



Years of Our Alumni Association

By Richard N. Katschke, Anthony J. Perez and Sara L. Wilkins

In early November 1925, several alumni of what was then the Marquette University School of Medicine gathered together during Homecoming events (November 4-7) to lay the foundation for an enduring entity that is proudly marking its centennial year.

Known as the Marquette University School of Medicine Alumni Association (1925-1968), the Marquette Medical Alumni Association (1968-1971) and since 1971, the Medical College of Wisconsin/Marquette Medical Alumni Association, the association has served more than 25,000 graduates of the schools of medicine, graduate studies and pharmacy (as well as residents, clinical fellows and postdoctoral fellows), and is dedicated to facilitating the lifetime connection of alumni and students with MCW and each other.

In this cover story we celebrate not only the association's 100 years of impact but also how it is charting a bold path forward to ensure that alumni remain at the heart of MCW's mission well into the future.

*Note that much about the particular workings of the Alumni Association from its founding in 1925 through the early 1990s has not been well documented and is sparse in nature. Thus, the authors are grateful for historical information shared in the works of Norman Engbring, MD '51, in *An Anchor for the Future: A History of the Medical College of Wisconsin, 1893-1990*; and Richard (Dick) Katschke in *Knowledge Changing Life: A History of the Medical College of Wisconsin, 1893-2019*.*

The Early Years

The formation of the Alumni Association featured prominently on the cover of the *Marquette Tribune* (continuously produced by Marquette University students since 1916) on November 12, 1925, under the headline of "MEDICAL ALUMNI ORGANIZE; PLAN NEW HOSPITAL." (See newspaper clip on facing page.) Note that newspaper accounts quoted below and throughout are as previously published.

During Homecoming the medical alumni of Marquette University held a special organization meeting, preceded by a dinner, at the University club, at which time articles of incorporation, a constitution and by-laws were drawn up and accepted.

Dr. Walter M. Kearns, and Dr. Joseph P. McMahon, Milwaukee, elected for three years; Dr. A. L. Curtin, Milwaukee and Dr. George T. Hegner, Appleton, for two years; Dr. A. Fiedler, Sheboygan and

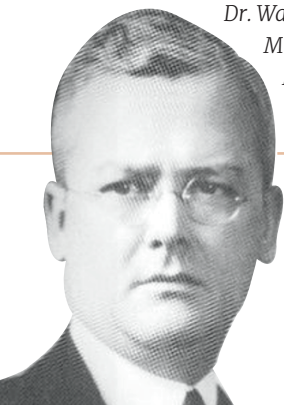
Joseph P. McMahon, MD (Class of 1903), director of obstetrics and gynecology, 1913-1915, and first president of the Marquette Medical Alumni Association

Dr. Ernest G. Welke, Madison, one year. The seventh member of the board is to be appointed annually by the president of the Medical Alumni association. The Rev. Charles B. Moulinier, S.J., head of the present Marquette Hospital College, was elected the first honorary member of the new organization.

Funds for the erection of a new Marquette University hospital, and school of medicine to cost \$1,500,000 will be sought by popular subscription within a year, the Rev. Albert C. Fox, S.J., president of Marquette told members of the alumni association.

According to Dr. Engbring (who served as professor of medicine and senior associate dean of graduate medical education at MCW, founder of the residency program and MCW's first archivist) in *An Anchor for the Future*, published in 1991:

Although some of the medical alumni were active members of the Marquette University Alumni Association, they were part of a distinct group that needed its own identity . . . Development of an enthusiastic alumni association was not easy. Many alumni of the old medical schools refused to accept Marquette as their alma mater and remained



Financial Support from Alumni

In 1936, members of the Class of 1916 participated in Commencement ceremonies as they celebrated the 20th anniversary of their graduation. When the medical school students had graduated in 1916, each took out a \$250 insurance policy naming the medical school as beneficiary. The policies matured in 1936 and the class presented the money to the medical school at the Commencement ceremony.

