

1989

1989 Norden Distinguished Teacher

Neil Dyer

Iowa State University

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1989 Norden Distinguished Teacher

Neil Dyer

One of the first things I noticed while interviewing Dr. Ron Myers as the 1989 recipient of Norden Distinguished Teacher Award was an identical commendation on the wall from 1984. The frequency with which an instructor may receive the Norden Award is every five years; Ron Myers received his second one as they say, ASAP. When the award was presented last spring the entire student body gave him a standing ovation. That says something about his consistent dedication, enthusiasm and excellence. Indicative of this deep concern for veterinary education, he is, among other things, chairman of the curriculum committee and chairman of the Teacher Learner Alliance.

In 1977, Dr. Myers came out of Kansas State University with his DVM and promptly went east for a year of predominately dairy practice in Maryland. Acting on a feeling that he always wanted to teach, he returned to KSU in 1978, and, in 1982, completed his PhD in veterinary pathology studying changes in the canine reproductive tract. Since 1982, Dr. Myers has been a member of the faculty in veterinary pathology at Iowa State University where he teaches necropsy techniques, graduate level courses, electives, and general and systemic pathology to first and second year veterinary students.

We talked at some length about veterinary education and, as a student, what impressed me was his feeling that “there is too much information to assimilate unless we assign relevance to facts. We need to prioritize what a student needs to know to become a veterinarian since the field is so rapidly expanding. More importantly, students need to learn to be learners. Teachers should encourage a lifetime of learning attitude that develops critical assessment, question asking and information gathering to effect the solution to a particular problem.”

Though it may be a tired and overused question, I couldn't resist asking him what he found most rewarding about his career. “I like the interaction with students.” He said. “I like to see them learn to think given the responsibility and opportunity.” Having been a student in his class, I think that there is more to it than that. I had a chance to watch as he learned something of the lives behind the ninety plus names and faces in sophomore pathology, and demonstrated to the class, beyond his gift of teaching and our relationship through veterinary medicine, that he cared enough about us to discover the people that we are.



Mike Doolen