



## The Johannes Odendaal HAI Distinguished Researcher Award of IAHAIO

**2016 Award Winner: Dr Erika Friedmann**



***Above (from left): Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers, Dr Erika Friedmann, Rebecca Johnson***

The “**Johannes Odendaal HAI Distinguished Researcher Award of IAHAIO**” was presented for the first time at IAHAIO’s 2016 Triennial International Conference held in Paris, France, July 10-13. The award is in honor of the late Johannes Odendaal of South Africa, a renowned veterinarian and scientist, and with permission of his heirs, IAHAIO will subsequently present the award at each triennial international conference. The award is given to an individual for distinguished research in the broadly defined field of human-animal interaction. That research must have been published (or accepted for

publication) in peer-reviewed journals and/or in chapters of books that have received excellent reviews in respected journals.

**IAHAIO is, therefore, delighted that the first Johannes Odendaal award was be received by Dr. Friedmann**, a Professor & Associate Dean for Research at the University of Maryland School of Nursing in the U.S. She has been conducting research on the health benefits of the human-companion animal bond for people since the 1970s. Her seminal research showed that pet ownership is associated with improved one-year survival of heart disease patients. Since then she has conducted numerous studies exploring the moderating effects of pet ownership on stress and blood pressure. The findings of her original research were confirmed and advanced in a follow-up study that was published in 1995. Erika is a founding member and President of the International Society of Anthrozoology (ISAZ), a group of researchers and scholars who are advancing the study of the human-animal relationship. She is an active researcher, conducting NIH funded research and contributing over 60 papers to interdisciplinary refereed journals published internationally. Erika holds a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Pennsylvania. For over two decades she was a faculty member at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, serving as chair of the Department of Health and Nutrition Sciences from 1992 to 2003.

The late **Prof. Johannes Odendaal** has been described as a “born animal person.” He studied for a Bachelor’s degree in science, majoring in Zoology and Chemistry, and then qualified as a veterinarian. After 14 years of managing a highly successful practice, he joined the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria, S. Africa. During this time, he obtained doctoral degrees in Veterinary Science (Zootechnology), Human Science (Psychology) and Veterinary Science (Physiology). Johannes Odendaal established the Department of Veterinary Ethology (animal behavior) and also introduced Veterinary Ethology as a specialized field in Veterinary Science. He was also a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Until 2006 Prof. Odendaal was a research and development professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria after which he founded Ethology Academy CC. He is credited with being the first investigator to study the neurochemical effects in humans and animal when interacting with companion dogs, a study which paved the way for research into the mechanisms of human-animal interaction. Prof. Odendaal was a prolific author and speaker, garnering numerous recognition and awards worldwide.

**IAHAIO is delighted that Mars Petcare and its global scientific research centre WALTHAM sponsored this award in 2016. WALTHAM is delighted to honor the contribution of those who do outstanding research in understanding Human-Animal Interactions**

