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NEWS & EVENTS

Alumnus Returns as Phi Zeta Research Day Speaker

In 1986, Dr. Albert Jergens, then a resident in small animal internal medicine at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, was awarded first place for his abstract presentation at Phi Zeta Research Day. On May 9, he will return to Columbia to again participate in the annual event — this time as the keynote speaker.

Although he's received several awards since that day nearly 30 years ago, Jergens still recalls the "heated competition" he faced.

"I remember it being great fun," he said. "I think that those experiences really stimulated my interest in clinical research."

Jergens is a professor and associate chair for research and graduate studies in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. He is also a staff internist at the Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center.

His keynote address, "Animal Models for Human Inflammatory Bowel Disease," will discuss the role of the clinician scientist in investigating the pathogenesis of inflammatory bowel disease in animals and its similarities to human Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, he said. The presentation, sponsored in conjunction with the Niemeyer Lecture Series, will begin at noon in the Veterinary Medicine Auditorium.

In addition to Jergens' keynote address, Phi Zeta Research Day will feature presentations of research projects by veterinary students, interns, residents and graduate students. New members of the Phi Zeta Veterinary Honor Society will be inducted at a banquet that evening.

Jergens said he hopes the day will inspire students by providing them a good introduction to research.

"You don't know whether you like something until you're exposed to it," he said. "At the end of the day, we're all concerned about improving animal health and, in turn, improving human health."

Dr. Craig Franklin, professor of veterinary pathobiology at the CVM, first met Jergens during their residency and then reconnected with him during a presentation at Iowa State. He said Jergens would excel at promoting research to students as either a component of a veterinary career or its own option.

"The purpose of the Phi Zeta speaker is to find someone who's a combination of a really good



Dr. Albert Jergens

researcher and a dynamic speaker," he said. "He's a great role model for a student who's considering veterinary research. I think he's going to be a phenomenal speaker."

Jergens completed his undergraduate and veterinary studies at Texas A&M University. He also received a master's in veterinary pathology and a PhD in immunobiology at Iowa State. He is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM).

Jergens has worked at Iowa State since 1989. His clinical and research interests include gut microbiota-host interactions mediating gastrointestinal health and disease.

Phi Zeta Research Day is sponsored by Purina, Zoetis, the College of Veterinary Medicine Office of the Dean and the College's Office of Research.

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