

suburban life



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Leading The Pack

Now led by a third-generation veterinarian, family-owned **Hickory Veterinary Hospital** evolves in its quest to provide exceptional care for dogs, cats, and other pets.

William J. Kay Jr., V.M.D., DACVIM, grew up surrounded by animals. He came of age on a wooded lot in Plymouth Meeting, where he watched his mother, father, and grandfather care for the dogs, cats, and other beloved pets of their friends and neighbors.

Dr. Will returned to the site of his former home early last year, only this time he did so

as the third-generation owner of Hickory Veterinary Hospital, succeeding his mother. Joined by his wife and partner Tiffany Kay, V.M.D., Dr. Will pledges to offer the highest-quality veterinary medicine, surgical and specialty care, and other complementary services to pets throughout the area.

“We’re still here, but we’re a different place than we were a year ago,” Dr. Will says. “For people who used to bring their pets here, I think they’ll get a different feel and see a slightly different place. Still, our primary focus is on maintaining the high-quality veterinary care people have come to expect at Hickory.”

For the Kays, the love of animals that began in childhood blossomed into careers that took them across the country, from Mississippi to California. Before coming to Hickory, the Kays had been living in Wrightstown, New Jersey. Dr. Will was and still is a part of a flourishing neurology and neurosurgery practice with Garden State Veterinary Specialists, whereas Dr. Tiffany worked as a general practitioner with Oakhurst Veterinary

Hospital. The Kays had been happy with where they lived and content in their careers, yet the pull to “come home” was too strong.

Hickory Veterinary Hospital traces its roots to William J. Brown, V.M.D., who was Dr. Will’s grandfather. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Brown opened a veterinary practice in Mount Airy in the 1940s and expanded to Plymouth Meeting in 1956. He eventually closed the Mount Airy location to focus solely on the suburbs. His daughter, Nancy O. Brown, V.M.D., DACVS, DACVIM (oncology), purchased the practice in 1983 and transformed it over the years by expanding staff and adding specialty services. She ran the practice until last year, only stepping back to focus on her health.

“My mother did a tremendous amount



Drs. William J. Kay Jr. and Tiffany Kay, with their two sons, James and Oliver



of good here,” says Dr. Will. “She grew Hickory Veterinary from a small one-doctor practice into a large, seven-day-a-week practice. When my mom started to pull back, things here started to suffer. That’s why we’re here now.”

‘A Big Difference’

The Kays took control of the practice in the first quarter of 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic made its presence known in the United States. They have since sought to reinvent the practice yet again, by investing in new staff, technology, and equipment to raise the already high standard of care. A new 64-slice GE-CT scanner, for example, was recently installed to provide the ability to acquire advanced diagnostic imaging of veterinary patients.

Dr. Will specializes in both medical and surgical treatment of pets with conditions such as intervertebral disc disease, seizure disorders, inflammatory diseases of the central nervous system, traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, and other neurological conditions. Dr. Tiffany, meanwhile, is a general practitioner, handling everything from emergency care and general surgery to wellness visits and care for chronic illnesses. Since taking the reins, the Kays have expanded their team to include several other “likeminded, compassionate veterinarians and staff,” according to Dr. Will. The Hickory philosophy is centered around its staff.

“I believe you can do anything if you get a talented team in place,” he says. “We’re trying to get a lot more Tiffans around—meaning people with broad expertise and compassion who can cover a lot of territory—while also keeping up and expanding our specialty services.”

Such growth has enabled Hickory Veterinary Hospital to offer a full gamut of specialty services for dogs and cats—surgery, neurology, behavior, cardiology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, radiology, and rehabilitation, among others—as well as care for small mammals and exotics. As a convenience for clients, the practice is open seven days a week, 365 days a year, with appointments available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and emergency open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Staff remains on the premises 24 hours a day.

Hickory Veterinary Hospital has received accreditation through the American Animal Hospital Association. To prospective clients, this accreditation means that a third-party organization holds Hickory Veterinary Hospital’s facilities, equipment, practice methods,



IN THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, Hickory Veterinary Hospital has instituted a number of cleaning and distancing protocols designed to protect the health of staff and clients. Everyone who enters the facility wears a facemask, and curbside drop-off limits the number of people who enter the hospital itself; euthanasia is a notable exception, as owners have the opportunity to be with their pets for the duration of the end-of-life procedure. The on-site pharmacy offers curbside pickup as well.



and management to a rigidly high standard. In addition, the Kays suggest the hospital is working toward becoming a “fear-free facility,” offering an environment designed to eliminate fear, anxiety, and stress for pets.

One of the most unique aspects of Hickory Veterinary Hospital is the Hickory Pet Inn, a large boarding facility offering overnight boarding for dogs and cats, as well as doggy daycare and “play care.” The inn recently underwent significant renovations, including the addition of new equipment for bathing and grooming, with room to expand. With the hospital right across the lot, pet owners appreciate the peace of mind of knowing their animals will be well cared for in the event of any emergencies or unforeseen medical issues. In addition, animals in need of any required pre-boarding vaccinations can receive them right at the hospital—a “one-stop shop,” of sorts.

Of course, the Kays have pets of their own: an Italian greyhound named Gia and a Labrador retriever named Winston, as

well as Sharkey and Bones, two “clinic cats” who roam the grounds. The Kays hope to pass their love of animals on to the next generation. Their two young sons, James and Oliver, may one day succeed their parents as the fourth generation of the family-owned practice.

“When we took over the practice in February, Oliver was two months old and James was four,” says Dr. Tiffany. “They are going to be a big part of the practice, too. Our kids are going to come to work with us some days, so our clients will probably see a lot of them. Will had his wild childhood here, growing up around the practice, and now our kids are going to have the same experience.”

“This veterinary practice has been here for a long time,” adds Dr. Will. “We’ve been working hard to make this a happier place for everybody. We’re providing the same high level of care, striving to do the very best we can for people and their pets, but I think people are going to see a big difference when they come here. It’s time to evolve.” ■



Hickory Veterinary Hospital Hickory Pet Inn

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