

# MICW

*magazine*



**Our Economic Impact  
on Wisconsin (and Beyond)**

# MCW

magazine

**MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP**

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**LEADERSHIP MESSAGE**

## MCW's Impact is Far-Reaching

Throughout its more than 130-year history, MCW has been a cornerstone institution in the region and the state – creating new knowledge that has continued to change lives through training the next generation of physicians, scientists and other healthcare professionals, through biomedical research, clinical excellence, specialty expertise and transformative clinical breakthroughs, and through bidirectional interaction with our communities.

As importantly, MCW generates substantial economic and social impact throughout Wisconsin and beyond. To that end, our institution has grown to become a workforce magnet for the entire state – most recently supporting thousands of jobs and generating billions of dollars in total economic impact statewide. The cover story in this issue provides an excellent overview of this widespread impact (generated during MCW's fiscal year 2023), based on a comprehensive report published in 2024 by the highly regarded private consulting firm Tripp Umbach.

The report, titled *The Economic and Community Impacts of MCW*, measured the effect of direct, indirect and induced economic, employment and state and local tax impacts for MCW operations. According to Tripp Umbach, MCW generated \$2.7 billion in total economic impact on Wisconsin in fiscal year 2023 and supported more than 19,350 jobs statewide. And when adding the contributions of our faculty through our hospital partners (Froedtert ThedaCare Health, Children's Wisconsin and the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center), our combined direct operational economic impact on the US economy in fiscal year 2023 totaled more than \$5.8 billion.

The report clearly demonstrates that MCW is not only an impactful academic and research institution, but also an economic driver and force beyond our state and into the nation. It also underscores our belief in being a transformational leader for healthier communities and a more vibrant economy in which individuals and families can flourish. (See the cover story on pages 14-19.)

In late January, I announced that after fourteen and one-half years of leadership, it was time for me to prepare for my transition from my executive leadership roles – which I plan to do on or about June 30, 2026. I will then commit my time to MCW as a member of the faculty. I will continue to focus my remaining time as president and CEO on strengthening our partnerships and ensuring a smooth and stable transition of leadership, and will continue to work toward opening new doors of opportunity for MCW. (See page 4.)

I am pleased to welcome two of our long-term faculty members to new interim executive roles as of January 1, 2025: Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, as interim provost; and Deborah M. Costakos, MD '98, MS, as interim dean of the MCW School of Medicine. (See pages 8-9.)

On page 12, we share a tribute to Lisa Grill Dodson, MD, Sentry Dean and founding dean of MCW-Central Wisconsin, who will step down from her executive leadership role on June 30 after almost 11 years of valuable service to our institution.

As always, I remain grateful to our countless alumni, donors and friends for their ongoing dedication to MCW and to the health and safety of our patients, families, loved ones and communities. ■

“... MCW is not only an impactful academic and research institution, but also an economic driver and force beyond our state and into the nation.”



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

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

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS: Dr. Andrew Abbott, Alex Boyes, Amanda Evans, Jennifer Foley, Emily Gessner, the Lange Family, Dr. Stacy Reid, Dale Reince, Jay Westhauser

**ON THE COVER:** As a private institution committed to its public mission, MCW generates substantial economic and social impact throughout Wisconsin and beyond. MCW is a workforce magnet for the entire state, and in fiscal year 2023, the institution supported thousands of jobs statewide and generated billions in total economic impact on Wisconsin. (See cover story on pages 14-19.) (Cover design by Julia Alberts.)

# STAT REPORT

## Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr., Preparing for Transition from Leadership Role in 2026

On January 28, 2025, John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, president and chief executive officer of the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and professor of medicine (nephrology), announced that after fourteen and one-half years of leadership to the institution, it was time for him to prepare for his transition from his executive leadership roles, which he plans to do on or about June 30, 2026. Dr. Raymond will then commit his time to MCW as a member of the faculty.

