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SUMMER 2023

MCW *magazine*



MCW Leaders Build Community Partnerships During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

CELEBRATING 130 YEARS AS AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION IN THE REGION

MCW

magazine

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LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Living Our Mission

As we continue to celebrate MCW's 130th anniversary throughout 2023, our mission – our purpose and reason for existence – remains at the forefront of everything we do at MCW on a daily basis.

We are a distinguished leader and innovator in the education and development of the next generation of physicians, scientists, pharmacists and health professionals. We discover and translate new knowledge in the biomedical and health sciences. We provide cutting-edge, collaborative patient care of the highest quality and we improve the health of the communities we serve.

Within this issue of *MCW Magazine* are many examples of how we put our mission into practice. Our education enterprise continues to grow and flourish, as illustrated in stories about the first graduating classes from our new graduate school programs in genetic counseling, biostatistics and data science, and precision medicine (*page 4*) and medical school and pharmacy school residency matches (*pages 8 and 11, respectively*).

The broad reach of our research enterprise is highlighted in stories including the work of our scientists to study drug overdose patterns to improve prevention strategies (*page 24*) and our Cardiovascular Academic Initiative, which supports clinical-translational cardiovascular research and team science in cardiovascular diseases (*page 26*).

Our outstanding clinical care is exemplified by stories on our comprehensive language therapy program for stroke victims (*pages 12-13*) and our new three-week outpatient program customized to treat the unique needs of veterans and first responders suffering from mild traumatic brain injury – supported by a generous founding gift from Avalon Action Alliance (*pages 22-23*).

Perhaps no story in this issue better underscores the full scope of MCW's mission than the cover story about our leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and our legacy as an invaluable community resource and partner. Drawing from MCW historian Richard Katschke's second volume of MCW's history (currently in progress), the cover story highlights MCW's heightened engagement, leadership and collaboration in Milwaukee, the region and the state as demonstrated during the pandemic. Many important lessons were learned during this time that will positively affect healthcare in the future, inform health behavior interventions and advance community-led initiatives to advance health equity (*see pages 14-21*).

As always, we express our deepest thanks to the thousands of MCW alumni around the globe who continue to protect the health and safety of our patients, families, loved ones and communities. ■

John R. Raymond, Sr., MD
President and CEO

Joseph E. Kerschner, MD '90, FEL '98
Provost and Executive Vice President
The Julia A. Uihlein, MA, Dean of the School of Medicine



“Perhaps no story in this issue better underscores the full scope of MCW's mission than the cover story about our leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and our legacy as an invaluable community resource and partner.”

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MCW IS COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION INCLUDING COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE IX. PLEASE SEE MCW.EDU/TITLEIX FOR MORE INFORMATION.

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS: Melissa Behling, Alex Boyes, Greg Calhoun, Chris Combs, Colin Daly, Dale Reince, Michelle Schaefer, Chris Verhyen, Jay Westhauser

ON THE COVER: Drawing from MCW historian Richard Katschke's second volume of MCW's history (currently in progress), the cover story highlights MCW's heightened engagement, leadership and collaboration in Milwaukee, the region and the state as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many important lessons were learned during this time that will positively affect healthcare in the future, inform health behavior interventions and advance community-led initiatives to advance health equity. (Cover design by Kristina Awadallah.)

STAT REPORT

MCW Graduates First Classes From Three New Graduate School Master's Degree Programs

MCW celebrated three inaugural graduating classes of trailblazing students during the MCW–Milwaukee Commencement ceremony on May 19, 2023. Nine students graduated with the Master of Science in Genetic Counseling (MSGC) degree; one student was awarded the Master of Arts in Biostatistics and Data Science (MSBDS) degree; and another received the Master of Science in Precision Medicine (MSPM) degree.

MCW's MSGC program matriculated its inaugural class in fall 2021. The program aims to address the shortage of genetic counselors in the state and to prepare diverse leaders at the forefront of the delivery of precision health. The 21-month program is one of two certified training programs in Wisconsin and one of only 54 in the US.

The MSBDS program provides students with the theoretical background expected from professional biostatisticians and equips them with the analytical skills used in the field of data science. The 31-credit program can be completed in 18 months. Graduating

students can find exciting opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry as well as in healthcare, biomedical sciences, academics and general data analytics.

The MSPM program is based in MCW's Institute for Health & Equity and offers exclusively online coursework during a 30-credit curriculum. Clinician participants in the program advance their knowledge, skills, practices and competencies in precision medicine.

The trailblazers in these three new programs marked the culmination of their studies alongside 310 fellow graduates from MCW's Milwaukee-based programs: 37 PharmD degrees bestowed by the School of Pharmacy; 184 MD degrees and six MD/MS dual degrees bestowed by the School of Medicine; and 96 degrees bestowed by the School of Graduate Studies (42 PhD; 30 MS; nine MMP; 13 MPH; and two MA).

On May 26, 2023, MCW–Central Wisconsin conferred 20 MD degrees, and on June 1, 2023, MCW–Green Bay awarded 22 MD degrees (*see related residency Match data on page 8*). ■



Dr. William Hogan Named Director of MCW Data Science Institute

William (Bill) Hogan, MD, MS, was named the inaugural director of the MCW Data Science Institute (DSI). He also serves as professor with tenure in the DSI. Dr. Hogan previously served as director of the division of biomedical informatics and professor of health outcomes and biomedical informatics at the University of Florida in Gainesville. In his prior role, he also served as director of informatics for the OneFlorida+ Clinical Research Network.

As director of the DSI, Dr. Hogan works to advance data science as a unique scientific discipline while supporting ongoing research throughout MCW. Under his leadership, the DSI will further harness the vast expertise across MCW and its health system partners in fields such as bioinformatics, medical informatics, genomics, proteomics and metabolomics, large database analyses, biostatistics and artificial intelligence.

Additionally, the DSI will contribute to the education mission through the development of training and professional development opportunities, including degree-granting programs. Dr. Hogan has had great success in building academic homes for biomedical informatics and data science at two universities. During a span of more than eight years, he grew the division of biomedical informatics at the University of Florida Health Science Center to its current scale comprising 14 faculty, three postdoctoral fellows, 35 staff and 25 graduate students – which resulted in a name change to reflect this growth. Dr. Hogan also built the freestanding division of biomedical informatics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, paving the way for the University of Arkansas System to promote the division to a full-fledged department. ■



Dr. William (Bill) Hogan

MCW Cancer Center Awards \$100,000 in Scholarships to UW-Milwaukee Students to Pursue Cancer Research Careers

The MCW Cancer Center recently awarded scholarships of \$10,000 each to 10 University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM) students to participate in a new undergraduate research program designed to train the next generation of high-performing cancer research scientists. The awards reflect a partnership between the MCW Cancer Center and UWM that offers students early in their academic studies the knowledge and skills needed to explore cancer research from the front lines and pursue careers in cancer research.

“Undergraduate students bring fresh energy to our research labs, eager to learn and contribute to the vast array of innovative cancer research on campus,” says program leader Michele Battle, PhD, MCW associate professor of cell biology, neurobiology and anatomy. “Our program allows students to engage in research from inception to completion, providing a comprehensive learning experience that teaches foundational research skills and develops critical thinking.”

Scholarships were awarded following a rigorous application process that required students to submit a grant proposal, just as career scientists would submit proposals for cancer research funding.

Wisconsin is above the national average for rates of cancer incidence and mortality based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, and sees persistent disparities across geographic areas and among racial and ethnic minority populations. According to MCW president and CEO, John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, “MCW is investing in aspiring students who have the potential to push the boundaries of what is possible and advance health equity. As we celebrate the 130th anniversary of our founding, an academic partnership with UWM will continue to strengthen MCW’s position as a milestone institution in the region and beyond.” The academic program complements the MCW Cancer Center’s existing robust educational and pipeline programs that span the educational spectrum from middle and high school to college and medical school through postdoctoral training, career development and continuing medical education. ■

Dr. Michele Battle leads the new undergraduate research program – in partnership with the MCW Cancer Center – designed to train the next generation of high-performing cancer research scientists.



NEWS

FOR ALUMNI

Alumni Association President's Message

On behalf of the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association, I want to send my most enthusiastic congratulations to the Classes of 2023 from the School of Graduate Studies, School of Medicine and School of Pharmacy! It was an honor to join my fellow board members in celebrating the achievements of our graduates and the conferral of their academic degrees at all campuses and for all schools.



"As I close out my term as president, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the incredible Alumni Association team."

— Dr. Jessica Olson

I joined the Alumni Association's board of directors in 2017, at a time when our student population was growing in exciting new directions. We had just opened two regional medical school campuses, established a School of Pharmacy and received Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation.

Through my own training experiences, I witnessed the incredible impact of research and clinical care working hand in hand, and as we grew, I wanted to help build an institutional culture that brought brilliant minds together to benefit all of the communities we serve.

Seven years later, MCW continues to grow in ways I could not have imagined at the time. We have made a deep commitment to the health and wellness of our Milwaukee community with the ThriveOn Collaboration, transformed medical education through the Kern National Network for Caring and Character in Medicine, weathered the challenges of a global pandemic and established several exciting new degree-granting programs in the MCW School of Graduate Studies, including a Master of Science degree in Genetic Counseling, Doctor of Public Health degree program, a



British Fields, MD '23 (at left), proudly displays her Match information during Match Day on March 17. Celebrating with her are (front, second l-r) Morgan Ashley Craft, MD '22; Na'il Scoggins, MD '21; and Lindsay Howard, MD '20.

Master of Science degree in Precision Medicine and a Master of Arts degree in Biostatistics and Data Science (*see page 4*).

As I close out my term as president, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the incredible Alumni Association team: our past presidents; board of directors; executive director Angela Nelson; assistant director Emily Gessner; and program coordinator Becca Snow.

The expansion of the degree-granting programs that MCW offers means that our alumni population is becoming much more diverse in our interests, identities and career trajectories. Exploring ways to share stories and ensuring that all members of our alumni population feel connected as a community is both complex and exciting, and I commend our incredible staff and board of directors for embracing the challenge head-on. I will continue to encourage

our alumni population to connect, whether through direct participation in our board of directors, on our virtual platform, ENGAGE (www.mcwengage.com), or just by reaching out to share accomplishments.

I welcome Betty S. Pace, MD '81, GME '84, who will assume the role of MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association president in September, and I can't wait to see the wonderful things ahead for our remarkable community! ■



Members of MCW's Class of 1973 tour the Standardized Teaching Assessment Resource (STAR) Center, which provides a controlled environment where students, residents, physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals can practice their clinical skills under the direction of MCW faculty and staff.



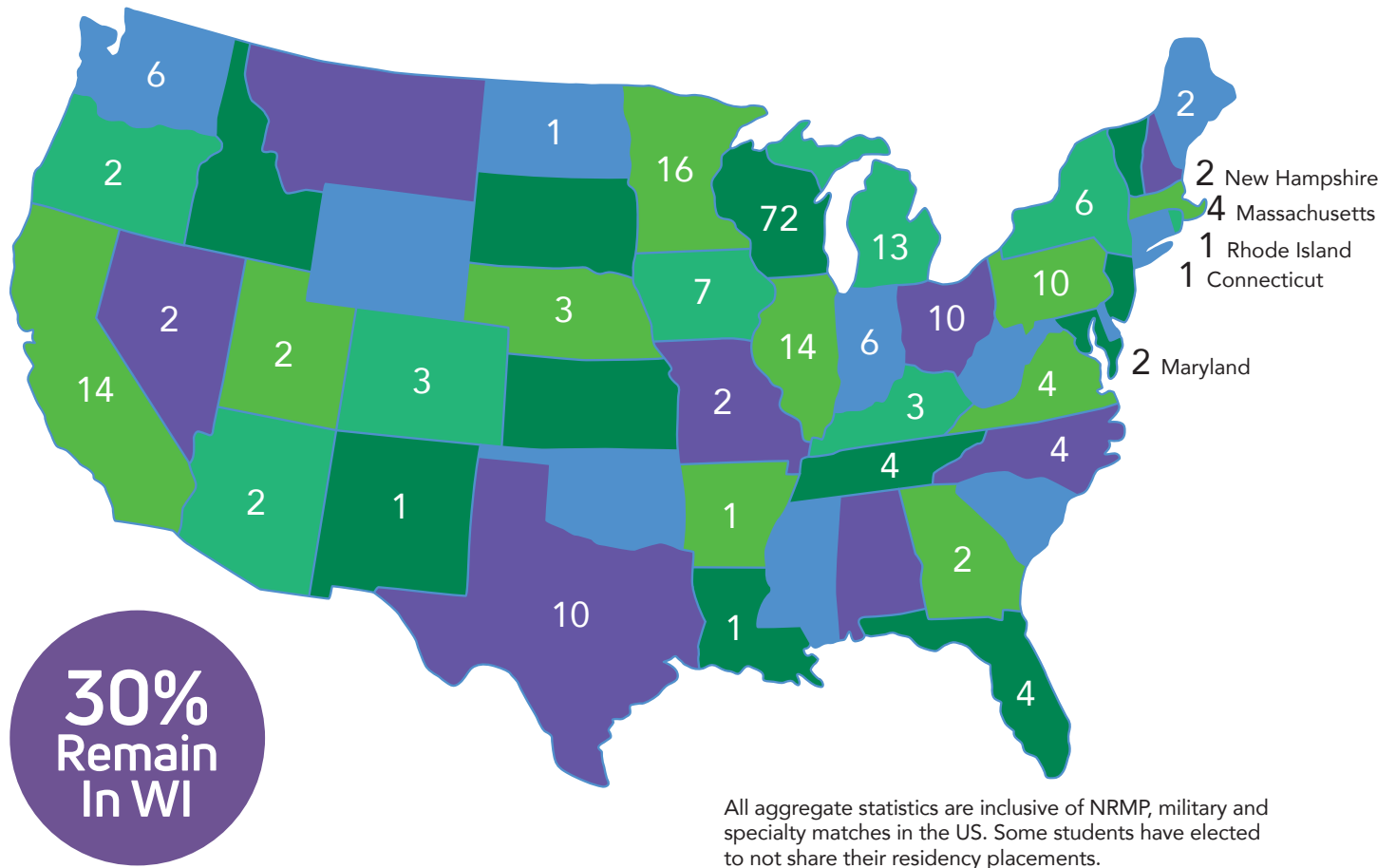
Gloria Halverson, MD '73 (shown here with Raj Narayanan, MD, MCW associate dean and professor of OB/GYN), proudly wears the graduation robe of her beloved OB/GYN mentor, Eleanor Delfs, MD, who, in 1963, became the medical school's first woman to attain the rank of full professor.



