



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Sharon M. Albright, DVM, CCRT**  
Manager of Communications & Veterinary Outreach  
AKC Canine Health Foundation  
Phone: 919-334-4019  
E-mail: sharon.albright@akcchf.org

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **AKC Canine Health Foundation Honors Dr. Gary Johnson with 2023 Asa Mays, DVM Excellence in Canine Health Research Award**

RALEIGH, NC (August 9, 2023) – The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the health of all dogs and their owners, announces Dr. Gary Johnson as recipient of the 2023 Asa Mays, DVM Excellence in Canine Health Research Award.

Named for Dr. Asa Mays, a member of CHF's first Board of Directors in 1995, the award is a biennial honor presented to a research investigator who demonstrates meritorious achievements in furthering the mission of identifying, characterizing, and treating canine disease and ailments. The award will be presented by Dr. Laura Liscum, CHF Scientific Review Committee Chair, and Dr. Carolyn Henry from the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, during the 2023 AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference on Saturday, August 12.



Gary Johnson, DVM, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. Since the early 1990's, Dr. Johnson has been searching for genetic mutations responsible for a wide variety of heritable diseases in domestic animals. In 2013, Dr. Johnson and his colleagues were among the first to use whole genome sequencing to identify mutations responsible for heritable canine diseases. They have used this technology to identify the genetic causes for numerous heritable canine diseases such as degenerative myelopathy, neuronal storage diseases, glaucoma, and more.

“Dr. Johnson’s pioneering research in canine genetics brought a new era to canine health,” says CHF Chief Executive Officer Dr. Stephanie Montgomery. “His groundbreaking career not only decoded genetics, it also deepened the connections we have with our canine companions.”

As Dr. Johnson nears retirement, a generous gift from the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) will establish the Dr. E. A. (Al) Corley OFA Endowed Program in his honor to ensure a bright future for canine molecular-genetic research at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. A new, yet-to-be-named, program director will lead the program into an era of artificial-intelligence-assisted research to identify the genetic mechanisms underlying complex canine diseases and behaviors.

“Dr. Johnson has become a household name in the world of canine health research,” says Eddie Dziuk, OFA Chief Operating Officer. “He is undoubtedly one of the most prolific researchers making genetic discoveries leading to DNA tests for various canine diseases. At the end of the day, no one can question the fact that Dr. Johnson’s work and dedication have absolutely made our dogs healthier.”

Dr. Johnson’s contributions are a valued part of CHF’s investment in canine health research. The Foundation is currently managing 158 active research grants exploring heart disease, epilepsy, various cancers, and more. Learn more about this important work at [akcchf.org/research](https://akcchf.org/research).

###

### **About CHF**

Since 1995, the AKC Canine Health Foundation has leveraged the power of science to address the health needs of all dogs. With more than \$67.5 million in funding to date, the Foundation provides grants for the highest quality canine health research and shares information on the discoveries that help prevent, treat and cure canine diseases. The Foundation meets and exceeds industry standards for fiscal responsibility, as demonstrated by their highest four-star Charity Navigator rating and GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency. Learn more at [www.akcchf.org](https://www.akcchf.org).