“After thoughtful consideration, I am making this announcement now to ensure a seamless leadership transition,” said Dr. Raymond. “My years of leadership at MCW have given me tremendous fulfillment, and I am deeply grateful for the trust, support and collaboration that I have enjoyed throughout my tenure here. I look forward to achieving our strategic priorities and supporting the transition. I will focus my remaining time as president and CEO on strengthening our partnerships and ensuring a smooth and stable transition of leadership, and will continue to work toward opening new doors of opportunity for MCW.”

Elizabeth (Betsy) Brenner, chair of the MCW board of trustees, shared that “MCW is thriving and well-positioned for continued success and sustainability, reflecting Dr. Raymond’s excellent stewardship and visionary leadership. His deep-seated and unwavering belief in health for all has been a hallmark of his tenure at the helm of MCW. His leadership and dedication have helped to further strengthen and elevate the institution’s reputation throughout the region and state, and around the globe.”

“Additionally, Dr. Raymond’s recognition as an influential executive leader in advancing health, new knowledge and business innovation underscores the esteem in which he is held across a broad range of stakeholders,” Brenner added.

The theme of Dr. Raymond’s installation speech as MCW president and CEO in 2010 was “Strength Through Collaboration,” a theme which has coursed throughout his leadership tenure. His commitment to strengthening MCW’s collaborative efforts has been critical to the institution’s numerous successes.

Dr. Raymond’s significant impact to our communities since he joined MCW on July 1, 2010, include:

**Growth:** doubling top-line revenue to \$1.6 billion; doubling research expenditures to \$336.8 million; tripling the number of annual patient visits to 4.8 million; creating novel regional medical school campuses in Green Bay and Central Wisconsin and a School of Pharmacy; driving effective philanthropic support totaling more than \$700 million to date, an increase of more than 400 percent.

**Innovation:** advancing MCW as a health sciences university, national education innovator and clinical trials leader.

**Collaboration:** expanding relationships with MCW’s health system partners (Froedtert ThedaCare Health, Children’s Wisconsin, the Zablocki VA Medical Center, Versiti); leading a collaborative vision for the construction of the Forensic Science and Protective Medicine Facility on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus.

**Addressing gaps and needs in healthcare:** implementing a generational vision for the ThriveOn Collaboration and ThriveOn King; implementing a novel vision for regional medical school campuses to address the shortage and maldistribution of physicians; creating new rural psychiatry residency programs and new family and community medicine residency programs.

**Leadership response to COVID-19:** serving as Wisconsin’s trusted health leader during the pandemic, for which he was named “Executive of the Year” in 2020 and “Health Care Leader of the Year” in 2021 by the *Milwaukee Business Journal*.

As the end of his tenure as president and CEO of MCW draws near, the institution will share his accomplishments in more detail as well as plan for a celebratory tribute in his honor. ■



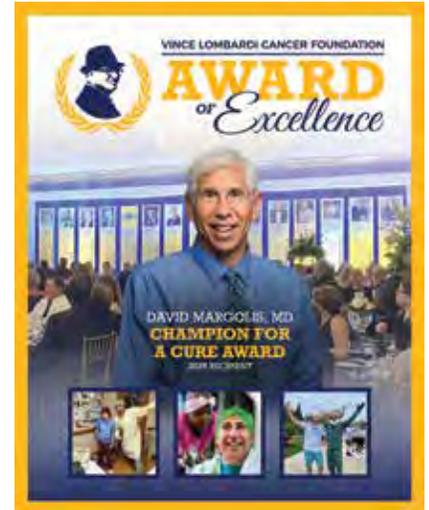
## Dr. David Margolis Named First Recipient of the *Champion for a Cure Award*

**D**avid A. Margolis, MD, GME '92, FEL '95, professor and chair of pediatrics at MCW and pediatrician-in-chief, the Barri L. and David J. Drury Chair in Pediatrics and the David A. Margolis Chair in Pediatric BMT at Children's Wisconsin, is the inaugural recipient of the *Champion for a Cure Award* from the Vince Lombardi Cancer Foundation.