MCW Class of 1973 – 50th Class Reunion

FRONT ROW (l-r): Dr. John Russell; Dr. Michael Sandberg; Dr. Paul Halverson; Dr. Gloria Halverson; Dr. Roberta Case; Dr. Janet Cudahy; Dr. Claire Scheele; Dr. Catherine Wigder; Dr. Herbert Wigder; Dr. Samuel Kocoshis. **SECOND ROW (l-r):** Dr. Anthony Bochna; Dr. R. Scott Liebl; Dr. William Hutt; Dr. Frederick Gahl; Dr. Daniel Tanty; Dr. William Platt; Dr. Lawrence Kassis; Dr. Thomas Collentine; Dr. Gerald Wisniewski. **BACK ROW (l-r):** Dr. Robert Winston; Dr. Joseph Thomasino; Dr. O. Arthur Stiennon; Dr. Leonard Rybak; Dr. Mark Bauer; Dr. Alan Chang; Dr. James Blitz; Dr. James Stadler.

2023 MCW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RESIDENCY DISTRIBUTION



All aggregate statistics are inclusive of NRMP, military and specialty matches in the US. Some students have elected to not share their residency placements.

Summary of First-Year Residency Programs for Milwaukee, Green Bay and Central Wisconsin Campuses

Anesthesiology	18	Neurology	2	Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	1
Dermatology	2	Obstetrics & Gynecology	11	Plastic Surgery (Integrated)	2
Emergency Medicine	17	Ophthalmology	3	Psychiatry	11
Family Medicine	32	Orthopaedic Surgery	10	Radiology-Diagnostic	2
General Surgery	12	Otolaryngology	5	Surgery-Preliminary	7
Internal Medicine (IM)	45	Pathology	3	Transitional Year	18
IM/Pediatrics	5	Pediatrics (Peds)	18	Urology	6
Neurological Surgery	4	Peds/Anesthesiology	1	Vascular Surgery	1

MCW Welcomes New Leaders



Ekokobe Fonkem, DO

Chair of Neurology

Ekokobe Fonkem, DO, was named chair of the department of neurology, effective July 1, 2023. He also serves as professor of neurology.

In his previous role, Dr. Fonkem served as the William Shapiro Endowed Chair and chief of the division of neuro-oncology at Baylor Scott and White Health System and associate professor at Texas A&M Health School of Medicine in Temple, Texas. Dr. Fonkem began his faculty career as an assistant professor of surgery at Texas A&M Health (2012–2016) and was promoted to associate professor in 2017.

Dr. Fonkem has served since 2017 as a co-founder and executive member of the steering committee of the Society For Neuro-oncology Sub-Saharan Africa; member of the executive committee of the American Society of Clinical Oncology Conquer Cancer Foundation since 2009; and founder and chief executive officer of Healing Beyond the Horizon Foundation in Georgetown, Texas. His bibliography includes more than 152 publications, manuscripts, abstracts, chapters and reviews, and editorials. His research also has resulted in the creation of four patents. Dr. Fonkem was honored by the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh, Fox Cities Campus (formerly the University of Wisconsin–Fox Valley) with the *Outstanding Alumni Award* in 2012. ■



Jay I. Sandlow, MD

Chair of Urology

Jay I. Sandlow, MD, was named chair of the department of urology, effective May 1, 2023. Dr. Sandlow had served as interim chair of urology since July 2021. He also serves as professor of urology and professor of obstetrics and gynecology at MCW. Dr. Sandlow joined MCW in 2003 as associate professor of urology with tenure following nine years as a faculty member in the department of urology at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics in Iowa City.

Dr. Sandlow was promoted to professor at MCW in 2008. He is a fellowship-trained specialist in male infertility with extensive experience in microsurgery and minimally invasive treatments for male contraception and has co-authored the national guidelines for both vasectomy and male infertility. He also has served as the director of MCW's male infertility and andrology fellowship program since 2010 and has garnered numerous awards for teaching. In addition to his efforts as a clinician and educator, Dr. Sandlow is an exemplary scholar who has helped advance the scientific understanding of infertility. His research has been funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, American Foundation for Urologic Disease, American Cancer Society and Rockefeller Foundation, among others. ■



M. Aileen Shinaman, JD

Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Assistant Secretary

M. Aileen Shinaman, JD, was named senior vice president, general counsel, and assistant secretary, effective July 1, 2023.

Before joining MCW, Shinaman served as vice president and general counsel at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York, which includes the approximately 900-bed Strong Memorial Hospital, a 1,400-member employed faculty group, a School of Medicine and Dentistry, five affiliate hospitals, three nursing homes and related healthcare subsidiaries.

Shinaman's areas of expertise include mergers and affiliations, faculty compensation, contract and tenure issues, the Stark and Anti-Kickback laws, human subject and basic science research, and oversight for legal aspects of medical center compliance. Prior to her more than two decades of service at the University of Rochester Medical Center, Shinaman worked in private practice and was an appellate clerk with the New York State Appellate Division, Third Department. Most recently, Shinaman and her team handled two complex legal projects which involved responding to the Federal Trade Commission on a request relating to a proposed hospital merger, as well as assisting the university's teaching hospital and five affiliate hospitals with legal issues and advice throughout the challenging months of the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

School of Pharmacy Faculty Lead HAAPIE Initiative to Improve Care

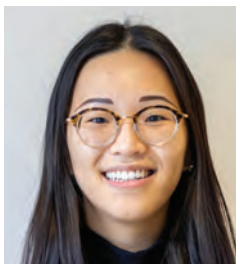
Three MCW medical students are creating an educational opportunity for future healthcare providers to become better equipped to care for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) populations.

The Health Advancement for Asian Pacific Islanders through Education (HAAPIE) Initiative raises awareness about health issues through various lenses including historical trauma and social determinants of health. Through a set of online modules, the inaugural curriculum includes a local spotlight on the Hmong community, plus case studies on cancer, diabetes, mental health and cardiovascular diseases.



Ming Lin, MS

“People don’t really know how diverse this population is – don’t really know our stories, don’t really know the challenges that have been experienced by a lot of these populations, especially in the realm of healthcare,” says HAAPIE co-founder and executive director Ming Lin, MS, a fourth-year medical student at MCW.



Joyce Lee, MS

Lin joined with co-founders and fourth-year MCW medical students Joyce Lee, MS, and Iaong Vang, finding motivation to start this project during the COVID-19 pandemic when anti-Asian racism and hate speech surged. Other impetuses for the project were their individual experiences growing up as Asian Americans in different parts of the country.



Iaong Vang

Lee, who was born in Taiwan and immigrated to East Los Angeles at age eight, grew up surrounded primarily by Asians and very few individuals from Black and Latinx populations. “When I was growing up, all my doctors – from pediatricians to optometrists to dentists – spoke Mandarin or Taiwanese, which helped because my mom only knew how to speak these languages. So, I didn’t have the unfortunate event of having to meet doctors who didn’t understand who we were,” she shares.

Vang is the daughter of Hmong refugees from Laos and was born and raised in Montana. She says where she started to feel true discrimination was in medicine. She has a sister with Bardet-Biedl



syndrome (a genetic disorder) who was misdiagnosed when she was born. “My parents knew nothing about that condition, were not familiar with Western medicine and didn’t trust the people here. There was no follow-up until she became critically ill her senior year of high school,” says Vang.

Vang was her sister’s caregiver as well as the interpreter and mediator among her parents and doctors. After Vang entered college and started working in the medical field she recognized the discriminatory practices her family experienced: doctors not listening, forcing her parents to sign papers they didn’t understand and taking medical actions without the full consent of her sister.

“I definitely wanted to be a part of [HAAPIE] to provide a voice for my people, people with similar stories ... and also to encompass and showcase the diversity of the AANHPI population, especially those who are overlooked and rarely recognized,” Vang says.

Prioritizing Cultural Intelligence in Healthcare

In addition to promoting better healthcare for AANHPI populations, the HAAPIE Initiative is more broadly focused on cultural intelligence, which, according to a recent article titled *Development of a Cultural Intelligence Framework in Pharmacy Education*, is defined as “the ability to attune to the values, beliefs and body language of people from different cultures and to effectively use this knowledge to interact with empathy and understanding in diverse contexts.”

The HAAPIE student co-founders collaborated on the curriculum development and outreach with two MCW School of Pharmacy

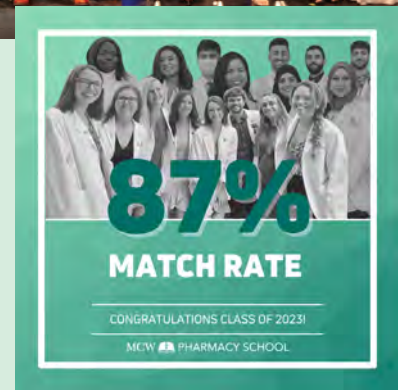
MCW School of Pharmacy Celebrates Class of 2023 PharmD Recipients

The MCW School of Pharmacy recently conferred the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree on 37 students from the Class of 2023. “This class completed all of its doctoral education during the pandemic. The students’ ability to adapt, persevere and serve others has prepared them well for roles as healthcare providers,” says George E. MacKinnon III, PhD, MS, RPh, founding dean and professor.

A number of the graduates are continuing their education through residencies and postgraduate training. Following the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Match, 20 students obtained postgraduate year one (PGY1) positions, yielding an 87 percent match rate, which



surpasses the national match rate of 82 percent. Overall, 70 percent of MCW’s graduating students who are pursuing a PGY1 residency program will continue their training in Wisconsin. Additionally, two graduating students were selected for fellowship positions, for an overall postgraduate training rate of 92 percent.



“ Having the knowledge to be able to interact with different groups, being empathetic and using that knowledge to provide a caring environment is important to me. - Dr. Lana Minshew ”



Kajua Lor, PharmD

faculty leaders: Kajua Lor, PharmD, associate professor and chair of MCW’s department of clinical sciences, and Lana Minshew, PhD, MCW assistant professor of clinical sciences and co-author of the article referenced above.

“This initiative makes me feel more visible,” says Dr. Lor. “A lot of times, diversity and inclusion work is focused on Black and white, not necessarily Asian. This curriculum gets at the point that not all Asians are alike. It builds the feeling of being included and belonging, and the most important thing, for me, is ensuring the voices of the community are heard.”

Dr. Minshew says she was brought onto the project due to her experience developing a framework to teach future pharmacists how to provide culturally

intelligent care. “Everyone deserves access to healthcare. But the equity within that access doesn’t exist,” Dr. Minshew remarks. “Having the knowledge to be able to interact with different groups, being empathetic and using that knowledge to provide a caring environment is important to me.”

Lin’s vision is to provide an even richer educational experience beyond digital lectures. “I’d like to add community aspects, where students have chances to talk to and learn from people in the community instead of just learning through a screen,” he shares.

Lee is working with the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association to push for a broad reach beyond the walls of MCW. “I really want HAAPIE to be the launching pad for incorporating AANHPI medical education into the core curriculum of different medical schools across the country,” Lee says. “I want it to be fully integrated, not just a separate elective. The US is such a melting pot, and no matter where you go, you’re going to encounter patients who look different than you.” ■

– MELISSA BEHLING



Lana Minshew, PhD

Language Therapy Program Offers Hope to Aphasia Sufferers

Lori Johnson and her family know the struggles of aphasia all too well. At age 55, this healthy mother and grandmother suffered a massive left hemorrhagic stroke. Although Johnson survived, it limited her ability to use the right side of her body and resulted in aphasia, a debilitating disease which affects roughly 180,000 individuals each year.

