



TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

VETERINARY MEDICINE OATH  
AND  
HOODING CEREMONY

COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

MAY 2, 2026





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COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE  
VETERINARY MEDICINE OATH  
AND  
HOODING CEREMONY

MAY 2, 2026  
12:30 PM  
FOLLOWING COMMENCEMENT

TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY DANIEL "CHAPPIE" JAMES ARENA

CHALLENGE SPEAKER:  
ATHEMA ETZIONI, DVM, MS, DACVP  
CLASS OF 2001

# DR. MARK A. BROWN

10TH PRESIDENT AND CEO OF TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY



Dr. Mark Brown, was appointed the tenth president and CEO of Tuskegee University. His tenure began on July 1, 2024. Dr. Brown's selection was the first time in Tuskegee's nearly 144-year history that an alum was selected to lead the university. This retired Air Force Major General agreed to take the helm after the retirement of Dr. Charlotte P. Morris, the university's ninth president.

His extensive executive experience includes the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, the University of Virginia Darden School of Business, and the Eli and Edythe Broad Academy for Urban School Superintendents, now hosted at the Yale School of Management.

Dr. Brown, who received his bachelor's from Tuskegee in accounting in 1986, earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Troy University, a Master's of Strategic Studies from the Air Command and Staff College, a Master's in National Security Strategy from the National War College, and his doctorate in Education from Baylor University. His experience in education is varied and distinguished.

While a Major General in the Air Force, Dr. Brown served as Deputy Commander of Air Education and Training Command, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. AETC recruits, trains, and educates Air Force personnel. His command included the Air Force Recruiting Service, two numbered Air Forces, and two fully accredited graduate and doctoral degree-granting universities: Air University and the Air Force Institute of Technology. AETC operates more than 1,400 trainer, fighter, and mobility aircraft, 23 wings, 10 bases, and five geographically separated groups. The command trains more than 293,000 Airmen annually, with approximately 60,000 active-duty, Reserve, Guard, civilian, and contractor personnel.

After retiring from the Air Force with 32 years of service, Dr. Brown expanded his educational service as the chief operating officer of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid, which had a lending portfolio of \$1.7 trillion equivalent to that of the nation's five largest consumer lending banks. As COO, he was responsible for all of the nation's Title IV funding.

Most recently, he has served as president and chief executive officer of the Student Freedom Initiative based in Washington, D.C. The Student Freedom Initiative is the vision of billionaire philanthropist Robert F. Smith after his historic gift to eliminate the student loan debt of the Morehouse College class of 2019.

As the first President and Chief Executive Officer, he and his staff provide four components to 63 HBCUs, which also includes two Tribal Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions. The capabilities include agreements to fund any educational attendance requirements beyond what is paid for through Federal programs, such as Pell Grants, Work-Study, and Federal Student Loans. SFI is also focused on elevating the communities around its school by providing critical resources such as access to highspeed broadband, cybersecurity upgrades, affordable living spaces and solar energy.

Dr. Brown was commissioned through the Tuskegee University Air Force ROTC program in 1986. He served in comptroller, command, and staff positions at all U.S. Department of Defense levels, including two assignments as congressional liaison to the United States House of Representatives.

His global experience includes serving in the Philippines, Spain, England, Turkey and Iraq. In addition, he has commanded four times at ascending levels, deploying in support of operation Provide Comfort, and served as the Assistant Executive Officer for the 17th Air Force Chief of Staff. He was also the Financial Management Senior Military Assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Chief Financial Officer for Air Force Materiel Command, responsible for a portfolio greater than \$60 billion, 38 percent of the Air Force budget.

Dr. Brown is married to Gwendolyn Jackson Brown, his wife of 33 years. They have two adult children, Mark II and Michael.

# TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY HISTORY

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Marked by more than a century of tradition since its founding through the efforts of former slave Lewis Adams and former slave owner George W. Campbell, Tuskegee University today is known for being among the nation's premier historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs)— and for its openness to all. Its mission remains service to people, not merely education for its own sake. Stressing the need to educate the whole person, that is, the hand and the heart as well as the mind, founding principal Booker T. Washington's new school was soon acclaimed — first by Alabama and then by the nation — for the soundness and vigor of its educational programs and principles.

Founded as the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers through the passage of Alabama House Bill 165 on July 4, 1881, Tuskegee University traces its modest beginnings to a one-room shanty located near Butler's Chapel AME Zion Church. Under Washington's leadership, however, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (as of 1893) soon rose to national prominence. A highly skilled organizer and fundraiser who counseled U.S. presidents, Washington was a strong advocate of black farmers and businesses. Student enrollment was not limited to rural Macon County and the South, but was global in composition. Every student's educational experience combined vocational classes with coursework toward general diplomas, which included mathematics, English and history. To that end, Washington recruited the best and brightest available within the black community, including famed researcher George Washington Carver and architect Robert R. Taylor.