The award honors Milwaukee-area leaders who embody former Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi's spirit of commitment and excellence in the fight against cancer. Dr. Margolis's exceptional contributions to cancer research and patient care through his work with MCW and Children's was honored at the Vince Lombardi Award of Excellence Dinner on March 1, 2025.

The special evening also featured the presentation of the 34<sup>th</sup> *Vince Lombardi Award of Excellence* to Packers legend Mason Crosby and his wife, cancer survivor Molly Crosby.

Dr. Margolis, or "Dr. Dave" as his patients call him, has been published in leading medical journals, and his compassionate care has earned him recognition as one of the Best Doctors in America and *Milwaukee Magazine's* Top Doctors. Dr. Dave is a self-proclaimed Milwaukee Bucks superfan and has even let his patients spray paint his hair the color of Bucks green on several occasions (see center inset at right). ■



## MSA Program Celebrates Graduation of 17 New CAAs



**M**CW's master of science in anesthesia (MSA) program celebrated the graduation of its seventh class of students on December 13, 2024. Following 28 months of rigorous study, these 17 newly minted certified anesthesiologist assistants (CAAs) will work under the direction of leading physician anesthesiologists throughout the country as a critical part of the anesthesia care team.

M. Tracy Zundel, MD '09, associate professor of anesthesiology and critical care medicine at MCW, served as the MSA Commencement keynote speaker. Dr. Zundel also serves as an associate

program director for the core anesthesiology residency program and as an MD program director for MCW's critical care APP fellowship.

MCW's MSA program, which launched in August 2016 with 12 students, is the first in the state and one of only 21 nationwide to train anesthesiologist assistants; 107 CAAs have graduated to date. The MSA's White Coat Ceremony for the ninth cohort of 18 new students was held in September 2024. The program will enroll 20 students to matriculate in September 2025, marking the largest entering class in the MSA program's history. ■

# NEWS

## FOR ALUMNI



## MCW Magazine Shares Stories Worth Telling

Every issue of *MCW Magazine* showcases the impact of our institution and its alumni.

– Dr. Thomas Palmer

As this season began, I found myself paging through past issues of *MCW Magazine*, reflecting on the incredible stories of our students, faculty, alumni and community partners. Some articles I had missed when they first arrived, while others felt new again – their details refreshed in my memory.

What remained constant, though, was the pride and admiration I felt for this institution and its people. Thanks to the talent and dedication of our *MCW Magazine* team (led by executive editor Sara L. Wilkins), the story of MCW continues to be told in a way that informs, inspires and connects us all.

### A Story Worth Telling

Every issue of *MCW Magazine* showcases the impact of our institution and its alumni. Whether highlighting the journeys of medical, pharmacy and graduate students; the groundbreaking research of faculty; or the evolution of medical education through the MCWfusion™ Curriculum, these stories remind us why MCW holds such a special place in our lives.

I always appreciate seeing updates from fellow alumni. Your achievements, insights and contributions are an essential part of the MCW story. Engaging programs like Coffee Conversations with Scientists and CTSI Discovery Radio, as well as stories and videos on *mcw.edu*, have also become powerful ways to share research breakthroughs and amplify the voices of our faculty and alumni.

As someone now living in Central Wisconsin, I find the coverage of MCW's regional campuses especially meaningful. The feature on rural, community-based

medical education captured the spirit of MCW's efforts to expand access to care in underserved areas. My wife and I recently had the pleasure of touring MCW-Central Wisconsin and meeting with founding dean, Dr. Lisa Grill Dodson – an experience that reinforced just how vital alumni involvement is in shaping the future of medicine. (See a tribute to Dr. Dodson on page 12 of this issue.)

And, of course, *MCW Magazine* continually reminds us of the profound impact of philanthropy. The stories of generous donors investing in student scholarships and institutional growth highlight the power of giving and the responsibility we share in supporting the next generation of healthcare leaders.