Aphasia impacts one's ability to speak, write or understand spoken and written language, according to Sara Pillay, PhD, GME '16, FEL '18, MCW assistant professor of neurology. In addition to relearning to walk, aphasia would force Johnson to learn to communicate independently again. "Aphasia is very socially isolating," says Dr. Pillay, adding that it also regularly causes long-term disability because patients are not able to return to work. "Patients may experience frustration, shame or embarrassment from not being able to communicate."

This stigma, and advocating for the condition, makes aphasia less well known than other diseases such as Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis, even though it's more common, Dr. Pillay shares. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, in the US, approximately one-third of all strokes result in aphasia, and one out of every 272 Americans are affected with this condition.

Care for aphasia typically involves treating the symptom that caused it together with speech and language therapy. Unfortunately, according to Dr. Pillay, insurance often limits the amount of therapy a patient can receive to treat aphasia. "If a patient reaches their visit limit for a year, or if progress starts to plateau, insurance will no longer pay for speech therapy – leaving these patients without additional options and limiting their ability to recover," she says.

Experts told Johnson that her language would not progress further after initially beginning rehabilitation. The news crushed her family. "It scared us, too," says her daughter, Nicole McGonigle. "However, we knew my mom would never give up." She was right. Johnson simply told them, "No way."



Lori Johnson, who is recovering from a massive stroke that resulted in aphasia, credits MCW's IPAT comprehensive language therapy program with helping her to regain some of her ability to speak.

Program Offers Hope

As part of her recovery, Johnson was invited to participate in the Intensive Program of Aphasia Therapy, or IPAT, a comprehensive language therapy program at MCW, directed by Dr. Pillay and Jeffrey Binder, MD, MCW professor and vice chair of research in the department of neurology and director of MCW's Language Imaging Laboratory.

Led by a multidisciplinary team of experts in speech therapy, neurology, neuropsychology and biomedical engineering, IPAT helps people such as Johnson regain their ability to communicate through intensive, cutting-edge and evidence-based treatments tailored to the patient's individual needs.

"The IPAT Clinic was developed to provide an intensive speech therapy program for individuals who have maxed out of traditional



speech therapy options covered by insurance, but yet would still benefit from additional intervention,” Dr. Pillay says.

The program begins with an assessment that involves compiling a detailed profile of the strengths and weaknesses of each participant. Using that knowledge, along with information gleaned from more than 20 years of research conducted at MCW regarding the location of language processes in the brain, the speech therapy team crafts a unique plan that targets these weaknesses and works on compensatory measures, Dr. Pillay shares. The two-week therapy program runs four hours a day on weekdays; in total, patients receive 40 hours of individual and group therapy. Research on aphasia treatment has found that many hours of therapy over a shorter timeframe may have more impact than standard speech therapy.

Another important aspect of the program is the support patients receive from other participants. “Most of these patients have never heard another patient with aphasia talk,” says Dr. Pillay. “So, this is a big communication and morale booster.”

IPAT is sponsored in part by a generous donation from the We Energies Foundation.

Contributing to Clinical Research

McGonigle says being able to communicate with others with aphasia was a big help for her mother. “She loved the social aspect of it and felt very comfortable with everyone,” McGonigle shares.

An additional component of the program – one which could lead to major advances in aphasia care – is the opportunity for participants to be part of clinical research studies that involve brain stimulation techniques.

Helping to lead this aspect of IPAT is Priyanka Shah-Basak, PhD, MCW assistant professor of neurology. Dr. Shah-Basak has a background in biomedical engineering and became interested in neuro rehabilitation as a postdoctoral researcher. Her initial work was focused on improving and optimizing brain stimulation to

enhance rehabilitation efforts, which led her to research on language impairment and aphasia. The research component of IPAT furthers her work. “IPAT enables us to learn more about these treatments and also how brain stimulation increases efficacy,” she says.

The brain stimulation used in the research project occurs externally, as electrical leads are placed on the scalp to target precise locations of the brain, Dr. Shah-Basak shares. Targeting brain regions involved during therapy using positive (or “anodal”) stimulation leads to excitation or increases in activation of those areas and helps researchers learn how to enhance future treatments. “This research uses prior neuroimaging work at the group level to probe specific linguistic processes that we’re targeting with therapy among individual patients,” she says.

For those who are wary of electrical stimulation, Dr. Shah-Basak notes that the sensations are mild and considered to be very safe. “There could be mild effects – tingling, a little bit of itchiness afterwards and some redness from stimulation that is done over time,” she adds.

While studying specific brain stimulation techniques remains a challenge because each individual’s brain reacts differently to treatment, new technologies such as high-definition stimulation have helped researchers better target treatments to a smaller section of the brain.

The ultimate goal of the research and treatment is to help patients regain what they have lost: the ability to functionally communicate. “This loss can have an impact on the social communication abilities with their family members, or on the ability to return to work or do better at work,” according to Dr. Shah-Basak. Johnson – who also participated in the brain study – says that the program has helped her regain some of her ability to speak. Along with taking regular walks again, she is able to order food at a restaurant once more. “It feels so good to be able to do these things again,” Johnson says. ■ – MCW MAGAZINE STAFF

Lori Johnson is pictured in the hospital immediately after suffering a massive left hemorrhagic stroke, during her recuperation and participating in MCW's IPAT program to help her regain the ability to functionally communicate.



MCW Leaders Build Community Partnerships During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

By Richard N. (Dick) Katschke and Sara L. Wilkins

Five years ago, in 2018, MCW celebrated 125 years as a cornerstone institution in the region and the state. In preparation for that milestone anniversary, MCW chief historian Richard (Dick) Katschke began to write a comprehensive history book to mark this significant achievement. Katschke's monumental work, *Knowledge Changing Life: A History of the Medical College of Wisconsin, 1893-2019*, was published in the spring of 2021 and explores MCW's 125+ years of accomplishments, challenges and controversies. The 720-page book also has served as a foundation for reimagining the institution – thinking generatively and creatively about how to educate the next generation of health and science thought leaders, how research is conducted and applied, how healthcare is delivered, how MCW engages with its community, and how the institution collaborates and partners.

In advance of MCW's 130th anniversary this year, Katschke has been writing a follow-up volume of MCW's history – currently titled *The COVID Years, 2020-2023* – which highlights many of the institution's successes and challenges in pursuit of the aspirational reimagining goals as noted above.

To that end, the cover story draws on Katschke's in-progress work to highlight MCW's heightened engagement, leadership and collaboration in Milwaukee, the region and the state as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beginning in March 2020, MCW provided steady voices from the medical and scientific community who shared credible, understandable fact-based scientific information; partnered with the business community to address industry challenges; communicated with the public to ensure its safety (especially addressing the needs of underresourced communities); served as a community resource for vaccination clinics; advocated in the state legislature and much more.

Many important lessons were learned during this time that will positively affect healthcare in the future, inform health behavior interventions and advance community-led initiatives to advance health equity.

What follows is a brief snapshot of MCW's leadership during the pandemic and its legacy as an invaluable community resource and partner.

(Editor's note: all direct quotes in this story were culled from interviews conducted by Katschke in advance of writing his new book.)

In mid-March 2020, Mara Lord, PhD '23, MBA, MCW's senior vice president for university engagement and strategic planning, saw both a need and an opportunity.

The need was for someone with a steady voice from the medical and scientific community who could provide credible, understandable information to the people of metropolitan Milwaukee and the state on the COVID-19 pandemic, its spread and the latest fact-based scientific information.

The opportunity was for MCW President and CEO John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, a leader with the knowledge, credentials and community stature, to take on the role. In doing so, Dr. Lord saw the potential

to rightfully establish MCW as a primary source of medical and scientific knowledge in the community.

Dr. Lord recalled, "Just before the World Health Organization had declared COVID-19 as a pandemic, we had received a call from the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) asking if Dr. Raymond could participate in a webinar on COVID-19 for the business community. He agreed."

Dr. Raymond told the *Milwaukee Business Journal* that while he prefers to work outside the spotlight, he embraced the public role he assumed in southeast Wisconsin, initially advising business leaders and later serving the public as a local voice of science and medicine.

His mission included delivering responses to the infodemic of misinformation and disinformation in social media and sensationalized headlines in other outlets.



COVID-19 VACCINES - WHAT TO EXPECT

COVID-19 VACCINES AT A GLANCE

PFIZER-BIONTECH (mRNA)	MODERNA (mRNA)	JOHNSON & JOHNSON/JANSEN (traditional)
2 SHOTS* IN THE ARM 21 DAYS APART	2 SHOTS* IN THE ARM 28 DAYS APART	1 SHOT IN THE ARM
AGE 16+	AGE 18+	AGE 18+

*Both shots must be of the same vaccine. Those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or those with severe allergies to vaccines or carry an egg-protein allergy, consult their health care provider prior to receiving the vaccine.

SIDE EFFECTS TO EXPECT:
You may experience a range of side effects that could develop within a day or two of getting vaccinated:

- In the arm where you received your shot: pain, redness and swelling
- In the rest of your body: chills, tiredness and headaches

 It's important to understand that these are all signs your immune system is working and generally last one day. The CDC communicates that the benefits of getting the vaccine outweigh the risks of getting ill from COVID-19.

HOW DO THE VACCINES WORK?
The vaccines use mRNA (Pfizer and Moderna) or an adenovirus (Johnson & Johnson) to tell your cells how to make antibodies that protect you against COVID-19. They will not alter your DNA. Individuals who get the vaccine will not be contagious or shed live virus.

CONTINUE TO PRACTICE THE 3-WS:
Even after getting vaccinated, it will still be important to protect those around you by continuing to:

- WATCH YOUR DISTANCE
- WEAR A MASK
- AND WASH YOUR HANDS.

 It's possible future booster shots will be needed.

V-SAFE CARD:
Upon receiving the vaccine, you can sign up for V-safe, a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccine. More information can be found on the CDC website.

UPDATED 3/17/2021 | WWW.CDC.GOV | SOURCES: CDC, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

COMMUNITY PROTECTION:
Widespread vaccination for COVID-19 means the virus cannot infect as many people, resulting in fewer people spreading the virus.

AT LEAST 80 PERCENT of the population needs to be vaccinated to attain community protection, according to medical experts.

NATURAL IMMUNITY:
There is not enough data available to indicate how long someone who had COVID-19 is immune to the virus, otherwise known as natural immunity. Early studies indicate natural immunity may not last long, but more data is needed.

ONGOING VACCINATIONS:
At this time, it is anticipated the vaccines will be given using only one or two shots. It's possible future booster shots will be needed.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:
EVEN AFTER GETTING VACCINATED.

- SOCIAL DISTANCING
- WEARING A MASK
- AND WASHING HANDS

WILL BE CRITICAL TO HALTING SPREAD OF THE VIRUS.

UPDATED 3/17/2021 | WWW.CDC.GOV | SOURCES: CDC, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

MCW developed educational materials to inform community members about COVID-19 safety precautions and public health measures.

Developing Messages and Building the COVID Communications Infrastructure

With Dr. Raymond on board to serve as a steady voice, he needed input about the messages to deliver – and key information channels had to be identified. Other COVID-19 experts within MCW needed to be identified and trained on how to deliver scientific information to the public. And MCW needed technology support to develop interactive webinars and presentations for audiences numbering into the thousands.

Dr. Lord reached out for help to Arik Johnson, chair of research, technology and learning consultancy for Aurora WDC, a Wisconsin-based firm that helps organizations worldwide deploy technology to amplify insights.

Together, Dr. Lord and Johnson brought Tim Sheehy (president of the MMAC) and Milwaukee business leaders into the conversation to advise on what was needed from the business community to navigate the early days of the pandemic.

Just days later, a first webinar was held focusing on the intersection of health and the economy. It turned into a daily briefing

just 20 minutes long that ran throughout the summer of 2020 – more than 200 in total that were produced with various stakeholders around the region and beyond.

One of the individuals that Dr. Lord tapped to be in daily morning briefings was Laura Cassidy, MS, PhD, MCW's associate dean for global health and research director and professor in the Institute for Health & Equity (IHE). Dr. Cassidy recalled, "The morning meetings included Mara and representatives from public health, government and the MMAC to strategize. We came together from all sectors and worked together in a way I've never seen happen before. We were a small group and represented different disciplines and sectors. We weren't the decision-makers, but we could influence things. We were each seeing things through different lenses, but we all had the same goal."

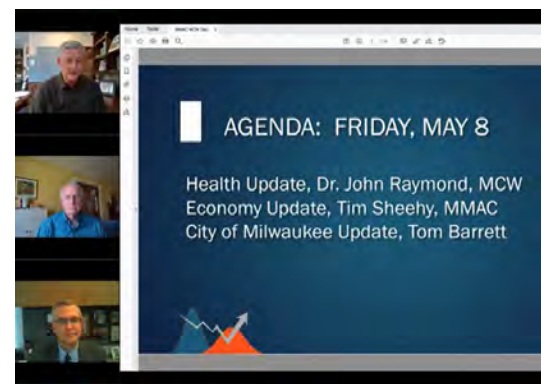
Partnering with the Business Community

It had the potential to be a major confrontation.

