Artists Serving Veterinary Medicine

Dean Biechler

Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian

Part of the Illustration Commons, and the Veterinary Medicine Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol43/iss2/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa State University Veterinarian by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Artists
Serving Veterinary Medicine

by Mr. Dean Biechler*

Editor's note:
The Department of Biomedical Communications is an important, vital part of Iowa State's College of Veterinary Medicine. Although many of us are aware of its existence, its purpose and functions elude us. This article, written by Mr. Biechler, is the first in a four-part series on Biomedical Communications, its personnel, and its functions.

It would seem at first that art and veterinary medicine have very little in common, but in taking a closer look at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University, one will see artist and scientist working together for a common goal.

Artists in the Biomedical Communications Section blend their creative talents with scientific knowledge to create effective communications in the form of biological and medical renderings and graphics. The purpose of their work is generally to clarify and reinforce a verbal or written presentation. It is designed to emphasize the major thrust of the message without interfering with its overall effectiveness. While the information is serious, factual, and scientific, there is no reason for the resulting piece of artwork to be dull. The artists strive to present the material in a creative manner while maintaining scientific accuracy and straightforward communication.

The art unit is just one of the areas in Biomedical Communications involved in the production of educational materials. These materials are used in publications, visuals for classroom use, and self-instructional programs. BMC currently has two fulltime art positions, Medical Illustrator and Graphics Specialist. Part-time artists are often employed, as well.

The medical illustrator has an educational background which encompasses most of the techniques employed by the art unit, as well as a scientific background and knowledge of educational methods. He also serves as the supervisor of all art-related activities in the section, routing work among artists and others in the section, providing technical advice to artists, and monitoring quality control. A major portion of his time involves the illustration of anatomical, surgical, and other scientific subject matter. Another important part of the job is design consultation with clients and coordination of large projects. Other duties include design and production of exhibits, brochures, and a variety of other design-related activities. The medical illustrator also takes an active role in many other functions of the section, such as the coordination of study room facilities and autotutorial learning materials.

In 1973, the College employed its first fulltime artist with the hiring of Dean Biechler as their Medical Illustrator. Born and raised on a dairy farm in northeast Iowa, Dean had ample opportunity to study nature firsthand, spending his free time drawing farm livestock and native wildlife.

Dean attended Iowa State University enrolled in pre-veterinary medicine, but his interest in art remained strong; thus, in 1971 he began to combine his science courses with art training. When he graduated in 1973 with a B.A. in art, he joined the College of Veterinary Medicine which gave him the opportunity to combine his interest in veterinary medicine and art.

---

*Mr. Biechler is the Medical Illustrator for the College of Veterinary Medicine, ISU.
In 1979, he was commissioned by the college to paint a 6x6 foot original acrylic painting commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the College of Veterinary Medicine, one of many commissioned works Dean has produced. He also has produced a limited edition print of the painting commissioned by the college.

He has recently increased his responsibilities at Iowa State University by teaching an upper level course in Biological Illustration. The course was offered jointly by Biology, Art and Design, and Veterinary Anatomy. The course received very favorable student evaluations, and will be offered again next year.

Dean Biechler

The art staff was expanded in 1976 with the addition of a full time graphic artist position. Kristi Kleh Blincoe was employed with BMC from 1976 until February of 1981 when she and her husband moved to Colorado. During that time, the responsibility of this position increased a great deal, and it was upgraded to Graphic Specialist.

Currently, the duties of the position include the production of charts, graphs, graphic design for word slides, and the design and layout of brochures, booklets, and other printed materials. The educational background for this position includes specialties such as layout and design, lettering, color theory, drafting, specifying typography, camera-ready art production, and other facets of the printing process. The graphic artist designs graphics for a number of media, including slides, films, exhibits, and television as well as for publication.

In filling the position, the art unit was able to hire a person who has a background in graphic art and is also trained as an illustrator.

Lyn Yoder has been employed as the Graphic Specialist in the Biomedical Communications Section since February of this year. She graduated from Iowa State University in November of 1980 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Illustration. Lyn was originally enrolled as a student in pre-veterinary medicine, but due to her great interest in art as well as science, she decided to combine these two areas into one major. With her educational background, Biomedical Communications hopes to increase both its illustration capabilities and graphic production.

Lyn Yoder

Before coming to I.S.U., Lyn lived in Des Moines where she was born and raised. Throughout her school years she worked as a veterinary assistant to her father, Dr. James T. Yoder. She feels this background in veterinary medicine has greatly benefitted her work as an artist in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Room 2265 of the Biomedical Communications Section has been a regular stop for many members of the Veterinary Medicine faculty as they develop teaching materials.

"We really enjoy working with the faculty
in finding the best way to present complex ideas, but it often gets really hectic trying to help everyone," says Biechler. "Right now we're trying to establish more of a schedule for consultation time separate from production time, so we can be more productive during the day. It really helps us if people can make an appointment, so we can give their ideas the time they deserve when we design artwork."