Tuskegee's prominence as a black school of higher learning continued after Washington's passing in 1915. President Robert R. Moton actively solicited for modern buildings and equipment to teach the trades, more comfortable faculty and student housing, and enlarged and improved recreational, health and academic facilities. By 1927, his efforts had helped to elevate Tuskegee's high school-level academics to full four-year college status with bachelor degrees in agriculture, home economics, mechanical industries and education. In addition, it donated land in 1923 for the Tuskegee Veteran's Administration Hospital — the first and only one staffed by black professionals. He continued institutional relationships with financiers such as Julius Rosenwald, which in turn created programs for underprivileged portions of society and the education of blacks.

Tuskegee would establish itself as a leader in veterinary medicine education in 1944 when President Frederick D. Patterson founded the Tuskegee Institute (as of 1937) School of Veterinary Medicine. In the same year, he helped co-found the United Negro College Fund, which continues today to advocate on behalf of and provide financial support for a consortium of HBCUs — Tuskegee among them.

During the 1940s, although the rest of the world was embroiled in war, Tuskegee continued to better opportunities for blacks nationwide. The Infantile Paralysis Center, which opened on Jan. 15, 1941, as part of Tuskegee University's John A. Andrew Memorial Hospital, treated and served African-American patients (especially for polio) from the southeastern states, as well as Alabama patients

with other orthopedic conditions. Further acclaim resulted from the university's Civilian Pilot Training Program (which began in 1939) that eventually led to the formation of the 99th Fighter Squadron of Tuskegee Airmen in June 1941.

The organization of the College of Arts and Sciences, the elimination of several vocational programs, and the development of engineering programs marked the tenure of fourth president, Dr. Luther H. Foster. His tenure also included the turbulent years of the Civil Rights Movement, during which time the university maintained an attitude of open dialogue by allowing a variety of controversial speakers — such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Julian Bond and Alex Haley — to visit campus. In 1960, Arts and Sciences Dean Charles Gomillion filed a lawsuit leading to the groundbreaking Supreme Court case *Gomillion vs. Lightfoot* concerning Tuskegee's black citizens who had been illegally gerrymandered out of their right to vote. Tragically, on Jan. 3, 1966, Tuskegee freshman Samuel Younge Jr. became the first black college student killed as a result of his involvement in the civil rights movement. The university's significance in our nation's history has twice been celebrated by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Parks Service: first, in 1966, when it became the first HBCU designated as a Registered National Historic Landmark; and again in 1974, when it became the nation's only HBCU designated as a National Historic Site.

Through fifth president Dr. Benjamin F. Payton's participation on the Tuskegee Syphilis Study Legacy Committee, the university established the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care as part of the government's apology for its participation in the "U.S. Public Health Service Study on Syphilis" conducted at Tuskegee from 1932 to 1972. Payton's commitment to education was further exemplified when, in 1985, Tuskegee attained university status and began offering its first doctoral programs in integrative biosciences, materials science and engineering.

The decade following Payton's presidency — under the leadership of presidents Gilbert L. Rochon and Brian L. Johnson — marked a greater emphasis on Tuskegee's research capacity and physical campus through the construction of new education, science and residential halls, as well as improvements to existing facilities. Each also contributed significantly to broader integration of arts and cultural programs in the growing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) movement throughout the U.S.

On July 1, 2018, Tuskegee University marked a new leadership milestone as Dr. Lily D. McNair began her tenure as its eighth – and first female – president in 137 years. Dr. Charlotte P. Morris, began her tenure on August 1, 2021, and served until June 30, 2024.

Dr. Mark A. Brown, was appointed the tenth president and CEO of Tuskegee University. His tenure began on July 1, 2024. Dr Brown's selection was the first time in Tuskegee's nearly 144-year history that an alum was selected to lead the university. He is a 1986 graduate.

# THE HISTORICAL LEGACY COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

The Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine (TUCVM) is the first veterinary medical professional program located on the campus of a historically black college or university (HBCU) in the United States. There are over 127,000 veterinarians in the U.S., 2% are African Americans, and of that 2%, 70% graduated from Tuskegee University. The TUCVM is recognized as the most diverse of all schools/colleges of veterinary medicine in the U.S. The primary mission of the TUCVM is to provide an environment that fosters a spirit of active, independent and self-directed learning, intellectual curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, ethics, and leadership; and promotes teaching, research and service in veterinary medicine and related disciplines.