From 1949–1954, the Alumni Association, under the leadership of president “Uncle” Max Fox, MD (Class of 1922), was a major contributor to more than \$575,000 raised to build the Carey Memorial Library, expand laboratory facilities to promote research, and recruit additional full-time faculty members, particularly for clinical departments. According to Dr. Engbring, “Uncle Max was an intensely loyal alumnus who was not reluctant to point out the obligations of alumni toward their alma mater.” (Dr. Fox was the great-great uncle of current MCW trustee Linda Gorens-Levey.)

In 1955, the alumni established a Student Emergency Loan Fund with a donation of \$1,000 to provide small, short-term loans. The fund is still in existence.

Between July–August 1969, the Alumni Association raised \$150,000 to help support ongoing operating expenses for the medical school during a period of extreme financial challenges.

In 1976, the Women’s Auxiliary of the Medical College of Wisconsin, formed in 1969 to raise funds for student scholarships, joined with the Alumni Association to host an inaugural benefit concert that over the years attracted top performers such as Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, John Davidson, Chita Rivera and Bob Newhart as well as a performance of the Neil Simon musical comedy, *They’re Playing Our Song*. The organization dropped the word “women” from its name in 1977 and opened its membership to men. These events helped to raise \$25,000 to \$30,000 each year.

Alumni Association Name Changes

In December 1968, with the separation of the medical school from Marquette University, the Alumni Association removed the “University” from its name and became the Marquette Medical Alumni Association. The new name remained in place until May 1971, when the entity became the Marquette/Medical College of Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association. In 1989, the association’s name was changed to the Medical College of Wisconsin/Marquette Medical Alumni Association to reflect that more alumni had graduated from MCW than from any of its predecessor institutions.

Inaugural Alumni Association Awards

Beginning almost 60 years ago, the Alumni Association began the tradition of bestowing annual awards to worthy graduates and supporters of the institution.

In 1967, Joseph King, MD (Class of 1921), received the inaugural *Alumnus/Alumna of the Year* award. Dr. King was the long-time director of surgery for Milwaukee County General Surgery.

In 1969, the association awarded its inaugural *Honorary Alumnus/Alumna* awards to Walter Blount, MD, and Louis Quarles. Dr. Blount was chair of the department of orthopaedic surgery from 1957–1967 and co-inventor of the Milwaukee Brace, the gold standard treatment device worldwide for the treatment of scoliosis. Quarles was the first president of the Marquette School of Medicine, and later, MCW.

In 1992, the association awarded its inaugural *Distinguished Service* awards. The recipients were George Korkos, MD ’69; William Listwan, MD ’68, GME ’74; and Sanbo Sakaguchi, MD ’43. All three have been and continue to be major donors to MCW, and Dr. Listwan served as an MCW trustee from 2002–2005.

In 2005, the inaugural *Humanitarian* awards were bestowed on Brother Jerry Galloway, MD ’65, GME ’70; and George Schneider, MD ’70. From 1974–1977, Dr. Galloway worked for the Peace Corps in the Congo and returned there in 1980 to work with the pygmies. Dr. Schneider was the medical director of the Greater Milwaukee Free Clinic.



(at left) Derward Lepley, Jr., MD ’49, receives the Alumnus of the Year Award in 1971 from Paul Dudenhoefer, MD ’51, president of the Alumni Association.





In 2012, Daniel McDermott, PhD '69, received the inaugural *Graduate School Alumnus/Alumna of the Year* award.

In 2025, William Krombholz, PharmD '20, received the inaugural *Pharmacy School Alumnus/Alumna of the Year* award (see page 23).

Current annual awards are: *Distinguished Service Award*; *Graduate School Alumnus/Alumna of the Year*; *Honorary Alumnus/Alumna of the Year*; *Humanitarian Award*; *Medical School Alumnus/Alumna of the Year*; and *Pharmacy School Alumnus/Alumna of the Year*.

Alumni Relations Office Created

According to Katschke, MCW leaders began the 1990s determined to repair the institution's fractured relationship with alumni. Many of MCW's older alumni had received their undergraduate degrees from Marquette University and felt disenfranchised when the medical school was separated from Marquette in 1967. They were unhappy in 1970 when the medical school's board renamed the institution without their input.

