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I knew that I wanted a career in Veterinary Medicine from the time I was about 7 years old. Although I wanted to be a Veterinarian, my life took me on a different path. Still in veterinary medicine, but not as a Veterinarian.

I began working in Veterinary Hospitals when I was 17 years old, doing kennel work, assisting in exam rooms and basic assistant work. I became very interested in the laboratory portion of Veterinary Medicine. There were no schools at that time in my area that offered a degree in Veterinary Technology so I went to Bergen Community College, Paramus, NJ to obtain my AAS in Medical Laboratory Technology. I still worked at the Animal Hospital, but I was also working on weekends at Peekskill Hospital (human) as a Medical Laboratory Technician. I loved the lab work, but humans, not so much. Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY began a Veterinary Technology program in which you could receive your Bachelors of Science in Veterinary Technology. I already had my AAS, so I transferred that degree and completed my Bachelor's degree in the next 2 years. After graduation I became employed at Oradell Animal Hospital in Oradell, NJ.

Oradell Animal Hospital was a specialty animal hospital, with veterinarians who specialized in orthopedics, internal medicine, behavior and dermatology to name a few. They had their own in house lab and I accepted a position here as their laboratory supervisor. Not only was I able to use my Med Lab Tech skills, I could also utilize the skills I learned working at other animal hospitals and what knowledge I received in school. I held this position for 4 years and worked very closely with 2 internists. I wanted to do something different other than lab work and obtaining body fluid samples for 4 years. The internists were so busy that they needed their own technician. The internists and I approached the administration to develop a position for me as a Diagnostics Technician. There were no specialties at that time for technicians, so I was in a new territory I guess you could say I was one of the first.

During my time at Oradell I had ventured out to work in corporate America. I worked as a supervisor in technical support for Vet Test, now known as IDEXX. This was before Vet Test was bought by IDEXX. This was a very different aspect of Veterinary Medicine as I would not only troubleshoot with technicians and veterinarians in reference to their chemistry analyzers, I would also travel and install the Vet Test in hospitals. I did this for a few months then realized I wanted to get back in scrubs and not wear a business suit, so I returned to Oradell.

...advancing the animal health industry

As the Diagnostics Technician, I would assist them on a daily basis, some of my duties were setting up and assisting in procedures such as ultrasound guided biopsies, colonoscopy, endoscopy, bone marrow biopsy/aspirates, peg tubes and the list goes on. I loved this position because not only did I learn something new every day, but I also fell in love with ultrasonography. Well, being the chronic student that I was, I found a school in Westchester that had a certification program in human ultrasonography. Veterinary ultrasonography was so new, no one was really teaching it. I completed this certification program after 1 year and was certified to work in human medicine again as an ultrasonographer. My thinking was, if technicians can do ultrasounds in human medicine why not veterinary medicine. I wound up working in a human hospital again as an ultrasonographer and performed many different studies on a daily basis. I was especially interested in echocardiography. NYU Medical School was offering a specialty class in Echocardiography 2D and M-mode, so I took this class at night in New York City while working at Peekskill Hospital during the day. At this point I had left Oradell again. I continued to work at Peekskill for another year, was expecting my first child and left Peekskill after she was born.

I was very blessed that I was able to stay home with my 2 children for 10 years. I wanted to get back into the work force and found out that SUNY Ulster was starting a Veterinary Technology Program. I adjuncted at SUNY Ulster for 2 years then was eventually hired on full time. I have been teaching for 9 years and last year I was promoted to Assistant Professor. I currently teach Veterinary Clinical Pathology, Small Animal Diseases and Nursing, Medical Terminology and Veterinary Radiology. I teach ultrasonography as part of my radiology class and I also have the Vet Test Chemistry Analyzer in my lab. Life truly does come full circle.

I am thrilled to be President of NYSAVT and my main goal as President is to have LVT's recognized for their hard work and dedication. We want to educate not only the public but Veterinarians on how valuable LVT's are. NYSAVT wants to emphasize the importance of hiring LVT's and utilizing their skills, so the client's pet is in educated, experienced care and the Veterinarian can free up their time to perform other duties the LVT cannot. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at Spring Seminar.

Donna Meier