

stem cells for preventing equine arthritis; and vitamin D supplements to prevent equine motor neuron disease. Zweig funding has helped bring about the equine Lyme antibody test used by practitioners all over North America, as well as the new leptospirosis vaccine now heavily used in the thoroughbred industry.

Divers also explained how Zweig funding has saved equine lives. New York racetracks have seen a 48 percent reduction of equine racing fatalities in the past five years thanks in part to Zweig-supported research on leading risk factors. Zweig research has also helped unravel the mystery of Theiler's disease and its association with equine parvovirus. Because of Cornell's Zweig-funded work, the USDA now requires that all horses used as blood product donors must be negative for equine parvovirus. Finally, equine practitioners now commonly administer heparin after abdominal surgery to help prevent adhesions — a discovery funded by Zweig.

Following Divers' overview, Drs. Norm Ducharme and Gillian Perkins gave summaries of their research efforts in upper airway problems and equine herpesvirus, respectively, pointing out how Zweig funding has been instrumental in pushing their advances forward.

After the review of past successes at Cornell, the presentations shifted toward future plans.

Lisa Fortier, Ph.D. '98, the James Law Professor of Large Animal Surgery, introduced the upcoming goals for all of Cornell's equine programs, outlining the plan to build their caseload, develop an equine field service and build a new horse barn.

Newer investigators Heidi Reesink, Ph.D. '16, and Michelle Delco '98, D.V.M. '02, Ph.D. '16, gave overviews of their equine research. Reesink discussed her studies on osteoarthritis and fractures with a focus on ending the epidemic of racehorse breakdowns, while Delco discussed mitochondrial dysfunction's role in early joint injury.

Next, Dr. Gerlinde Van de Walle and Jonathan Cheetham, Ph.D. '08, gave overviews of Zweig-funded work that had garnered federal/sponsored funding; Van de Walle highlighted her work in stem cells and viruses, while Cheetham discussed his research on peripheral nerve injury and recurrent laryngeal nerve disease.

Next, Lauren Schnabel, D.V.M. '04, Ph.D. '13, associate professor at North Carolina State University, gave her keynote talk, discussing her interest in using mesenchymal stem cell and platelet-rich plasma as therapeutics for a wide range of equine issues.

At the close of the presentations, Weiss noted, "I think



Dr. Thomas Divers and Lisa Fortier, Ph.D. '98

it's clear that the Zweig fund has had a transformative impact on equine research and has also fostered the creation of a remarkable community of equine scientists. Thanks to our partnership with Zweig, we are positioned to continue to make great strides in equine health."

Attendees then had the chance to mingle over hors d'oeuvres and examine posters showcasing the latest Zweig-funded research.

Later, Zweig committee members, members of the Zweig family and other guests gathered in the second floor of the atrium for a celebratory dinner. During the dinner, Lorin D. Warnick, D.V.M., Ph.D.'94, the Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine, presented Anna, Brian and Sylke Zweig with a mounted horseshoe from the Cornell farrier shop as a symbol of appreciation for Harry Zweig's impact on Cornell research. Warnick also publicly recognized Jerry Bilinski '66, D.V.M. '69, a dedicated equine practitioner, who served as the New York State Senate representative to the Cornell University Board of Trustees. Warnick presented Bilinski with a mounted and inscribed brick from Schurman Hall.

As the event wound to a close with scientists, students and equine industry leaders sharing stories and insights, it was clear that the legacy of Harry Zweig has become a powerful engine for discovery and service for horses in New York and beyond. ■