

## DOGS AS INDIVIDUALS

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**“It is impossible to breed label or predict the behavior of dogs of unknown history and genetics solely on the basis of their appearance.**

**There is so much behavioral variability within each breed, and even more within breed mixes, that we cannot reliably predict a dog’s behavior or his suitability for a particular adopter based on breed alone.”**

- **Dr Amy Marder, VMD, CAAB,  
Director, Center for Shelter Dogs**

Visual breed identification is unreliable. Dogs in shelters rarely arrive with verifiable pedigrees or histories. A breed label based solely on appearance is nothing more than a guess that results in a lifetime assignment of behavioral expectations that may never be met.

While verifiable pedigrees for pure bred dogs may provide some information about a pure bred dog’s propensity to lend himself to particular tasks or to exhibit particular traits, assigning pure breed dog standards to mixed breed dogs or dogs of unknown origin is likely to be inaccurate, unreliable and a disservice to adopters.

**“We must take the lead and free ourselves from stereotypes that imply simple solutions to complex issues, in order to better serve our animals and society.”**

- **Bernice Clifford, CPDT  
Director of Behavior, Animal Farm Foundation**

Shelters and humane organizations will fulfill their mission, manage risk and better serve adopters when they do not imply more than they actually know for sure about the dogs in their care.