

Vet's devotion makes him a pet owner's favorite

November 2, 2009

BY ELISABETH MARTIN

Dr. Wayne Ingmire is a man for all animals.

Since he founded the Mokena Animal Clinic in 1982, countless pets have passed through the clinic's doors. And from vaccinating puppies to counseling families on end-of-life options for their pets, the veterinarian has left a lasting impression on his clients.

Ingmire discovered just how devoted those clients are after winning the North American Pet Health Insurance Association's North American Favorite Veterinarian contest. The Pittsburgh-based nonprofit group, which promotes pet health insurance awareness, combed through submissions from all over the United States and Canada before choosing Ingmire for the honor, said Loran Hickton, executive director. "We were overwhelmed by the nominating letter," Hickton said.



(Joseph P. Meier/SouthtownStar)

That letter was written by Charlene Tabler, who has been bringing her pets to Ingmire since she was a little girl in Mokena. Now grown and living in Joliet, Tabler still takes her German shorthaired pointers to her longtime vet.

"I've always wanted to do something for him to recognize him," Tabler said.

Ingmire has seen the family through cancer treatments for one dog, Tabler said, and kept another pet from an untimely death. When Tabler's 2 1 / 2 -year-old pup, Sage, got into her nephew's lactose intolerance medication last summer, Ingmire saved the dog's life.

"He's our favorite doctor. That includes our pediatrician, and we like our pediatrician," Tabler said. North American Pet Health was especially moved by Tabler's description of Ingmire's devotion to both pets and their owners, Hickton said. "We were very taken by the view of him caring for the entire family," he said.

Sage, Tabler, Ingmire's family and his staff all gathered at the Mokena Animal Clinic last week to present Ingmire with the award, which comes with a \$500 educational grant for the clinic's staff and a \$250 grant for Joliet Junior College on the vet's behalf. The second award is a nod to Ingmire's family history - his father, Cecil, ran a veterinary practice for farm animals for nearly 50 years in Joliet.

As dozens of people applauded the ruddy-cheeked doctor, he simply beamed and thanked his 20-person staff. "This is not my award, it's our award," he said.