At the time, an independent Alumni Association existed with its own administrator. The organization was supported by dues-paying members, primarily older alumni who had graduated from the Marquette University School of Medicine.

After assuming the presidency of MCW in 1990, T. Michael Bolger, JD, bought out the association's administrator and made the Alumni Association a non-dues-paying organization. He then created an alumni relations office in August 1991. Jude Kaufmann was hired as MCW's first alumni relations director and also served as executive director of the Alumni Association. She left MCW in 1992 and was succeeded in 1994 by William (Bill) Schultz.

Under Schultz's leadership, two major changes were made. In January 1996, the association discontinued the requirement of annual membership dues; all MCW medical school alumni automatically became members of the Alumni Association. In May 1996, the association opened its membership to non-MD alumni of MCW including MA, MS, MPH and PhD alumni.

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Current Alumni Association Support for MCW and Our Students

- Alumni Association Scholarship
- Student/Alumni Committee for the quarterly Alumni Association Board meetings
- Annual Alumni Association Awards
- Monthly Alumni eNewsletter
- Admissions Committee representative
- Financial support of specialty receptions at annual conferences
- Orientation Week Activities: provide swag and information on our support for students
- Alumni Engagement and Student Mentorship
- Symposium for Senior Physicians
- Engage – online mentorship platform
- Financial support for student research awards
- Graduate School Research Day and Poster Contest
- Physician Scientist Pathway Student Research Competition
- Hoops for Hunger support
- Events and Opportunities
- Operation: Education
- Reunions

(l-r) Emily Gessner and Becca Snow give out Alumni Association mugs to students on Match Day 2023.



During Operation: Education in April 2021, 100 MCW medical students engaged with 30 alumni from graduation years 1968-2019, representing 17 specialty/research areas and 13 states.



Q&A with Alumni Association Presidents



In honor of the 100th anniversary the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association, three Alumni Association presidents gathered for a question-and-answer session with Tony Perez, executive director of the Alumni Association. Some of the answers below were edited for length.



Cynthia A. Bauer,
MD '74, GME '75
(2003-2004)^a



Mark Bosbous,
MD '05, GME '11
(2025-Present)



William J. Listwan,
MD '68, GME '74
(1999-2000)

What did your involvement with the Alumni Association mean to you?

Dr. Bauer: My involvement with the Alumni Association has expanded my alumni contacts. We tend to be very close to our classmates, but through the Alumni Association's various activities and events, my alumni contacts have expanded well beyond my classmates to so many other alumni. What a wonderful group to belong to!

Dr. Bosbous: My involvement in the Alumni Association has been a unique honor that has kept me connected to MCW and given me the opportunity to serve my fellow alumni, but also connect with current students and help mentor the next generation of providers. It has kept me connected and allowed me the opportunity to serve an institution that has done so much for me personally and professionally.

Dr. Listwan: I was initially drawn to the organization because of the CME events that they coupled with golf outings in warmer climates during the wintertime. But the main reason I got involved was because I've always been grateful for the medical education I received and felt that this was a great way to remain involved with the institution.

What was your most meaningful memory from serving on the association's Board of Directors?

Dr. Bauer: My most meaningful memory was to watch the continuing evolution of our medical school's curriculum, always targeting an improved approach to educating and developing the complete, competent physician.

Dr. Bosbous: Some of my fondest memories are the connections you make with alumni from different generations and locations across the country. It gives you such great perspective of the reach that MCW truly has. I have also enjoyed participating in the graduation ceremonies of a variety of different disciplines at MCW,

wishing the next generation well on their careers. The honor of being asked to join the board and eventually be the president of the Alumni Association also stands out. The opportunity to help lead such a great organization and be active in the MCW community in that capacity was such an honor.

Dr. Listwan: The thing that sticks with me most is the work that Mike Bolger put into transitioning the Alumni Association from a separate and independent group to one that was more closely tied to MCW. A lot of back-and-forth happened between Bolger and the organization's leaders at the time about finances, staffing and other things. I'm amazed that Mike Bolger was able to accomplish what he did. But in the end, everybody seemed happy, and it certainly seems to have worked out well.

