Pride in being a member of the family

“I got the eye of the tiger, a fighter
Dancing through the fire
‘Cause I am a champion, and you’re gonna hear me roar.
Louder, louder than a lion
‘Cause I am a champion, and you’re gonna hear me roar.”

—Katy Perry, “Roar”

I am so excited to be your new AVMA president. I cannot think of a group of smarter and savvier people than veterinarians. I regularly tell my students you can put seven veterinarians in a room and you will get eight different opinions—but together we will make the right decisions. I love being a veterinarian. The profession is a massive family: it’s beautiful, intelligent, messy, joyful, compassionate, frustrating, and loving, all at the same time. One thing that is certain about this family is that our hearts and souls are intertwined by our care for animal and human health. This year, I am honored to be the “mom” of the AVMA family. This is noteworthy because I am the first woman to serve as AVMA president.

My path to this position has its twists and potholes. I worked at a practice that was the perfect fit, and then I got the six-year itch: Is this all there is? I challenged myself and became board-certified by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. Shortly thereafter, our son was diagnosed with some significant learning differences that resulted in a two-year hiatus from practice (except for the occasional Saturday) and the founding of a high school for students with special needs. I learned a lot during that time, including that I needed the mental stimulation that comes from being a veterinarian and being engaged in veterinary medicine. More recently, I joined the faculty at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences to teach our future colleagues. This is incredibly stimulating! What also maintains my joy in our profession is my participation in organized veterinary medicine. When I got involved in something bigger than me, I found colleagues who share a passion to better the profession. This process can be frustrating at times. However, I am ALWAYS inspired by the veterinarians, team members, and others who appreciate the AVMA’s contributions to the care of animals and the public.

So, wherever you are on the veterinary family tree, know that you are an integral part of us.

Now, sit up straight, eat your veggies, and let me hear you roar: AVMA Rocks!

Lori Teller, DVM, DABVP

I want to hear from you. Please reach out to me with your comments, questions and concerns at presidentscolumn@avma.org.