Broken Bow pharmacist Mike Holcomb, center, receives the College of Pharmacy Preceptor of the Year award at the college's recent spring honors convocation.

BROKEN BOW'S DR. HOLCOMB NAMED UNMC PHARMACY PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR
by Chuck Brown, UNMC public relations
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When pharmacy students arrive for a rotation at Holcomb Pharmacy in Broken Bow, they can expect their comfort zone to, shall we say, expand. Mike Holcomb, Pharm.D., a 1990 College of Pharmacy graduate, likes to tailor the rotations through his pharmacy to the experience levels of the students.

"If a student has done a lot of nursing home work, we stay completely away from nursing homes when it comes to our work with that student," said Dr. Holcomb, who received the College of Pharmacy's 2011 Preceptor of the Year Award. "I set their rotations to build strengths in new areas for them." Below, Dr. Holcomb tells us more about his experience and approach as a preceptor.

Tell us about your pharmacy.

We have a family-run pharmacy just off Broken Bow's main street that has been in operation since 1938. My grandfather started it, then my father ran it and now I do.

How long have you been a preceptor?

I started working with students about 1995.

What is the most rewarding aspect of being a preceptor?

I like that see what we can teach each other. I always ask the students, "What do you think I can do to improve my pharmacy?" They often have excellent ideas that I have been able to implement. Conversely, it's fun to teach them things they don't learn in pharmacy school, which often relates to the business side of running a pharmacy.

Describe one of your favorite experiences as a preceptor.

I once took a student to a live radio segment focused on blood glucose monitors. The student was asked to do a blood glucose test on an announcer. The student pricked the announcer's finger but no blood came out. She did it again. Still no blood. This scene repeated about six times until finally I grabbed the host's hand and really stuck him hard with a needle, which finally drew some blood. Although mortified, the student did a great job keeping her cool and the announcer had a great sense of humor about it.

As a pharmacy student, what were your experiences like with preceptors?
I had several good ones and some who showed me how not to handle rotations. The main thing I took away was not
to use a student as just another worker but rather to see what I can offer him or her educationally.