The TUCVM (formerly the School of Veterinary Medicine) was envisioned by Dr. Frederick Douglas Patterson in 1944. Dr. Patterson founded the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) that even today serves as an excellent example of far-reaching, consequential engagement across the U.S. The TUCVM was established in 1945 to train and educate African Americans at a time when opportunities to study veterinary medicine due to segregation and other racial impediments did not exist. At that time, the TUCVM was one of 10 veterinary schools in the U.S., and it is estimated that there were fewer than five African American veterinarians in the South.

The first graduates of five included one female that completed the program with the DVM degree in 1949. Although the first veterinary class in 1945 contained students who were exclusively African Americans, significant strides have been made over the years to become the most diverse and inclusive veterinary school in the U.S., which has served a singular role in expanding diversity in the veterinary profession. The focus of the college is to be inclusive and play a significant role in educating minoritized and underrepresented populations needed to address the growing veterinary needs in a diverse national and global population.

Since its inception, the TUCVM has graduated nearly 3,200 veterinary medical graduates. The college currently accepts 65 students per year in the incoming class. As with the students, the faculty of educators and researchers are also diverse with national and international expertise. In the basic sciences component of the program, 75 percent of faculty members hold both the DVM and Ph.D. degrees, and the clinical faculty include educators trained in various specialty disciplines and with board certifications.

The college is comprised of professional and graduate programs. The TUCVM offers the professional degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM), the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Interdisciplinary Pathobiology (IDPB) and Integrative Biosciences (IBS). The Ph.D. in IBS is also a shared degree program among the TUCVM; the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences; and the College of Arts and Sciences. The College also offers the Master's degree in Veterinary Science and the Master of Public Health (MPH). The Graduate Public Health program was accredited with the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) in 2022. The college holds 7 U.S. patents with 2 for time-saving technologies to detect multiple foodborne and biothreat pathogens in food items through the research efforts in the Center of Food Animal Health, Food Safety, and Food Defense and 1 in collaboration with engineering faculty for nanomaterial-based films in food packaging applications.

The veterinary medical graduates of the TUCVM are engaged as leaders in various aspects of the veterinary profession. Leadership roles include current president and past presidents and vice-president of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA); past presidents of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), leadership roles in state veterinary medical associations; deans and associate deans of veterinary schools/colleges; leadership roles in the government such as the United States Department of Agriculture (APHIS and FSIS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA). TUCVM veterinary medical graduates are also engaged in agencies that promote funding for health and biomedical research, other public health agencies, and the military services; key positions in organizations that promote veterinary medical education, and experts in biomedical research and leaders in the pharmaceutical industry. Our veterinary medical graduates continue to make contributions to promoting animal welfare; advancing the veterinary profession through education and research; and providing an avenue for the new veterinary professionals to continue the Tuskegee legacy.

The Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine will continue to remain vibrant and engaged as one of the national and global veterinary schools/colleges in the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) that provides leadership for and promotes excellence in academic veterinary medicine. The College also remains vigilant to continue to carry the banner of the organization that represents our profession, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to protect, promote, and advance a strong and unified veterinary profession that meets the needs of society; and advance the science and practice of veterinary medicine to improve animal and human health.

# Oath & Hooding Program

Presiding  
Ebony Gilbreath, DVM, Ph.D., Diplomate-ACVP  
*Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine*

The Processional . . . . . Theme from “*Pomp and Circumstance*” (March No. 1) . . . . . Edward Elgar

The Invocation . . . . . Rev. Cecil A. Duffie, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Chapel

(Audience may be seated)

The Welcome . . . . . Ebony Gilbreath, DVM, Ph.D., DACVP  
Dean of the College

The Greetings & Recognitions . . . . . Dr. Mark A. Brown ’86  
President and CEO, Tuskegee University  
Thierno Thiam, Ph.D.  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Piano Selection. . . . . “*Jesus, I Love You*”. . . . . Norman Hutchins  
Carrington Thompson, *bass*  
Dr. Wayne A. Barr, *piano*

The Introduction of Speaker . . . . . Dean Ebony Gilbreath

The Challenge to the Class of 2026. . . . . Athema Etzioni, DVM, MS, DACVP  
Associate Professor/Section Chief Clinical Pathology, Tuskegee University

The Acceptance of the Challenge . . . . . Morgan Banks, President  
TUCVM Class of 2026

The Musical Selection. . . . . “*Because the Lord is My Shepherd*”. . . . . Milton Brunson  
Carrington Thompson, *bass*  
Dr. Wayne A. Barr, *piano*