MCW supported a public health approach to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by

encouraging people to stay home and avoid contact with others. The business community wanted to protect the economy by keeping stores open and maintaining a sense of normalcy in daily activities. When asked what prevented a confrontational situation between the business community and MCW, Sheehy said, "Two words: Dr. Raymond."

Sheehy explained further, "Dr. Raymond became an early, instrumental and trusted



(top to bottom) Tim Sheehy, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr., partnered for a series of COVID-19-related webinars for city businesses.



In May 2020, MCW and the MMAC joined with the Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Partnership to create an online toolkit designed to help businesses reopen and operate safely during the pandemic.

voice with these business leaders. We asked him for the facts around COVID, and how it was transmitted and what he was seeing. We didn't ask him for policy recommendations. We asked him, 'Will this level of masking work? Is social distancing working? What remediations would work?' Then the business leaders were free to make their own decisions. It was a very direct, fact-forward conversation."

He continued, "This was an environment built just around the health facts, and that's why those meetings every week for 50-some weeks were so critical. The webinars built a following, reaching about 40,000 people in total. Why did people come to those webinars? Because they knew they were not getting any spin."

In May 2020, MCW and the MMAC joined with the Milwaukee 7 Economic Development Partnership to create an online toolkit designed to help businesses reopen and operate safely during the pandemic. The toolkit provided a checklist and step-by-step approaches to protect employees and customers as well as information on best practices and links to other resources.

In addition to the MMAC, Drs. Raymond and Lord worked with other business and professional groups statewide. Every Friday, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the Regional Leadership Council, representing economic centers across Wisconsin, hosted a COVID-19 CEO Leadership Series during which Dr. Raymond provided a medical update. MCW also provided webinars to the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Wisconsin Counties Association, Greater Milwaukee Committee, Hispanic community leaders, Black/African American community leaders and pastors, and state, local and regional government officials. Gregory Wesley, JD,

MCW's senior vice president for strategic alliances and business development, described Dr. Raymond's partnership with the MMAC and other business organizations as "an example of bringing together health and the economy to make decisions that were in the best interests of the citizens of the state."

Sheehy said that by engaging with MCW, the MMAC's members saw the breadth and depth of the institution's expertise and the critical intersection of healthcare and the economy.

Communicating with the Public

Beyond the business community, MCW leaders and faculty members provided daily pandemic information to the public through the media and other communications channels. It was becoming an infodemic, as the public was being bombarded with an overload of information, often contradictory, outdated or incorrect. MCW saw the opportunity to share objective information and dispel misinformation – and Dr. Raymond, with his credibility and knowledge, was the most effective messenger to reach the public.

Dr. Lord and her colleagues identified at least a dozen additional experts at

MCW who could provide perspective on the pandemic for the news media, including Joseph E. Kerschner, MD '90, FEL '98, provost, executive vice president, the Julia A. Uihlein, MA, Dean of the School of Medicine and professor of otolaryngology and communication sciences; Douglas Evans, MD, the Donald C. Ausman Family Foundation Professor of Surgery and chair of surgery; Mary Beth Graham, MD, professor and associate chief of medicine (infectious diseases); Ian Martin, MD, professor and chair of emergency medicine and eminent scholar; Silvia Munoz Price, MD, PhD, then-associate professor in the IHE and enterprise epidemiologist for Froedtert Health; and Joyce Sanchez, MD, then associate professor of medicine (infectious diseases).

Another major voice of calm and reason was Ben Weston, MD, MPH, who provided daily science-based information on COVID-19 to the public. Dr. Weston, MCW associate professor of emergency medicine and chief health policy advisor for Milwaukee County, also serves as director of medical services for the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management.

Dr. Weston recalled, "One of the biggest challenges, and certainly a focus of my role for Milwaukee County, was communications, which were particularly challenging for two reasons. One was the complexity and unknowns of the virus, which made it hard to communicate, and second, politics and misinformation made it even harder."

COVID-19 WI CEO Leadership Series

Dr. John Raymond President & CEO Medical College of WI	Troy Streckenbach County Executive Brown County	Tamas Houlihan Executive Director WI Potato & Vegetable Growers Association	Giacomo Fallucca Chairman & CEO Palermo's Pizza

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Momentum West | New North | Prosperity Southwest | Vision NorthWest

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The Unified Emergency Operations Center was created in March 2020 as a collaboration among Dr. Ben Weston's office and partners from local government, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, public health departments, healthcare institutions and the business community. Together, they coordinated and elevated a multisector public health response to the pandemic, emphasizing affected vulnerable populations.

Dr. Lord recognized the need to reach the public through social media and the internet. As a result, MCW began producing a series of podcasts on COVID-19 that included information from the institution's physicians and scientists addressing questions raised by the public. The podcasts were a component of MCW's COVID-19 resource center that also included facts, statistics, health and safety tips and videos on the virus.

In the spring of 2020, MCW hosted public-facing weekly virtual community town hall meetings about the pandemic during which MCW physicians and scientists and local community health experts provided updates on the virus and the most current scientific information.



Dr. Ben Weston

Contributing to the Safety of the Community

As director of medical services for the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management, Dr. Weston oversees emergency medical services in the 14 fire departments throughout the county and was at the forefront of keeping community

residents and first responders safe from the virus. Dr. Weston was supported by faculty in the IHE who provided COVID-19 data analysis for Milwaukee County by monitoring the reproduction rate of the virus and providing incidence mapping and predictive modeling – all of which contributed to the decision-making by the county's Unified Emergency Operations Center (UEOC).

THE UEOC was created in March 2020 as a collaboration among Dr. Weston's office and partners from local government, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, public health departments, healthcare institutions and the business community. Together, they coordinated and elevated a multisector public health response to the pandemic, emphasizing affected vulnerable populations.

"Having the support of the vast resources of MCW was invaluable," Dr. Weston shared. "From the epidemiology team helping with data management to my own department providing information on what's happening in the emergency departments, to the reports provided by the infectious disease experts – all these different folks were there to support the community during our time of need."

Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Communities


Many of Milwaukee's early COVID-19 cases had been found in the Black/African American community, prompting Dr. Raymond to address the urgent need to reach this community with good information about COVID-19. This underscored MCW's need to ensure that everybody, especially those in underresourced communities, knew about the dangers of the virus. It also was important that people wore protective face masks to prevent its spread early in the pandemic.

MCW medical students responded by assembling 80,000 face masks made of surgical mask material at a time when personal protective equipment was scarce. The masks were distributed to underresourced communities through community health clinics, and faith-based and community organizations.

Dr. Raymond's concerns about reaching underserved communities were echoed by Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, MCW senior associate dean, director of the institution's Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin (AHW) Endowment and professor of



MCW medical students and members of a research team sort personal protection equipment for assembly and delivery to Wisconsin nursing homes as part of an AHW Endowment-funded COVID-19 response project.



Fewer than two weeks after the pandemic was declared, AHW released \$4.8 million in rapid-response funding to support 17 projects statewide in response to COVID-19 in Wisconsin – some of which targeted assistance to underserved urban and rural populations.

anesthesiology and clinical informatics. Fewer than two weeks after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic and stay-at-home orders shuttered American businesses, schools and offices, AHW released \$4.8 million in rapid-response funding to support 17 projects statewide in response to COVID-19 in Wisconsin – some of which targeted assistance to underserved urban and rural populations.

One project of note was a \$500,000 grant to the city of Milwaukee's Health Department. The project was designed to rapidly improve communication of prevention guidelines to communities of color in Milwaukee County as well as piloting online training for community health workers and public health outreach personnel to respond to the mental health and well-being needs among these communities.

Twelve community health workers were hired to reach out to Milwaukee's Black/African American, Hispanic, Southeast Asian and Native American communities. The community health workers assembled and distributed thousands of disposable masks and disinfectant wipes through local businesses, community events and door-to-door home visits. The community health workers also developed public service

announcements and podcasts in Spanish and Hmong and utilized radio broadcasts, YouTube and social media to provide current health and resource information, and worked with Black/African American media outlets to address misinformation.

A Community Resource for Vaccination Clinics

Months before there were vaccines for COVID-19, MCW convened a group that included the office of research, office of the president, School of Pharmacy and others to plan the institution's development of COVID-19 vaccination clinics. MCW was one of the few organizations in the state that had the ultra-cold freezers needed to store mRNA vaccines and pharmacists who could draw up and distribute the doses.

MCW's application to the state to be a site to receive and administer COVID-19 vaccinations was accepted. From December 2020 through April 2021, MCW rolled out COVID-19 vaccinations for frontline workers, essential workers, individuals over 65 years old and individuals from educational, childcare or other healthcare facilities. In addition, MCW leadership also identified eligible recipients, including local opinion leaders whose vaccinations might positively influence others to be vaccinated, as opportunities became available.

Dr. Kerschner shared: "The goals for the program were to work with our clinical partners to ensure rapid vaccination availability for the institution's front-line workforce, to support state public health agencies in offering a vaccination opportunity for underserved and higher education community members, and to train vaccinators. A key component of the program was the MCW COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic, and 88 percent of MCW's workforce was fully immunized

against COVID-19 with the two-dose mRNA vaccine by April 30, 2021. Within the MCW clinic, 56 pharmacy and 163 medical students learned to administer vaccines."

MCW's Vaccination Clinic was staffed predominantly by approximately 50 pharmacy students and MCW pharmacy faculty who oversaw the students. The School of Pharmacy standard curriculum already provided didactic and laboratory training in immunization administration to pharmacy students, and the School of Medicine rapidly developed a new COVID-19 vaccination curriculum for medical students. Licensed volunteer vaccinators included School of Medicine and School of Pharmacy faculty, nurses, advanced practice providers and community volunteers. Compounding included School of Pharmacy and School of Medicine researchers and faculty; all doses were rechecked by licensed pharmacists. Staff from MCW's offices of public safety, compliance, communications, human resources, finance and legal provided additional support.

In total, nearly 300 internal and external volunteers directly supported the clinic in vaccinator or other capacities, offering more than 5,000 hours of service. MCW's leaders reached out to business, education, community and faith-based organizations in underserved communities to help identify eligible, vulnerable populations for vaccinations. MCW's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic administered more than 20,000 vaccinations, 12,450 of which were administered to members of the external community.

Advocacy in the State Legislature

MCW sought legislative changes on two issues related to pharmacy education that impacted the operation of MCW's COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Wisconsin law required that pharmacy students providing immunizations could only be precepted by pharmacists. This proved challenging when pharmacists were occasionally in short supply to staff clinics. In mid-February 2021, MCW successfully gained



The MCW Hub Vaccination Clinic enabled faculty to train 163 medical students and 56 pharmacy students under the direct supervision of licensed healthcare professional volunteer preceptors.



MCW School of Pharmacy faculty and students assisted in providing more than 20,000 vaccines to healthcare personnel and other eligible populations on the first floor of MCW's Hub for Collaborative Medicine.

legislative support to change the law so that physicians also could precept pharmacy students and pharmacists could precept medical students.

One other legislative hurdle that needed to be surmounted centered on a Wisconsin law prohibiting pharmacy students from providing immunizations until they had completed two years of pharmacy school. Other states surrounding Wisconsin didn't have similar restricting legislation.

George E. Mackinnon, III, PhD, MS, RPh, founding dean of MCW's School of Pharmacy and professor of pharmacy, recognized that the pandemic was an opening to seek legislative change.

Dr. MacKinnon said at the time, "We're in a pandemic. We need more immunizers, not fewer. By my back-of-the-envelope calculation, if the University of Wisconsin and Concordia University changed when they teach immunizations, we could get 400 more immunizers overnight."

MCW successfully pursued the legislative change with the support of both of these pharmacy schools. On December 3, 2021, Act 98 was signed into law, enabling pharmacy students to provide immunizations earlier in their pharmacy matriculation. For the first time, pharmacists are now recognized as non-physician healthcare providers in the state of Wisconsin under Medicaid.

HealthyMKE: Providing Vaccination Information to Vulnerable Communities

Through most of 2020, MCW's communications were focused on the epidemiology and transmission of COVID-19. After the vaccines became available in late 2020, Joy Tapper, executive director of the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, led the creation of a group called the Community Vaccine Response Committee. She reached out to Dr. Lord to ask if she would lead a vaccine communications effort across the county; Dr. Lord agreed, and in short order, a multifaceted communications project was created called the Vaccine Integrated Communications and Outreach Mobilization team (VICOM). Dozens of professional communicators were engaged from across the county to participate in VICOM, including co-founders of INPOWER, a

marketing firm based in Milwaukee's Harambee neighborhood.

INPOWER launched the HealthyMKE website on January 7, 2021, initially providing information on COVID-19 vaccine access for county residents including the locations of vaccination clinics and COVID-19 testing sites. Additionally, in April 2021, VICOM began a media blitz aimed at building vaccine confidence across Milwaukee County. The campaign was designed to enable the public to make an informed choice about taking the COVID-19 vaccine. It included a focus on 15 ZIP codes that were disproportionately impacted during the pandemic.

Informed by focus groups led by Jump at the Sun LLC (JATSC) (a health literacy firm located in the 53206 ZIP code), the campaign recognized the importance of hearing authentic, relatable stories from local members of the community to both honor their unique perspectives and to show how getting vaccinated was a way to express personal strength and commitment. The campaign also ensured equitable representation and pay in front of and behind the camera.

