COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
ANNUAL AWARDS

CLINICOPATHOLOGIC CONFERENCE AWARD
Kayla B. Mercer   Ashleigh Nicaise

CLINICOPATHOLOGIC CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AWARD
Makayla R. Threde   Nicholas D. Wheeler

ZOETIS TEACHING AWARD NOMINEES
Dr. Cooper Brookshire   Dr. Ben Nabors   Dr. Caitlin O'Shea

ZOETIS TEACHING AWARD RECIPIENT
Dr. Alex Shealy

WISE SCHOLARS
(GPA between 3.5 and 3.79)

Garrett Bailey	Matthew D. Harjes	Hannah Renfroe
Yaimarie Berríos Irene	BreAnna N. Heard	Sabrina E. Swistek
Hadley Grace Brennan	Mary Hilliard	Michael John Thomas, II
Ashlyn Brown	Shelby Ladner	Makayla R. Threde
Caitlyn L. Burke	Shelby Noelle Lanier	Zana Watkins
Mary Elaine Day	Alexis M. Lephew	Jeannette Elizabeth Wheeler
Jacob Eldridge	Carey McLain	Caitlin Wonnacott
Dakota Foley	Matthew Robert Mitsch	Rebecca Younts
	Ashleigh Nicaise	

GILES SCHOLARS
(GPA of 3.8 and greater)

Julia Alley	Hayden Verne Brines	Kayla B. Mercer
Reid Alley	Catherine Ann DiNicola	Miranda Beth Reese
Jessica L. Barber	Martin A. Holsinger	Julia M. Strickland

BARDSLEY AWARD FOR HIGHEST ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
Hayden Verne Brines

The late Dr. Charles Bardsley and Mrs. Viola Bardsley of Ocean Springs on Mississippi's Gulf Coast were very interested in the academic success of students studying veterinary medicine. Because of this interest, they established a scholarship at MSU CVM more than 20 years ago to recognize academic excellence. The Dr. Charles and Mrs. Viola Bardsley Scholarship is given to the graduating student who has achieved the highest grade point average during their time in the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine. This scholarship is in the amount of $10,000.

The recipient of the 2025 Bardsley Scholarship is Hayden Verne Brines.

Dr. Stephen Pruett

Dr. Stephen Pruett joined the MSU family in 1991 as an associate professor with joint appointments in the Department of Biological Sciences and at the College of Veterinary Medicine. From 2007 until 2018, he served as department head of MSU CVM's Basic Sciences department. He also served MSU CVM as the interim associate dean for research and graduate studies and as the director of the CVM's Center for Biomedical Research Excellence project. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Pruett was tasked with founding and managing the MSU CVM COVID-19 testing lab, which processed PCR tests for the entire MSU community and was vital to the university's navigation of the pandemic.

A member of the American Association of Immunologists, the Society of Toxicology, the American College of Toxicology, and the Academy of Toxicological Sciences, Dr. Pruett's research was supported for 30 years by nationally competitive grants. His primary focus was the effects of toxicants on the immune system, and he produced a seminal peer-reviewed publication and model that became widely accepted and used by other NIH-funded research labs. Dr. Pruett also worked with a research team that identified and characterized a new antifungal, earning a U.S. patent in 2020 for its application to potentially treat cancer.

In 2022, he was recognized by Stanford University for being in the top two percent of scientists in the world related to his publication volume. His accomplishments in research mentoring will have a lasting impact on the careers of many scientists, especially scientists at MSU.

Dr. Pruett retired on June 30, 2023, after 17 years of valuable service to the MSU CVM.

Dr. Robert Wills

Dr. Robert Wills joined the CVM family in 2001 and served as associate professor of veterinary epidemiology, interim head of the Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine, and professor of veterinary epidemiology, before being named head of the Department of Comparative Biomedical Sciences in 2019.

A diplomate in the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine with a specialty in epidemiology, Dr. Wills has a passion for agriculture and a dedication to bettering rural America. His research focused on the ecological epidemiology of animal diseases, applying quantitative methods to address some of the most pressing challenges in food safety, animal disease, and antimicrobial resistance. Through his expertise, he helped ensure that an abundant supply of safe, wholesome food reached consumers while helping animal industries meet the rigorous demands of modern agriculture.

In 2013, he served as a Loaned Expert with the Global Early Warning System at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. In this role, he developed a system dynamics model to assess the risk of introduction and spread of Foot and Mouth Disease in cattle, demonstrating the model's potential for global risk assessments.

Dr. Wills has tremendous knowledge in biostatistics and provided a unique study design/analysis service at MSU CVM. He was also a cornerstone in academia, contributing to training veterinarians not only at MSU and across the country but also abroad.

During his career, he illustrated a steadfast commitment to advancing both the science and practice of veterinary medicine and was honored with the Pfizer Award for Research Excellence and the CVM Dean's Pegasus Award.

Dr. Wills retired on September 30, 2023, after a 21-year career at MSU CVM.