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Doctoral student
lands dream
internship

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY



NDSU doctoral student lands dream internship

Tori Kennedy was in awe the first time she met an elephant and held its trunk.

That amazing moment was one of many she has experienced during her internship at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, Virginia, where she works to improve elephant breeding programs.

"I've dreamed about this since I was a little kid," she said. "I wanted to be a scientist or vet with elephants. Now I'm here at the Smithsonian in the name of science and meeting an elephant. That is a huge step for me."

Kennedy, a doctoral student, secured the highly competitive internship with guidance from her faculty adviser at NDSU. As an intern, she works with two post-doctoral researchers in the Smithsonian's Endocrine Research Laboratory. They monitor hormones to identify the optimal times for breeding and match health records with blood samples to look for markers of health and welfare. She's in her element.

Kennedy earned a bachelor of science in animal sciences from The Ohio State University. As an undergraduate student, she developed an interest in animal reproduction by volunteering in a research laboratory. She worked on a project involving male fertility changes. A graduate student mentor noticed Kennedy's interest in animal reproduction and helped connect her to former NDSU faculty member Kim Vonnahme, who specializes in female reproduction and ultrasound in animals. "I'm a big fan of ultrasound and using that as a research tool," Kennedy said. "I was impressed by NDSU's animal science program. I decided that was the best place for me to do hands-on work."

Kennedy arrived in Fargo in 2013 to pursue a master's degree. Her thesis project focused on pregnancy in beef cattle. But in the back of her mind, her goal was to work with wildlife. While completing her coursework for her doctoral degree, she spent the next year brainstorming and writing grants to make her experience with wildlife more successful.

"Tori is highly motivated. Her curiosity is amazing and she is not scared to try new things," Vonnahme said. "I knew she needed to spend time in this field to see if it was actually what she wanted."

Kennedy was put in touch with NDSU alumna Janine Brown, who is a reproductive physiologist at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. Brown offered the experience Kennedy was looking for – an internship in elephant health monitoring in the endocrine laboratory. Kennedy immediately applied.



"Dr. Brown is an academic hero of mine," Kennedy said. "When I found out she was an NDSU graduate, I was excited that of all the students who contact her, she might want to talk to me."

Brown's own interest in animal reproduction was sparked during a reproductive physiology class she took in the animal sciences department at NDSU.

"Wildlife research is a comparative science," Brown said. "We're teaching Tori these skills. Her animal science state of mind is key to understanding the complexities of working with wildlife."

Kennedy's internship experience was extended so that she could be involved in an additional project studying Andean bears. She serves as the lead on the lab team, establishing ways to measure hormones to confirm pregnancy and evaluate how management affects stress and welfare. The research has never been conducted on this species of bear.

Her education and experience also have been valuable to the research team. "I learned how to do many things at NDSU," Kennedy said. "I'm proud to bring the animal science perspective to the table because I'm contributing something," she said. "These are people whose research I've been reading all of my academic career and they're pushing me to do things to expand the research and knowledge."

Kennedy plans to solidify her doctoral research in the coming months. "I know it will be something with identifying early pregnancy to improve our breeding and management programs," she said. "Hopefully that could include doing research at a zoo like the Smithsonian."

Faculty, students teach horsemanship clinics in Europe

Two NDSU students got the experience of a lifetime when they were selected to help teach horsemanship clinics abroad for the American Quarter Horse Association from June 24-July 15.

NDSU taught clinics in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Belgium. The group provided instruction to more than 50 individuals, teaching skills related to basic and advanced horsemanship, including trail, reining, ranch riding and roping. The clinics also increased awareness of western style riding.

Recent graduate Hayley Sauber, Hampton, Minnesota, and senior Katelynd Whitehead, Lennox, South Dakota, were the students chosen to assist on the trip.

Participating faculty members included Carrie Hammer, associate professor of animal sciences and equine science director; Tate Eck, lecturer of animal sciences and rodeo team coach; and Tara Swanson, lecturer of animal sciences and western equestrian team coach.

Both students agreed it was a great opportunity, something to remember as a highlight of their college careers.

"It was an amazing experience, probably one of the best things I did in college," Sauber said. "It was a great way to end it. It was amazing and I learned so much."

Whitehead concurred. "I imagine this is going to be what I remember most about college," she said.

"I think the trip impacted the students in a lot of ways," said Hammer, the leader of the trip. "It's always an eye-opening experience to study abroad. They saw both the differences and the similarities between the horse industry here in the United States and in Europe. It's a great experience for any student."

Whitehead, an agricultural education major, hopes to use her experience abroad during her upcoming teaching career.



"Looking forward in life, in my ag education career, I really think I'll be able to use my experiences to help educate students on the agriculture and equine industry outside of the U.S.," she explained. "I really look forward to sharing with my students, and with my friends, co-workers and colleagues."

