

# AAEP NEWS

## Meet 2017 AAEP President Dr. Reynolds Cowles, Jr.

**Hometown:** Statesville, N.C.

**Degree:** DVM, Oklahoma State University, 1967

**Current Residence:** Free Union, Va.

**Current Position:** Founder and past president, Blue Ridge Equine Clinic in Earlysville, Va.



*Dr. Cowles and his wife Evie at the 2015 Resort Symposium.*

### Describe how you ventured into equine veterinary medicine.

I was raised on a dairy farm and had a good relationship with our local practitioner, Dr. Robert Hudgins, who was an excellent mentor. I became involved with the equine side by working in the summers before vet school at the Van Clief family's Nydrrie Stud in Virginia. The Van Cliefs introduced

me to Dr. Dan Flynn and to Dr. Allen Hughes, very respected equine practitioners in Virginia. I was mentored strongly by the clinicians at Oklahoma State and went to work for Dr. Flynn out of school with an emphasis on the equine side of his practice.

### What issues in equine veterinary medicine are top priorities for you and why?

The top issues today are continuing our excellence in continuing education and supporting our members in what they do. The profession faces many challenges in the support area—wellness, ethical education, advocacy for our members in the halls of government, and assisting in all the many equine-related industries.

Welfare for all equines is high on the list. Right now, the AAEP is serving as a resource for the various racing efforts working toward uniformity in medication policies and has taken the lead in efforts to find better methods to manage EIPH in the racehorse. For the performance horse industries, the issues of proper medication usage and biosecurity lead the list. Veterinarians are the leading source of expertise in these fields, and we must maintain a leading role.

### How has your AAEP membership influenced your career?

AAEP has been the guiding light for our profession. Since my very first meeting, I have looked at AAEP as the source for education and advocacy for equine practice. I have learned so much from my colleagues, and the leadership in this association has always been at the

highest level. It has made me and my practice better in all respects.

### How have your experiences as a veterinarian and AAEP member prepared you to lead the association?

As practitioners, we are challenged each day to ask what, why and how in diagnosis and treatment. This prepares us to address the issues that we face, and AAEP addresses these pillars and gives us the tools to help the horse and our clients.

### What are you most proud of during your veterinary career?

Helping horses and their owners on a daily basis.

### What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Always ask why.

### Please describe your interests outside of veterinary medicine.

Family is very important. My wife Evie and I enjoy spending time with my two children and our four grandchildren, two of whom are show hunter riders. Evie and I both fox hunt, and I lead first flight for the Farmington Hunt. We also enjoy steeplechase racing. We had some modest success as owners and breeders from the 1980s up until three years ago, when we converted our remaining steeplechasers into fox hunting horses. I'm also active with the National Steeplechase Association—I serve on their board of directors and chair their Steeplechase Safety Committee, which covers both horses and riders.

Our escape is a house in Montana where we go to fly fish and where I also hunt. I'm mainly a bird hunter, and we maintain two setters as bird dogs.



*Dr. Cowles at the Farmington Hunt.*