



Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Alumnus earns Association's highest honor

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Dr. James Peddie'65 will be recognized with the Daniel Elmer Salmon Award for Distinguished Alumni Service, given annually by the Alumni Association of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University. To be presented at the New York State Veterinary Conference, in October 2013, the award recognizes and honors Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine DVM graduates who have distinguished themselves in service to the profession, their communities, or to the College.

“The recognition came as a complete surprise,” said Dr. Peddie, adding that he will receive the honor on behalf of himself and his wife Dr. Linda Reeve Peddie '65, whom he met in veterinary school at Cornell and has been his partner in all things – personal and professional – for more than 50 years. “I have dedicated my career to veterinary medicine and wouldn't do it any differently if I were able to do it over again. This profession is exciting and at the center of healthy and productive lives for animals and people.”

The award is named in honor of Cornell's first DVM graduate, who is remembered for his pioneering work in controlling contagious animal diseases in the early 20th century. D.E. Salmon was one of Dr. James Law's first students when Cornell University opened its doors in 1868. He received the Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree from Cornell in 1872, and he was awarded the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1876, the first DVM degree to be awarded in the United States of America. Dr. Salmon's contributions to veterinary medicine and human medicine were numerous and significant, including private practice, government service, foreign service, food inspection, and leadership in identifying significant bacterial diseases, including salmonella.

Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Dr. Peddie was drawn to California immediately following graduation from Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine. He was one of the three founding members of the Conejo Valley Veterinary Clinic in Thousand Oaks. During his 23 years there he mentored many veterinary students and recent graduates.

Dr. Peddie developed an interest in exotic animal medicine in the early 1970s. He published papers on surgical procedures in exotic animals such as sea mammals, exotic felines and Woolly Monkeys; diagnosed blood cancer in a

mandrill; and operated on a leopard whose life was in danger, all at a time when exotic animal medicine was still evolving.

“My practice followed the philosophy that ‘we will treat any species because we’re the only ones trained to do it,’” said Dr. Peddie. “As a child, I spent a lot of time hunting and fishing, which gave me the opportunity to learn about the similarity and differences in anatomy and organ function across species. This, with my formal training and some early success stories, gave me the confidence to help animals that others might not have been willing to consider.”

Dr. Peddie also volunteered at local zoos, becoming a pioneer in humane restraint and treatment techniques in a variety of exotic species. During this time he began a 30-year relationship with the Exotic Animal Training and Management Program at Moorpark College. He touched the lives of hundreds of students who would dedicate their professional lives to the care and training of exotic animals. Dr. Peddie received the Academic Senate Outstanding Service Award and the Distinguished Faculty Chair Award while at Moorpark College.

“More than 40 of my students at Moorpark, a community college, were inspired to earn their veterinary degree,” said Dr. Peddie. “Other students have pursued doctorate degrees. I’m proud to have been a part of their professional development and their decisions to lead in a profession that touches all walks of life, from people and animals in the military to entertainers in Hollywood.”

His particular interest in elephants led the Peddies to work tirelessly to monitor and shape fair and meaningful legislation and regulations for the appropriate care of these animals when kept in captivity. He is respected the world over as a pioneer in wildlife medicine and in the area of the humane use of animals in the entertainment industry. When one of his elephant herds was diagnosed with tuberculosis, he helped develop protocols for testing and treating these animals for this zoonotic disease. One of his proudest moments was delivering a baby elephant that would become his namesake.



Throughout his career, Dr. Peddie has found the time and energy to devote to organized veterinary medicine, in part, an AVMA delegate representing California, AVMA Treasurer for six terms, California VMA Treasurer and Board of Governors. He is currently Treasurer of the Western Veterinary Conference and serves as a clinical proficiency examiner and as a trustee for AVMA’s Group Health and Life Insurance. In addition, Dr. Peddie has received both the California Veterinary Medical Association's Lifetime Achievement Award and the AVMA award, which recognizes distinguished members of the Association who have contributed to the advancement of veterinary medicine in its organizational aspects.