Sauber also learned plenty from the trip.

"It was a great opportunity to see how differently they do things over there compared to here," Sauber explained. "Seeing and working with all the different horses and riders improved my own horsemanship. I am working on an equine management position, the experiences I had on our trip will help me work with all kinds of horses."

Sauber graduated from NDSU in May with a Bachelor of Science in animal and equine science. She hopes to go into the equine industry. "I want to be involved and make a difference," she said.

"Our program is a strong teaching program," Hammer said, explaining the importance of having students participate in the trip. "The experience gave the students the ability to teach lessons in a completely different setting. Sometimes language is a barrier, so you have to learn how to convey a concept when you can't necessarily explain in English terms."

In addition to the knowledge the students gained from the trip, the total experience was special.

"The countries we visited were absolutely beautiful," Whitehead said. "There were some things that just couldn't be captured on camera. The memories,

by far, were the best part."

The American Quarter Horse Association is the world's largest equine breed registry and membership organization and is based in Amarillo, Texas.

Berries are his business: alumnus leads Driscoll's test plots

NDSU alumnus Rolando Estrada is doing his best to help make a well-known brand even better.

He recently was named the test plot coordinator for Driscoll's of Europe, Middle East and Africa. The renowned family-owned company is a respected global market leader for fresh strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries.

Specifically, Estrada is responsible for the evaluation of new breeding material and applied research trials at six locations across Europe and Africa. Another aspect of his work is to provide solutions for growers of the various varieties of berries.

"What I enjoy the most is that I get to learn, not only about the performance of our crops and new varieties in different geographies, but also about the people – how they live, their traditions, their food," said Estrada, who is based at Driscoll's Genetics in Kent, United Kingdom. "It also gives me the opportunity to have an influence in a community by creating more opportunities for them."

Estrada started with Driscoll's shortly after earning his master's degree in plant pathology at NDSU in 2007. His first job was test plot manager in Baja California, Mexico. He then held several positions at Reiter Affiliated Companies (one of Driscoll's biggest growers), working on commercial trials and advanced growing practices as he shared information with growers in Morocco, Portugal, U.S. and Mexico. He was named to his new position in March.

"Research stations and test plots are at the core of what Driscoll's does, which is developing new varieties," Estrada explained. "I want to make sure that each of the areas I am responsible for is generating quality data for breeders, applied researchers and other people in the organization so they can make the best decisions when launching a new variety to Driscoll's grower community."

Estrada has many fond memories of NDSU and Fargo, including tailgating at Bison football games and the many friendships he made on campus. He credits his education for his success.



"NDSU has everything to do with how my career has turned out," he said. "Aside from learning how to do science, I learned to ask questions and always be curious about why things happen in the plant. This pushes you to find solutions and be creative. I had great professors at NDSU from whom I learned not just about science but also about life and being a professional."

Driscoll's Berries Inc. is a family-owned business founded in 1904, and is headquartered in Watsonville, California.

Scholarships: a pathway to success

NDSU junior David Kiefer says he can now sleep easier at night. The reason: he'll receive the Joe Peltier Memorial Scholarship for the upcoming academic year.

"Scholarships are important to me because they give myself and other students the opportunity to focus more on classes rather than worrying about how we are going to pay for school," said the native of Larimore, North Dakota, who is majoring in agricultural economics. "I am honored to be chosen to represent the Joe Peltier Scholarship and be a part of his legacy."

The late Joe Peltier was an NDSU alumnus who graduated in 1951. He enjoyed a highly successful career at the Arthur Farmers Elevator and other business endeavors. He also was a longtime member of the State Board of Higher Education.

The Peltier family considers the scholarship a meaningful and lasting tribute to his memory.

"We like to give back for what we've received," explained son Keith Peltier, BS '75, MS '77, who is president and general manager of Proseed Inc. in Harvey, North Dakota, and a trustee of the NDSU Foundation and Alumni Association. "Agriculture has been very important for our family for a long time, and we grew up in the grain business. Risk management is paramount in agriculture, so we're trying to reward students with scholarships in that venue."

The scholarship is just one example of the many generous contributions by the Peltier family to NDSU. Some of them include establishment of the Peltier Innovation in Teaching Award and support of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station Greenhouse Complex, Barry Hall, Sanford Health Athletic Complex and the NDSU Division of Performing Arts.

"A good education is really important," said Peltier, who also helped start and supports the Roger Grooters Scholarship Fund for a Bison track and field student-athlete. "And when people graduate and get out in the marketplace, they learn some more. We wanted to reward people, who perhaps have been less fortunate than ourselves, to be able to continue on with their educational process and be successful."