The first phase of the multimedia ad campaign, called "Authentic Voices," included TV, radio, digital outdoor billboard, online digital and social media advertising featuring diverse members of the Milwaukee community and produced by creatives from Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx and Hmong communities. The campaign was made possible through generous in-kind donations from Hanson Dodge Creative and area media outlets, as well as financial support from several area

organizations. The "Authentic Voices" messaging reached more than 300 million impressions in just six months.

Supporting materials for the community-wide public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic included an ad campaign in support of vaccinations.





From July 2021 to October 2021, community mobilizers covered 48 census tracts, visited 20,193 homes and provided in-person education to 2,902 residents. Clinicians paired with mobilizers to administer 731 vaccinations in or near people’s homes.

In addition to the advertising, JATSC led an effort to recruit and train 150 individuals from underresourced communities as community mobilizers to go door to door to share vaccine information. From July 2021 to October 2021, community mobilizers covered 48 census tracts, visited 20,193 homes and provided in-person education to 2,902 residents. Clinicians were paired with mobilizers and administered 731 vaccinations in or near people’s homes.

According to Dr. Weston, VICOM’s collaboration using an equity lens throughout the entire process could be a critical building block for the future. “This model could be scaled to enhance equity and promote other positive health behaviors and could serve as a bridge to overcome medical mistrust – building relationships at the neighborhood level with individuals from the community who serve as health advocates and liaisons to more complex health infrastructure,” he said. (See sidebar on page 21 that details Dr. Lord’s PhD thesis on a related topic.)

Reflections

Looking back on MCW’s engagement in the community during the first years of the pandemic, Dr. Raymond said, “I think a lot of people appreciate what MCW did. And I believe what they appreciate the most is that we, for the most part, drove down the middle of the fairway. When people asked political questions, we said, ‘We’re going to stick to the science. If you’re asking about public policy, you really should be talking to the policy makers.’”

Elizabeth “Betsy” Brenner, an MCW trustee and former publisher of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, recalled, “Our secret weapon was John Raymond. He was everywhere. He responded calmly with authority. He really provided that trusted authority for the community in a time of crisis that Wisconsin needed. John was able to represent MCW, but, even more importantly, represent Wisconsin by giving people the calm information they needed to move forward, run their businesses and run their lives.”

Sheehy added, “If there is a takeaway from this, it’s that the Medical College of Wisconsin played a preeminent role in making sure that Milwaukee got through this crisis.”

When looking to the future, Dr. Weston shared, “I do think there’s been learning from the pandemic that will positively affect health in the future. We’ve learned a lot from the Milwaukee County COVID Dashboard, in designing it and then using it to inform health-related approaches in the community. We’ve been working on a similar EMS dashboard that we can use to improve community health. For example, if we can have a dashboard that looks at gun violence, we could do a lot of interventions ... the same with opioid overdoses, same with cardiac arrest. So while the collateral damage from COVID has been massive, I hope there’s a silver lining that will enable us to take a lot of the learning and apply it to enhancing health in the community.”

MCW’s statewide leadership during the pandemic also provides opportunities for preparedness for the future, including: fast-tracking vaccine research and technology; integrating public health into an unified system for improving health; strengthening the supply chain; developing, expanding and using telehealth; focusing on prevention (not just cures); and addressing health disparities. ■

Jump at The Sun Consultants (JATSC) led an effort to recruit and train 150 individuals from underresourced communities as community mobilizers to go door to door to share vaccine information (photos below at left and right). At center, Dr. Mara Lord and Lorraine Lathen, founder and CEO of JATSC.





A Community-Led Implementation Framework to Foster a Reciprocal Continuum of Trust

In May 2023, Dr. Mara Lord, MCW's senior vice president for university engagement and strategic planning, was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Public and Community Health. Her dissertation, *A Community-Led Implementation Framework to Foster a Reciprocal Continuum of Trust*, drew on MCW's multifaceted community-wide responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned.

The rapid onset of the pandemic, intersecting with an "infodemic" and economic crisis, exacerbated health disparities – disproportionately impacting individuals in marginalized communities and highlighting systemic disparities in health equity based on race and ethnicity.

Vaccines brought a promise to end the pandemic, but also complexities in attitudes toward vaccine and vaccination. Historical mistrust and distrust, misinformation and disinformation, and racism led to vaccine hesitancy, which became the most significant barrier to achieving high levels of vaccination rates in Milwaukee County.

In her study, Dr. Lord used implementation science and community-engaged research to assess determinants of vaccine uptake in marginalized Milwaukee communities through qualitative and quantitative analyses.



The Community Mobilizer implementation strategy enabled vaccination behavior and generated goodwill and capacity-building among stakeholders."

A novel Community Mobilizer intervention was deployed in which individuals recruited from socially vulnerable communities were trained to visit homes to talk about COVID-19 and vaccination. They also were paired with clinicians to offer vaccination in homes to increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake in communities with high social vulnerability and low COVID-19 vaccination rates.

Dr. Lord's findings included six implementation determinant themes: trust in community-based leaders; perception of resource needs; authenticity of Community Mobilizers; rapid deployment of implementation strategy; goodwill outcome of trust validation; and relational dynamics and capacity-building. A key enabling



Dr. Mara Lord receives her PhD diploma from Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr., at MCW's Commencement ceremony on May 19, 2023.

implementation determinant was a cascade of trust and influence among stakeholders.

Dr. Lord concluded that authenticity and trust are key enabling determinants of an implementation strategy to influence health behaviors and that the Community Mobilizer intervention was novel in an emergency state when it was critical to reach individuals in high-vulnerability communities to lower incidence of disease. She noted, "The Community Mobilizer implementation strategy enabled vaccination behavior and generated goodwill and capacity-building among stakeholders. This implementation strategy could inform future health behavior interventions and implementation strategies as well as the development of a community-led implementation framework to advance health equity."

Creating the Midwest's First Brain Injury Program for Veterans and First Responders

Milwaukee will be home to the Midwest's first program designed specifically to treat mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) in veterans and first responders.

The Wisconsin Institute of Neuroscience (WINS) is launching BRAVE (Building Resilience through Action in Veterans and First Responders), an intensive three-week outpatient program customized to treat the unique needs of participants with mTBI, thanks to a \$12.5 million gift from Avalon Action Alliance, a national organization focused on the mental wellness of veterans and first responders.

Avalon made the donation at an announcement at MCW on April 27, 2023. WINS represents a partnership among Children's Wisconsin, Froedtert Hospital, MCW and the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans' Administration Medical Center. Its goal is to deliver a combined set of offerings that showcase the unmatched advancements of collaborative academic medicine, along with world-class clinical care, unique clinical trials, groundbreaking research and innovative education.

"When we looked for a partner to build our veteran alliance, WINS immediately stood out due to the global reputation of its leadership," says Joe Brennan, CEO of Avalon Action Alliance. "The

partners' history of developing medical treatments and conducting research to increase our knowledge of brain injuries and trauma is remarkable. We're pleased to support them in repaying these heroes for their service."

Participants in BRAVE will begin the program following discharge from a medical facility – such as the Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee – for any brain injury treatment they may have received. After a referral by a medical professional, members of the BRAVE program will conduct detailed clinical evaluations and develop a customized treatment plan that targets each person's needs and how to best support their recovery.

"We're grateful and excited to be the first Avalon Action Alliance program in the Midwest, providing specialized diagnostic and rehabilitation services designed to help our military veterans and first responders overcome these injuries and regain their lives," shares Michael McCrea, PhD, director of the BRAVE program. "Military veterans and first responders are tasked with going into situations that not only can be extremely dangerous, but also can commonly result in brain injury, trauma and great distress," he adds. Dr. McCrea also serves as the Shekar N. Kurpad, MD, PhD, Chair in Neurosurgery, professor of neurosurgery, vice chair of



Dr. James Kelly, national director of Avalon Action Alliance, and Cecilia J. Hillard, PhD, MCW's G. Frederick Kasten, Jr. Endowed Chair in Parkinson's Disease Research, associate dean for research, professor of pharmacology and toxicology, and director of the Neuroscience Research Center, discuss the organization's gift to launch the BRAVE program.



Milwaukee-area first responders and leaders from Avalon Action Alliance, MCW, Froedtert Hospital and the Wisconsin Institute of Neuroscience gather on April 27 to announce Avalon's \$12.5 million gift to create the BRAVE program to treat mild traumatic brain injury in military veterans and first responders.

research, director of the Neurotrauma Research Center and director of the Brain Injury Research Program.

Due to the size of the region and the number of veterans living there, Avalon had been looking to expand to the Midwest and was delighted to find such a strong foundation of TBI research and treatment at MCW. However, the program won't just focus on people within the Midwest.

BRAVE is expected to attract participants from across the country – and possibly beyond – due to the word-of-mouth connections that often draw members of the veteran and first responder communities to treatment.

“WINS and our partners at Froedtert Hospital and MCW have an international reputation for research and specialized clinical care for neurotrauma,” says Shekar Kurpad, MD, PhD, director of WINS and the Sanford J. Larson Professor and chair of neurosurgery at MCW. “Our partnership with Avalon Action Alliance represents another focused step toward our goal of delivering the best care to people with traumatic brain injuries.”

The BRAVE program is expected to begin offering services to patients in the fall of 2023. Services will be delivered at the Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin's Greenfield Highlands Health Center. ■
– CHRIS COMBS

Neuro Hero Award Winners

In recognition of its support in creating the region's first mTBI program for veterans and first responders, Avalon Action Alliance received the *Neuro Hero Award* at MCW's Imagine More Dinner on June 20, 2023.

An annual nationally recognized philanthropic event, Imagine More raises money for neuroscience research. Winners of the *Neuro Hero Award* are selected by MCW's Neuroscience Research Center board for their outstanding commitment to the advancement of the neurosciences.

Michael McCrea, PhD, presented the award to Joe Brennan, CEO of Avalon Action Alliance, and James Kelly, MD, Avalon Action Alliance's national director, noting its transformative value to the Milwaukee community.

Dr. McCrea also joined Brennan and Dr. Kelly as guests on the Clinical & Translational Science Institute of Southeast Wisconsin's "Discovery Radio" on June 16. They discussed mTBI, the BRAVE program and the difference specialized treatment can make when helping veterans and first responders recover from an injury to the brain.

“The mission of the Alliance is to take care of our veterans and first responders who have invisible wounds [and] help those individuals who otherwise find it hard to seek help,” says Dr. Kelly. “This is about restoring military veterans and first responders to their best selves and returning them to gainful life,” adds Dr. McCrea.



Dr. Michael McCrea, MCW professor of neurosurgery and neurology, director of the BRAVE program and director of MCW's Center for Neurotrauma Research, announces the recipients of the 2023 Neuro Hero Award.



Dr. James Kelly shakes hands with a well-wisher as Joe Brennan looks on.



Dr. Cecilia Hillard (center) with event co-chairs and MCW trustees Mary Ellen Stanek and David Lubar.

Overdoses Under Scrutiny

An MCW Scientist and His Partners Study Local Overdose Patterns to Improve Prevention Strategies



Dr. John Mantsch

“I’m an impatient person,” says John Mantsch, PhD, Florence Williams Professor and chair of pharmacology and toxicology at MCW. As a neuroscientist, Dr. Mantsch has been interested in how the brain works since the earliest days of his training. More recently, he has expanded the scope of some of his research from the microscopic level to examine entire communities and cities.

“Basic science requires a lot of patience, so I see community-level research as a chance to help create a more immediate benefit,” Dr. Mantsch adds.

The problem could not be much more immediate. Deaths from drug overdose in the US rose in 22 of the last 23 years and were projected to be more than 110,000 in 2022, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Milwaukee County, overdose deaths grew by more than 80 percent from 2016 to 2021, with 623 deaths recorded in 2021.

“To better counter these alarming trends, we need more precise information about the issue,” Dr. Mantsch says.

Dr. Mantsch partnered with a team of geographers and data scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, led by Rina Ghose, PhD, professor of geography, to look at data on overdose deaths in Milwaukee County. Taking inspiration from studies by criminologists investigating the distance individuals travel before breaking the law, known as the “journey to crime,” Dr. Mantsch and the team opted to study the journey to overdose. The team developed its dataset by comparing the locations of overdose deaths with addresses of residences provided by next of kin that were recorded on death certificates from 2017 through 2020. The scientists published their findings in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* in February 2023.

“We found that in nearly 27 percent of cases, individuals traveled away from their communities of residence and suffered overdose deaths in different communities, which we call geographically discordant overdose deaths,” Dr. Mantsch says. “We conducted spatial social network analysis to find patterns of where these overdoses are more likely to occur and better understand characteristics

of individuals who are more likely to undertake a journey to overdose.”

The researchers developed a color-coded map highlighting census tracts that have been hotspots for geographically discordant overdose deaths from 2017–2020 with risk levels ranging from very high to very low. The team also determined which census tracts were more likely to be starting points for journeys to overdose. Geographically discordant deaths more commonly involved fentanyl, cocaine and amphetamines than non-discordant deaths, and were more likely to be accidental.