### Looking Ahead

At our most recent MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Board Meeting, we discussed the future of *MCW Magazine*: Should it remain a printed publication, transition to digital or perhaps become a blend of both? While formats may evolve, one thing is clear: preserving and sharing the MCW story is essential to engaging alumni and strengthening our lifelong connection to this institution.

The MCW Alumni Association remains dedicated to fostering these connections – between alumni, with students and with MCW itself. Your involvement, your stories and your support ensure that MCW's legacy continues to grow.

Thank you for all you do to carry forward the mission and spirit of MCW! ■

## Note from the Executive Editor

Several alumni in the two Class Reunion photos below, taken during Alumni Weekend in September 2024, were misidentified in the Fall/Annual Report 2024 issue of *MCW Magazine*. Their names have been corrected and the photos rerun in this issue. We regret the error and appreciate those alumni who reached out to inform us.



◀ FRONT ROW (l-r): James Zellmer, MD;  
James McCabe, MD; Wendelin Schaefer, MD

BACK ROW (l-r): John Manning, MD;  
John Nachazel, MD; John Walsh, MD;  
Vincent Banker, MD;  
Anthony Stephen Woo, Jr., MD

▶ FRONT ROW (l-r):  
Shannon Muderlak, MD;  
Sukhjit Takhar, MD;  
Renee Koronkowski, MD

ROW TWO (l-r):  
Vinona Bhatia, MD;  
Stephanie Drobac, MD;  
Tiffany Mork, MD;  
Molly Martin, MD;  
Deborah Bernstein, MD;  
Nancy Havas, MD;  
Jennifer Weisgerber, MD;  
Michael Weisgerber, MD;  
Greg Orshansky, MD;  
Brian Koch, MD;  
Shannon Garton, MD;  
Sunny Malik, MD;  
Blaine Warkentine, MD

BACK ROW (l-r):  
Gregory Gramstad, MD;  
Matthew Taylor, MD;  
Kristian Novakovic, MD;  
Rhett Silver, MD;  
Stacey Halum, MD



CLASS OF 1999 -25th REUNION

# Dr. Cheryl Maurana Begins New Role as Interim Provost



Dr. Cheryl Maurana

*" I aspire to leadership qualities such as integrity, intellectual humility, transparency and practical wisdom. "*

Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, Stephen and Shelagh Roell Endowed Chair, professor of bioethics and medical humanities, founding director of the Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN), and senior vice president for strategic academic partnerships, assumed the additional role of MCW's interim provost on January 1, 2025.

As interim provost, Dr. Maurana serves as the principal academic officer of the institution and is responsible for the development, administration and execution of the academic and professional programs of MCW, and the education and welfare of MCW's learners. The deans of the MCW School of Pharmacy and School of Graduate Studies, and the director of the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW), report directly to Dr. Maurana.

Dr. Maurana maintains her roles as senior vice president, KNN founding director and director of the MCW Flourishing in the Health Professions Initiative.

Since joining MCW in 1995, Dr. Maurana has been responsible for expanding MCW's inter-institutional academic efforts and fostering collaboration among existing and new partners. She provided collaborative leadership for the development of MCW's regional medical education campuses and the creation of the MCW School of Pharmacy, launched the PhD program in public and community health, and served as first senior associate dean for public and community health, founding director of the Institute for Health and Society (now the Institute for Health & Equity), and founding director of AHW.

Dr. Maurana recently sat down for a question-and-answer session with the executive editor of *MCW Magazine* to reflect on her critical new leadership role.

## *What is your approach to leadership?*

My leadership style emphasizes collaborative servant leadership, prioritizing the needs and goals of our institution while fostering open inquiry, respect and inclusivity. I aspire to

leadership qualities such as integrity, intellectual humility, transparency and practical wisdom.

## *What are your top goals in your new interim role?*

One of my top goals is to assure continuity and stability as well as a smooth transition and attention to current institutional priorities. I also will emphasize Dr. John Raymond's key points of positivity, partnership and growth as a lens through which to view our work. And I look forward to exploring MCW's future evolution and identity as a health sciences university.