For students like Kiefer, the generosity of the Peltier family will long be remembered.

"Not a lot of students can afford to pay for college, so all of us scholarship recipients appreciate the extra financial help," said Kiefer.

Kiefer's future plans fit in perfectly with the risk management aspect of the Joe Peltier Memorial Scholarship. After graduation, he's looking forward to a career in crop insurance in his hometown of Larimore.

Alumnus receives 2016 Agribusiness Award



NDSU alumnus David Berg, recently retired president and CEO of American Crystal Sugar Co., was the recipient of the 2016 Agribusiness Award. He was honored during the annual Harvest Bowl awards program.

Berg grew up in Fargo, near the NDSU main campus. Both of his parents worked at the university, and Berg remembers crawling under the fence at Dacotah Field to watch Bison football games when he was

7 years old. He later sold popcorn in the bleachers at games until he was a teenager.

After graduation from high school, Berg enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Upon his discharge in 1976, he enrolled at what was then called Moorhead State University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in mass communications. Following graduation, he worked as a news reporter at WDAY TV and radio in Fargo. During his time at the station, a member of NDSU staff suggested he enroll in the master's degree program in agricultural economics.

Within a three-week period in 1982, Berg completed his master's degree, married Becky Samson and started a new job in the procurement division of General Mills in Minneapolis. In his five years with General Mills, Berg was a commodity analyst, grain merchandiser and ingredient buyer.

The couple returned to Fargo-Moorhead in 1987 and Berg began a 29-year career at American Crystal. His first position was in the marketing department, and led to opportunities in human resources, agriculture and operations. In 2007, he was named president and CEO.

During his time at American Crystal, Berg was involved in his company's role in supporting the Farm Bill and sugar program in Washington, D.C. He represented the beet sugar industry in negotiations to resolve a long-standing and important trade dispute with Mexico. Berg retired in August 2016.

Berg served two terms on the NDSU alumni board of directors, and was part of the Bison Caucus effort to represent NDSU at the state capitol.

The Bergs divide time between their lake home in Minnesota and winter residence in Arizona. They have three children.

Distinguished alumna is natural resources policy expert

NDSU alumna Andrea Travnicek knows what it's like to be involved in complex decisions about public policy at both the state and federal levels.

She recently took a new position with the U.S. Department of Interior as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science in Washington, D.C.

"I am excited to have the opportunity to work with the Department of Interior and even more specifically on projects and policy related to the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey," Travnicek said.

Travnicek brings a wealth of experience to her new job. During former North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple's administration, she was the "go-to person" on anything and everything related to natural resources. Skilled in a variety of areas, she played an important role in many statewide issues.

To recognize her career in public service, Travnicek was honored as the 2016 Distinguished Alumna for the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources. While on campus, Travnicek met with college faculty and administrators, and led a class discussion for students.

From July 2010 until December 2016, she served as a senior policy adviser, first for Gov. John Hoeven and then in the same capacity for Dalrymple. Before that, she was a biological sciences environmental manager for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Sacramento, California, District office.

"Throughout my career, I have worked on a multitude of different projects and worked with a lot of different people with different



perspectives. While working for the governor, I dealt with both water-protection projects and water-supply projects as the State of North Dakota often times has too much or not enough water," she said, noting she also was often involved in energy issues like oil and coal development, as well as trade matters. "I'm a person who likes to be challenged, to take on something new. I try to look at options and alternatives to solve oftentimes complex situations and try to assist in any way that I can to solve problems."

Her high-profile positions have carried a lot of responsibility. Travnicek earned her bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate in natural resources management at NDSU, and she credits her education for helping pave the way.

"NDSU prepared me very well for my career through my coursework and relationships built by being involved on campus. I came to NDSU determined to take advantage of every opportunity on campus," said Travnicek, who played soccer for the Bison and was active in the Natural Resources Management Club, Student Athlete Advisory Council, NDSU Conflict Resolution Board and Blue Key.

"NDSU opened my eyes to a bunch of opportunities," she said. "It was a place that felt like home and I was able to make friends for life. I definitely plan to come back and continue to contribute to campus."

True to her word, Travnicek is maintaining her close connection with NDSU. She is one of the initial members of the new eight-person Natural Resources Management Advisory Board with the goal to help improve NDSU courses so graduates can quickly transfer their knowledge to the workplace. She also is a member of the NDSU Alumni Association board of directors.

Marketing team places third in national competition

A marketing team of NDSU students is among the best in the nation. NDSU's team took third place in a student competition held during the National Agri-Marketing Association conference in Dallas April 26-28.

For three years in a row, NDSU's NAMA team has made the finals – placing third, sixth and third. "I think what they've accomplished is amazing," said David Englund, lecturer of economics, who is a faculty adviser for the team along with Thomas Wahl, professor of agribusiness and applied economics.