Dr. Mantsch sees the detailed information about individuals and communities involved in journeys to overdose as part of a new approach to studying the dynamics driving health issues such as the drug overdose epidemic. He calls this shift to better understanding community- and neighborhood-level subtleties “precision epidemiology.”

“These neighborhood-level dynamics could inform more precise public health prevention plans and the availability of harm reduction resources, such as adjusting the supply of Narcan [a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose] so it can be used where it is needed most,” Dr. Mantsch notes. “This is the level of detail we need to understand to accelerate our progress in addressing this epidemic.”

In addition to his academic partners at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Dr. Mantsch works with numerous others to help with the research and put the team’s findings into action, including the data surveillance and informatics team in the MCW Comprehensive Injury Center led by assistant professor of epidemiology Connie Kostelac, PhD; the Milwaukee County medical examiner; Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management; City of Milwaukee Health Department; Project WisHope; Social Development Commission; and other neighborhood organizations.

“Data by itself is only part of the story,” Dr. Mantsch adds. “None of this is effective without the understanding of and partnership with our communities.” ■ — GREG CALHOUN

In Milwaukee County, overdose deaths grew more than **80 percent** from 2016 to 2021, with 623 deaths recorded in 2021.

TOPS Research Support Leads to Landmark Discoveries on Obesity

Since 1966, Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), an international non-profit weight loss organization based in Milwaukee, has been a major supporter of obesity research at MCW. TOPS Club, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2023, has contributed more than \$16 million toward understanding and treating the effects of obesity on health and on learning ways to help individuals effectively lose weight. TOPS is MCW's longest sustaining donor.

“Support from the TOPS organization and its members has aided more than a generation of obesity researchers to investigate a variety of

hypotheses and move the science forward. We are grateful for its generosity in supporting research and discovery,” says Srividya (Vidya) Kidambi, MD, MS, MCW's medical director for TOPS research, professor of medicine and



Dr. Srividya Kidambi

the chief of the division of endocrinology and molecular medicine at MCW.

Research supported by TOPS has made major contributions to the world's understanding of obesity and its links to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, inflammation and cancer. In 1981, Ahmed Kissebah, MD, PhD, then the medical director of TOPS research at MCW, was the first in the world to describe a cluster of metabolic features in patients that became known as “metabolic syndrome.”

His research described the role of insulin resistance in the metabolic complications of abdominal body fat versus gluteal obesity. In lay terminology, Dr. Kissebah's research described the reasons why an apple-shaped body type is more detrimental to health compared to a pear-shaped body type.

TOPS-supported research also led to the landmark discovery in 2013 that an area on

chromosome 3 is associated with all the fundamental features of obesity. Other research studies have focused on the role of different fat deposits on heart health and diabetes, with a particular focus on beneficial effects of a pear-shaped body type; the effect of race on resting metabolism with Black/African American women showing lower metabolism; identification of variants in multiple genes that affected plasma triglyceride levels; identification of obesity and cardiometabolic risk factors in children and adolescents; and understanding the impact of aging, exercise and heredity on the insulin resistance in human obesity.

In addition to funding support, thousands of TOPS Club members have participated in research studies, including the “TOPS Obesity Genes Project” – the engagement of approximately 600 families in one of the largest human studies of the genetics of obesity in the US.

MCW founded the TOPS Center for Obesity and Metabolic Research in 1984. Ten years later, MCW dedicated the center's expanded facilities that included the Esther S. Manz Laboratory. Recently, a conference suite in MCW's Hub for Collaborative Medicine was dedicated to TOPS Club in recognition for its support in combatting obesity. ■

– RICHARD (DICK) KATSCHKE



At the Intersection of Team Science and Clinical and Translational Research

At the intersection of team science and clinical and translational research, a new MCW initiative is growing: the Cardiovascular Academic Initiative (CAI).

“The impetus for the CAI was to build more significant infrastructure and organize additional resources to improve our ability to translate the outstanding basic science in cardiovascular disease at MCW into the clinical space. In addition, it was designed to better support investigator-initiated clinical investigations in cardiovascular disease, focusing on cardiovascular physiology,” shares Michael Widlansky, MD, MPH, Northwestern Mutual Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, director of the CAI and associate director of MCW’s Cardiovascular Center.

Founded in 2020, the aim of the CAI is to create collaborative spaces for innovation in cardiovascular research and clinical care; to facilitate the translation of cardiovascular research among basic sciences, early human studies and clinical practice; and to train the next generation of leaders in cardiovascular research and education.

Partnering with the MCW Tissue Bank, the CAI has worked with clinical services to consent patients and procure tissue samples from cardiovascular surgical cases to create a cardiovascular tissue biobank. The CAI also provides support for data extractions from the MCW Clinical Data Warehouse and other existing clinical and research databases. The CAI’s current services include research coordinator services, pulse wave velocity and pulse wave analysis, flow mediated dilatation, endothelial dysfunction tests and participating in VO₂ Max testing using state-of-the-art cardiopulmonary exercise testing equipment in the Adult Translational Research Unit.

The CAI offers funding opportunities including Patient-Oriented Cardiovascular Academic Projects (PCAP) which provide one year of funding up to \$10,000. To date, the CAI has awarded funding to six PCAP projects spanning various topics including postpartum blood pressure control aimed at decreasing maternal morbidity and the effect of coronary artery calcification on patients hospitalized with COVID-19.

Additional funding opportunities available through the CAI include the Cardiovascular Focused Ensembles in collaboration with the Clinical and Translational Science Institute of Southeast Wisconsin (CTSI).

Each team in this research program is called an “Ensemble” because the team structure is likened to a musical ensemble, in which different “instruments” – or in this case, scientific disciplines – come together to make “music” or multidisciplinary collaborative research that could not otherwise be accomplished by their individual performances.



A subject participates in VO₂ Max testing using state-of-the-art cardiopulmonary exercise testing equipment in the Adult Translational Research Unit in support of CAI’s clinical-translational cardiovascular research and team science in cardiovascular diseases.

Successfully formed Ensembles selected for this program are eligible for an initial \$50,000 line of credit to support their approach. In addition, the Ensemble will receive administrative support from the CTSI as well as clinical research coordinator support and data analytics support from the CAI. Three Cardiovascular Focused Ensembles have been funded through the CAI to address research in traumatic brain injury, atrial fibrillation and hypertension, and preterm birth.

Dr. Widlansky explains, “Our synergistic partnership allows the CTSI and CAI to share resources to further mutually shared goals. This partnership is best captured through the CAI-CTSI-sponsored Cardiovascular Focused Research Ensembles, which has allowed us to leverage the resources of both CAI and CTSI to resource team science approaches to complex problems in cardiovascular clinic care.”

The CAI hopes to continue to grow connections with existing MCW centers and offices to advance cardiovascular research, with the potential to collaborate in genomics and precision medicine, immunology, technology and development, bone marrow transplant, neuroscience, population science and cancer research. “We want to continue supporting clinical-translational cardiovascular research and team science in cardiovascular diseases. We hope these efforts will result in the growth of new extramurally-funded programs and new tools, products and approaches to improve the care of patients,” Dr. Widlansky adds. ■

– MICHELLE SCHAEFER

Reflections from My Postdoctoral Fellowship

Immersing myself in the journey of my postdoctoral fellowship this past year, I ventured into two distinct yet interconnected realms: medical education and community engagement. What I discovered was a rich tapestry of insight and learning that fundamentally reshaped my perception of the medical profession and the communities we serve.

My exploration of medical education through the Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education at MCW reframed it from a mere transfer of knowledge to a focus on shaping the future. I delved into a captivating field that assesses human virtues and growth – discovering that even abstract outcomes such as human flourishing and our capacity for empathy, resilience and compassion could be quantified. These attributes are as integral to a physician's toolkit as a scalpel or stethoscope.

However, there are challenges to delivering quality education. This became evident when I began to understand the diverse socioeconomic backgrounds of learners. Just as medical outcomes are influenced by social determinants of health (such as poverty, access to healthcare and education), student success is likewise shaped by the social circumstances enveloping them. Recognizing these realities calls on educators to tailor their teaching materials, resources and assessments to consider students' diverse academic backgrounds and life circumstances.

While navigating these complexities, I was humbled by the diligence of medical educators developing innovative teaching methods. I saw the painstaking efforts behind each non-lecture modality, such as case-based discussions and small group tasks. These aim to stimulate active engagement, nurturing students not only to memorize content but also to refine their analytical reasoning and critical thinking – skills vital to medical practice. This journey was shared with other educators at the International Association of Medical Science Educators Conference in Cancun, Mexico, in June 2023, during which I presented my work on the longitudinal assessment of character virtues.

On the other hand, my engagement with the community through All of Us Wisconsin exposed me to very different but equally enriching experiences. Building community trust and ensuring meaningful engagement was not about grand overtures, but about small, consistent actions and conversations, slowly morphing into a long-term commitment. During these engagements, I also grappled with the challenge of translating complex genetic research into lay language.

The task was a stark reminder of the gap in comprehension that could impede advancements in personalized medicine. However, I was encouraged by the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems (such as ChatGPT) in translating complex scientific jargon into lay language through analogies. At the Association for Clinical and Translational Science's Translational Science Conference in Washington, DC, in April 2023, I showcased my work for All of Us on Community-Based Participatory Research, which brought together scientists and community members to design a hypothesis driving healthcare research relevant to southeastern Wisconsin communities.

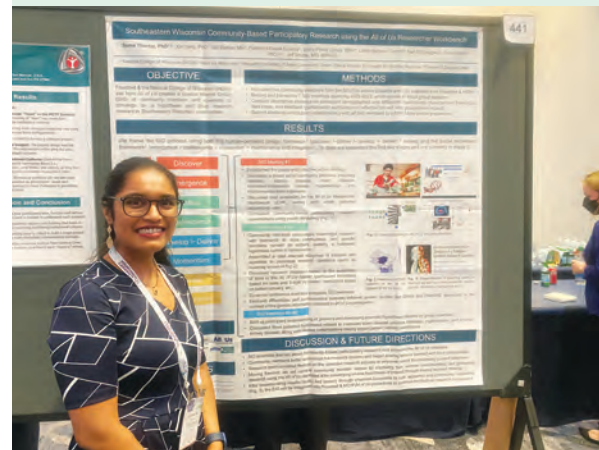
Looking back, I am deeply grateful for the insights shared by mentors from basic, clinical and educational science. As I transition back to my third year in medical school, I carry a newfound appreciation for the patience, commitment and sustained efforts required to strengthen healthcare professional teaching and foster community collaboration. ■

– DR. SUMA THAREJA

Dr. Suma Thareja (Samudrala) is a student in MCW's MD/PhD program. After receiving her PhD in May 2022, she completed a one-year postdoctoral fellowship and has entered her third year of medical school at MCW.



Top: Dr. Thareja (at front right) and colleagues attend the Association for Clinical and Translational Science's Translational Science Conference in Washington, DC, in April 2023. **Middle:** Dr. Thareja presents her poster on "Southeastern Wisconsin Community-Based Participatory Research using the All of Us Researcher Workbench," at the Translational Science Conference in Washington, DC. **Bottom:** Dr. Thareja and Ethan Duwell, PhD, receive certificates of appreciation for their contributions as postdoctoral fellows in the Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education.



Summer Science Sets the Stage

“My career in science and medicine probably started with some memorable science projects my dad and I completed, including growing cultures on petri dishes in the dental office he ran in Milwaukee,” reflects Ann Klopp, PhD '02, MD '03, GME '04. Her scientific enrichment continued during high school summers at genetics camps in Michigan.

Dr. Klopp currently serves as professor of radiation oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston; she also leads the gynecologic section in the department of radiation oncology and is the director of brachytherapy.

Dr. Klopp was determined to study science when she entered the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor as an undergraduate and envisioned her future as a researcher running a laboratory. After a different scientific summer experience, however, her dreams expanded to include medicine.

“I was fortunate to spend a college summer at the Royal Free Hospital in London helping with a project to sequence the Ras family of genes, now widely known to increase risk of cancer when mutated. Even though the confines of sequencing technology at the time limited our success, I really enjoyed the work and loved interacting with patients while collecting their samples for the study. The experience made me want to be both a physician and a scientist,” Dr. Klopp says.

A family friend and faculty member at MCW, Jack Kleinman, MD, suggested that she apply to the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) at MCW, where she would be able to complete both her MD and PhD degrees.

“I had a wonderful experience at MCW. I have fond memories, especially of bonding with my classmates during the first two years as we learned the fundamentals. I still think of those days and how what I learned then is foundational to the knowledge and wisdom I use to care for patients today,” Dr. Klopp adds. She notes that the MSTP felt like a welcoming academic home throughout her training.

“The PhD often is a journey of peaks and valleys, mine especially so,” Dr. Klopp notes. Her mentor was William Burns, MD, former holder of the Robert A. Uihlein, Jr. Professorship of Hematologic Research and leader of MCW’s adult bone marrow transplant program.

“He was interested in ameliorating the infections that could be a problem in patients with suppressed immune systems before and after a bone marrow transplant. We were studying a mouse herpesvirus and a gene that caused the virus to reactivate,” Dr. Klopp says. Dr. Burns was very patient and supportive while Dr. Klopp developed new processes to create and isolate recombinant versions

of the virus and test their effects.

