



UPEI's Twenty-fourth Recognition of Founders Ceremony  
Schurman Market Square  
Don and Marion McDougall Hall  
Thursday, February 26, 2026, 1:30 pm

Citation for Dr. Gerald Johnson  
Read by Julia Skinner

Good afternoon,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr. Gerald Johnson, a renowned educator, researcher, and visionary in aquatic veterinary medicine.

Dr. Johnson was the first fish health faculty member to arrive at the Atlantic Veterinary College when it opened at UPEI in 1986. Largely through his efforts, AVC and UPEI became known as one of the premier academic institutions in veterinary medicine for aquatic food animals and associated graduate training.

Based on a foundation of veterinary pathology applied to fish—something that was rarely done in veterinary schools around the world—other faculty members built programs in disciplines such as epidemiology and microbiology. These advances were made possible by Dr. Johnson's leadership and the opportunities he created in those early years.

Dr. Johnson's support of aquatic veterinary pursuits at AVC connected the College to industry-driven projects, making it an integral part of aquaculture success in the Atlantic region. This led to other national and international academic successes, including initiatives with the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Atlantic Innovation Fund, and establishment of the World Organization for Animal Health Collaborating Centre for Epidemiology and Risk Assessment of Aquatic Animal Diseases. In turn, these became the building blocks for the successful Canada Excellence Research Chair in Aquatic Epidemiology program at AVC from 2011 to 2019.

Throughout his career, Dr. Johnson taught many veterinarians and fish health specialists around the world. Known as a practical pathologist, he applied problem-solving skills to many different species—from finfish to mollusks to crustaceans—and to on-farm health issues.

His pioneering work in the 1980s and 1990s, as the founding member of fish pathology and the Coordinator of Fish Health at AVC, impacted national and international programs in fish health. The

Canadian Aquaculture Institute provided applied fish health courses around the world—the central figure in most of those courses was Dr. Johnson. When the National Aquatic Animal Health Program was being proposed by Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in the late 1990s, it was his reputation that ensured UPEI's inclusion in advisory bodies and design.

Faculty members who explore opportunities in places like Southeast Asia and Chile are sometimes surprised to learn that AVC is already well known in those areas. Why? Because Dr. Johnson established those connections decades ago.

In addition to teaching and research during his career at AVC, he took on leadership roles that included Chair of the Department of Pathology and Microbiology, Director of Diagnostic Services and Animal Resources, and Fish Health Coordinator. He supported the University's faculty as vice-president and president of the UPEI Faculty Association.

He retired from AVC in 2011 and was named Professor Emeritus in Pathology and Microbiology at UPEI's Convocation in 2012. In 2024, the Prince Edward Island Veterinary Medicine Association presented him with a lifetime membership.

Dr. Johnson's influence on AVC and its place at UPEI and on veterinary medicine is enormous. He is a giant in aquatic veterinary medicine.

For his groundbreaking work in establishing the Atlantic Veterinary College as a leader in aquatic animal health education, research, and service, we are proud to name Dr. Gerald Johnson a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island.