Thank you so very much for all the kind words.

I am profoundly honored to be the recipient of the 2011 Daniel E. Salmon Award and I am extremely humbled to see my name alongside those who have been previous recipients of this prestigious award. Like I told Jon May and Dean Kotlikoff when they called to inform me of my selection, I am speechless!

Having said that however, I do want to share a few words with you tonight.

First, I would like to thank my wife and family for their sacrifices over the years because of my passion for veterinary medicine. Without the love and support of family, friends, and colleagues, I would be nothing.

Dr. Salmon lost both his mother and father and was orphaned at eight years of age. From such a difficult childhood he rose to earn the professional degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from our beloved Cornell in 1876; the first DVM degree granted in the United States. His professional contributions are legendary, an example for us all to emulate.

Success comes from character, ethics, and application, modulated by energy, attitude, and a desire to be all that each of us can be.

We meet life’s challenges with the values instilled on us by our parents, the intensity within us as individuals, the skills taught to us by our educators, and the examples of those who have gone before us.

Like Malcolm Gladwell so eloquently describes in his book, Outliers, we are invariably the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities that have allowed us to learn and work hard at applying ourselves to the tasks that life presents. Success is not something that we achieve by ourselves.

As an example, Gladwell reminds us the tallest oak in the forest is the tallest not just because it grew from the hardiest acorn; it is the tallest also because no other trees blocked its sunlight, the soil around it was deep and rich, no rabbit chewed through its bark as a sapling, and no lumberjack cut it down before it matured.
It is the composite molding of our personal clay, fired by others, that creates the vessels we become and it is all of us working together, each with our own contributions, that create the face of veterinary medicine today.

Our course on life’s journey, whether personal or professional, is based on our faith, our experiences, and on our mentors who have helped us develop our potential and guided us along the way, much like the museum who owes its appearance to the architect who designed it, its soundness to the masons, electricians, carpenters, plumbers, and craftsmen who built it, its awareness to the publicity and marketing community, and its character to its contents.

Cornell University and in particular, the College of Veterinary Medicine, has been instrumental in shaping all of our lives, and as alumni, it is our duty and privilege to support the ongoing efforts to provide those same opportunities to those who will follow us.

Our personal mosaics are the gifts of many artists, and so tonight, I accept this award on behalf of my parents, my wife and family, my mentors, friends, and many colleagues who have encouraged and supported me over the years.

Thank you.

October 1, 2011