“Sadly, at the end of my PhD program, Dr. Burns died. I’ll always remember him as an incredible mentor. I learned so much from him about excelling as a clinician and researcher,” Dr. Klopp notes. She attributes her choice of medical specialty to another group of MCW mentors.

“My path to radiation oncology is another great MCW story. During my medical student rotations, I was fortunate to observe many wonderful women radiation oncologists such as Drs. Beth Gore [MD '90], Colleen Lawton [MD '83, GME '87] and Beth Erickson [MD '84, GME '88],” Dr. Klopp says.

She was drawn to the depth of relationships these physicians developed with their patients, as well as by the example they set for others as role models. “I looked up to them because they were thriving as physicians, scientists and people,” Dr. Klopp recalls.

Dr. Klopp is thankful that she chose a career as a physician-scientist in this field. “I still find so much appealing in this discipline. I like the imaging, the technology and the pace of the clinical work. Most importantly, it is meaningful for me to meet patients during a very challenging time, form a tight bond with them and be able to offer something very concrete to help them,” Dr. Klopp adds. ■

— GREG CALHOUN



Dr. Klopp (at center) with Michael Rosenblum, PhD '03, MD '06; Matthew Anderson, PhD '04, MD '06; Kathryn Bollinger, PhD '01, MD '03 – fellow students in MCW's Medical Scientist Training Program in the early 2000s.

I still think of those days [at MCW] and how what I learned then is foundational to the knowledge and wisdom I use to care for patients today.

– Dr. Ann Klopp



From Texas to Tanzania



From 2020-2023, Dr. Donald J. Wright served as US ambassador to Tanzania. (l-r) Dr. Wright speaks on behalf of the US government, visits a USAID agriculture project that improves agricultural productivity and meets with Her Excellency President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania.

While Donald J. Wright, MD, MPH '99, was working as a family physician in Texas, his interest in population health led him to leadership roles in the federal government and a Tanzanian ambassadorship.

Dr. Wright knew at a young age that he wanted to be a physician. He found the human body intriguing and liked helping people. Early in his career, while working as a family physician in Texas, he acquired an interest in population health.

Dr. Wright saw this as a way to improve the health and lives of whole groups of people. So, he charted a new way forward. It was a path that included earning his Master of Public Health degree from MCW in 1999.

“The foundation I gained at MCW in epidemiology and statistics was invaluable

and served me for the next two-plus decades,” says Dr. Wright.

During that time, his roles included director of the Office of Occupational Medicine in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for the Department of Labor; a variety of leadership roles in the Department of Health and Human Services including the deputy assistant secretary for health; and nearly three years as ambassador to Tanzania from 2020 to 2023.

As ambassador, Dr. Wright served as the US president’s highest-ranking representative to Tanzania and the East African community and oversaw a team of more than 600 staff. Dr. Wright was responsible for an annual operational and foreign assistance budget of \$800 million and for advancing US

security and economic interests in the region.

“It was very rewarding to work as ambassador because I saw firsthand the impact of our country’s generosity,” says Dr. Wright. “Much of our funding went to improve the health of the people who live in Tanzania.”

About 60 percent of the annual operational and foreign assistance budget was directed toward health issues such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and food insecurity. As ambassador, Dr. Wright led President Biden’s COVID-19 vaccine uptake project in Tanzania, which increased vaccination rates from 15 percent of the eligible population to 80 percent. US financial support also was directed to conservation projects that protect parks and wildlife.

Throughout his career, Dr. Wright has focused on disease prevention and keeping people out of the healthcare system. “We need to focus more on preventing chronic disease,” he says. His efforts during his many leadership roles have been consistent with this belief, as his teams developed the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (more commonly known as the “My Plate”) and the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans that are now considered best practices, as well as prevention guidelines for mammograms and flu shots.

“I wanted to be able to say I used my skills, talents and leadership to improve the human condition here and abroad,” adds Dr. Wright. ■ — ANTHONY BRAZA

Reconnecting With an Old Friend

After Dr. Wright completed his family medicine residency training at Baylor College of Medicine in 1985, he visited Tanzania to gain experience helping people in an underresourced country. During that trip, which included work at a hospital, Dr. Wright gained a love for the country’s people and their culture. The trip turned out to be quite fortuitous.

“Little did I know when I left Tanzania in 1985 that the next time I would return would be as an ambassador,” shares Dr. Wright. He also didn’t realize that a medical student with whom he worked during his first trip became the chief of staff at the hospital where they first had met. They reconnected in 2020 when Dr. Wright returned to Tanzania.



Dr. Wright reconnects with a medical colleague 35 years after Dr. Wright’s first visit to Tanzania.

ALUMNI NOTES

1980s



Betty Pace, MD '81, the Francis J. Tedesco Distinguished Chair of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at the Medical College of Georgia and the Georgia

Cancer Center at Augusta University, is the recipient of the American Medical Women's Association's 2023 *Woman in Science Award*. She leads a National Institutes of Health-funded basic/translational research laboratory focused on drug discovery for treatment of sickle cell disease. Dr. Pace also directs a National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute-funded training opportunity focused on increasing diversity in biomedical research.



William Hathaway, MD '88, is CEO of the nonprofit Mountain Area Health Education Center (AHEC) serving western North Carolina. It is the largest

of the nine AHEC centers in the state. He previously served as chief medical officer of the North Carolina division of HCA Healthcare.

1990s

Carlos Lowell, DO, GME '95, is in private practice in Sandusky, Ohio, where he runs the TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation) Institute of Ohio. He has been active teaching TMS and electroconvulsive therapy to attendings, residents and medical students.



Thomas Chen, MD, PhD, FEL '97, CEO of NeOnc Technologies Holdings, Inc., received the *Best in Medicine Award* from the American Health Council. Dr. Chen is

professor and director of surgical neuro-oncology at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine.

Yoon Hang Kim, MD '97, joined Memorial Hospital in Carthage, Ill., as chief wellness officer. He specializes in integrative medicine, acupuncture and functional medicine laboratory testing.

Maneesh C. Sharma, MD '98, is an anesthesiologist and critical care specialist with the Interventional Pain Institute in Baltimore.



Abel Kho, MD '99, was named to the Illinois State Board of Health. He is a professor of medicine and preventive medicine at the

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, where he conducts research on integrating diverse data within public health applications. He was recognized in 2020 by the American Medical Informatics Association with the *Donald A.B. Lindbergh Award for Innovation in Informatics*.

2000s



Cynthia Bryant, MD '00, joined the Northeast Oklahoma Cancer Institute in Claremore as a radiation oncologist. She is interested in the interactions among exercise, nutrition and cancer treatments.

David Ghilarducci, MD '00, was appointed to the State of California's Commission on Emergency Medical Services. He has been a deputy health officer and emergency medical services medical director at the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency since 2014.

Philip Moyer, MD '00, joined the Palm Beach (Florida) Health Network Physician Group as a general surgeon specializing in robot-assisted surgery and minimally invasive surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and is on the medical staff at Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center.



Kimberly Shoenbill, MD, PhD, GME '00, was named the clinical informatics fellowship director for the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Medicine,

where she also is an assistant professor of family medicine. Dr. Shoenbill also serves as director of the UNC tobacco treatment and weight management programs.

Philip Mofte, MD '02, a board-certified general surgeon, joined Spooner Health in northwest Wisconsin.

Amitpal Johal, MD '03, was appointed chair of gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition weight management for the Geisinger Medical Institute, which includes the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton, Penn.

Ron Zuiderweg, DO, GME '04, FEL '06, joined Nephrology Associates of Utah with offices in South Ogden and Layton. He is board certified in both nephrology and internal medicine.



Wendy Huddleston, PT, PhD '05, is an associate professor and director of both the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program and the Visuomotor Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In her research, she uses functional magnetic resonance imaging and psychophysical testing to address questions regarding brain activity

involved in attentional selection of sensory and motor information necessary for task completion.



Rakesh Mistry, MD, FEL '05, MS '05, was appointed section chief of pediatric emergency medicine and professor of pediatrics and emergency medicine at

Yale University and Yale New Haven Children's Hospital. He previously served as a professor of pediatrics and emergency medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.



Amy Liepert, MD '06, is associate professor of surgery and division chief of acute care surgery at the University of Missouri College of Medicine. Her

research focuses on multidisciplinary and surgical management of severe and necrotizing pancreatitis, surgical health policy advocacy engagement and healthcare worker violence prevention.

Peter Katz, MD '07, is a board-certified dermatologist and co-director of the Forefront Dermatology Clinic in Kaukauna, Wis.

Paul Smullen, MD '07, joined Prevea Health in Kewaunee, Wis. He specializes in routine medical care for children and adults, preventive medicine, medication management and acute and chronic disease management. He is board certified in family medicine.

2010s



David Barber, MD '11, is the new director of emergency medicine at Prosser Memorial Health in Prosser, Wash. He is certified with the American

Board of Emergency Medicine and is an assistant professor at Washington State University's Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

Bonnie Stabrawa, MD, GME '11, a board-certified pediatrician, has joined the Edward-Elmhurst Medical Group with offices in Lombard and Elmhurst, Ill. Her clinical interests include asthma, childhood obesity, eczema, nutrition, newborn care and development, breastfeeding and preventive medicine.

Christopher Ford, MD '13, is an emergency medicine specialist at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee. He is highlighted in the revised edition of the best-selling book, *The Dyslexic Advantage*.



Julie Ruth Owen, MD '13, GME '17, FEL '18, an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine and emergency medicine at MCW, was named

the inaugural chief medical officer for the newly created Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) serving metropolitan Milwaukee. She also serves as medical director of the emergency psychiatry service in Froedtert Hospital's emergency department. The MHEC, a freestanding psychiatric facility, is a joint venture among Milwaukee County and Milwaukee's four health systems: Advocate Aurora Health, Ascension Wisconsin, Children's Wisconsin and Froedtert Health.

William Lea, MD, FEL '15, is medical director of the northeast Atlanta location of Preferred Vascular Group's Preferred Fibroid and Vascular Center. Dr. Lea is a board-certified vascular and interventional radiologist.



Robert Tuliszewski, MD '16, is a pediatric otolaryngologist with UT (University of Tennessee) Le Bonheur Pediatric Specialists and is an otolaryngologist at

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

Brian Quinn*, MD, GME '17, an assistant professor of medicine (general internal medicine/hospitalist) at MCW, was named as a medical director of acute care services at Froedtert Hospital.

James Billings, MD '18, was named interim medical director for North Central Health Care, a mental health clinic in Wausau, Wis. He also is a psychiatrist at the clinic's youth hospital.

2020s

Edmundo P. Cortez, Jr., MD, FEL '21, is chief of the division of pediatric critical care medicine at UI (University of Illinois) Health in Chicago, where he also is a professor of clinical pediatrics at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine.



Michael Totoraitis, PhD '21, was appointed as the city of Milwaukee's health commissioner. He most recently served as the director of health data

and evaluation within the city's health department. Dr. Totoraitis was a violence prevention research coordinator for the health department's Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission. He also previously served as a grants analyst for Milwaukee County.

*MCW faculty member

IN MEMORIAM

1950s

Thor M. Thorgersen, MD '53, of Appleton, Wis., died on February 18, 2023. He was a pathologist for 25 years at Waukesha Memorial Hospital in Wisconsin.

Richard Botta, MD '54, of Wycoff, N.J., died on March 17, 2023. An obstetrician and gynecologist, he served on the staff of Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, N.J., where he delivered more than 5,000 babies over the course of his career.

Peter Gardetto, MD '54, of Wauwatosa, Wis., died on March 9, 2023. Dr. Gardetto served as chief of pediatrics at St. Mary's and St. Luke's hospitals in Racine, Wis., and occasionally taught at both the Marquette University School of Medicine and Chicago Medical School.

William Thomas Redfern, MD '54, of Las Vegas, died on April 25, 2023. He was a general surgeon for 27 years at the Henderson Clinic and Rose de Lima Hospital in Henderson, Nev. He was recognized for his excellence in vascular, burn, thoracic and general surgery.

John T. Goswitz, MD '58, of Two Rivers, Wis., died on May 11, 2023. From 1966 to 1999, he was a general surgeon with Park Medical Center in Manitowoc, Wis. He then joined what is now Advocate Aurora Health where he worked until his retirement in 2004.

1960s

Erwin Koenig, MD '60, died in March 2023. He joined the University of Wisconsin in 1965, where he worked for the next 30 years as a clinical professor of medicine and physician at University of Wisconsin Health Services.

Harold Leo Ripple, MD '60, of L'Anse, Mich., died on March 25, 2023. He practiced medicine in Milwaukee for more than 25 years.

Col. Helen J. Gurkow, MD, '62, of Madison, Wis., died May 24, 2023. She was a general surgeon in private practice in Platteville, Wis., until her retirement in 1986. She joined the Wisconsin National Guard in 1979 and served in Operation Desert Storm. Dr. Gurkow transferred to the Ohio National Guard in 1992 and was the Ohio state surgeon for the Army National Guard.

