

An international journal dedicated to avian health

Avian Diseases

Published Quarterly by the American Association of Avian Pathologists

Vol. 67 No. 4 December 2023 Pages 297–513

www.aaapjournals.info



DR. BRUCE WIXSON CALNEK

aaap
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AVIAN PATHOLOGISTS

About the cover

DR. BRUCE WIXSON CALNEK (1932)

Dr. Bruce W. Calnek was born in a small farmhouse between Manchester and Palmyra, NY on January 29, 1932 to Otto and Lucile (nee Wixson) Calnek. When the Calnek family moved to a farm near Clifton Springs, Bruce had his first exposure to small flocks of chickens kept by the family for slaughter and sale. When Bruce was starting his junior year in high school, the family moved to the Ithaca area, where he met Dr. Earl Moore, a turkey disease specialist at the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine.

Bruce was offered a job by Dr. Moore washing glassware on Saturday mornings at the research facility (later known as the P.P. Levine Laboratory) and soon afterwards was doing the weekend chores at the facility. He was encouraged to help with minor tasks in the research program on coccidiosis and Dr. Moore suggested that Bruce consider a career in avian veterinary medical research. In 1949, Bruce matriculated in the New York State (NYS) College of Agriculture and enrolled in the NYS College of Veterinary Medicine in 1951. Dr. Calnek received his DVM degree in 1955 and his MS degree in 1956 for his studies on egg transmission of “pleuropneumonia-like organisms” (*Mycoplasma gallisepticum*). To pay for his studies, Bruce worked at the Tompkins County hospital doing emergency laboratory work during nights and weekends. While working at the hospital, he met Mary Jeanne Trudeau, a dietician on the staff, who he married on July 5, 1955.

After receiving his MS degree, the Calnek's moved to Amherst (MA) where Bruce was appointed as an Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts (UM). During their time in Amherst the Calnek's had two sons, David and Douglas. While at UM, Dr. Calnek worked on avian encephalomyelitis ultimately resulting in the development of an oral vaccine that is still used worldwide. In 1961, he returned to Cornell University to join the newly established Department of Avian Diseases, later known as the Department of Avian and Aquatic Animal Medicine or DAAAM. From that time until his retirement in 1995, he worked mostly on the pathogenesis of Marek's disease (MD) supported with grants from the National Institute of Health. Some of the key results of his studies include the identification of the feather follicle epithelium as the source of cell-free MD virus, development of a method to obtain cell-free herpesvirus of turkeys, the development of the “Cornell model” of the pathogenesis of MD, and the development of the HVT/SB-1 vaccine. From 1976 until his retirement, Dr. Calnek served as Chairman of DAAAM. During this period, he was also Editor-in-Chief of the 9th and 10th editions of Diseases of Poultry. He published over 150 peer-reviewed papers and many book chapters.

Dr. Calnek served as President of the AAAP (1981-1982). In 2003, he made a generous gift to the AAAP to establish the Calnek Applied Poultry Research Award. The first award was given in 2004 to his good friend and colleague Dr. Stephen Hitchner. Bruce received many honors during his career including the AAAP Special Service Award (1995), the Pharmacia & Upjohn Achievement Award (1990) and the P.P. Levine Award for the best publication in Avian Diseases in 1966, 1983 and 1990. He was awarded life membership in the AAAP in 1996. In 2013 and 2016, Dr. Calnek was inducted into the Inaugural class of the Hall of Honour of the World Veterinary Poultry Association and the Hall of Honor of the AAAP, respectively.

On a personal note, I met Bruce for the first time during the 15th Annual Meeting of the AAAP in New Orleans in 1972, not knowing that I would become his graduate student in 1975. It has been a privilege to be his student, colleague and friend since that time.

Submitted by K.A. Schat