



Dr. Terry Blasdel Obituary

Dr. Terry Blasdel DVM, passed away peacefully in her sleep early morning on Feb. 17th, 2021, after a long co-existence with cancer. She had been in hospice care at home, watched over by family and friends. Her husband Chris was particularly attentive to her needs and comfort during her final illness and treatments.

Technical details of Terry's life include a B.A. in biology from Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, a Master of Agriculture degree from West Texas State University (currently named West Texas A&M) in Canyon, Texas and a Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine from Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas. She started her professional career as a veterinarian at the Houston Zoological Gardens where she headed the zoo's research program. Her areas of research included the study of peculiar, little known parasites for which pill bugs and cockroaches were the intermediate hosts. The other focus was basic reproductive research and artificial reproduction techniques in everything from garter snakes to rhinoceroses. This job resulted in many memorable experiences, including an unexpected encounter with a full-grown male rhinoceros, which did not end very well for Terry, but made for a great story that she delighted in telling throughout the years.

In 1986, realizing that laboratory animal medicine presented more opportunities for professional development, she began working at UT Medical School in Houston, Texas. In 2005, she moved to the University of Houston to oversee the lab animal program, retiring in 2017. Throughout the years she also worked part-time at NASA, training the Space Station crew in how to handle experiments on mice, a job she loved and pursued until shortly before her death. In her later years, Terry directed her passion and time to the support of lab animal welfare and sanctuaries.

Years ago, Terry wrote a moving obituary for her mentor Dr. Bill Cox of Amarillo. Her words opening words are worth quoting here, as they pertain to her as well.

“All lives have significance. But no matter how long or short is one’s life or the circumstances under which they lived, there is one question that matter: what will that person be remembered for?”

There will be much that Terry will be remembered for—her selfless giving of time, expertise and advice to her colleagues and friends, her deep love for her husband and family, the long hours of mentoring younger students and residents, and the passion she maintained for the care of the animals in her charge.

She is survived by husband Chris Coleman and siblings Gene, Mike and Chris, and two dogs: Rooster and Pita.

She requested that her body be cremated and the ashes scattered in several places dear to her. Due to the pandemic, her memorial services will be postponed until further notice, with one in Houston and another in Canyon.

When asked what should be in her obituary, she indicated that the poem, *The Dash*, by Linda Ellis, should be included.

THE DASH

I read of a man who stood to speak at a funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning to the end.
He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.
For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth
and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.
For it matters not, how much we own, the cars, the house, the cash.
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.
So think about this long and hard; are there things you’d like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.
To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives like we’ve never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile,
remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.
So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash,
would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?