## *What are your top priorities in your new interim role?*

A top priority relates to exploring MCW's evolution and identity as an institution. Toward that end, I will lead the creation of an institution-wide task force. This process, already underway, involves engaging the MCW community, reviewing best practices and developing thoughtful options for consideration. I will work with colleagues to explore the idea of a vibrant academic life, one that contributes to individual and collective flourishing.

## *What do you see as your top challenges in your new interim role?*

One challenge in this work will be preserving our fundamental academic mission, character and values while strategically adapting to meet the increasing challenges in healthcare. In addition, there are many practical considerations for health sciences universities, such as the upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation, funding, resource allocation, branding and identity.

## *What is one thing about you that others might not know?*

I love libraries and visit as many as I can when traveling. One of my favorites is the New York Public Library with its two lions, Patience and Fortitude, who stand guard at the entrance. ■

– SARA L. WILKINS

# Dr. Deborah Costakos Begins New Role as Interim Dean, School of Medicine

**D**eborah M. Costakos, MD '98, MS, professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences and former chair of the department, began her new role as interim dean of the MCW School of Medicine on January 1, 2025. Dr. Costakos succeeds Joseph E. Kerschner, MD '90, FEL '98, who was named dean emeritus of the School of Medicine as of January 1.

As interim dean of the School of Medicine (SOM), Dr. Costakos is responsible for the conduct and advancement of the programs of the SOM; maintaining the highest standards of excellence in the academic affairs of the SOM; fostering competitive biomedical research programs; and ensuring high-quality patient care and engagement of communities to advance health for all.

Dr. Costakos serves as the chief administrative and academic officer of the SOM and will oversee the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation. She will recommend primary or secondary faculty appointments for individuals requesting appointments in the SOM and will recommend appointments and reappointments to a named or endowed chair/professorship.

Additionally, Dr. Costakos oversees MCW's senior associate deans, clinical and basic science department chairs, institute and center directors, and the deans of MCW's regional campuses in Central Wisconsin and Green Bay.

Dr. Costakos received her MD from MCW in 1998. Following completion of her ophthalmology residency and fellowship in pediatric ophthalmology, she entered private practice. Dr. Costakos joined MCW in 2009 and served as chair of the department of ophthalmology and visual sciences from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024, following 11 months in the interim chair role.

Dr. Costakos recently sat down for a question-and-answer session with the executive editor of *MCW Magazine* to reflect on her critical new leadership role.

## What is your approach to leadership?

I consider myself to be a servant leader, an institutionalist and a realistic optimist.

## What are your top goals in your new interim role?

Among my top goals is to ensure a smooth transition as interim dean of the School of Medicine during a time of transition, so that the incoming leadership can execute on the vision for which they are hired. I also want to provide a stabilizing force for students, staff and faculty during the period of transition.

## What are your top priorities in your new interim role?

Most importantly, I will endeavor to work with key stakeholders to cultivate a collaborative and more transparent relationship with our Froedtert Hospital partner leaders to develop teams that can effectively align our missions to benefit both entities; expand our research strategic plan; support ongoing grant submissions; and ensure the success of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation grant submission and site visit.

I will also work to ensure educational progression and LCME certification for all stages of medical education; interface with donors, support philanthropic efforts and engage the southeastern Wisconsin community in the future of MCW; and continue to support and promote the execution of excellent clinical care for all patients at Froedtert Hospital and Children's Wisconsin.

## What do you see as your top challenges in your new interim role?

My top challenges include successfully navigating critical relationships with our health system partners and meeting the goals associated with MCW's four missions at a time of increasing restraints on resources.

## What is one thing about you that others might not know?

I am an open book, and if there is something you don't know about me, it is probably a good thing! But you may not know that I love ethnic food – the spicier, the better! ■

– SARA L. WILKINS



Dr. Deborah Costakos

*“ I consider myself to be a servant leader, an institutionalist and a realistic optimist. ”*

# School of Pharmacy Offers First International Clinical Rotation

**T**he MCW School of Pharmacy has added a new experiential education opportunity for students interested in reducing global health inequities.

