

1992

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1992 Norden Distinguished Teacher Award

Beverly Levene*

Not only did Dr. Donald Adams receive the Scavma Teaching award, but he was also the recipient of the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award. Dr. Adams has served on a number of College and University committees such as Faculty Senate. He is currently on the Academic Standards Committee and is a new appointee on the Admissions Committee. In 1960, Dr. Adams attained a B.S. degree in Zoology from the University of California at Davis. He continued his education at Chico State College in California to earn a General Secondary Teaching Credential and an M.S. in Biology. Dr. Adams accepted a position in 1970 as an Assistant Professor of Veterinary Anatomy at Michigan State University. In 1974, He moved to Iowa to assume a position in the Dept. of Veterinary Anatomy.

Dr. Adams was a guest lecturer, embalmer, and lab instructor for 5 weeks at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine. During this time, he was instrumental in the development of the first anatomy course offered at this new school.

Dr. Adams enjoys hiking, trout fishing and rock collecting on his 1/2 acre lot in Lander, Wyoming during the summertime. In his spare time during the school year, he works on his house which he and his wife built 4 years ago on 7 acres south of Ames Iowa.

When I asked Dr. Adams to provide me with some information on his background, rather than revising and condensing his stories, I thought it would be best to present the rest of this article in Dr. Adams' own eloquent words as I would not be able to do them justice.

The following excerpts are in response to my question regarding his thoughts on what makes his teaching style unique.

*Beverly Levene is a third year student in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University.

This question of uniqueness in instruction is difficult or impossible to answer. When I listen to the many fine lectures of my peers or examine the breadth and depth of their course offerings, and compare them to that of mine, I realize the complexity of this issue. As a way of attempting an answer I need to describe some of my formative experiences.

As I have told many students, my first eight years of education were spent in the same classroom, containing grades 1-8, with the same teacher. For 8 years we faced South while studying geography books which always had North at the top of each map page. From this early experience I learned that it is in the best interest of the student to observe a variety of subjects from various perspectives. The value of examining structure from more than one perspective was also demonstrated to me while I was studying for my PhD qualifying exam. For the first time as a student, I was able to study serially the gross anatomy of an organ, then its microstructure, physiology, pathology, etc. in a broad array of textbooks and journals. Each author provided both reinforcement of earlier readings and additional insights on the organ being studied.

Two of the most outstanding instructors under whom I had an opportunity to study in College were diametrically opposite. One, a geography instructor at UCD, did not have a PhD (the only one such individual listed in the UCD faculty bulletin at that time) but had extensive field experience. This instructor held the class spellbound as he freely integrated physics, biology, chemistry, history etc during lecture periods. These "lecture" deliveries were not canned as they often deviated into channels established through questions of individual students. The other instructor was a biologist at Chico State College who was asked at the last moment to teach an amphibian/reptile course to graduate students (the regular instructor was out of the country and could not return for much of the semester). It soon became obvious that

this substitute faculty member knew very little of the amphibians and reptiles of California. Yet the class atmosphere was so positively charged and free of distractions that the learning process was optimized. Students collected specimens from all over California and brought them back to the laboratory for study. Due largely to this liberal academic environment, I researched and published an article on the diet of a species of salamander during my first year of study for the MS degree. From these experiences I have learned that class attitude and the innate desire of the student to learn, is far more important than is the factual knowledge or academic status of the faculty member.

During my three years of teaching biology and health science, at the high school level, I twice had the experience of examining animals and their structure with student groups far removed from the classroom. I will never forget the shared excitement with African biology students while studying the vertebrate vascular system during a hiking trip. One of the students had killed a snake so we dissected it alongside the stream where it was found. While observing the intrinsic beat of the heart we observed that something recently eaten was present in the stomach of the snake. Upon removing a frog from the snake's stomach, the students dissected it - and observed that the frog's heart was also beating. A second educational high occurred when a group of California biology students collected and studied marine animals during a coastal trip subsequent to classroom study of similar animals. The enthusiasm and activity of the classroom paled in comparison to that exhibited by students who were actively directing their own studies.

A final comment on my formative background is another that I also often relate to veterinary students. During my early academic years at Michigan State, introductory anatomy was taught using the embalmed dog and Miller and Evans' dissection guide. I was assisting a very knowledgeable and respected instructor; the students were enjoying laboratory and performing well on examinations. But I wanted to be able to contribute something in addition to the course. So I asked the instructor in charge if I might bring in a non-embalmed animal from time to time with which the students might use for a comparison. Upon receiving permission, I set up an adjacent room for small group exercises.

