

Dear Colleagues of the MVMA,

It is with great pleasure that I would like to nominate a very special dog for the MVMA's Minnesota Hall of Fame Award in the professional category.

Captain Maxwell III (Max) is a 10 year old German Shepherd. He is the constant companion and assistant of Dr. Janice Nadeau, a licensed clinical psychologist, marriage and family therapist. Max is a trained Emotional Support dog. Emotional Support Dogs are a category of trained working dogs that assist mental health providers in a variety of settings. For 10 years Max has provided unwavering encouragement, unconditional love and dedication to Dr. Nadeau's clients, family and Janice herself as they have navigated their way through any number of periods of loss and emotional pain. Max accompanies Dr. Nadeau to work daily. He provides gentle and loving comfort to Dr. Nadeau's patients including adults, teens and children. Through the gentle touch and affection that only a dog can provide, he is the avenue of trust many patients need during therapy. He is well trained to obey commands but even more than that he knows what each patient needs. He is there to be pet and hugged but also knows when to back off. This level of comfort and support allows patients to open up and achieve emotional breakthroughs that otherwise may have taken much longer or may not have been possible.

In recent years Max has not only provided support but he has also been an inspiration to those who know him and Dr. Nadeau. Three years ago Max was diagnosed with Megaesophagus. This is a condition in which the muscles of the esophagus no longer function properly. Dogs with this condition regurgitate frequently. Keeping food and water down is a constant struggle for Max. When he is given even small amounts of water he regurgitates. He is fed frequent meals of high moisture foods and must be fed in an upright position. Often a meatball of food is used to push the water into his stomach. That and other little tricks have helped Dr. Nadeau to keep Max alive. There was a long period around the time of his diagnosis where Max was in the hospital. He did not have a typical form of the disease and the diagnosis came after special imaging with fluoroscopy showed

that Max could not move food through his esophagus. He lost a great deal of weight and it was uncertain whether he would be able to live with this condition. Without the support of a dedicated owner Max would no longer be with us. And more importantly he would no longer be here to give love to his patients.

Dr. Nadeau provides a service that we as veterinarians can certainly appreciate. Grief counseling and family support are part of our lives as veterinarians. It is inspiring to me to see Max and what he and Janice have been able to achieve even give the difficulty of his disease and the great expense it has taken to keep him healthy.

It is my hope that Max's contribution is recognized both as a professional support dog but also as an ongoing inspiration to us in what can be achieved through dedication of a loving owner.