What aspirations do you have for the future of the Alumni Association?

Dr. Bauer: Hopefully the association will continue to provide opportunities to connect with classmates and alumni from other classes. The connection is so important for us personally and for our three schools. Social gatherings and educational programs continue to provide these opportunities and could be expanded in the future.

Dr. Bosbous: My hope for the association is that we continue to grow as a group, both reconnecting with alumni that may not have thought about or interacted with MCW in some time, and also growing our association because MCW is now training pharmacy graduates and a variety of graduate studies programs. It's only through building a strong base that we will be able to support MCW moving forward.

Dr. Listwan: To keep doing what they are doing well. The annual reunions and opportunities for alumni to connect with us and with each other is important, so we should look to continue and even expand upon those.



Schultz was promoted to executive director of alumni relations in 1996. “I have wonderful memories of working with such amazing alumni, especially running the Alumni Clinical Conference, Symposium for Senior Physicians and Reunion Weekends,” Schultz recalls.

In 1998, Kathleen Hargarten, MD ’82, GME ’85, an emergency medicine physician in Watertown, Wis., became the first woman to serve as president of the Alumni Association.

In 2000, the Geenen Family – including Joseph Geenen, MD ’60, GME ’65, FEL ’67; Sarah Geenen Joerres, MD ’87; and Daniel Geenen, MD ’89 – made a substantial gift to support the Alumni Relations Office in honor of the 40th anniversary of the graduation of Dr. Joseph Geenen from the Marquette University School of Medicine.

Seth Flynn served as executive director of the Alumni Association and executive director of alumni relations from September 2015 through February 2019.

Angela Nelson was named executive director of the Alumni Association in January 2020. She formerly served as senior director of development and alumni giving at MCW. Nelson retired in June 2024. “It was very rewarding to work with alumni to impact areas they care deeply about and to help them create lasting legacies through their incredible generosity to MCW’s education programs, research, department initiatives and community engagement programs,” Nelson shares.

Anthony (Tony) Perez, MSED, served as interim director of the Alumni Association from February 2019 to March 2020 and was appointed to his current position as executive director of the Alumni Association, effective October 1, 2024. Perez joined MCW in 2015 and has served in leadership positions responsible for student recruiting, enrollment marketing and enhancing overall awareness of MCW. As a key leader in efforts to attract students to apply to the MCW Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Graduate Studies, he has an extensive background in organizational culture, budgeting and educational marketing.

In addition to Perez, the office of alumni relations includes Emily Gessner, associate director; and Becca Snow, program coordinator.

The Future of Alumni Relations at MCW

“The centennial is a time to both reflect on the past and an opportunity to look ahead, as alumni engagement is shifting from primarily reunions and milestone events to a lifelong, two-way relationship model. Our future efforts will be more strategic, data-informed, inclusive and integrated with MCW’s broader goals,” Perez says.

Some key future priorities include:

Strengthen Connectivity: Ensure that alumni feel informed, involved and valued by MCW, with a focus on strengthening relationships with each other as well other areas with which they have affinity (e.g., student groups, academic programs, schools).

Expand Giving: Create and promote meaningful opportunities for alumni to give back their time, talent and resources to support MCW’s mission – ensuring that every alum can contribute.

Increase Presence: Meet alumni where they are, whether at professional conferences, in their local communities or through regional and virtual events that bring together alumni from all backgrounds.

Modernize Communications: Broaden and personalize outreach to alumni with an emphasis on two-way communication that allows them to share their voices.

Perez envisions that this enhanced engagement with alumni will result in a number of significant outcomes. Alumni will serve as co-creators on advisory panels and focus groups and mentor students. Alumni engagement will be measured both through numbers and quantity of connections, underscored by more personalized experiences to meet alumni where they are geographically, professionally and personally. Ties will strengthen between engagement and philanthropy as alumni see the direct impact of their support.

“We are building a culture in which alumni involvement is part of MCW’s everyday identity,” Perez adds. ■

