

2021 Immediate Past President Speech

Fellow members of the Board, delegates and alternates, staff and distinguished guests, it is my honor to stand here before you today. I thank you for putting your trust in me three years ago and electing me Pres-Elect.

I could not have done this without the loving help of my darling wife of 51 ½ years, Diane.

I would like to thank both Doug and Jose who were great to work with. Jose, thank you for translating my speeches into Spanish for my talks in Mexico. With your help I was able to say In Mexico and Puerto Rico, “Es un privilegio estar con todos ustedes hoy”. Giving my speeches in Spanish perfectly meant a great deal to me.

Dr. Kratt, you are a true statesman. You always looked at issues from both sides before you made an opinion.

There is great leadership in this house of delegates and it’s been an honor to serve you.

Representing the AVMA both nationally and internationally has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. Our fantastic staff had me well prepared for the numerous speeches, appearances, and television and radio appearances, always putting veterinary medicine in the best possible light and showing the world that veterinarians are the key to understanding zoonotic disease and maintaining public health.

One of my best memories was going to Garmisch, Germany, and hearing the US and NATO public health veterinarians give talks on best practices for public health, preventing zoonotic disease, and food safety measures not only for the troops but for the people in their respective countries.

It was a treat to spend time with such great people like Ret. General John Poppe and his wife. The world is full of great veterinarians who have a lot to share with us. We must maintain our international ties if we are going to have a say in how we maintain animal and human health.

All of you are leaders in your respective locales and fields of work. I hope you continue to promote veterinary medicine as one of the most honorable professions.

I found great satisfaction in being able to represent our members and the profession through my service to the AVMA.

Helping educate the public about all the things veterinarians do—and all the things the AVMA does—was incredibly rewarding, and I did it with genuine passion and enthusiasm that is rooted deeply in my love and respect for this profession and organized veterinary medicine.

I know many of you share that same passion, and yes, I also know that we face challenges and that we may disagree on things from time to time in terms of what our priorities should be. Respectful debate is healthy, and we should never stray from sharing our minds and honest opinions.

Through it all, I also know in my heart that each of us works in the best interests of our members, the animals and people we serve, and the veterinary profession.

As I bid farewell, I thank you for all that you do, and I thank you for providing me the opportunity to fulfill my desire to serve organized veterinary medicine.

I'll see you down the road.

Be well and be safe.
Thank you.