

Dr. Robert Bruce Wiggs 1948-2009

Bob Wiggs, as he was universally known in the veterinary dental community world-wide, died November 29, 2009.

A 1973 graduate of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University, he established the Dallas Dental Service Animal Clinic at the Coit Road Animal Hospital, in Dallas, Texas.

Although he was quiet and modest personally, he was a giant in veterinary dentistry. He was a founding member (1976) and President (1995-96) of the American Veterinary Dental Society. He was a member of the first group of veterinarians inducted as Fellows of the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry, and was President of the Academy from 2003-2005. He was a member of the first class to enter the American Veterinary Dental College by examination, in 1989, and was subsequently President of the College from 1998-2000. He was lead author of an influential textbook, *Veterinary Dentistry, Principles and Practice*, published in 1997, and was the author of many papers in veterinary journals and an internationally-known lecturer in veterinary dentistry.

In 1994, Bob was awarded the Peter Emily AVDC Service Award for his contributions to veterinary dentistry. He was awarded the American Veterinary Dental Society's Research and Education Award in 1999. In 2001, Bob was awarded the Hu-Friedy Golden Scaler Award, and also that year he was recognized as the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry Fellow of the Year.

His Dallas Dental Service Animal Clinic was one of the first to be recognized as a veterinary dental residency training site by AVDC; he trained several members of AVDC as residents, and many more as a result of visits to his hospital. He was a frequent contributor to and source of sage advice in the AVDC list-serv. Even when he was in severe pain, as he was for much of the last several years, he was always ready and willing to help anyone who asked.

Bob had a particular interest in zoo and wild-life dentistry. He was a volunteer consultant to the Dallas Zoo and several other zoos and animal parks, and was the long-time co-organizer of the Exotic Animal Dentistry program at the Veterinary Dental Forum, where his presentations were always one of the highlights of the program. He was a Board member of the Peter Emily International Veterinary Dental Foundation, which provides dental treatment of captive and wild animals.

He was also active as an adjunct Professor at the Baylor University College of Dentistry, including service as chair of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and as Veterinarian at the Surgical Research Foundation, Baylor University College of Medicine.

Bob's contributions to the development of veterinary dentistry, and in particular to the training of veterinary dentists as a result of his willingness to give of himself in such huge measure, were recognized during his lifetime by the naming of an American Veterinary Dental College Award in his honor. The AVDC Robert Wiggs Award is given annually to an outstanding candidate or recent diplomate, and will be a continuing memorial to his contributions.

Bob was active in and held office in his local and state veterinary medical associations, and provided pro-bono veterinary services for several dog clubs and animal welfare and rescue organizations. He was the Texas A&M Outstanding Alumnus (1995) and the Texas VMA Companion Animal Practitioner of the Year (1996). He was also active in community and charitable organizations.

Humble and knowledgeable, ever willing to give of himself and with never a negative word to say about anyone, Bob Wiggs was a powerful role model, as well as a major contributor to the rapid development of veterinary dentistry in the last 30 years.

He will be greatly missed as a source of veterinary dental knowledge, as a mentor, and as a stalwart friend always ready with a humorous comment.

Ed Eisner, also a past-President of AVDC and a close friend of Bob's, adds: "*On November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the world has lost a very valuable contributor. I will miss Bob Wiggs, my friend of more than twenty years. I cannot imagine a truer friend or a more ethical and modest colleague, all very refreshing to see, especially in one of the truly innovative pioneers and textbook authors of modern veterinary dentistry. His loyalty, patience, and generosity among students, and colleagues alike is already legendary among those who knew him. His contributions to veterinary dentistry have been many and enduring, in both equipment design and procedure technique for not only companion and agricultural, but also for zoo animals. All of these attributes were enhanced by his tireless teaching, quick wit and many enjoyably creative puns. Bob was a very brave, stoical, and private man, sharing very little of the medical details throughout his 14 years of painful illness. He almost always had a twinkle in his eye, and quick comeback, whether with humor or a valuable scientific reference from his encyclopedic mind. His loss is tragic for his friends and family, and a person with his spirit and tenacity for life deserved a more peaceful conclusion to his end-stage battle. At least, now there will be no more pain and nausea for Bob to endure; we are the ones suffering by his loss.*"

Rest in peace, Bob. You have earned it.