

Douglas Meckes, DVM

ORTHOPAEDIC TRAUMA



Veterinarian Douglas Meckes is an avid outdoorsman and is passionate about cycling. He routinely rode his bike on the George Washington Memorial Parkway Mount Vernon Trail, just steps from his home on the south end of Alexandria, Virginia. On a Friday afternoon in Mid-August of 2012, he hopped on his bike after work to take advantage of the summer day.

On his return trip, Doug was on the outer edge of a curve when he looked up and saw another biker enter his lane from the opposite direction. As he moved to the outside, his front tire slipped off the trail, catching a divot in the asphalt. "In the blink of an eye, my front tire was perpendicular to the trail, my bike stopped and I was launched over the handlebars at 15 miles per hour," Doug recalls. "I landed on my head and on the point of my hip (my greater trochanter) and skipped like a rock for 10 feet. When I stopped skipping, I could not arise from my recumbent position and I knew I was in trouble."

Other bikers on the trail quickly attended to him and called the rescue squad. Doug was rushed to Mt. Vernon Hospital, where he learned that he shattered his pelvis and hip. The attending physician recommended that because of his age, Doug should let the fracture heal, and then replace the hip. Doug reminded the doctor that despite his age, he was highly active and wished to remain so. Doug also planned to return to his home state of North Carolina to consult with his long-time health care providers at Duke University Hospital System.

He stayed in the hospital in Alexandria for a week and a half, working with a physical therapist before transferring to Duke University Medical Center. Doug's orthopaedist at Duke, who he had seen six years prior for a knee replacement, referred him to Steven Olson, MD, an orthopaedic trauma surgeon. Upon examination, Dr. Olson discovered that Doug had a blood clot in his right leg. He immediately initiated therapy to treat the clot, and surgery was scheduled two days later.

On September 1, 2012, Dr. Olson operated, performing an open reduction and internal fixation to reconstruct Doug's pelvis. Doug spent the next two months in extensive rehabilitation at Duke, before returning to the Washington, DC, area for another two months of treatment at George Washington Hospital.

Determined to recover to the greatest extent possible, Doug worked hard in therapy and is now able to enjoy an active lifestyle that includes walking, fishing, and golf. He's since given his bike to his son, as his wife insists that he keep one foot on the ground at all times.



"I shudder to think where I would have been without the surgery undertaken by an accomplished surgeon," Doug says. "During my veterinary practice career, I trained in orthopaedic surgery and performed orthopaedic surgery on a regular basis. I know and appreciate full well that without the skill possessed by Dr. Olson, my outcome would have been considerably less desirable."

Doug looks forward to retirement and walking the Way of Saint James in Northern Spain. He is grateful for the care he received and hopes that further research and physician education will advance the standard of care for trauma patients.