Established in fall 2024, the international Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) is offered in collaboration with Refuge International, which organizes medical volunteer trips in Guatemala. The nonprofit focuses on bridging healthcare gaps in rural communities, especially for indigenous people with limited access to medical care.

Adam Crouse, a 2025 PharmD candidate, was the first MCW pharmacy student to participate in an international APPE rotation. He traveled with Stacy Reid, PharmD, BCPS, MCW assistant dean of experiential education and assistant professor, to San Raymundo, Guatemala, in October 2024. Residents in this remote region face limited healthcare access and common health issues such as malnutrition, infectious diseases, limited maternal care and language barriers (for those who speak Spanish or the local Mayan dialect).

This was Dr. Reid’s third international medical volunteer trip. Her first trip was

to Belize as a pharmacy student in 2015; the other two trips were with Refuge International in Guatemala as a practicing pharmacist in 2022 and 2023.

“Participating in an international rotation when I was a pharmacy student helped me develop an appreciation for getting out of my comfort zone, working collaboratively and problem solving,” recalls Dr. Reid. “I advocated for current and future students at MCW to engage in this opportunity because I know it will be memorable and hopefully give them a new perspective on patient care.” Dr. Reid acknowledges that MCW’s Office of Global Health supports her efforts to organize the rotation for third-year PharmD students.

Refuge International operates out of the community-owned hospital (named “Llano de la Virgen”) in San Raymundo. The patient pays two dollars for any services they may need, which goes toward upkeep of the hospital (not to Refuge International). If a patient cannot pay this fee, however, they will not be turned away. The pharmacy is a patient’s last stop before leaving the building following a clinic appointment or surgery.

“This was an incredible immersive educational experience,” says Crouse. “It



*MCW pharmacy student Adam Crouse prepares a prescription in the pharmacy within the community-owned hospital in rural San Raymundo, Guatemala.*

brought to life so many patient care lessons about resource-limited environments that we discuss in theory but rarely see firsthand.”

Crouse was responsible for managing medication distribution and overseeing a limited medication inventory. For example, he carefully prioritized antibiotics with limited access to certain classes and, in some cases, specific formulations.

The pharmacy team (comprising Dr. Reid and Crouse as volunteers, plus translators who were native Guatemalans) had to balance the effectiveness of the available options with the severity of each patient’s condition and think creatively about substitutions when a preferred medication was not available.

Crouse also gained interprofessional experience working with physicians on medication management and with medical interpreters to ensure that patients understood their respective diagnoses and treatment plans.

Refuge International recently implemented an electronic medical record (EMR) system at the clinic to track patient histories and to provide a continuity of care that is rare in rural healthcare. The organization hopes to incorporate the pharmacy and operating room into the EMR system in the future.

“Working with Refuge International, volunteers experience healthcare delivery in challenging settings, helping them gain unique skills and a deeper appreciation for the impact they can have on a global scale,” Crouse notes. “For me, this experience emphasized the critical need for affordable access to essential medications and reinforced my commitment to addressing healthcare inequities.” ■

– MELISSA BEHLING



*(l to r) Alex Morales (Guatemalan director), Adam Crouse, Dr. Stacy Reid, and pharmacy translators.*

# Preparing Ethical Leaders in Healthcare

**H**ow should scarce medical resources be allocated? When do the risks of medical intervention outweigh the benefits? What is the role of artificial intelligence in healthcare? The master of arts (MA) in bioethics program in MCW's School of Graduate Studies prepares students to explore these questions and to navigate the evolving ethical challenges in healthcare.

Established in 1992, it is one of the longest-standing graduate bioethics programs in the nation and, as a trailblazer, pioneered an online program in 1999 to expand access for working professionals and distance learners. Designed for midcareer professionals – including physicians, nurses and lawyers – who want to deepen their expertise in ethical decision-making, the program's curriculum is structured to progress from philosophical grounding to clinical applications to legal and policy considerations.

