

Former MP, Dundas Mentor Receive Distinguished Veterinary Awards

[January 25, 2007] Toronto, Ontario – The Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA) will this week honour two individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the veterinary profession, affecting thousands of animals and their human companions.

OVMA Golden Life Membership Award: Recognizes OVMA members who have served the veterinary profession in an extraordinary manner, but who are now retired from veterinary medicine.

Dr. Arthur (Harry) Brightwell, retired, Stratford, Ontario -- 1956 graduate of the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph

After graduating in 1956, Dr. Brightwell served as a mixed animal practitioner, but he always had his heart set on the bigger picture.

In the early seventies, he organized a group of veterinarians who knew something had to be done to improve the distribution of veterinary supplies. This group started up a veterinary cooperative in St. Mary's, Ontario which now provides to veterinarians across the province, Veterinary Purchasing. In 1972, Dr. Brightwell was the first president of this cooperative which now boasts over \$160 million in annual sales.

Always a go-getter, Dr. Brightwell was also instrumental in founding the Society of Ontario Veterinarians, which in 1990 became the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association.

Throughout his career, Harry continued to lead the way, holding a variety of positions with a number of other veterinary organizations. Among these were:

- Co-founder and first president of the Ontario Swine Practitioners Association
- Vice President, Councillor and Committee Member at the Ontario Veterinary Association – now known as the College of Veterinarians of Ontario
- President, Perth Huron Veterinary Association, and
- Member of the Advisory Board at the Centralia School of Agricultural Technology.

Besides his work in veterinary medicine, Dr. Brightwell was also quite involved with his community:

In 1984 he began his political career as Federal Member of Parliament for the Perth-Wellington riding. He held this position for 9 years, finally leaving politics behind in 1993.

Never tiring of public service, Dr. Brightwell has been involved with so many other community groups, including the Stratford & District Association for the Mentally Retarded, the Boy Scout Association, the Stratford Art Association, the Stratford Kennel Club and Habitat for Humanity. He is presently a member of the 'K-40' Club of Stratford, the Probus Club and the Rotary Club of Stratford.

"It is veterinarians like Dr. Harry Brightwell that have made the profession what it is today – made up of individuals who are leaders in their communities, in rural and urban settings, with companion and food animals, and amongst people," says OVMA President Dr. Ken Bridge. "We are proud to be part of a profession with so many caring, involved individuals like Dr. Brightwell."

OVMA Award of Merit: Acknowledges members of the community – who may or may not be veterinarians – who have made significant contributions to the world of animals and the veterinary profession. The Award of Merit is the only OVMA Award category that permits public nominations.

Dr. Bruce Robinson, Dundas Animal Hospital, Dundas, Ontario
-- 1976 graduate of the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph

Dr. Bruce Robinson graduated from the Ontario Veterinary College in 1976 and has practiced mixed animal veterinary medicine ever since.

Throughout his career, Dr. Robinson has provided mentorship to veterinary students, veterinary technology students, high school co-op students, graduates and foreign-trained veterinarians (including those in the Veterinary Skills Training and Enhancement Program, a provincially funded program which assists foreign graduates to achieve licensure in Ontario). He has especially embraced the task of mentoring foreign-trained veterinarians from field experience through to licensure. Dr. Robinson feels that foreign-trained veterinarians are quote, “a huge resource of capable, intelligent and highly motivated future colleagues.”

Dr. Lindsay Paterson of the Lawrence Veterinary Clinic in Toronto says,

“Over the past 6 – 7 years, Bruce has helped countless foreign veterinary graduates, like myself, prepare for the large animal section of their Clinical Proficiency Exams. He is also actively involved each summer with the OVC Externship Program.

“His enthusiasm and dedication to the profession, together with his genuine compassion for both patients and clients, are clearly evident in all his work. He practices a very high standard of medicine and has kept well ahead academically.

Returning to large animal work after 25 years in small animal practice was daunting for me. Bruce was always friendly, cheerful, encouraging, patient and kind. He turned the experience into a pleasant and positive one. He gives of his time and effort to a continuous stream of ‘students’ quietly and selflessly.

Dr. Robinson is an inspiration to young graduates and a reminder to older vets as to why we entered the profession in the first place.”

Dr. Eldad Weiner of Willowdale Animal Hospital says,

“I had the honour to be one of many veterinarians to have been mentored by Dr. Bruce Robinson while preparing for my Clinical Proficiency test. Dr. Robinson, a warm and generous mannered person, let me be involved and share his case management and care. I felt very comfortable, welcome and well-cared for while working alongside him.”

Dr. Robinson has mentored veterinarians from countries around the world, including Poland, Egypt, India, Romania, Pakistan, South Africa, Israel, Kenya and the Phillipines.

“Veterinarians who voluntarily and so actively mentor their peers play an important role in ensuring that the best possible veterinary care is delivered right across Ontario,” says OVMA President Dr. Ken Bridge. “Professionals like Dr. Robinson help ensure that educated professionals who immigrate to Canada contribute to the Canadian economy by putting their education and skills to use as soon as possible.”

OVMA Awards Ceremony

OVMA will honour these two individuals at two separate awards ceremonies during the 2007 OVMA Conference & Trade Show in Toronto. Media must register on-site at the OVMA Registration Desk.

OVMA Golden Life Membership Presentation, Dr. Arthur (Harry) Brightwell

When? Thursday, January 25, 8 a.m.
Where? Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto
Photos? Digital images will be available post-event upon request.

OVMA Award of Merit Presentation, Dr. Bruce Robinson

When? Saturday, January 27, roughly 8 a.m.
Where? Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto
Photos? Digital images will be available post-event upon request.

About OVMA

Founded in 1980, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association represents more than 3,000 Ontario veterinarians in private practice, government, academia, industry and public service. Its mandate includes the provision of economic research, continuing education and professional development, increasing public awareness, government relations, and discount services to members.

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For more information, contact: Nadia Vercillo, Manager of Communications and Public Relations

Phone: (905) 875-0756, ext. 15

Toll-free phone: 1 (800) 670-1702

Mobile: (416) 875-0756

Email: nvercillo@ovma.org