

(May 11, 2009 Stillwater, OK) – It all started in Endwell, N.Y. Barbara Carey dreamed of becoming a veterinarian. She graduated high school from Seton Catholic Central in Binghamton, N.Y., and planned to attend Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., to study veterinary medicine. However, being the third of four children in her family, the finances were not there. Thus, her journey began.

Barbara went on to earn a B.S. degree with a dual major in Wildlife Biology/Forestry from the State University of NY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, N.Y. Following graduation, she did wildlife work with the federal government in Rawlins, Wyo. Personnel cuts came and Barbara ended up as a flight attendant and then an air traffic controller based in Chicago, Ill.

“When I was getting my advanced training at the FAA center located in Oklahoma City, I saw an ad for the Dallas Police Department,” recalls Barbara. “I didn’t care for my job or living in Chicago, so I applied. It was sunny in Oklahoma and Texas and snowing in Chicago. I vowed I would never own a snow shovel again.”

While working on the Dallas Police force, Barbara met and married her husband, Curtis Braziel, a motorcycle officer. Soon after their engagement, a gift to her sister prompted a discussion that would take her one step closer to her dream.

“I gave her a necklace with a cat reaching for a star because my sister had chased her dream of being an actress,” explains Barbara. “I admired her because although the odds were against her, she attempted her dream and reached for her star. Curtis asked me if there was anything I hadn’t reached for that when we were old and sitting in our rocking chairs, I would regret not trying. I told him that veterinary school was my star and that I had always kept a veterinary school fund to save up money so ‘someday’ I could go.”

Within a few days, Curtis had worked out the schedule and convinced Barbara that now was the time. He was willing to make many sacrifices and put in long hours thus helping to alleviate the money obstacle to obtaining her goal.

“My husband has been unbelievably supportive through the entire process,” smiles Braziel. “I had to redo all of my undergraduate work since the only courses accepted must be taken within the previous eight years. When I was working full-time and attending school part-time, he would prepare dinners for me to take with me.”

But the hardships didn’t end there. Only 38 days after their wedding, Curtis was hurt at work landing him in an intensive care unit in a coma.

“The only time I considered leaving my pre-requisite program at the University of Texas-Dallas and abandoning my dream was right after his accident. As soon as he was up and about

again, he insisted I start back up. I only missed one semester.”

Still more challenges lay ahead. When it came time for Barbara to enter veterinary college, Curtis chose to stay in Dallas and continue working while Barbara moved to Stillwater to attend OSU’s Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

“Being apart from Curtis has been the hardest aspect,” says Barbara. “We have basically spent the last four years apart, with very little time to travel back and forth for visits.”

But all that is about to change. As part of a veterinary student’s training, the students get a chance to work in the field gaining valuable hands-on experience at a practice of their choice for two 3-week rotations. Barbara chose the VCA Preston Park clinic in Dallas for her first rotation and the VCA Kaneohe Bay small animal clinic in Hawaii for her second and final rotation.

“During OSU’s Fall Veterinary Conference, I met with Donna Williams of VCA located in Oahu, Hawaii. We talked about some mutual interests and she suggested it. I talked to my husband and set it up. Since it is my last rotation, he is coming out for a two week reunion/vacation after I finish my rotation.”

Barbara’s dream of becoming a veterinarian will finally be realized in May 2009 when she graduates from Oklahoma State University’s Center for Veterinary Health Sciences with her DVM degree.



“Several people have been instrumental in helping me finish veterinary school,” says Braziel. “My mentor has been Dr. Jeff Ellis, OSU Class of 1980. He let me volunteer at his clinic prior to my applying to OSU. My chain of command on the Dallas Police Department, Sgt. Jim Chandler and Capt. Troy McClain allowed me to flex my hours while completing my pre-requisites. And, of course, Curtis. Without all of their support I never could have continued on. It’s important to realize no one is ever too old to try something new or pursue a dream. It’s also important to know that no one does this alone. We all have an amazing support group that makes this possible and I truly thank mine.”

While Barbara will return home to her husband and Texas, where she will work in a small animal clinic, her journey will never end. In becoming a veterinarian, she has taken an oath, which in part, pledges her commitment to a lifelong obligation to continually improve her

professional knowledge and competence. So Barbara's journey continues—finally on the path she so long ago dreamed of—as she begins her career in veterinary medicine.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The center's Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital is open to the public and provides routine and specialized care for small and large animals. It also offers 24 hour emergency care and is certified by the American Animal Hospital Association. For more information, visit [www.cvhs.okstate.edu](http://www.cvhs.okstate.edu) or call (405) 744-7000.

###