The Presentation of the Class of 2026. . . . . Deetra Benn, MS  
Director of Student Affairs

## ASSISTING WITH HOODING

Courtney Allred, DVM - Assistant Professor/Section Chief of Large Animal Medicine & Surgery  
Pawan Puri, DVM, Ph.D. - Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences  
Ebony Gilbreath, DVM, Ph.D., DACVP - Dean of the College

The Administration of the Veterinarian’s Oath . . . . . Dean Ebony Gilbreath

The Welcome to the Veterinary Alumni Association . . . . . Dana Fuller, DVM, TUCVM Class of 2003  
President - Tuskegee Veterinary Medical Alumni Association (TVMAA)

The Closing Remarks . . . . . Dean Ebony Gilbreath

The Benediction . . . . . Rev. Cecil A. Duffie, Ph.D.

The Recessional. . . . . “*Pomp and Circumstance*”. . . . . Edward Elga

## *The Veterinary Oath Challenge Speaker*

### **ATHEMA L. ETZIONI, DVM, MS, DACVP '01**



Dr. Athema L. Etzioni, currently serves as a tenured Associate Professor and Section Chief of Clinical Pathology, Alternate Attending Veterinarian for the Comparative Medicine Resource Center in the Pathobiology Department, and Adjunct Medicine Clinician in the Small Animal Veterinary Teaching Hospital at the Tuskegee University College of Veterinary (TUCVM). She has worked at TUCVM since returning home to her alma mater in 2015. Dr. Etzioni has worked in academia, research, government, corporate, private practice, emergency and critical care, and as an associate and relief veterinarian. She is licensed in both Alabama and Georgia and is Type II USDA Accredited. Previously, Dr. Etzioni served as a Veterinary Clinical Pathologist at Avid Laboratories in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Adjunct Professor in the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences (CAENS) at Tuskegee University, Associate/Relief Veterinarian at South College Veterinary Clinic in Auburn, Alabama, and Relief Veterinarian of Small Animal Medicine and Surgery.

Dr. Etzioni commenced her academic journey at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology/Pre-medicine (major) and Chemistry (minor) in 1997. In 2001, Dr. Etzioni received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree from Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, where she subsequently completed her one-year Veterinary Clinical Pathology Internship in the Department of Pathobiology in 2002. She completed her residency training in veterinary clinical pathology at Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine in West Lafayette, Indiana, where she acquired her Master of Science degree in Comparative Pathology in 2005. Dr. Etzioni is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists following her mentor, the late Dr. William O. Jones, a 1963 veterinary alumnus of Tuskegee University and a trailblazer who was the first black board-certified clinical pathologist. Also making history, Dr. Etzioni is noted as the first black woman board-certified in clinical pathology by the American College of Veterinary Pathologists.

Dr. Etzioni has a love for clinical pathology and is passionate about sharing her knowledge and desires to help students at her alma mater be the best they can be as her mentor, Dr. William O. Jones, inspired her to be.



TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE  
CLASS OF 2026

1. Kaela Adams
2. Chloe Adams-White
3. Briana Arceneaux
4. Alexis Arthur
5. Paola Aviles Villafane
6. Morgan Banks
7. Ayanna Brown
8. Kierney Burks
9. Brittney Carney
10. Jayde Channell
11. Starla Clifton
12. Ariana Cook
13. Kaylie Cutter-Jimenez
14. Kennedy Dames
15. Alexis Edwards
16. Kyle Frett
17. Kateland Gelin
18. Hanna Gilsdorf
19. Austin Goodwin
20. Amanda Gordon
21. Stephanie Hall
22. Eden Harris
23. Faith Isabelle
24. Tatianna Jackson
25. Trenni Jefferson
26. Mallika Kumar
27. Jean Linn
28. Jennifer Maharath
29. Kennedy Mathews
30. Savannah McCrobie
31. Gamaya McEachern
32. Kevin McGhaw Jr.
33. Catherine McKenzie
34. Whitney Moore
35. Jordy Oriental
36. Jada Owens
37. Lauren Petry
38. Angela Plemmons
39. Kaci Polk
40. Alexis Rawlings
41. Nia Reeves
42. Janeece Richardson
43. Jessica Robinson
44. Jacob Scruggs
45. Whitney Shivers
46. Jamie Smith
47. Aulisea Thomas
48. Aliyah Thompson
49. Adam Varella
50. Sabria Wooten
51. Eli Yance

# VETERINARIAN'S OATH

**B**eing admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

**I** will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

**I** accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.



*(Approved by the HOD, 1954; Revision approved by the HOD, 1969;  
Revision approved by the Executive Board 1999, 2010)*





TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY