

ACVS MERIT AWARD

Presented at the Mark W. Allam Lecture & Awards Ceremony
8:00-10:00am, Thursday, Ballroom 6BC



Gretchen L. Flo

In selecting Gretchen L. Flo, DVM, MS for the ACVS Merit Award, the ACVS membership recognizes an outstanding career in veterinary orthopedic surgery and a woman of strength and creativity, who has helped to define the profession we work in today.

Dr. Gretchen Flo has made an impact on veterinary surgery from her first days as a student working with the beloved ACVS founder, Dr. Wade O. Brinker. Indeed, she is thought of as a pioneer as she blazed the trail for women faculty in veterinary surgery, at not only Michigan State University (MSU) but also reaching to state, national and international levels, as generations of students and ACVS residents learned from her advances in orthopedic surgical technique. She was awarded her DVM with high honors in 1966 from MSU and her Master of Science degree, also from MSU, in 1969. Her professional life as a surgeon and professor has been spent entirely at MSU, where she continues to work one week per month in her “retirement.” Dr. Flo has received numerous awards, including being named the Outstanding Woman Veterinarian of the Year in 1976 from the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Outstanding Woman Veterinarian of the Year in 1977 and the Faculty Women’s Award for Excellence in 1977.

Dr. Flo is *the* consummate teacher, both inside and outside of the classroom and operating theatre. She maintains the highest of standards for herself and her students and demands excellence in all aspects of veterinary surgical practice. Her hands-on approach to teaching and learning have endeared her to all who have passed through MSU, as well as countless others who have learned from her books and numerous publications and presentations over the past 41 years. Dr. Flo has been a passionate and dedicated teacher and mentor to the professional development of surgical residents, from the very first inception of ACVS residency training programs, and has likely trained more ACVS residents than any other surgeon in the world today.

Most notably, Dr. Flo is the originator of the “Flo technique” as well as a co-author of four editions of the most comprehensive small animal orthopedic textbook used by students and specialists alike. The Flo technique, as it is known by in most countries outside the United

States, is the most commonly performed surgical technique in the world for stabilization of the canine cruciate deficient stifle. While other procedures continue to come and go, this technique has withstood the test of time for the past 35 years. Contributions such as this have made her name synonymous with cruciate repair and contributed to her international reputation. Her textbook, *Handbook of Small Animal Orthopedics and Fracture Treatment*, written with Drs. Brinker and Piermattei, has been translated into more than ten languages including French, German, Japanese and Portuguese, and is required reading for those studying for the American, European and Australian specialty board examinations.

Dr. Flo has also conscientiously served the veterinary profession at national and international levels. Her service to the Veterinary Orthopedic Society (VOS) began in 1975 when she was the Secretary-Treasurer, then a member of the Board of Directors from 1980 to 1983 and again from 1987 to 1990 followed by Scientific Program Chair from 1987 to 1988 and 1988 to 1989. She was voted President-Elect of VOS, serving from 1989 to 1990 and then President of the VOS from 1990 to 1991.

Finally, anyone who has had the privilege of knowing Dr. Flo will attest to her unfailing graciousness and dedication to her family and friends at Michigan State and to the veterinary profession and community at large. There is no finer or more deserving member of the veterinary surgery community than Dr. Gretchen L. Flo.

Past recipients of the ACVS Merit Award:

2003 – Steven F. Swaim, DVM, MS

2005 – Geoffrey Sumner-Smith, MSc, DVSc, FRCVS

2006 – Barclay Slocum, DVM, MS (posthumously)