

For Immediate Release

NYC's Animal Medical Center Presents Annual Awards at 2020 Virtual Graduation Ceremony

The Animal Medical Center (AMC), the largest non-profit animal hospital in the world, presented a series of awards at its June 18th virtual Graduation Ceremony celebrating its 56th graduating class of interns and residents. AMC is the largest postgraduate veterinary teaching institution in the world with over 2,500 residents and interns trained at AMC through the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Institute for Postgraduate Education.

Award Presentations

The Connie Leifer Resident Research Award

Dr. Connie Leifer was an oncology resident and staff doctor at AMC. A prolific researcher, Dr. Leifer was a role model for residents conducting research.

The Connie Leifer Resident Research Award recognizes residents who demonstrated excellence in their resident research project, oftentimes contributing original research to the veterinary field. In an unusual move demonstrating the strength of this year's applicant pool, two winners have been selected. Recipients of the 2020 Connie Leifer Resident Research award are:

- Dr. Madeline Libin
- Dr. Elisa McEntee

Dr. Madeline Libin's study examined whether high volume chloride administration was associated with outcomes related to acute kidney injury and survival in hospitalized canine patients.

Dr. Elisa McEntee's study aimed to determine whether pre-operative imaging characteristic(s) in cats with unilateral urethral obstruction were predictive of renal recovery, IRIS staging (following guidelines set forth by the International Renal Interest Society), and long-term outcome following renal decompression.

The Donald J. Bruckmann Award to the Outstanding Intern

Donald J. Bruckmann served as Chair of the AMC Board of Trustees. He was an avid and generous supporter of AMC's research and teaching missions.

This award is presented to an individual who demonstrates a combination of skill and clinical excellence as recognized by AMC Staff. The recipient of the Donald J. Bruckmann Award to the Outstanding Intern is:

- Dr. Melissa Hanson

"Dr. Hanson started off functioning like a resident and the level of excellence has only grown," said Dr. Katherine Quesenberry, Chief Medical Officer. Other mentors commented: "She is smart, professional, driven, and kind, and truly stands out and exemplifies all the qualities that an AMC intern should possess. Dr. Hanson is confident, knowledgeable, efficient, well-liked, easy to work with and a strong

communicator. She is a great team player who is actively interested in learning and takes initiative. She is dependable, able to multi-task, exhibits clinical maturity, and has demonstrated all the qualities hoped for in a young clinician.”

The Clendenin J. “Mike” Ryan Memorial Award for Outstanding Teaching

Clendenin J. Ryan served as an AMC Trustee.

This award represents AMC’s dedication to postgraduate education and recognizes a current staff member who has excelled as an educator and role model to the intern class. This award is selected by a vote of the intern class. The recipient of The Clendenin J. “Mike” Ryan Memorial Award for Outstanding Teaching is:

-Melissa Smith, DVM, PhD, DACVAA, Staff Doctor, Head of Anesthesia & Pain Management

“Dr. Melissa Smith is passionate about teaching and strikes the exact right balance of challenging you to grow, while providing support and encouragement,” said Katherine Quesenberry, Chief Medical Officer. Members of the graduating class commented: “She is extremely knowledgeable, always kind, patient, and willing to set aside time to teach. Dr. Smith ensures that patients receive excellent care while providing ample opportunities for interns to learn and practice new skills. We often hear from interns that their time on Dr. Smith’s service is one of the best experiences during their time at AMC. She is incredibly intelligent but equally approachable, kind, enthusiastic, and humble. Dr. Smith approaches each situation with a level of grace and humor that is a pleasure to be around and an inspiration to all.”

Selected by AMC staff, the awards for Licensed Veterinary Technician and Licensed Veterinary Assistant of the Year celebrate professionals who exemplify excellence in their profession.

The AMC Licensed Veterinary Technician of the Year Award

-Kimberly Vargas

“Kimberly joined AMC in the winter of 2011. She is always very positive and upbeat and always has a can-do attitude,” said Nurse Manager Dion Small. “She has a calm, positive persona and is the kind of person we all love and respect. She has no problem under pressure, and is a kind soul, hard-working, and easy to work with. I am grateful for everything she has done for AMC and her patients and clients.”

The AMC Licensed Veterinary Assistant of the Year

- Sarah Woods

“Sarah started at AMC in 2016 as a volunteer and eventually came to work in emergency and critical care full time. She has a superb work ethic and never complains even when working long hours or several overtime shifts. She is dedicated to learning and growing in her field and several times a week I hear what an amazing help she is to the doctors and nurses. Her compassion and dedication benefit her patients immensely,” said Nurse Manager Nancy Patsos.

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“We are so proud of every AMC Award recipient and celebrate all their achievements, especially during these challenging months,” said Katherine Quesenberry, DVM, MPH, DABVP (Avian), Chief Medical Officer at AMC. “We recognize and celebrate their bravery, strength, dedication and passion for veterinary medicine.”

About the Animal Medical Center

The Animal Medical Center (AMC) is the world’s largest non-profit animal hospital with 100+ veterinarians providing the highest quality medical care across more than 20 specialties and services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our mission to provide the best in care, research, and education has been the foundation of our work for over a century. For more information, www.amcny.org.

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