



## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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# White Coat ceremony: the rite of passage

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On Saturday, March 18, 97 members of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine Class of 2018 participated in the White Coat ceremony, a rite of passage for third-year veterinary students. The students were coated by their chosen mentors—veterinary faculty members or DVMs who made an impact on their pre-clinical study. They also all stood and recited the veterinarian’s oath, administered by Dr. Susan Ackerman, DVM ’86, chair of the Alumni Association Executive Board.

The ceremony provides students a symbolic transition from the pre-clinical to the clinical phase of veterinary education. The white coat is a symbol of medical professionalism and the ceremony signifies the beginning of students’ clinical apprenticeship to sustain and restore the health of animals and people.

Lorin D. Warnick, Austin O. Hoey Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, spoke of the great responsibility of donning the white coat (or coveralls and boots) as they start clinics: “Your responsibilities for client communication and patient care increase. Having completed all your pre-clinical course work, you are in a better position to integrate

the knowledge and skills you have learned and apply them in a clinical setting. You are taking another step in joining the veterinary profession and accepting the associated rights and responsibilities.”



Dr. Matthew Antkowiak '97, co-founder and veterinarian at The Atlas District Veterinary Hospital (AtlasVet)

Dr. Matthew Antkowiak '97, co-founder and veterinarian at The Atlas District Veterinary Hospital (AtlasVet) in Washington, D.C., was the keynote speaker. Drawing from his experience as a veterinary student and practitioner, Antkowiak encouraged students to learn from their mistakes, follow their own path, and to be confident in their knowledge and abilities. These three “nuggets” of advice were delivered with humor, sincerity, and wit.

The Class of 2018 began clinic rotations on March 27 in the Cornell University Hospital for Animals.