

Waters Corporation Celebrates the Life and Legacy of its Founder, Jim Waters

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Pioneering Scientist in Chromatography Driven to Innovate and Deliver Benefit

MILFORD, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Waters Corporation founder James L. Waters, a legendary inventor and pioneer in liquid chromatography whose work spurred a multi-billion-dollar industry and helped advance numerous scientific breakthroughs, passed away peacefully on May 17th. He was 95 years old.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210519005620/en/>

James L. Waters (Photo: Business Wire)

“While we mourn his passing,
those who knew and worked

alongside him remember Jim Waters as a brilliant and spirited scientist and businessman, who propelled the discipline of separations science with his revolutionary work in liquid chromatography,” said Udit Batra, CEO and President of Waters Corporation. “Alongside his loving family, our Company and industry celebrate the legacy of this special man who always sought to ‘deliver benefit’ and whose work continues to catalyze innovation across the life, materials and food sciences, and today contributes to the fast-evolving science on COVID-19 vaccine development and disease research.”

Watch the Jim Waters Tribute video: [“A Legacy of Delivering Benefit”](#)

Jim Waters was born Oct. 7, 1925 in Nebraska. A career opportunity for his father relocated the family to Framingham, Massachusetts where Jim would later launch his namesake company Waters Associates in 1958 in the basement of the Framingham Police Department. With five employees, his plan was to build scientific instruments. The company’s big breakthrough came in 1965, when Waters licensed a refractometer from Dow Chemical for analyzing plastics. Jim built an instrument around the refractometer and “sales took off like a rocket after that,”

Waters later said.

Perhaps Jim's biggest triumph for the company came in 1972, by solving a problem for Harvard Professor and Quincy, Mass. native Robert Woodward who was working on the synthesis of vitamin B12 and who had already won a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1965 for being the first to synthesize chlorophyll. At Woodward's request, Waters accompanied a team to Woodward's lab with a liquid chromatograph and solved the problem in the span of a few weeks.

The Waters liquid chromatograph, and ones that came later now help drive pharmaceutical drug discovery, development, and manufacturing throughout the world. Along the way Jim redefined separations science, which crossed the boundaries of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and engineering. Through his revolutionary work, he first advanced the field of gel permeation chromatography, which led to liquid chromatography and the dramatic growth of the global analytical technologies industry. Today, Jim Waters' fledgling company has grown into a multi-billion-dollar global industry leader in analytical technologies serving the life, food, and materials sciences fields.

His tenure as President of Waters Associates lasted until 1979, when Millipore Corporation purchased the company. The company remained a division of Millipore, until Millipore split it off in a management-led buyout. It became public again during an initial public offering in 1995.

In his honor Waters Corporation established the Jim Waters Society in 2017 to recognize employees for scientific achievement.

As a firm believer in the power of education, Jim Waters strongly identified with the principles he learned about systems thinking as an important life skill. Jim and his wife Faith, a former teacher, recognized the value of systems thinking to empower students to create successful lives for themselves and contribute to the world in important, positive ways. What began as a special project through the Waters Foundation more than 30 years ago grew to become the [Waters Center for Systems Thinking](#), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to delivering benefits through systems thinking to school districts, organizations and communities around the world.

A benefactor and trustee of Northeastern University, in 1984 Jim and his wife Faith endowed the James L. Waters Chair in Analytical Chemistry within the Barnett Institute at Northeastern University and which is now held by Professor John Engen. At a ceremony in 2019, the University acknowledged Jim with a Pioneer Award for his continued service toward furthering the university's mission of developing young scientists and contributing to the advancement of STEM education and careers.

A symposium in his name is held annually at the Pittsburgh Conference on Analytical Chemistry and Applied Spectroscopy (PITTCON), an analytical instrument industry trade show and conference. Now in its 32nd year, the Symposium explores the origin, development, implementation, and commercialization of scientific instrumentation

of established and major significance.

More on Jim Waters:

- History of Jim Waters and Waters Corporation
- Science History Institute Oral History Interview with James L. Waters
- Northeastern Storytellers: James Waters H'93

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About Waters Corporation

Waters Corporation (NYSE:WAT), the world's leading specialty measurement company, has pioneered chromatography, mass spectrometry, and thermal analysis innovations serving the life, materials, and food sciences for more than 60 years. With more than 7,400 employees worldwide, Waters operates directly in 35 countries, including 14 manufacturing facilities, and with products available in more than 100 countries.

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