The NDSU team tried a different approach this year. Instead of a presentation that appealed to millennials or addressed household budgets, they developed a specific marketing plan aimed at baby boomers in the northeastern United States about the health benefits of a hybrid pumpkin seed.

"We wanted to break the mold; we wanted to be unique," explained Hayden Strickler, a senior agricultural economics major from Euclid, Minnesota. He was the NDSU group's president and one of six NDSU presenters in the finals.

The presentation impressed the judges. NDSU finished above institutions such as Ohio State University, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, Arizona State University, University of Tennessee and University of Florida.

"By being in the finals consistently, we are getting more recognition for our program and our students," Englund said. "I get emails from companies that are reaching out about internship possibilities or job opportunities for students. Good things are happening."

Ag visionary receives honorary doctorate



Longtime NDSU faculty member and administrator H. Roald Lund received an Honorary Doctorate in Agriculture during NDSU commencement ceremonies May 13.

"It is the highest honor that a university can bestow on any person, and that's really significant. The university took time to honor a local person in his hometown," said Lund, who is the 161st recipient of an honorary doctorate from NDSU; the first

was awarded in 1939. "Nearly all the active work I did for NDSU was from about 1969 until 1998. Here we are almost 20 years later, and the university hasn't forgotten the contributions people like myself have made."

Lund graduated from what was then called North Dakota Agricultural College with his bachelor's degree in agronomy and agricultural education in 1955. He continued on campus, earning his master's degree in agronomy in 1958.

After serving in the Army, Lund returned to NDSU and was named an assistant professor of agronomy and assistant breeder for the Hard Red Spring Wheat breeding program. He later earned his doctorate from Purdue University and again returned to NDSU as an associate professor and corn geneticist.

Lund was named assistant dean of agriculture and assistant director of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station in 1969. He became

associate dean and associate director in 1974, and he was selected in 1979 as dean and director, a position he held for 15 years.

He took great pride in communicating with North Dakotans, often crisscrossing the state to personally meet with growers and ranchers. "Back in those days, we were the face and the personality of NDSU. We had a speaker mounted on the top of a pickup and we'd go around during field days," said Lund. "The people in the NDSU Extension Service traveled the state from end to end."

Many significant projects became reality through Lund's vision and leadership, including Hultz Hall, Van Es Laboratory, Robinson Hall, the North Dakota State Seed Department building, Northern Crops Institute, Loftsgard Hall, Industrial Agricultural Communications Center and the USDA-ARS Northern Crops Science Laboratory.

"Dr. Lund had an outstanding career leading the College of Agriculture and the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station for more than 25 years," said Ken Grafton, vice president for agricultural affairs, dean of the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources and director of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station. "His can-do attitude, his vision on the future trends in agriculture and his ability to convince others to support projects and programs benefitted the entire state. He laid the foundation on which we have attained continued success."

Lund retired from NDSU in 1998, after more than 37 years at the university as a teacher, researcher and administrator.

NDSU Agriculture welcomes development director



Randy Schmeling, a development director in the NDSU Foundation and Alumni Association, has assumed important new duties as director of development for NDSU Agriculture.

"This position is designed to engage alumni, supporters and friends and to direct their gifts to areas that interest them the most or they have a passion for," explained Schmeling, who will work with both

individual and corporate contributors who support NDSU Agriculture.

Schmeling, who graduated from NDSU in 1978 with a major in economics, joined the NDSU Foundation and Alumni Association in December 2013. He previously was in the banking business, where his duties included industrial and agricultural loans.

According to Schmeling, there are a variety of giving methods, and part of his job will be to offer options. "We counsel people on what is available," he said, listing some possibilities. "There are planned gifts,

such as estate gifts like trusts with residual income to the family, or endowments to be gifted out of a will. The foundation also can receive gifts of grain or other commodities to support specific areas."

Schmeling's efforts will be in conjunction with a comprehensive and aggressive campaign by the NDSU Foundation and Alumni Association. The goal is to raise more than \$300 million for NDSU during a capital campaign that runs through 2022.

"We will provide funds for NDSU Agriculture to ensure high quality programs, faculty improvement and retention, and a higher level of student support through scholarships," he said. "We want to attract the best and brightest students."

Schmeling finds it rewarding to hear from scholarship donors. "They often tell me that they have developed a bond with the student and become personally invested in their success at NDSU," he said. "To me, that is philanthropy in its purest form."

Schmeling is based in Bismarck-Mandan, but also has an on-campus office in Morrill Hall.

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NDSU faculty member
Carrie Hammer
provides instruction
during a horsemanship
clinic in Denmark.

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