

Veterinary Nurse Initiative: A Veterinarian's Perspective

At a very early stage of my career, I was lucky to have been exposed to the value and improved efficiency of the veterinary technician in practice. I must admit I have a special place in my heart for the veterinary technician. By focusing on the clinical tasks, they made it possible for me to focus on what I truly enjoy, which is practicing veterinary medicine (diagnoses, prescribing, and surgery). While I found most of the routine pre-exam and follow-up activities mundane, veterinary technicians always approached them with a keen sense of enthusiasm. This attitude is essential, as these portions of a visit are very important to the client/patient.

The veterinary technician profession has deeply expanded its role by becoming nurse care specialists. I have always felt we do not have enough appreciation for the excellent job they provide to the patient, client, and veterinarian. The veterinary profession needs to recognize the value of the veterinary technician and start to refer to them as the dedicated people they are: veterinary nurses.

Today, the general public thinks of a technician as someone who fixes things (computers, cars, electronics). Health care professionals certainly do not come to mind. By transitioning from credentialed Veterinary Technician to Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) we will be providing the title and respect these individuals deserve. Our clients will then have an immediate appreciation of the clinical activities they perform for us every day. This change might also help our veterinarians understand the difference between the RVN and the veterinary assistant. Many practices still refer to all staff as "technicians" which is *incorrect* and disrespectful to the veterinary technicians who have worked very hard to earn their Associate's or Bachelor's degree and become credentialed to practice. This change is long overdue and needed in our profession to further enhance veterinary medicine as a whole. I encourage you to read the article in *Today's Veterinary Nurse* (Spring 2018) in "Career Challenges". **TVP**



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McCurnin's distinguished veterinary career spans over five decades. After receiving his DVM and MS (surgery) from Iowa State University, he owned and operated a small animal practice in Phoenix, Arizona. After becoming a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons (ACVS), he pursued teaching, serving at various schools of veterinary medicine as a professor and at the director level. Winner of numerous awards, he has presented over 525 papers and presentations, published over 190 articles, and contributed to 11 textbooks, including *McCurnin's Clinical Textbook* for Veterinary Technicians. Currently, he serves as director and president-elect of the Western Veterinary Conference (WVC) and teaches part-time in veterinary technology at Pima Medical Institute, Las Vegas and Penn Foster College, Scranton, Penn.



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