



Alumni Panel

Moderated by **Monika Blackwell**

Dr. Niccole Bruno | Cornell University



Dr. Niccole Bruno, is the CEO & Founder of blendVET™, a veterinary hospital certification program in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). As an Afro-Latina, Dr. Bruno's navigation into veterinary medicine has had its share of challenges. During her career, the experiences of racism, misogyny, and stereotypical behaviors caused Dr. Bruno to develop a sense of disengagement from a profession she once dearly loved.

Nevertheless, her perseverance prevailed and her passion for veterinary medicine resumed when she was offered the role of Medical Director, for a veterinary hospital in Long Island, NY. For roughly eight years, her sincere and dedicated service as a hospital leader in both NY and Houston fueled her heartfelt endeavors to ensure a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.

Today, Dr. Bruno continues in her efforts of diversity, equity, and inclusion through speaking engagements, mentorship, and building the pathway of BIPOC students (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) into the profession. Following completion of the Purdue University Diversity and Inclusion program in 2020, her awareness, continual exploration, and study into the diversity deficiencies of our profession, ignited her vision to create blendVET™.

Dr. Bruno currently serves as an Advisory Board member for Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and Pawsibilities, a mentorship platform for BIPOC students interested in veterinary medicine. In her spare time, she enjoys activities with her family, traveling, her Peloton, football, and binge-watching her favorite shows.

Dr. Robert Knapp | The Ohio State University



Dr. Knapp received a BS in Food Technology (Animal Science) from The Ohio State University, a MS in Animal Science from Texas A&M University and his DVM from The Ohio State University. He became the owner of Knapp Veterinary Hospital in 2007, which was founded by his grandfather in 1945, and remains an active Ohio State alumnus, currently serving as treasurer of the Veterinary Medicine Alumni Society, also serving in the position of President in 2008.

Dr. Knapp has also been active in the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA), serving in various capacities during his 32-year membership, including President in 2007 and as the Ohio Delegate to the AVMA. Dr. Knapp serves on the AVMA Board of Directors representing District V and currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Board. He was honored with the OVMA's Meritorious Service Award in 1999; the Ohio Veterinarian of the Year Award in 2014; and The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2015.

Dr. Ryan Lee | Texas A&M University



Dr. Ryan Lee is a passionate veterinarian at South 40 Equine and South 40 Veterinary Hospital in College Station, Texas, providing exceptional care for horses, dogs, and cats. His thorough approach includes meticulous examinations and advanced diagnostic imaging to ensure accurate diagnoses and effective treatments. Growing up in rural Navarro County, Dr. Lee was actively involved in agriculture, which sparked his interest in veterinary medicine.

He earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science and a master's degree from Texas A&M University. After teaching high school Agricultural Science and serving as an FFA advisor, he pursued veterinary studies at Texas A&M's Veterinary School.

Dr. Lee is a member of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, American Quarter Horse Association, Texas Equine Veterinary Association, and American Association of Equine Practitioners, among others. He holds a patent for a device used to safely pass nasogastric tubes in horses and enjoys teaching veterinary students and undergraduates.

Dr. Lee lives with his wife Kristina and their three children and is active in their church and community.

Dr. John Poppe | Washington State University



Brigadier General John Poppe (DVM WSU '86 and WSU BS Animal Science '81) retired at the end of 2015 as the 25th Chief of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps after serving 28 years as a veterinarian in the Army.

Originally from Washington state, he and his family retired in San Antonio where he serves as an Assistant Vice President of the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo and Executive Director of the American Veterinary One Health Society.

He is President Elect of the Uniformed Veterinary Medicine Association which raises funds for replacement horses for the Fort Sam Houston and Fort Myer Caisson Units. He enjoys conducting Wounded Warrior hunts and sailing the coast of Texas with his wife as Skipper.

He and his wife Denise (WSU '86) and their three children Jane, George, and Hollis have traveled the world with their pets which currently includes their cat "Tati."

Dr. Addie Reinhard | University of Tennessee



Dr. Addie Reinhard is the Founder and CEO of MentorVet, a rapidly growing entity that leverages evidence-based approaches to empower individuals to thrive within veterinary medicine. She is a veterinary wellbeing researcher, and her research focuses on developing and evaluating innovative interventions to support mental health and wellbeing within the veterinary profession.

She is on the research team for the Merck Animal Health Veterinary Wellbeing Study. In 2021, she completed a master's degree in Community and Leadership Development and a Graduate Certificate in College Teaching and Learning from the University of Kentucky and holds a certificate in Veterinary Human Support from the University of Tennessee. She is also a certified QPR instructor.