

D. Michael Davis, DVM, MS

New England Equine Medical & Surgical Center

by Kelly Welles

D. Michael Davis, DVM, MS, founder and CEO of New England Medical & Surgical Center, in Dover, New Hampshire, is no stranger to the horse world. Growing up in the Genesee Valley Hunt region of western New York, Dr. Davis was exposed to horses at an early age. He grew up on a farm with close to 40 horses.

His mother, Georganna Prime Davis, was an avid horse woman who competed in show jumping, fox hunting and most notably three-day eventing. In 1958 she placed second at the Wofford Cup Olympic Selection Trials in eventing, defeated only by professional rider Jona Irbinskas. This should have ensured her a spot on the 1959 Pan American Games equestrian team, but being a woman she was passed up for the fifth place rider, a man. "Unfortunately, they wouldn't allow women to compete at that point," says Dr. Davis. "That changed for the '64 Games, but too late for my mother. She continued to ride and compete for many years with some great horses." Dr. Davis' father rode in the late '50s and through the early '60s. After attending veterinary school at Colorado State University, Dr. Davis' father set up a large animal practice in New York. "He did mostly equine," says Dr. Davis. "[He] vetted the Pan Am Three-Day Games and the National Horse Show in NYC, Madison Square Garden, a few times. His equine career was cut short by a car accident that left him partially paralyzed."

Following in his parents' footsteps, Dr. Davis jumped into riding at a young age. "My family always teases me about winning my first horse show in lead line," says Dr. Davis. "My brother told me to sit up straight and keep my heels down. I rode a lot, foxhunted and did Pony Clubs – through B level – and competed primarily in horse trials and three-day." He competed up to the preliminary and intermediate levels before suffering a broken collar bone from a bad crash in a two-day event a day before leaving for college. It was the last time he competed as education took priority.

Dr. Davis began working for two equine veterinarians while still in high school before enrolling in Colorado State University where he received his B.S. degree in Animal Science in 1982 and his D.V.M. in 1987. While there Dr. Davis continued to be involved in horses and three-day eventing, helping to bring awareness of the relatively unknown sport to northern Colorado. He worked in the school stables and spent three summers as a veterinary assistant at Littleton Large Animal Clinic, a large practice south of Denver. During veterinary school, he worked at the university hospital and after graduation, went to the Illinois Equine Hospital outside of Chicago for a one-year internship in equine medicine and surgery. "[It was] a very busy practice with good mentors," says Dr. Davis. "This set me up for a three-year residency program in equine surgery at Louisiana State University." From there, Dr. Davis concurrently completed his M.S. in Veterinary Anatomy in 1991.

Dr. Davis continued his journey by moving to Montreal, where he spent just under a year at the University of Montreal as an interim equine surgeon. He was the only surgeon on staff at that time. While it was only a short stint, Dr. Davis says it was a great experience with super people and time well spent.

In 1992 Dr. Davis joined Rochester Equine Clinic in Rochester, New Hampshire, as a staff surgeon and clinician. By 1997 he was the major case and income generating clinician at the practice and in 2000 he became a 1/3 interest partner. After five years and for a multitude of reasons, the three partners decided to dissolve the practice known as Rochester Equine Clinic to all pursue different directions of practice.

The next step for Dr. Davis was the creation of New England Equine Medical & Surgical Center, PLLC, a 34,000-square-foot emergency and referral equine hospital that looks and feels more like a high-class boarding facility

than a typical veterinary facility. Construction on the facility started in January 2005 and careful consideration for the well being of the equine patients and owners is apparent from the wall-to-wall high-density rubber floors to the relaxing waiting room complete with fireplace.

Dr. Davis began the idea of NEEMSC while in Rochester and how the practice evolved is as interesting as the physical lay out. When Rochester dissolved, Dr. Davis and then-partner Dr. Deme Erickson wanted to stay together in some way, but Dr. Erickson's type of practice – primarily ambulatory, dentistry and reproduction – was very different than his own – lameness, surgery and hospitalized critical care. Dr. Davis teamed up with Dr. Jacqueline Bartol, an outstanding clinician that specializes in medicine, colic cases, respiratory disease, etc., to co-own the practice known as NEEMSC. Dr. Erickson joined them as co-owner/partner of the land and facility, and has her own practice housed at NEEMSC known as TNT Equine, PLLC. "The combination and sharing of both facility and specialties has been phenomenal," Dr. Davis says.

July was the one-year anniversary of the opening of NEEMSC and the facility is thriving under the collective experience of everyone involved. "Dr. Bartol and I are blessed with a staff that cares so much for the equine patients and their owners," says Dr. Davis. "They are all very experienced horse people – most are riders – and have been in the equine veterinary business for many years. The technical staff alone has the cumulative experience of more than 80 years! They have done this for a long time, know what to do and how to do it, and most importantly, are always looking for ways to do things better. When we moved from the Rochester facility, we not only wanted to provide clients with an excellent practice environment, but really wanted to 'step up' our commitment to client service and excellence of care, and the staff has embraced it fully. They are more involved in our client communication and meeting clients at appointments and helping the horses onto trailers when done. This has been a great thing for all of us."

