

## Mentoring and helping others gets passed on by Chet Taylor

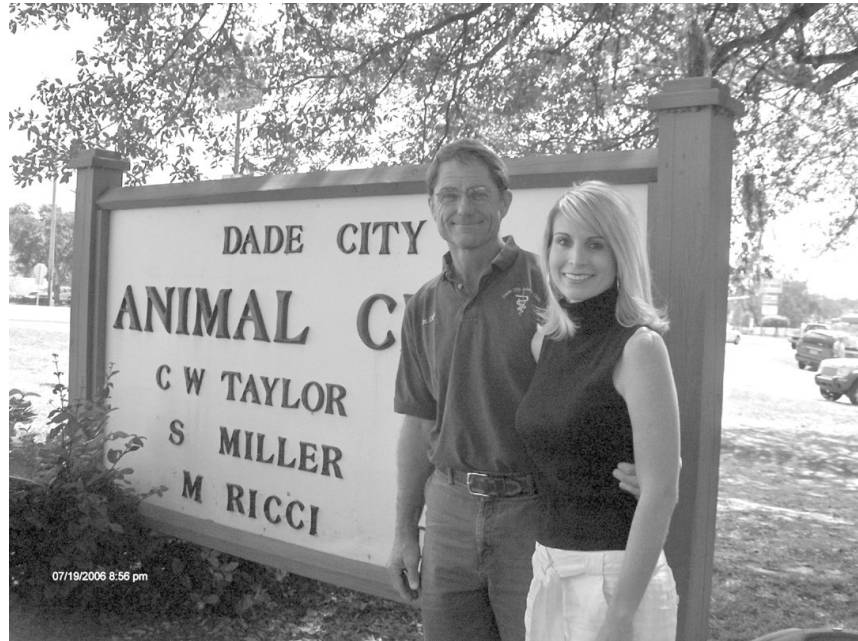
Faces Around East Pasco

By Betty Kossick

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A lot of people in Dade City hurrah for Chester W. Taylor III, DVM; known as Chet. He's an appreciated man—a product of good mentoring by his parents and the man in whose profession he followed: H.R. Smalley, DVM.

Taylor operates his 1,000 square feet veterinary office in the same location, as did Dr. Smalley; Dade City Veterinary Clinic, 13117 Highway 301. However, by the summer of 2007 the current site will be razed and a brand-new



clinic will be built. "It will be five times bigger," Taylor says, "it's been long, long overdue. I can hardly wait." He explains that the new clinic, and its operatory will include an up-to-date boarding facility as well, including a large animal's barn in the back."

Of his veterinarian mentor, Dr. Smalley, Taylor says, "He's a hoot. I said when I was young, if I could have as much fun doing what he's doing - that's what I wanted to do!" Taylor started working with Smalley while in junior high school as a kennel boy and continued working for him while in college. He returned to work professionally with his mentor in 1983, after doing a year's internship in rural animal medicine at the University of Florida.

Taylor's experienced some touching experiences as an animal doctor. The saddest time for Taylor occurred when he and Dr. Smalley still worked together, he says. "An older lady who was blind had to put down her guide dog. That's the only time I saw Dr. Smalley cry." This business has its highs and lows. A fun time was when I did a c-section on a goat and she had two live kids. My daughter, Rebecca, got to see it straight from the birth to drying them off with towels. Within minutes the little kids were up walking. She got a kick out of it and said, "Thanks, Dad, for letting me watch."

When Dr. Smalley retired after 30 years at the same location, Taylor bought the practice from him. Dr. Smalley, originally the only veterinarian in the area, says. "I made Dr. Taylor a deal he couldn't refuse. I quit and walked away with just the shirt on my back," he quips. He also tells that when Taylor's mother passed away, "Chet was only about 13 and my wife and I took him under our wing."

Smalley, obviously satisfied with his protégé, says, "Chet is as honest as the day is long. He's a hard worker and a fine boy. His children call me Pappy."

Taylor's community involvement is a full basket of responsibilities: Pasco County Fair Board member, Pasco County Fair veterinarian, a charter member of the Dairy Commission, the large animal

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vet for the annual Little Everglades Steeplechase, as well as its Jack Russell's vet. He also coaches both baseball and soccer for the kid's teams in Dade City. He and his family attend Dade City's First Baptist Church.

In addition, he's known as the man who does the benefit dinners to raise money for good causes. Annually, he cooks the benefit dinner to raise money for the 4-H Club as a part of the Kumquat Festival – and this year he's cooking for the Dade City Main Street fund raiser. In 2005, the accolade as Friend of the 4-H for the state of Florida became his honor.

Two recent benefit fundraisers that he cooked for provided funds for the ailing widow of Lowell Stanberry who recently passed away – and for Josh Cooley. "Those were very meaningful for me. It truly helped those people."

Taylor's positive influences also stem from his teen years as a Future Farmers of America involvement. He recalls serving on a judging team with Floyd Philmon, an agriculture teacher. "He and my dad were responsible for getting vocational agriculture at Pasco High School." Taylor's father served 16 years as the Pasco County school's superintendent. His mother was a physical education teacher. "Chester W. Taylor Jr. Elementary School in Zephyrhills is named after Dad," he says. "Yes, Dad and Dr. Smalley were my role models."

The Taylors have four children between them, his son is Tristan, 10; and his daughter is Rebecca, 9. Becky's children are Olivia, 7; and Laura, 5.

Taylor notes that the children accompany him often as he makes calls in his practice. "Tristan has made calls with me when he was literally in the child's seat of the truck."

When Taylor first joined Dr. Smalley in his practice he says, "I did primarily large animals. "I handled the dairies and still do dairies at 6 in the morning, but I do a lot more small animals now." Taylor's clinic employs a staff of 24. Three veterinarians comprise a part of that bevy: Doctors Steve Miller, Sarah Quatman and Maria Ricci.

"Our kids don't miss much," Taylor notes. He mentions, "Just last week Olivia pulled a calf in Brooksville. It was in backward and she asked, 'Why did we have to pull the calf?' I told her the cow couldn't have it without our help."

Taylor tells of the time that he and Ray Cluey, a client, had to pull a calf. "Rebecca had ridden with me enough that she said, 'Dad do you want me to go get that chain thing (calf puller)?' She went to the truck and got it. Ray was so impressed that he gave the calf to her. She named it Blackie. I think that Tristan, Rebecca and Olivia will all be in the running to be vets." Becky adds, "But the five-year old, there's not a chance. She wants to be a ballerina."

With such a full schedule as a vet works, does the family get to do anything else? "Well, we took six kids to the University of Florida Gators football game last Saturday!" Becky laughs.

Then Becky gives a plug for her husband, "He's just a kind hearted person, who will do anything for people who need help. He goes out and takes care of it. His brother, Rusty, helps out a lot too.