



## Top UNC Cancer Researcher Receives 2023 Oliver Max Gardner Award

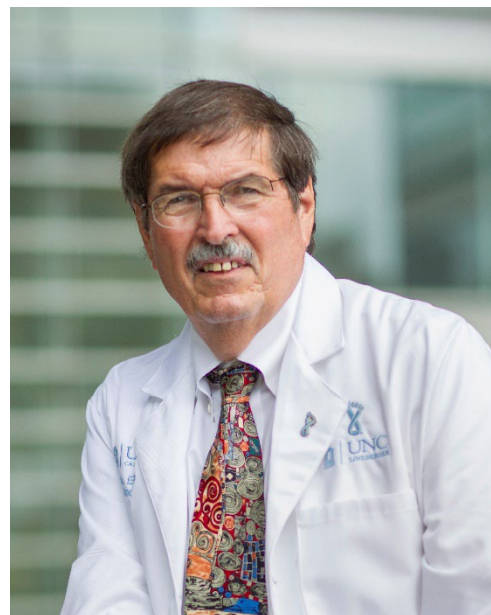
*Prestigious award goes to faculty who make greatest contributions to welfare of human race*

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RALEIGH – A top cancer researcher from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine has been named the recipient of the 2023 Oliver Max Gardner Award.

Dr. H. Shelton “Shelley” Earp, leader of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and UNC Cancer Care, received the prestigious award at today’s meeting of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors. Established by the will of former North Carolina Gov. O. Max Gardner, the award recognizes faculty who have “made the greatest contribution to the welfare of the human race.” First presented in 1949, it is the highest honor conferred on faculty by the Board.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted human health around the world, but because of Dr. Earp’s heroic efforts, cancer diagnosis, cancer treatment and cancer research continued, benefitting the residents of North Carolina and beyond.



“Dr. Earp has dedicated his life and work to battling one of the deadliest diseases known to humankind,” said UNC System President Peter Hans. “His passion for scientific research, combined with his commitment to the understanding, prevention and compassionate treatment of cancer, have made Dr. Earp an outstanding leader in his field. My congratulations to him on this very well-deserved award.”

Earp received his undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University before coming to UNC-Chapel Hill to attend medical school in 1966. Once at Carolina, Earp followed his undergraduate interests, studying how cells behave in both healthy and cancerous tissues. His research mentor, Dr. Robert Ney, chair of the Department of Medicine, encouraged him to seek an academic career. Earp did a tour in the Army medical corps, then returned to Carolina to work with Ney in 1974.

Earp joined UNC-Chapel Hill as an assistant professor in 1977, rising through the ranks to become the Lineberger Distinguished Professor of Cancer Research and director of UNC Lineberger. Today, his research looks for new therapeutic options to treat a range of cancers including breast, lung, pancreatic and prostate cancer, as well as leukemias and melanoma.

Since 1997, Earp has worked to make UNC Lineberger into the premier institution it is today. The N.C. Basnight Cancer Hospital, clinical home of UNC Lineberger, is ranked as the top cancer center in North Carolina and is among the top 30 nationwide. Earp has also initiated partnerships with other University

of North Carolina System schools, including NC State University, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and East Carolina University, recognizing the importance of collaboration in research that leads to new treatments for cancer.

Earp's scientific discoveries have led to intellectual property and new companies that are committed to turning research findings into clinical advances. He holds patents on certain tumor cell inhibitors and is the co-founder of Meryx, an oncology-focused biopharmaceutical company that was recently acquired by Xcovery Holdings, Inc.

"At Carolina, we are committed to solving the grand challenges of our time, and cancer is one of those challenges that has devastated lives across the world and motivated generations of researchers," said UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz. "Dr. Earp's national prominence in the field has led some of the best researchers from across the world to come work with him. By bringing together these scientists and concentrating resources, Dr. Earp's leadership in team-based convergent science approaches has resulted in UNC Lineberger making significant advancements in the world's understanding of this horrific disease."

Earp is internationally recognized for his work and serves on the National Cancer Institute's Board of Scientific Advisors, the Association of American Cancer Institutes, the scientific boards of the V Foundation for Cancer Research, and many others. He contributes his expertise nationally and internationally and acquires new knowledge that directly benefits North Carolina and the patients of the UNC Health Care System.

"Cancer is a disease that, tragically, touches North Carolinians from all corners of our state," said UNC Board of Governors Chair Randy Ramsey. "Dr. Earp's work helps bring treatment and hope to all residents regardless of their background, education level or financial status. It is a privilege to recognize the efforts of this passionate and committed physician and researcher, and we congratulate him on this award."