



Iowa Veterinary Medical Association

THREE REMARKABLE DOGS NAMED TO 2008 ANIMAL HALL OF FAME

Pets honored by the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association and Intervet/Schering-Plough

The Iowa Veterinary Medical Association (IVMA) and Intervet/Schering-Plough honored three heroic dogs with 2008 Animal Hall of Fame awards for their bravery, companionship and professional contributions to people and the community. Thirty-three animals from across Iowa have been inducted into the Animal Hall of Fame since its inception 11 years ago, including dogs, cats and horses.

This year's winners include a Weimaraner who saved his owner's life by alerting his sleeping wife to the fact that he was having a heart attack; a Golden Retriever who spends her days with school children, helping improve their social behavior; and a black Labrador mix who was a "resident pet" at a long-term care facility loving elderly patients.



Hall of Fame Hero Category — HJ, the Weimaraner from Fredericksburg

On most days, HJ, a friendly Weimaraner, is the official greeter and everyone's favorite friend at the Engelbrecht's Farm House B&B in Fredericksburg, but in the early morning hours of Easter Sunday 2007, HJ became a hero. Around midnight, Loren Engelbrecht woke feeling sick. He tried to eat something to alleviate his nausea, but only felt worse. To cool off, he went out to the enclosed porch where HJ sleeps. After leaving the porch, Loren headed for the front parlor of the family's Victorian farm house to watch television and relax. Suddenly Loren developed an enormous pressure in his chest. The pain was so great he couldn't move or call for help.

Loren's wife Dianna woke up to HJ nosing her arm. She wondered what HJ was doing in the bedroom and got out of bed to find Loren in the front parlor in severe pain. HJ never left Loren's side while the paramedics worked to save his life. The doctor described Loren's heart attack as a "widow maker." Only 50 percent of all people who have that kind of heart attack make it to the hospital. The Engelbrechts know without a doubt that Loren would have been found dead the next morning had it not been for HJ.



Hall of Fame Professional Category—Sidda, the Golden Retriever from North Liberty

Sidda is a learning dog who received her training at the Kansas-based therapy dog program, Canine Assistance, Rehabilitation, Education and Services (CARES). She is the only full-time learning dog in the Iowa City Community School District and is available to students to read to, talk to, or just hang out with. Her owner, Julie Robinson, is the principal at Penn Elementary. Sidda has been extremely beneficial to the students in many different ways. She helps children to improve their literacy skills and their confidence levels. She also often helps children with behavioral problems. She has been brought to the classroom of a child in the throgs of a temper tantrum and almost immediately the disruptive behavior is over.

Sidda’s ability to improve social behavior, reading skills and communication between the students, parents and staff is truly a special gift. But most important, is her ability to strengthen the human/animal bond by making each child at Penn Elementary feel special and loved.



Hall of Fame Companion Category— Hericane, the black Labrador mix from Des Moines

Hericane, a black Labrador mix, was only 10 weeks old when her owner Lynette Krambeer adopted her from the Animal Rescue League of Iowa in 1992. Trinity Center at Luther Park, a long-term care facility in Des Moines, was just initiating their “resident pet” program at the time. Lynette and Hericane immediately began visiting the elders on a regular basis and before her first birthday, Hericane was ‘working’ at the facility full-time.

Hericane spent her days being played with, hugged, brushed and fed. It was said, she was an employee who did not appreciate her days off. Lynette and Hericane lived close to Luther Park. There were several instances on weekends when she jumped her four-foot fence and went to work by herself.

Hericane had an unconditional, non-judgmental love and affection for everyone she met. She would stand next to a wheelchair or a bed, allowing the elders to pet her for as long as they wished. Hericane didn’t care about the residents’ diagnosis, poor memory, tremors, broken speech or paralysis. After having worked for almost 10 years at Luther Park, severe arthritis and knee surgery forced Hericane to retire in 2003. Following a stroke in 2006, Hericane passed away.

The 2008 Hall of Fame winners were publicly recognized on April 18, 2009 during the Animal Rescue League of Iowa’s annual Raise Your Paw Auction in Des Moines.

