, Coasta pet products

enriching the interactions between pets and people by providing high-quality lifestyle products that support the care and safety of dogs and cats.

Since 2010, Coastal Pet has supported Morris Animal Foundation and increased donations starting in 2013



through sale of its Pet Attire<sup>®</sup> Styles Orange Brown Tan pattern collar, harness and leash. Donations from Coastal Pet help to support research programs at the foundation. Coastal will continue to support Morris Animal Foundation to help increase healthy, happy, safe interactions between pets and their owners.

# The Orvis Canine Cancer Campaign

Since 2009, Orvis has been proud to partner with the Morris Animal Foundation in the fight against canine cancer. To date, the Orvis Cover Dog Contest has generated more than \$1 million to support canine cancer research through the foundation. The reason Orvis

chooses to work with Morris is, quite simply, because we love our dogs. They are our friends,



our protectors, our helpers, our family. Morris Animal Foundation is the global leader in supporting scientific research that advances veterinary medicine. And who doesn't want the very best for the ones they love?

Thank you to these and ALL the organizations that join us in our mission to give ALL animals a happier healthier life. +

# A lifetime of caring for animals inspires donor to become a Loyal Friend

BY: JACKIE POLISEO

While we all hope to be lucky enough to have our companion animals enjoy long, healthy lives, many pets leave us too soon because of devastating illnesses, such as cancer. This is something with which Jan Hitchborn is all too familiar. She has lost dogs both young and old to various forms of cancer, but those heartbreaking losses do not deter her from continuing to provide a loving home to dogs and cats of all ages, no matter what health problems they may face.

A long-time animal rescue volunteer, trainer and animal lover, Jan originally began giving to Morris Animal Foundation after hearing about the Golden Retriever Lifetime Study through her local golden retriever rescue group. After learning about the many research and health initiatives funded by Morris Animal Foundation, across so many breeds and other species, Jan chose to become a monthly donor, a true Loyal Friend.

Her monthly donation helps advance diagnostics, preventions, treatments and even cures for the many diseases that affect our companion animals and wildlife. For Jan, cancer is of particular interest and she hopes to see continued progress in early detection of cancer, as well as education for pet owners and animal lovers about animal health issues.

Monthly giving at any amount is one of the easiest and most effective ways to help the animals we love have a



brighter, healthier future. For \$30 a month, just \$1 per day, you can become a Morris Animal Foundation Loyal Friend and contribute to critical science that will be part of live-saving solutions for animal health problems.

Monthly giving helps animals and is:

- Convenient
- Consistent
- Sustainable
- Secure

Being a Loyal Friend is just another way that Jan feels she can "do something good" for all the animals she loves. A recurring donation is a "small amount to pay to have an impact on so many animals; to hopefully get some answers."

Consider becoming a monthly donor in the name of all the animals you love. Sign up at <u>www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/ways-to-donate</u> or call Jackie Poliseo, donor relations specialist, at 303.708.3417. +

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#### PLEASE CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN TO ASK PET HEALTH QUESTIONS.

Our staff is unable to provide veterinary medical advice. The opinions of study investigators may not necessarily be those of your companion animal's veterinarian.

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# **UPCOMING EVENTS**

San Diego K9 Cancer Walk • San Diego, Calif. • March 6, 2016 Knoxville K9 Cancer Walk • Knoxville, Tenn. • April 10, 2016 Los Gatos K9 Cancer Walk • Los Gatos, Calif. • April 24, 2016 Washington DC Metro K9 Cancer Walk • Leesburg, Va. • May 15, 2016 Virtual Pet Cancer Walk • Anywhere! • May 22, 2016

For more information or to register, please visit **morrisanimalfoundation.org/events** or call 800.243.2345.



# Match Surpassed-Thank You!

In cultures, countries and traditions around the world, the winter season is a time of sharing and caring, of family and friends, and of celebration and giving. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to you, and all of our dedicated supporters, for truly embracing the season. Your generosity helped us secure \$100,000 in matching funds—and helped us meet our \$600,000 Season of Hope campaign goal.

Because of your gifts, we will be able to continue our critical work, including investing in the training of future scientists, funding studies to help stop the spread of bone cancer in dogs, and identifying ways to treat a fatal viral disease in cats.



"I cannot begin to thank you enough for joining with us, and rising to the occasion when we asked for your financial support. Donations aren't just dollars—they are hope for a better tomorrow—for the animals in our hearts, our homes and in the wild. This new year holds the hope that through investing in innovative, scientifically based knowledge, we will get closer to the answers we all want," said Walt George, interim CEO and board trustee.

It's true that donations fuel the foundation's work, but we also deeply value our partnership and friendship with you, our supporters. Our Season of Hope campaign allowed us to connect with and hear from so many of you this holiday season, and your stories will propel our inspiration well into the New Year. From all of us at the foundation, thank you! +

# RILEY



Beloved Golden Retriever Family: Chris Iorio Donor: Christy & Corey W.

