

# About Dr. David J. Waters, DVM, Ph.D.



Dr. Waters is the Director of the Center for Exceptional Longevity Studies at the Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation in West Lafayette, Indiana. The Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation is a not-for-profit research institute located in the Purdue Research Park that is committed to defeating cancer and other age-related diseases through basic, comparative, and clinical research. From 2000-2014, Dr. Waters served as Professor of Comparative Oncology in the School of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Director of the Center on Aging and the Life Course at Purdue University. He received

his BS (1980) and DVM (1984) degrees from Cornell University and his PhD from the University of Minnesota (1992). Dr. Waters is nationally recognized for his work on validating pet dogs as models of human aging and cancer. In 2006, he published in *Scientific American* “Cancer Clues from Pet Dogs”, which benchmarked for investigators and the public the science behind the field of comparative oncology. Since 2008, he has led the research team conducting the first systematic study of exceptional longevity in pet dogs. The research hinges on the idea that pet dogs with extreme longevity — equivalent to humans who live to be 100 years old — offer a valuable scientific opportunity to uncover important clues to understanding what it takes for pets and people to age more successfully and avoid cancer.

In 2010, his first cross-country scientific expedition to study the oldest-living Rottweilers in their homes (“The Old Grey Muzzle Tour”) was featured in *USA Today*, *AARP Bulletin*, and *Good Morning America*. Dr. Waters is also an expert on the comparative aspects of prostate cancer in men and dogs, selected as one of the 100 scientists who formulated the scientific direction of the prostate cancer research agenda of the United States in 1997. His expertise as a One Health-minded translational researcher is evidenced by the publication of more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific papers in a variety of high-impact journals, including *Aging Cell*, *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Journal of Gerontology*, *Carcinogenesis*, *Prostate*, *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention*.

He is the only veterinarian to be awarded: The Brookdale National Fellowship recognizing leadership potential in aging (1999); The National Academies of Sciences — Keck Futures Initiative Scientific Panel on Extending Human Healthspan (2007); Innovative Minds in Prostate Cancer Today (one of the top 100 prostate cancer researchers of the decade) from the Department of Defense Prostate Cancer Research Program (2007); The Glenn Award for Research in Biological Mechanisms of Aging (2009); Fellow in the Biology of Aging, Gerontological Society of America (one of 125 scientists in the world) (2012). He is an award-winning teacher, receiving the Great Teacher Award for Exemplary Interdisciplinary Teaching at Purdue in 2005. In 2012, he published in the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* the first paper on the self-renewal of teachers in the veterinary profession. His 2013 TEDx talk “The Oldest Dogs as Our Greatest Teachers: Get the Words Out of Your Eyes” underscores how our use of language not only limits scientific discovery, but also influences how we respond to new information.