



## NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

### **Barb Berg honored with Bruntz Family Teaching Award**

By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

CURTIS, Neb. (Aug. 25, 2022) \_ On Monday, Barb Berg started the fall semester for a 44<sup>th</sup> year in the Veterinary Technology Department at the “ag school in Curtis.”

Two of those academic years were 1971-1973 when Berg was a Vet Tech student at the then-titled University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture program.

The other 42 have been while Berg is a faculty member. For decades and again this year, she teaches beginning and advanced courses in nursing, radiology, anesthesia, animal restraint and more. Often, she oversees the required internships VT students experience in clinics, zoos, and animal shelters.

Assistant Professor Berg is a Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT) and holds a bachelor’s degree in Business and Vocational Education from the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Her 40 years in higher education at UNSTA-NCTA have prepared hundreds of Aggie graduates for their careers such as veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, nurse anesthetists, radiology technicians and animal care technicians.

#### **Teaching excellence**

As the 2021-22 school year drew to a close in May, Berg’s dedication and expertise was recognized for teaching excellence. She was nominated by peers and selected by the NCTA Faculty Senate to receive the Bruntz Family Teaching Award.

“In looking for the perfect example of dedication to teaching and support of students, Barb should be on the poster,” one nominator wrote. “She always has the students’ best interests in mind.”

Judy Bowmaster-Cole, campus awards committee co-chair, has taught alongside Berg for most of those years. She also was the first recipient of the Bruntz teaching award when it was established in 2017 by Ann and David Bruntz of Friend, Nebraska.

“On behalf of our family, we endowed this award some years ago to recognize an outstanding faculty member at NCTA. Our daughter Julie was a student here in Vet Tech, and David and I graduated from UNSTA in 1971. We are proud to do this,” said Stuart native, Ann Ramm Bruntz, VT ‘71.

The annual recognition includes a \$1,000 stipend, plaque, and a butterfly memento in honor of Julie, who passed away in 2016. Through the tutelage of Bowmaster-Cole and Berg, Julie had received a program certificate in animal care in December 2003.

Berg is academic unit lead of the six-member teaching faculty plus the facilities class coordinator.



*Barb Berg, assistant professor,  
NCTA Veterinary Technology*

A 1971 graduate of Omaha North High School, Berg arrived in Curtis with her horse, Lady Shamrock. Shamrock was the first student-owned horse to board at Bill and Judy Nutt's stables, a boarding facility near campus.

Today, Berg maintains a home and barn of her pets, three dogs, four cats and Thora, a 30-year-old horse. Some were adopted from the NCTA program.

Her human family is quite supportive of Berg's career and commitment to Nebraska's animal health industry. Daughter, Ashley is an NCTA graduate, son and daughter-in-law, Jay and Maggie live in Lincoln with daughter Amelia (Berg's sole grandchild). Her sister and three brothers reside in Omaha.

### **Military and industry service**

Berg served in the Navy Reserve in Omaha, was active duty in Desert Shield and Desert Storm from 1990-91, and is retired Yeoman, First Class Petty Officer Managerial from 1984 – 2007.

She is a life member and past president of the UNSTA-NCTA Aggie Alumni Association. In 2017, she received the Alumni Achievement Award.

Throughout her career, Berg has been active with the Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association, Livestock Emergency Diseases Response System, and served as a professional exam writer for the National Veterinary Technician Exam.

Each year, the Veterinary Technician Continuing Education Association (which she co-founded in 1980) coordinates the VTCEA conference in Curtis. The non-profit group's 49<sup>th</sup> annual conference is Oct. 21-22.

Berg also oversees the national reaccreditation of the NCTA Vet Tech program by the American Veterinary Medical Association. NCTA was initially accredited in 1973, in the first two colleges in the U.S. to be accredited.

Her leadership is often behind-the-scenes and unknown by Aggie students and the public, says Bowmaster-Cole.

"Barb Berg is certainly deserving of the Bruntz award. In many cases over her 40-year career, she has been the unsung hero. Not only a champion and beacon for Vet Tech, but a supporter of NCTA across the board and the best advocate for students that 'nobody' will ever hear about."

The Bruntz Family Teaching Award is testament to Berg's accomplishments, and most of all, her excellence in teaching Aggie students.



*Barb Berg, center, receives the Bruntz Family Teaching Award from Ann and David Bruntz, UNSTA alumni. (NCTA photo)*