

UW-Eau Claire: Dr. CP Liu to receive honorary doctorate at UW-Eau Claire

Posted on Thursday, Apr 28, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Photo caption: *Dr. CP Liu, who received his master's degree in biology from UW-Eau Claire in 1974, fondly remembers his time at the university. He will receive an honorary doctorate of science degree in May.*

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire alumnus Dr. CP Liu has a passion for unlocking the mysteries of the human body, founding six companies in his quest to find cures for chronic diseases such as cancer.



Dr. CP Liu

For his work, Liu will receive an honorary doctorate of science degree from UW-Eau Claire, just the second person to earn the distinction. He will be honored at the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association alumni awards event on Friday, May 20, and at commencement on Saturday, May 21.

Chancellor James Schmidt says Liu, who received his master's degree from UW-Eau

Claire in 1974, is deserving of the honorary doctorate as he is an “exceptional example of the innovative spirit that UW-Eau Claire fosters.”

“Dr. Liu doesn’t hesitate to talk about how UW-Eau Claire transformed his life,” Schmidt says. “He knows firsthand the power of education to unlock opportunities and open doors. Thanks to dedicated UW-Eau Claire faculty who prepared him to excel, he has been able to benefit countless people through groundbreaking medical research and the creation of new companies that are changing health care.”

Liu says he is “thrilled and proud” to receive the honorary degree from the university that holds a special place in his heart.

“Without the opportunity that the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire gave to me, my life would be on a different path,” Liu says. “I appreciate very much the opportunity and full scholarship that the school had offered to me without considering who I was and where I came from. I always remind myself to pay back the gifts and favors that others provided to me when I needed it.”

Liu came to UW-Eau Claire’s campus five decades ago in what members of the university’s biology department, who nominated him for the honorary doctorate degree, call “a fortuitous misunderstanding.”

After receiving his bachelor’s degree in biology from Taiwan National Normal University, a friend urged Liu to leave Taiwan and pursue his master’s degree in Wisconsin. Unaware that the UW System had so many universities, Liu chose UW-Eau Claire because it was first on the alphabetical list of schools.

“He often has said it was the best thing that happened to him,” according to the biology department nominators.

Pursuing a master’s degree in biology at UW-Eau Claire, Liu was mentored by Dr. Johng Lim, who taught biology at the university for 36 years. Liu credits Lim for helping to improve his language skills, grades and focus, and attributes much of his success to Lim’s support.

Liu also recalls how his residence hall roommate, John Mohr, realized that Liu needed assistance learning to speak English and understanding English grammar.

“Every morning, he spent about 30 minutes reading the daily headline news and

asked me to repeat after him,” Liu recalls. “He explained to me the meaning of each word until I fully understood. A few weeks later, I started to follow parts of professors’ lectures in the classrooms.”

During his time at the university, Liu not only learned in the classrooms and laboratories on campus, but he discovered the culture of America.

“I witnessed the greatness of this great country in emphasizing equality, democracy, morality, individualism, diversity, humanities, philanthropy, science and technology,” says Liu, who eventually went through the naturalization process to become an American citizen.

After Liu earned his master’s degree, he earned his Ph.D. in genetics from UW-Madison, where he conducted research on gene transfer. He conducted research on embryonic stem cell lines during his postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University, before returning to UW-Madison for a fellowship focused on gene cloning. Liu also had a fellowship in molecular biology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Liu developed a diagnostic testing business in Taiwan, then decided he could have a greater impact in the U.S., so he returned to America and embarked on his journey creating companies focused on treating chronic diseases.

Liu assists academic researchers to advance their work into commercial product development. He provides initial startup funding, works with scientists to transfer their research into commercial entities, hires experts to help manage the early processes and raises funds for preclinical programs.

“Dr. Liu has spent his entire career using science and discovery to improve the human condition,” says Kimera Way, president of the UW-Eau Claire Foundation. “He has sought to find cures for some of our most vexing diseases, combining his great mind for science with his entrepreneurial spirit, all the while being guided by the hope that it might save a life. We are so fortunate that his UW-Eau Claire experience has played a part in his life’s work. He is the embodiment of the Blugold focus on excellence.”

Liu founded the following companies:

- An immunodiagnostic startup called General Biologicals.
- Pepgen Corp., aimed at helping people with autoimmune disease.

- Medeor Therapeutics, focused on helping people who receive kidney transplants without the need to take immune-suppressive drugs for life.
- Bolt Biotherapeutics, a clinical-stage biotechnology company pioneering a new class of immuno-oncology agents.
- Tranquis Therapeutics, aimed at helping people with central nervous system disorders.
- Angarus Therapeutics, which develops immuno-oncology therapies intended to treat refractory cancers and to prevent metastasis.