

## NWRA Lifetime Achievement Award 2023



The NWRA Lifetime Achievement award is the most prestigious award in our profession. It is given to an individual whose primary identification is with wildlife rehabilitation and who has contributed to the field on a national level for many years. Recipients receive Life Membership in NWRA and an engraved plaque.

Congratulations to this year's honoree, Dr. Erica Miller. She is widely regarded as one of the world leaders in the field of wildlife

rehabilitation medicine. Her expertise is expansive, and her commitment to sharing her knowledge and ideas is superb. For more than three decades, she has shown exemplary dedication and a strong desire to impact wildlife rehabilitation.

She has been a central figure in our profession so many times in so many ways:

- Working on oil spill response issues
- presenting at state and national conferences
- helping create a wildlife rehabilitation curriculum
- teaching at veterinary universities
- helping create professional standards
- publishing many articles and book chapters
- participating in research on contaminants and poisons
- effectively advising state and federal agencies on wildlife and environmental issues

Not only has she spent her career providing direct care to injured, orphaned, and oiled wildlife, but she has been passionate about teaching the next generation of veterinarians and rehabilitators about the importance and intricacies of caring for wildlife. She has taught over a thousand veterinary students over the last 15 years, exposing students to the various opportunities available in wildlife medicine and providing hands-on wet labs teaching fundamental clinical skills. She has mentored countless veterinary students seeking careers in wildlife medicine. She has taught thousands of aspiring and experienced wildlife rehabilitators through many lectures and workshops at numerous state, national, and international wildlife conferences.

She has excellent skills in education and communication. Although she takes pride in mentoring veterinary students, many of her educational efforts have been aimed not at fellow professionals, but at the lay public (including children). Her style is relaxed and nonthreatening and she is sensitive and responsive to people's cultural, educational, and social differences. She has a particularly gentle, non-threatening, and open manner. She never comes across as dominating, territorial or as a "know-it-all".

She is a leader in partnerships and collaboration, quick to recognize and acknowledge what colleagues and partners bring to the table. She is able to subtly and skillfully make a wide variety of people feel respected and part of ongoing activities and decision-making. She regularly works with extremely polarizing issues, trying to develop consensus for the good of wildlife and the environment. Sometimes these discussions take place at times of emergency and extreme stress, during environmental and human emergencies such as oil spills or storm damage recovery efforts. No matter how hot things get, she doesn't panic. She presents a calm exterior, helps to smooth over the rough spots, and skillfully works to reduce stress and enable problem solving.

She served NWRA and our members through four terms on the board of directors, taking a turn at being secretary and president, committee chair, editor of several publications including our Formulary and Quick Reference, symposium program designer, symposium presenter and lab instructor, Wildlife Medicine Course coordinator and instructor, and much more. Perhaps you recognize her for her work over the last two decades as the extraordinary editor of the ground-breaking “Standards in Wildlife Rehabilitation.” This publication achieved national and international recognition of wildlife rehabilitation as a profession, and is gaining increasing respect in the fields of veterinary medicine, wildlife management, conservation, and oil spill response.

She is a wildlife rehabilitator, wildlife veterinarian, teacher, mentor, lecturer, writer, researcher, facilitator, coordinator, collaborator, consultant, highly respected leader, ...and... valued colleague. She is a driving force in the evolution of wildlife rehabilitation. She has pushed the art, science, and profession of wildlife rehabilitation forward.

We continue to learn from both the work she does and the example she sets for all of us. We are inspired by her passion for providing consistently high levels of care and her compassion for every wildlife patient, and for every student who learns from her.

Her work will continue to influence rehabilitators to do their best for many years to come.

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