

MEET YOUR President

Dr. John Hammons
Athens, AL

What inspired you to pursue a career in veterinary medicine?

My second childhood pet was a puppy that contracted distemper and survived with treatment by a veterinarian. Even with a poor prognosis and eventual survival, I was awestruck by the knowledge of veterinarians. At that point in my life, I knew I wanted to achieve that goal.

What type of veterinary medicine do you practice and why did you choose it?

The first 10 years of my career was a mixed animal practice that eventually evolved into companion animal practice in 1987. The reduction of livestock numbers in the area was a factor in the transition.

Where did you study?

I did undergraduate and veterinary medical college at Auburn (Class of 1977).

Who is your role model/mentor?

There are many veterinarians, some older and some younger than myself, that I try to emulate.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Understanding the bond between clients and their pets. Admiring the love and devotion of clients to their pets and the reciprocation.



How did you get involved with the ALVMA?

When I returned to Limestone County in 1981, I was invited to join the North Alabama Veterinary Association. It was through the NAVMA that I learned about the ALVMA.

What is the hardest part of your job?

Balancing my personal life to professional duties and obligations.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I want to still be practicing this profession and evolving to meet the needs of current and future clients/patients.

Why would you recommend that someone join ALVMA?

Every veterinarian needs to be part of an organization that supports the profession and builds relationships with colleagues.

How has being a member of ALVMA helped you professionally?

To be able to network with colleagues who practice professionally and are constantly improving themselves. The ALVMA's continuing education programs provide this opportunity.

What advice can you offer someone coming into this profession?

Adhere to the Veterinarian's Oath, be a member of a civic organization and treat all of your clients and patients with respect.

What is the most memorable experience of your career?

There are so many to recollect, but I would include: three canine c-sections on a Christmas Eve; a midnight meal with a farmer on a snowy night after two bovine dystocias; and the loss of a patient during surgery that was impaled

with a crochet needle through a lung and the liver.

What is the last movie you watched?

The Bucket List – so you know I do not watch many movies.

When I'm not working, you'll find me ...

Usually doing maintenance at my animal hospital, outdoor maintenance at my home or, on a rare occasion, I may be in the field looking for Native American artifacts.

What was the last song you sang?

A hymn at a funeral.

Where would you go if you could go anywhere? Why?

Tour the back roads of America, visiting historical sites, to observe and understand regional and national pride.

If you were stranded on an island, what three things would you want to have?

Besides sufficient nutrition, my wife, Peggy, and our pet, Howard.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

I am most proud of our new hospital facility.

What is your favorite quote?

I have two: "Any man who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the government take care of them had better take a closer look at the American Indian" — Henry Ford; and "Adversity builds character and provides opportunity" — JRH.

What is your simplest pleasure?

Eating fresh home-grown tomatoes.

Professionally, if you could change something, what would it be?

I would require all clinical DVMs in the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine to spend some time in private practice every five years. This would give them different challenges and promote a better understanding of client communication and the evolution of curriculum to every day practice.

What makes you laugh out loud?

Watching all young mammals exploring their environment and playing with littermates.

If you could meet anyone (dead or living) who would it be and what would you ask them?

President Thomas Jefferson – and I would ask him how did he obtain such a varied and vast scientific knowledge and still accomplish the other achievements in his life.

What book are you reading?

"Stand for Something – The Battle for America's Soul" by John Kasich.

What do you think has been the most significant change/ advancement in veterinary medicine?

The availability and utilization of the clinical pathology equipment.

What five adjectives best describes you?

Persistent; observant; respectful; intense; and quiet.

I still want to learn how to...

Perform more specialized surgeries and become more knowledgeable of my computer system.

Not your typical REPTILE

Hawksbill Sea Turtles help maintain the health of coral reefs. An endangered species, they are threatened by the loss of habitat, excessive egg collection, pollution, and the illegal wildlife trade, as their beautiful shells are highly sought after.



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