STILLWATER, Okla.—Sixty years ago, the Oklahoma A&M College first opened the doors to the School of Veterinary Medicine. In 1951, the first class of 26 men graduated with a degree in veterinary medicine. It wasn't until 1959 that the first formal awards banquet was held. The tradition of honoring excellence continues today as the College of Veterinary Medicine honored the class of 2008 (52 females and 24 males) and other deserving veterinary students, faculty, and staff at its Annual Honors and Awards Banquet held recently in Stillwater.

"Thanks to our generous donors, we were able to award more than $312,485 this year, an increase of $54,048 over last year," says Michael Lorenz, dean and professor of the OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences. "Our veterinary students need these scholarships to help offset the debt they incur while attending veterinary school. The average debt for our students at graduation is about $80,000."

A total of 20 new scholarships were awarded this year including:

- Francis J. and Mrs. Ethlyn E. Beloncik Endowed Scholarship for $2,000
- AAEP Foundation/Equus Foundation Scholarship for $2,000
- Robert and Martha Buford Endowed Scholarship for $1,500
- Dr. K. Shawn Blood Scholarship for $1,500
- Bruce and Debbie Nance Scholarship for $1,400
- Ethicon-Novartis Surgery Scholarship for $1,000
- Dr. Renee and Herb Hammer Endowed Scholarship - $1,000
- Physiological Sciences Award - $1,000
- Charles and Donna Jeffries Scholarship, which awarded 11 students $2,000 each

The awards banquet was sponsored by the OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., Hill's Pet Nutrition, Nestle Purina Company and Novartis.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association.