

Ron Spink, DVM

Dr. Ron Spink took the lead in organizing the first Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) Annual Conference, held in June 1980. A pioneer in avian and wildlife medicine, Dr. Spink graduated with *high honors* from Michigan State University in 1963, earning both a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree and a master's in orthopedic surgery. He was the recipient of the Merck Award and was honored with membership in the Phi Zeta, Phi Kappa Phi, and Alpha Zeta honor societies. He continued his training with a postdoctoral fellowship in laboratory animal medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School. Over the course of his career, Dr. Spink held numerous leadership roles and veterinary positions across Michigan, including Vice President of the Kent County Humane Society in Grand Rapids; zoo veterinarian for Milham Park Zoo in Kalamazoo; veterinarian for the Kalamazoo Nature Center; and president of the West Michigan Veterinary Medical Association. He also served as the attending veterinarian for the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary in Battle Creek and founded the Michigan Wildlife Health Organization, which was later incorporated into Michigan State University. Dr. Spink pursued additional graduate studies in ornithology and ethology at Western Michigan University and went on to found the Western Michigan SPCA. He also established Avi-Vet Corporation, where he invented the Therapy Unit Plus, a specialized treatment device for birds. In addition to his veterinary work, he served as a deputy in the Kalamazoo Sheriff's Department's water rescue and mounted divisions. Inspired by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, he studied the effects of DDT on birds at the University of Idaho. Later, he founded the Sycamore Nature Preserve in Ravenna, Michigan, earning an Environmental Excellence Award. In North Fort Myers, Florida, he served as the zoo veterinarian for the Shell Factory Wildlife Park and was a member of FEMASART. A full list of his publications can be found at nchi.nih.gov/?term=Spink.