



Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet® 2009 Winner Profile

1. What does winning the Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet® award mean to you?

It was an honor that was unexpected but very much appreciated. There are so many very talented and caring veterinarians. Apparently, I know at least one individual who is an influential writer, and who thought I should be included among that group of veterinarians.

2. When did you decide to become a vet and why?

I first remember deciding to become a vet when I was 8 years old. That was the time I got bitten by my first dog. Unfortunately, I was given the responsibility to decide the dog's fate. I have been trying to make up for it ever since.

3. Who were the special animals in your life (past and current)?

I have always been blessed with wonderful two- and four-footed friends. One of the most special was a blind diabetic dog named Whiskers. She came to me after the owners suggested that I should adopt the dog because it would otherwise be euthanized as they were going through a divorce. Being blind, Whiskers did not like to be left alone, and she became very attached to us. Once I took her to my brother's house when I was helping him with some construction. While doing some work on the second level of his house, only accessible by a ladder, Whiskers climbed up the ladder to the second level. Fortunately, she barked when she reached the top so we could assist in her unperfected dismount.

4. What are the most memorable experiences you have had in your career?

I, like most vets, have had some great experiences. I enjoy working with wildlife and have been called out to work on eagles, hawks, herons, owls, cormorants, pelicans, bunnies, groundhogs and, most recently, a beaver. B.B. the beaver, a permanent resident of Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital, was having a difficult time getting out of her indoor pond. On exam she was found to have a painful stiff spine. We performed several sessions of acupuncture on some back points and she is improving.

5. What is your care philosophy toward your animal patients and their owners?

My philosophy regarding patient care is consistent with my veterinary oath. The patient's care and comfort takes precedence over all other concerns. Fortunately, the majority of people that present these patients feel the same.

6. Do you encourage your clients to do their own pet health research?

I enjoy working with clients that are well informed. When they have already researched some concerns regarding their pet's health, it facilitates a prescient conversation with respect to the care for our patients.

7. How do you use research in your practice?

We use research in two ways. The first of which is to become involved with clinical trials. This allows us to remain more objective in our perspective regarding scientific investigation and its application to the practice of medicine. The other way research is used is in the approach and treatment of individual patients. Not every patient fits into a scientific patient protocol. By using available online and journaled references we can be better advised as to the myriad of approaches to patient care and select the best for our patients.

8. What is the most rewarding aspect of your professional life?

The most rewarding aspect of my professional life is the ability to give back to the community. Whether this is helping a client/patient in need, providing assistance to the myriad of rescue organizations or assisting wildlife, it feels good when I can help and money is removed from the equation.

9. How has the profession changed since you became a doctor?

The profession has changed dramatically over the past 25 years I've been in practice. I can no longer perform my services in the same manner as when I graduated from school. The level of expertise and care that is expected is now much greater. Referral has become a much greater aspect of providing excellent care. In that vein, performing surgery and not monitoring the patient while it is in the hospital no longer meets the standard of care that my clients expect. In addition, the landscape for veterinary practices has changed significantly. I initially practiced in a mixed-animal environment in what was then considered country or rural. The setting is now more suburban. Furthermore, client expectations of species proficiency have become much greater due to the advancement in

procedures and knowledge. It has made it almost impossible to practice on all species equally well. Species “specialization” has displaced the mixed-animal practitioner.