

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

“Preparing for Our Future by Understanding Our Past”

Introduction

This collection contains 205 short stories created by Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine that were previously published as blog postings periodically between April 2013 and September 2015.

These stories originated in Veritas, a project that was instituted as a partnership between the Cornell University and Texas A&M Colleges of Veterinary Medicine. The effort was sponsored by Zoetis, a global animal health company, with the goal of providing computer-based continuing education programs for veterinary professionals.

This collection of stories was added to Cornell University’s eCommons institutional repository in January, 2017 when the Veritas grant project ended and the blog was discontinued.

Overview

When veterinary medicine is examined throughout the years, we look at people and events as snapshots in time, considering how we arrived at the present and anticipating the future. It is a form of rear-view mirror awareness of how history informs and guides our path forward.

However, *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* is not just a trip down history lane. Neither is it simply a compilation of the most famous veterinarians nor a catalog of the most important events in the profession’s development. This collection of stories includes all of those things, for how could we understand veterinary medicine’s contributions to public health without knowing about Drs. James H. Steele and Tracey McNamara, or consider the emergence of feline medicine without being aware of Drs. Jean Holzworth and Jane Brunt?

But, what *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* really does is to collect the profession’s stories: why Harvard closed its veterinary college in 1901; how a veterinarian established the United Negro College Fund; why New York City had five veterinary colleges; why Cornell admitted 20% Jewish students during the Depression; and how a veterinary pathologist at the Bronx Zoo unraveled the mystery of West Nile Virus.

Perspectives will help us understand why 90% of veterinary colleges are located in regions of the country where only 10% of the people live. It will clarify why we should not be surprised at the rapid rise in proprietary, non-university-based colleges of veterinary medicine because we will understand why others were created a century ago.

Through these stories, readers will learn that women went from being sparsely represented to comprising over half of our veterinary class student body in less than one decade. And despite graduating 80% female students for almost three decades, we will also learn that 20% or fewer senior positions of leadership are currently held by women. *Perspectives* documents an impending shift and describes how women are poised to become the leaders in organized veterinary medicine, clinical practice, industry and academia.

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine also provides insight into the re-emergence of the concept of 'One Health' through the growing realization that animals enhance the human condition and contribute to mankind's health and well-being. It predicts how the concept of 'Zoonotic' could set the stage for expansion of veterinarians into the human health field from a direction other than comparative medicine.

Also discussed is how the establishment of the Western University of Health Sciences in California changed the face of veterinary accreditation and led to similar recognition of proprietary off-shore colleges. An understanding is given for why the growing number of veterinary graduates should not be feared if the profession expands into the fields of human health as well as continues critical core missions in animal health.

In short, *Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* peers into the future of the profession while examining its past using 2013 to 2015, as a benchmark and a dedication to the profession.

Contributors

Stories written by Dr. Smith are supplemented by those from co- and guest authors who bring their special voice to their personal stories. The authors include people such as veterinary students, women who are prominent in the profession, and those who share their knowledge of veterinary history.

Credits

Acknowledgement is given to Terry L. Kristensen, former Associate Director of the Cornell University Veterinary Library who designed and implemented the original blog and oversaw production on a daily basis. Gwen Isham, former Executive Administrative Assistant to Dr. Smith, provided copy editing services for the stories. Susanne Whitaker, former Reference Librarian of the Cornell University Veterinary Library, transitioned the collection of Veritas blog posting documents into Cornell University's eCommons institutional repository, in conjunction with support from the College of Veterinary Medicine's Office of Marketing and Communications.