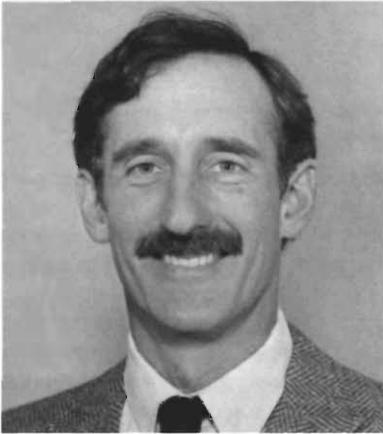
I was astounded that even the A+ students upon completion of the unit on the respective system were often unable to place a steel skewer in the stomach, heart, transverse colon, hip joint, etc. Then subsequently, a number of staff members (including myself, the instructor in charge, and two surgery residents) were unable to identify grossly the lymphatic nodules of the gut wall of non-embalmed cadavers; each of us mistakenly called these nodules pathological (not recognizing that gas distension during a short time period subsequent to death makes these nodules very recognizable). Another blow of reality struck me when teaching at Iowa State during the early '70s. A student who excelled in anatomy during the dissection of the embalmed dog was observed crying in the hallway shortly after completion of the anatomy course. She had been following a live dog down the hallway and had tried to imagine the positioning of various organs in its body but could not.

From all of these early experiences I have come to two basic conclusions regarding instruction: 1) have high expectations of your students, and 2) provide an optimum learning environment. Over the past 14 years I have tried to provide an optimum learning environment by: a) stressing 3-dimensional topography while down-playing needless factual memorization (such as dental formulae, etc); b) providing students with a variety of dissection experiences (dorsal, ventral, lateral approaches; avoid directing all student groups to use the same dissection approach; and encourage students in each lab group to examine structures at the dissection tables of other groups); c) maximizing laboratory activity while minimizing traditional lecture time; and d) providing the student with a variety of prosections, plastinated specimens, and anatomical illustrations.

During 1991-92, after years of fruitless attempts, I succeeded in obtaining funds for the development of a digital image bank to be used for instructional purposes. A USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant was obtained which is: 1) supporting the development of computer-aided-instructional programs, and 2) fostering the understanding and use of new technologies by other faculty members in the Colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. Both my departmental and college administrations have also supported me in these activities. Mr. Prem Urali, a graduate student in computer network-

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Kirk Heisterkamp*



Dr. Eric Davis



Dr. Donald Adams

ing, and I have begun the development of interactive computer-assisted programs for gross anatomy, applied anatomy, and dog breeds. Lessons on gross anatomy are being developed and presented to the VAn 305 class this semester; these lessons will need to be amplified, evaluated, and refined over a period of time. We also have held a hands-on training course at Media Resources, led by Dr. David Graf, for faculty wanting to utilize an authoring software to develop individualized lessons. The 9 faculty who attended this course utilized digitized images of their choice on computers to prepare an interactive lesson. We will support a second 5-day workshop this coming summer for 15 faculty members from the Colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Eric Davis was the recipient of the 1992 SCAVMA Clinical Science Teaching Award. He received this award for his dedication to the teaching of equine medicine and surgery at ISU College of Veterinary Medicine. He is involved with teaching VM III and VM IV students, as well as helping provide a clinical prospective to the equine applied anatomy course and student wet labs and seminars. Dr. Davis also advises the Large Animal ICU, which has volunteers from VM I, VM II and VM III classes.

Dr. Davis moved to Iowa with his wife, Dr. Ila Davis, from Nevada in 1990. Once in Iowa, he began a residency in Equine Surgery. But, what of his past life and his interest in horses?

Dr. Eric Davis was born in Stanford, CA and raised in Portola Valley, CA. As a youth he was involved in 4-H and local horsemen's association. He attended the Porterville Horseshoeing School where he learned a trade to help him work his way through college.

In 1977, Dr. Davis graduated from the University of California, College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, he established a mixed animal practice in Willitts, CA.

After ten years of practice, Dr. Davis returned to UC Davis to complete a residency in Equine Medicine. This he completed in 1989, the same year he married Dr. Ila Davis and moved to Nevada. In Nevada, Dr. Davis consulted on equine medical and surgery cases. During this same time period, he also was a visiting clinician at Purdue College of Veterinary Medicine and a relief veterinarian for Equine Emergency Services of Los Angeles, CA.

Dr. Eric Davis' knowledge, experience and inexhaustible time have been an immense asset to the students of ISU College of Veterinary Medicine. He well deserves the SCAVMA Clinical Science Teaching Award.

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