“We are committed to keeping the roots of bioethics in the humanities,” explains Fabrice Jotterand, PhD, MA, director of the MCW graduate program in bioethics and professor of bioethics and medical humanities. “We want our students to have a grounding in different ethical theories and to understand that there are different perspectives on these questions. We want our students also to understand how to apply these theories in the clinical context.”

The program encourages hands-on clinical bioethics experience such as participating in clinical ethics consultations or serving on an ethics committee. To cap off their studies, students work with MCW faculty mentors to complete a thesis or publishable research paper. The program boasts an alumni network of more than 170 graduates who have become bioethicists, clinical ethics consultants, bioethics policymakers and even authors and law professors. To that end, the program partners with the Marquette University Law School to offer a JD/MA dual degree, as the intersection of bioethics and health law has become an increasingly popular path.

The MA in bioethics forms part of the education arm of MCW's Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities, founded in 1982 as one of the first bioethics centers in the US. The center combines innovation in bioethics education, research, consultation and outreach with a program in medical humanities – which uses literature, social sciences and the arts to further professionalism, communication, empathy and reflection in medicine.



*The core faculty and staff of MCW's Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022. (l-r) Garson Leder, PhD; Arthur R. Derse, MD, JD, GME '83; Ryan Spellecy, PhD; Fabrice Jotterand, PhD, MA; Kristen Tym, MA; and Annie Friedrich, PhD.*

In addition to teaching, the center's faculty engage in cutting-edge research and scholarship on a broad spectrum of ethical topics in healthcare, including end-of-life care, pediatric ethics, neuroethics and genomics. Additionally, through its oversight of MCW's Responsible Conduct of Research Program, Research Ethics Consultation Service and institutional review boards, the center plays a critical role in ensuring ethical integrity in medical research.

The center provides essential clinical consultative services as well. “Several faculty from our center are trained as ethics consultants, serve on ethics committees and go to the bedside and give advice to clinicians, patients and families at Froedtert Hospital and Children's Wisconsin, among others,” notes center director Arthur Derse, MD, JD, GME '83, the Julia and David Uihlein Chair in Medical Humanities and MCW professor of bioethics and medical humanities. Faculty also have been tapped to serve on state-level committees, such as the state disaster medical advisory committee, on which Dr. Derse was part of a group tasked with prioritizing access to the COVID-19 vaccine when supply initially was scarce.

With continuous advancements in medical technology and an ever-changing public health landscape, bioethics' role in shaping patient care, guiding medical decision-making and informing public policy continues to grow. MCW's MA in bioethics program and the Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities equip healthcare professionals with the tools and expertise to lead through today's real-world ethical challenges. ■

– CAROLINE LADD

**In addition to teaching, the center's faculty engage in cutting-edge research and scholarship on a broad spectrum of ethical topics in healthcare . . .**

# Dr. Lisa Grill Dodson to Step Down From Leadership Role at MCW–Central Wisconsin



Lisa Grill Dodson, MD, Sentry Dean and founding dean of MCW–Central Wisconsin (MCW–CW), will step down from her executive leadership role on June 30, 2025, after nearly 11 years at the helm. She plans to live in Wausau, Wis., after the transition, and will remain on the faculty as a professor of family and community medicine. Following approval of the MCW board of trustees, she will be named founding dean emerita of MCW–Central Wisconsin.

Dr. Dodson loves attending community events and is thrilled to be a member of the Wausau Curling Club. These are the types of activities that have made the practice and teaching of rural medicine in remote areas so appealing to Dr. Dodson throughout her career.

“I like living in small towns where I know everyone and have the opportunity to interact with the community,” says Dr. Dodson. “It is uplifting to be surrounded by people whom I see regularly.” It was the opportunity to live in such an area and to build an academic program from scratch focused on rural medicine that led Dr. Dodson to take the role of founding dean of MCW–CW in 2014. She was named the Sentry Dean in 2019.