Daily life for Dr. Davis at NEEMSC is varied and incredibly busy with the combination of surgery, lameness examinations and all types of other cases. Surgery can begin as early as 5:00 a.m., depending on the number of surgeries scheduled for the day, hospital case rounds begin at 9:00 a.m., and evaluation and treatment of outpatients begins at 10:00 a.m., where up to six horses will be seen each day (by Dr. Davis and team). Each of the four doctors has their own technical team seeing their own cases as well, assisting in radiographs, ultrasound and other treatments. A second set of rounds begins at 5:00 p.m. and then the night crew is prepared for the evening treatments.

"The fun thing for me is that each day is different," says Dr. Davis. "I am truly fortunate – I really love everything I do and there is great variety in each and every day. Surgery is an incredibly interesting and fulfilling thing I do and sometimes I think I could be in there every day, but then I miss seeing and helping clients and the horses in lameness, etc. So, I am really happy doing all these things, and having a balance is great."

While it has barely been a year since the opening of NEEMSC, Dr. Davis is already planning additions and new services in order to keep the facility evolving. "We are planning a building to house nuclear medicine – scintigraphy or bone scans – for difficult lameness cases and also an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) unit," says Dr. Davis. The leading equine MRI company has chosen NEEMSC to house one of their units, one of only three that will ever be in the New England region. Also, to better serve NEEMSC, clients, and all regional veterinarians, both small and large animal, a crematorium was built on the premises of NEEMSC in May 2006.

Outside of NEEMSC, Dr. Davis spends time skiing, hiking and traveling with his wife of 18 years, Christine, their 14-year-old son Daniel and their 11-year-old daughter Katy.

"We all just completed a scuba diving course and are going to Belize to finish the open water part of the training," says Dr. Davis. He has also been competitively running for a number of years, qualifying for twice and running the Boston Marathon in 2002 and 2003. "I haven't raced since last year in putting together the design and building of NEEMSC, then starting in and maintaining this incredibly busy practice," says Dr. Davis. "But I am getting ready to start again."

Although Dr. Davis has been many places, there is a something special at NEEMSC that clicks between him and everyone there; from his partners, colleagues, and staff, to the patients and clients. "I can't say there is any one thing that is best about NEEMSC," says Dr. Davis. "When I sit here and realize all that is going on around me, I would say – it just works. For example, right now my colleague Dr. Andy Kaneps is currently in surgery with a yearling Thoroughbred that has severe colic, my partner Dr. Jackie Bartol is evaluating another colic case that just arrived from Rhode Island, Dr. Monika Calitri and I just finished lamenesses for the day and are attending to hospitalized cases, and everyone else is assisting doctors, or doing their various duties in the lab, pharmacy, front office, barn, etc. It just works. We have all come together to do a job we love and the new facility has allowed us to do our jobs in a much more efficient and comfortable environment. As a result, we have so much more to offer our equine patients and their owners."

To contact New England Equine Medical & Surgical Center or Dr. Davis call 603-749-9111 or email dmdavis@newenglandequine.com



Dr. Davis is committed to client service and excellence of care.



NEEMSC provides state of the art technology to care for the horse such as radiography and shock wave therapy.



New England Equine Medical & Surgical Center

Let us team up with your veterinary professional for that competitive edge



I've had my horse, Dionne, for 5 years now. Two years ago I was seriously considering selling her. She was different, she hadn't been acting like the same horse that I had been riding and competing the year earlier. Her stride had shortened and she was beginning to bolt after jumping fences; showing her was now becoming a disappointing venture often ending in tears. I felt as though I couldn't depend on her, we would put down an amazing round, only to come back into the ring 10 minutes later and have her run away with me after the first fence.

No matter how much work we put into her, Dionne continued to worsen. She was looked at by 5 vets, each one putting the blame on a different body part. Dionne was injected, massaged, and put on various supplements; each offered a temporary fix, but nothing seemed to solve the problem. My family and I continued to become discouraged.

We decided to give it one more try by bringing her to Dr. Mike Davis. After a complete exam, it was discovered that Dionne had broken her knee. It was obvious to the vets that it was not a new injury. My horse had been jumping and competing on a broken knee.

She underwent surgery and a long recovery process. After four months of stall rest and hand walking, she was slowly brought back to work, with intensive follow-ups at New England Equine Medical and Surgical Center. We were gradually allowed to reintroduce her to jumping.

It was a long process, but Dionne is back! This year we competed at the Sport Horse Nationals in Lexington, VA and came home with three national reserve championships!

The staff at NEEMSC have continued to help us through whatever arises. Two years ago, I never would have dreamed that I would still have Dionne, let alone be competitive on the national level again. I am so thankful for NEEMSC for their knowledge, care and support.

Jennifer Roberts
Khandle in the Wind + + + + // (Dionne)
Chesterfield, NH

Nobody Says It Better Than Our Clients,
But We Like To Call Them *family.*

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