

Pomona, Calif.

CVM 2019 student Athena Kepler has received a \$45,000 AQHF (American Quarter Horse Foundation) Margaret A. Haines Scholarship. This scholarship is made possible by the late Margaret A. Haines, a passionate and vocal supporter of the health and well-being of horses. This scholarship promotes the funding of cutting-edge research which includes the control and treatment of laminitis, the study of immunizations and vaccines for infectious diseases, and genetic and musculoskeletal injury treatment.

Ms. Kepler remembers her long path to the achievement of this scholarship. With her starting point inspired by the ownership of her first American Quarter Horse, which gave her a love for the breed and introduced her to equine sports medicine and podiatry. Years later, after earning a BS in Bioengineering from UCR she entered veterinary school at WesternU with a desire to develop her skills and knowledge to eventually start her own veterinary device company and practice sports medicine. Ms. Kepler was nervous in approaching the application for the Margaret A. Haines Scholarship as it required a show record in AQHA, which she did not have. Nonetheless, she applied, recounting the sheer amount of determination, passion, and effort she put into writing about what she wanted to do for the equine industry practicing in sports medicine as well as her dreams of developing future devices and conducting research that would help all equine athletes.

After graduation, Ms. Kepler plans on obtaining her certificate of equine rehabilitation practitioner, certificate of canine rehabilitation practitioner, as well as her Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Board certification. She has plans to aid in the development and monitoring of rehabilitation programs at local Southern California equine rehabilitation facilities and continue to practice equine podiatry while bringing awareness to the necessity of farriery to bridge the divide between farriers and veterinarians. She will seek to continue to practice both equine and canine sports medicine and develop a device company for equine and canine athletes and companions.

Ms. Kepler recalls that her interests and dedication to clinical research were likely key in the success of her application for the AQHF Margaret A. Haines Scholarship. Further achievements, such as successful collegial presentations (at CVM/WesternU, the National Student Presentation, and the Veterinary Orthopedic Society Conference), and co-authorship on a manuscript have gone far to enrich the appeal of her application for the scholarship. It is her belief that hard work and perseverance can help one to achieve many things, including mentorships, scholarships and personal achievements. She wishes to thank all of her amazing mentors and the individuals that have gotten her to where she is today. She would like to mention Dr. Babak Faramarzi for giving opportunity and guidance to pursue her goals and a residency in Equine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. Additionally, Dr. Elizabeth Boynton who was instrumental in boosting her confidence as a female vet and her ability to pursue and obtain the scholarships she has received.