SABRINA



Beloved Cat Family: Jill Burgum Donor: Tom & Bonnie Burgum

SAMANTHA BELOVED CAT Family: Cookie & Richard Chambers





Beloved Dog Family: TJ, Leanne & Cash Scholand Donor: Jo Scholand





Beloved Cat Family: Liz Garn

# **STEELYDAN**



Beloved Golden Retriever Family: Jill & Michael Funderburke



Beloved Dog Family: Carole Beeton





Beloved Dog Family: The Reed Family





Beloved Rhodesian Ridgeback Family: Cindy & Keith Heintzelman Donor: Kathi Guerrant

# TECKIE



Beloved Cat Family: Kathleen Abbott

THURMON



Special Boy Family: Pamm & Phil Licina

# THURMON



Beloved Golden Retriever Family: Pamm & Phil Licina Donor: Jill & Dan Casey

### **TOP HAT'S FRED** ASTAIRE

Beloved Dog Family: Todd Ruppenthal Donor: Happy Husky Bakery

VAIL



Beloved Golden Retriever Family: Chipp & Janet Krumm

WILEY



BELOVED BEAGLE Family: The Heaster, Ritter and O'Bryan Families Donor: Brenda Heaster & Keith Ritter

### WILL Beloved Pet Family: Mark & Deborah Carter

Donor: Carter Family Foundation

ZSUZSI BELOVED VIZSLA Family: Verna Bodig

# Special animals that have touched their families' lives

The pets in this section were honored through qualifying donations made between September 16, 2015, through December 15, 2015. These gifts will be used to invest in science that creates a brighter world for animals.

With your gift of \$200 or more per pet, you can include a special pet in the "In loving memory" section of AnimalNEWS. We will do our best to include the pet's photo when you send it along with your donation.

For donations of \$500 or more, the pet's name and family name will be added to our Pet Memorial Wall located in Morris Animal Foundation's Denver headquarters. We will also send a special commemorative keepsake to the family.

For more information about tribute options, or to make your gift, visit the "Ways to Donate" section of our website, morrisanimalfoundation.org, and click on Memorial and Honor Gifts, or use the envelope included in AnimalNEWS.



# In loving memory

At Morris Animal Foundation. we understand the love between people and their pets and the significance of losing these wonderful companions.

Pets are part of our families, and this section honors the special animals that have touched their families' lives.

**WINTER 2016** 

# ACE



**Beloved Staffordshire** BULL TERRIER Family: Lucille Perry

# ALEX



OUR BELOVED WHIPPET Family: Curt & Chirleen Michelini

# ANNIE



The Best Dog Ever Family: Lynn Ross & John Dounoucos





Beloved Golden Retriever *Family:* Dora Lee & Paul Tom Donor: Marlene, Candy & Lyla

ASH Beloved Cat Family: Cookie & Richard Chambers

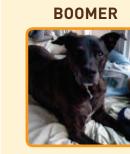
# ASPEN



Beloved Golden Retriever Family: Chipp & Janet Krumm

**BARNEY BEAGLE** Beloved Dog Family: Lynda Kerbs

### BELLA Beloved Pet Family: Kristen Septak Donor: K. Vet Animal Care



Beloved Dog Family: Pamela & Arnold Loeb

### **BOSCO ALMAHURST**



OUR GENTLE GIANT, ONCE A RACER, ALWAYS A FRIEND Family: Curt & Mary Conover

# **BRUISER WOODS**



My HAPPINESS,

2002-2013 Family: The Reisinger-McGregor Family

# CANDI



**Beloved** Collie Family: Carol S. Martin

CINDER Beloved Cat Family: Cookie & Richard Chambers

CORRIE **Beloved Scottie** Family: Janis L. Koch

**CSUTKA** Beloved Vizsla Family: Verna Bodig

CUTTER BELOVED PET Family: Mark & Deborah Carter Donor: Carter Family Foundation

Beloved Dog, 2013 Family: Bryan Hieronymus Donor: Hieronymus Family

# EJ



Beloved Golden Retriever *Family:* Eric Papamarcos Donor: Outi & Andy Papamarcos

### GALAHAD



Companion Family: Tracy & Robert Barrett



Beloved Dog Family: Violet Gaines

GONZALO Beloved Cat Family: The Vick Family

# GRACE

**Beloved** Pet Family: Mark & Deborah Carter Donor: Carter Family Foundation

# **HAPPY BOY**



Smart & Handsome Yellow Lab *Family:* Darryl & Judy Kissinger

### **HEATHER**



**Beloved** Collie Family: Carol S. Martin





Beloved Golden Retriever, 2/8/2002 -5/22/2015 Family: Cary Meyers



Beloved Golden Retriever Family: Chipp & Janet Krumm

# **JEWEL**

Beautiful Dog Family: Hernstat Family Donor: Sherry Bernstein

### JOHANN



Beloved Dog Family: Eileen Mulaney & Gary Bauer Donor: Jo Scholand

# **KELSEY**



Beloved Yellow Lab Family: The Bouchard Family



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DIEFENBAKER

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Beloved Golden Family: The Nation Family

# **KOKO**



Beloved Golden RETRIEVER Family: Richard & Susan Bahnsen

# **KRENZEL**



Beloved Golden RETRIEVER Family: Paul & Beth Laird

# LIZZY

Beloved Pet Family: Mark & Deborah Carter Donor: Carter Family Foundation

### LULU ROCKET



**BELOVED**, **PRECIOUS** POODLE Family: Linda Semon Donor: Julie Saper

### MAX



**BELOVED YELLOW** LABRADOR Family: George & Marti Clemons Donor: Janet, Arvid & Shane Johnson

# MAXIE CONOVER



MUCH-LOVED YORKIE, WHO GAVE 15 YEARS OF LOVE, COMPASSION & JOY Family: Nell C. Hatcher & Curt and Mary Conover

# MINNIE MOUSE



Beloved Dog of Jan WILLIAMSON

### PETEY



Beloved Dog Family: Isaac & Megan Greenlee Donor: Alison Hazel, DVM

# RAVEN

**BELOVED COMPANION** Family: Arlene & Joe Bird Donor: Bill, Sandy, Dexter, Willow & Merlin