Robert Allen Haushalter, MD '67, GME '74, of Elm Grove, Wis., died on March 15, 2023. He was a vascular and general surgeon at Elmbrook Memorial Hospital in Brookfield, Wis., and Milwaukee's St. Joseph Hospital, where he was chief of surgery and chair of the cancer committee.

James J. Ansfield, MD '68, of Mequon, Wis., died on April 10, 2023. He was considered a vibrant fixture in Milwaukee's Jewish community. For 35 years beginning in 1977, he was a gastroenterologist and internal medicine specialist in private practice in Milwaukee.

1970s

Thomas F. Taylor, MD, GME '73, died on May 26, 2023. He operated a solo ophthalmology medical practice for 40 years in Oconomowoc, Wis., and was a member of the medical staff at Memorial Hospital of Oconomowoc.

Lynn Di Ulio, MD '74, died on February 27, 2023. She was an obstetrician/gynecologist who served on the medical staffs of Milwaukee's St. Joseph Hospital, West Allis Hospital, Waukesha Memorial Hospital and Elmbrook Memorial

Hospital in Brookfield. She was a founding member of WomenCare in Brookfield, a women-owned medical practice focusing on the care and wellness of women patients. Dr. Di Ulio was one of only 10 women in her 1974 MCW graduating class.

Marc Posner, MD '76, of Glen Allen, Va., died on January 11, 2023. Dr. Posner joined the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) in Richmond in 1983 as a surgical transplant fellow. He rose through the ranks to full professor and assumed the role of MCV's director of the abdominal transplant program in 1990. Over the course of his career, he published more than 300 publications, book chapters and abstracts. He brought together a surgical team to form one of the world's earliest and most successful living donor liver transplant programs. He retired in 2015 as professor emeritus at VCU Health System.

Cassandra Pollard Welch, MD '77, died on February 1, 2023. She was the first African American woman to graduate from MCW's medical school. During her medical career, Dr. Welch worked for North Point Clinic/St. Mary's in Milwaukee, where she eventually became medical director. She also worked at Milwaukee Health Services as medical director and an internal medicine physician.

Andrew Padgug, MD '78, of Nashville, Tenn., died on February 10, 2023. He was an assistant professor of radiology at Vanderbilt University and chief of interventional radiology at the VA Hospital in Nashville for 36 years.

1980s

Scott Edward Cameron, MD '85, died on June 6, 2023. He practiced at Marshfield (Wis.) Clinic for 30 years as an orthopaedic surgeon. His success in hip

and knee replacement surgery led to Marshfield's designation as a national center of excellence in those procedures.

Captain Warren S. Inouye, MD '88, of Encinitas, Calif., died on February 9, 2023. Dr. Inouye served as a radiation oncologist for 27 years at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, where he retired in 2015. He then joined the VA Long Beach (Calif.) Healthcare System. Dr. Inouye served as specialty advisor for radiation oncology to the US Navy Surgeon General. In 2011, he was division officer for radiation oncology in the department head of diagnostic radiology and medical operations officer for US Forces Japan during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor incident.

1990s

Colonel Mark Burnett, MD '93, of Honolulu, died on March 17, 2023. He served a nearly 30-year Army career with deployments including Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Philippines. As a colonel, he served as chief of pediatrics at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, where he also was the hospital's historian and assisted the US Department of Defense's Prisoner of War/Missing in Action accounting office.

Dwayne Capper, MD, GME '97, of Solon, Iowa, died on May 7, 2023. He was a board-certified otolaryngologist with ENT Medical Services in Iowa City.

2000s

Austin Dosh, MD '06, died on December 19, 2022. He was a psychiatrist in Spokane, Wash., and was affiliated with Mann-Grandstaff Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Special Remembrances

Roland A. Pattillo, MD, GME '64, died on May 3, 2023. He was a strong force in women's health for five decades and the first African American faculty member at MCW's predecessor institution. Dr. Pattillo, who served on the MCW obstetrics and gynecology faculty from 1968 to 1995, received MCW's *Distinguished Service Award* in 1994. This award is the highest honor that MCW bestows on a faculty or staff member. He also received an honorary degree from MCW in 2018.

Dr. Pattillo was an expert on gynecologic and trophoblastic (placental) cancers and stem cell research, and he led a team of physicians who successfully cultivated cervical tissue cells outside the body to develop a vaccine for the human papilloma virus (HPV).

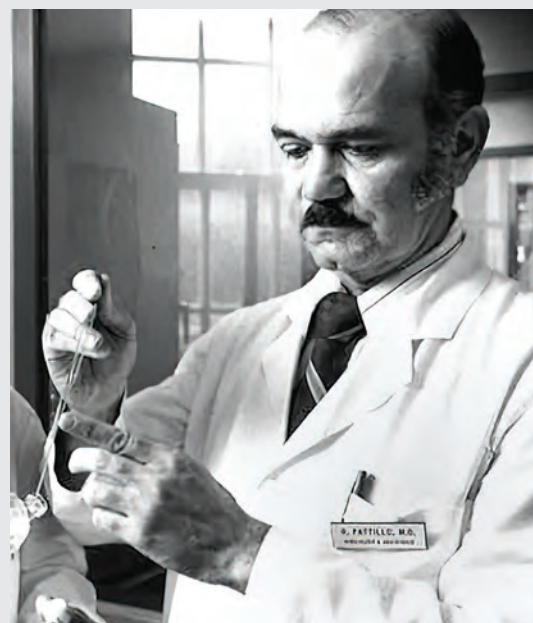
Dr. Pattillo's research and clinical studies focused on in vitro cell models possessing characteristic biomarkers that were then used in multiple experimental designs for assessment of endocrine function, chemotherapy, radiation therapy sensitivity and differentiation. His research culminated in the first identification of the trophoblast stem cell and establishment of the first human hormone synthesizing cell system maintained in continuous cultivation.

Dr. Pattillo shared all the cell systems he established with scientists worldwide. The ovarian system he created was used to develop a new treatment for ovarian cancer. He authored the first stem cell publication in 1968. In total, he authored more than 100 peer-reviewed journal publications, one book and several book chapters.

Earlier in his career, Dr. Pattillo trained as a fellow with George Gey, MD, at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. In 1951, Dr. Gey established the first immortalized cell line (HeLa) which is chronicled in the best-selling book and movie *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Dr. Pattillo's work with Dr. Gey led him to develop an enduring close relationship with the Lacks family. Dr. Pattillo purchased a headstone for Henrietta's previously unmarked grave, served as a champion for the family, and later in his career, while at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, launched a women's health conference in Henrietta's honor.

During his time at MCW, Dr. Pattillo served one year as acting chair of obstetrics and gynecology and four years as vice-chair. In 1995, he was named emeritus professor of

(continued on page 34)



IN MEMORIAM

obstetrics and gynecology. He then moved to Morehouse School of Medicine, where he eventually was promoted to chair of the department of obstetrics and gynecology.

Dr. Pattillo has been honored with the *Medallion of the International Trophoblast Society*, the *Leonard Tow Humanism*

in Medicine Award and the *Pioneer Award* from the National Institute of Health for Frontiers in Stem Cell Research.

He earned his MD from St. Louis University and completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at MCW. He also completed a gynecologic oncology fellowship at Johns Hopkins.

James E. Youker, MD, of Oconomowoc, Wis., died on June 12, 2023. Dr. Youker's 45-year tenure as chair of MCW's department of radiology was, in the 2000s, the longest of any of the nation's medical school department chairs.

"Dr. Youker's life was one of service – to the medical community, to our nation and to our patients," says Vincent P. Mathews, MD, the James E. Youker, MD Professor of Radiology and chair of radiology at MCW. "His leadership would inspire his residents and faculty to such a degree that he would see their children grow up to become radiology residents, still under his tutelage."

Dr. Youker graduated from the University of Buffalo School of Medicine in New York and served his residency in radiology at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis–Saint Paul. He served in the military as chief of radiology at the US Naval Hospital. Before joining MCW in 1968 as chair of radiology, he held positions at what is now VCU School of Medicine in Richmond, Va., the University of California, San Francisco and as a research fellow at the University of Lund in Sweden.

He held gold medals (the highest level of award and distinction) from the Association of University Radiologists, the Radiological Society of North America, the American Roentgen Ray Society and the American College of Radiology. Dr. Youker's name is nationally recognized and respected due to decades of leadership to the medical community, including as president of the Society of Chairs of Academic Radiology Departments, the Wisconsin State Radiological Society and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Executive Committee. He holds the distinction as the only radiologist to hold this leadership role at ABMS.

"Dr. Youker's leadership helped form MCW as we know it today," says Dr. Mathews. He chaired the Committee to Form a Faculty Organization at MCW in 1968 and served on 10 MCW department chair search committees, as well as the search committee for the president of MCW. He helped found the department of radiation oncology and later the department of biophysics, both of which initially resided in his department. Dr. Youker served

on the MCW board of trustees as well as numerous committees at MCW, Milwaukee County General Hospital and Froedtert Hospital. He received MCW's *Distinguished Service Award* in 1989 in recognition of his many contributions.

Academically, Dr. Youker was a prolific researcher and chaired the Conjoint Committee on Diagnostic Radiology at the National Institutes of Health, which served to enhance research and education in radiology nationally. He also chaired the Radiology Residency Review Committee of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and served as a trustee of the American Board of Radiology. He was a master educator, as illustrated by his receipt of an *MCW Medical Student Outstanding Teaching Award* at age 90.

Upon his stepping down as department chair in 2014, MCW established the James E. Youker, MD Professorship to honor Dr. Youker's many achievements.

In a 2017 oral history interview, Dr. Youker reflected on his career, saying, "After all the years, there's still an esprit de corps here that's very real. I'm particularly proud of the people I recruited to MCW, faculty members who have grown to become internationally recognized. The thing that's been most exciting to me is to be part of radiology at this time of tremendous advances. For me to say that I knew what would happen would be a bold-faced lie. It's been a unique privilege to be part of this field."

Dr. Mathews adds, "Dr. Youker was an inspiration, admired and respected by his colleagues and trainees, cherished by his patients and loved by his family. His passing is an enormous loss for his family, friends, MCW, the medical profession and the patients and students he affected."





Linda Meurer, MD, MPH

Linda Meurer, MD, MPH, is vice chair for academic affairs and professor of family and community medicine, MCWfusion™ thread director for health equity, and chair of the medical school admissions committee.

Dr. Linda Meurer has dedicated her career to advancing health equity and community-engaged education and research for almost 30 years.

Since joining the Medical College of Wisconsin in 1994, Dr. Meurer has directed postdoctoral primary care research training, faculty development and summer student research programs. She served as the founding director of the Urban and Community Health Scholarly Pathway for medical students, which prepares students to promote community health and reduce health disparities. She currently is participating in the development of the new MCWfusion™ Curriculum as director of the health equity thread, ensuring that the next generation of physicians is equipped with crosscultural understanding and the ability to effectively advance health equity in their respective spheres of influence.

Dr. Meurer has been consistently recognized for her excellence as an educator as a recipient of both the MCW *Outstanding Medical Student Teacher* and *Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher* awards. Additionally, she was elected to MCW's Society of Teaching Scholars in 2009.

Dr. Meurer also is a committed mentor and currently serves as director of the junior faculty development program in the department of family and community medicine. Additionally, she collaborates on NIH-funded research that explores how mentorship in the training of research scientists can help support the entry of women and underrepresented in medicine students into physician-scientist careers. In 2017, Dr. Meurer received MCW's highest honor, the *Distinguished Service Award*, in recognition of her many years of service and extraordinary contributions to MCW. ■ — CAROLINE LADD

What Drives You?

I'm driven by a desire for medical education that best meets society's needs and by a love of family medicine, which exemplifies relationship-centered care that bridges academia, the community and the home. I love teaching and building connections, and then seeing my learners succeed in work that improves the lives of others.

What Has Been the Highlight of Your Career?

Creating the Urban and Community Health Pathway (UCH) was a medical educator's dream — having time and latitude to teach important, nontraditional content on social determinants, cultural humility and health disparities. UCH enabled me to connect students with community partners to learn about the unique strengths and challenges faced by the people they would come to serve as physicians. A student once said, "UCH doesn't only make us better doctors. It makes us better people." I cried.

What Do You Still Hope to Accomplish Over Your Career?

I have stepped away from UCH to lead the new MCWfusion™ Curriculum's health equity thread. I'm excited to upscale UCH principles to integrate population health and social sciences into the new curriculum, fostering patient-centeredness and building skills to advance health equity. As department of family and community medicine vice chair, I hope to be a mentor to our faculty and trainees as they advance their careers and the science of community-based family medicine.

What Would You Like Your MCW Legacy to Be?

Part of my legacy is evident; many of my former fellows and UCH graduates are now faculty leading or contributing to programs I cherish. I hope to leave a robust, integrated health equity curriculum and support for community-engaged service learning at all levels of medical education.

What One Piece of Advice Would You Like to Share With Your Colleagues?

Try to be present in your interactions with everyone. Under stress we might be short, impatient or fall back on stereotypes before truly seeing those in front of us. But they see us and notice the slights. Take the time to trust, listen and connect. Paraphrasing Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said or did, but they won't forget how you made them feel."



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