As founding dean, Dr. Dodson has provided overall leadership and management of MCW’s regional medical school campus in Central Wisconsin – but she is adamant that the successes the campus has experienced are the result of a team effort. “Another reason I like living in a smaller town is that the smaller the place, the more impact you can have,” she notes. “The faculty, staff and I didn’t just start a medical school – we worked to address the healthcare needs of an entire community.”

For this reason, Dr. Dodson is proud of everyone with whom she has worked. “Every person who works here could work elsewhere, but they bought into our mission. They want to train amazing doctors who can help improve the health of an incredible community,” Dr. Dodson adds.

Reflecting on her time at MCW–CW, Dr. Dodson also is proud that many of the students have returned to the area after residency. “We are seeing our graduates get their training and then come back,” she remarks. “When I first came here, people would say to me, ‘My doctor just retired. Can you recommend anyone I can see?’ At the time, I didn’t have any names. Now, I have a growing list of doctors we trained whom they can see.”

MCW–CW welcomed its first class of students in 2016, celebrated its first graduating class in 2019 and to date has graduated 113 physicians. More than 80 percent of the graduates from the earlier classes have returned to practice in rural and non-urban areas of the state – fulfilling the regional campus’s mission and filling a crucial need in northern and central Wisconsin.

Dr. Dodson says that being founding dean has had its challenges, some of which included the availability of preceptors. “When the campus opened, people in the community were not used to medical education – so some of the community doctors required coaxing to become preceptors because they hadn’t had experience teaching,” she says.

“But it all worked out. My time at MCW–Central Wisconsin has been a gift, and I can’t think of a better way to have spent the last 10 years,” Dr. Dodson muses. “I am so thankful for the community that accepted us, and for the MCW folks who hired me.” ■

– ANTHONY BRAZA



(l-r) Dr. Dodson, 2015; Dr. Dodson and Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr., at the inaugural MCW–Central Wisconsin White Coat Ceremony, 2016; Dr. Dodson with MCW–Central Wisconsin medical students Miriam Sanchez and Tommy Voss, 2024.



# Inspiring the Next Generation of Innovators in Clinical and Translational Research



*Dr. Jacquelyn Kulinski*

**J**acquelyn P. Kulinski, MD '08, an associate professor in MCW's department of medicine (cardiology) and director of the Preventive Cardiology Program, did not originally plan to become a physician scientist.

"While I was an undergraduate biomedical engineering student at Marquette University, I took part in a cooperative education program with a biomedical device company where I focused on atrial arrhythmia research, and my workplace mentor suggested I think about medical school," shares Dr. Kulinski.

Dr. Kulinski took her mentor's advice. After completing medical school at MCW and a residency and fellowship in clinical cardiology, she hoped to continue her pursuit of research knowledge and experience. Dr. Kulinski found such an opportunity at MCW as a junior faculty member through the Clinical and Translational Science Institute's (CTSI) translational workforce development program. The translational workforce development function is geared toward cultivating and training an expanded and more heterogeneous workforce that can address complex and diverse health-related problems through innovative approaches and team science.

"The department of medicine supported my participation in the CTSI certificate program, and simultaneously I participated in the CTSI clinical research scholars (CRS) program, which was essential to launching my independent research career committed to pursuing clinical research and becoming independently funded," notes Dr. Kulinski.

Dr. Kulinski completed both the certificate of clinical and translational science and the CRS programs. The CTSI masters and certificate of clinical and translational science equip candidates with training and skills for success in the expanding field of clinical and translational science, while the CRS program offers training and mentoring for junior faculty dedicated to clinical research careers.

Dr. Kulinski believes these programs were essential in helping to build her career as a clinician

scientist, and she went on to complete the CTSI KL2 mentored career development program award, which provides training opportunities for faculty working in clinical and translational research to become independent investigators. She now serves as the co-director of the CRS program.

Jennifer Knight, MD '04, MS '15, MCW professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine, aimed to become an independent investigator – a goal that motivated her to complete the CTSI masters in clinical and translational science, CRS and KL2 programs. "My goal was to be an independent investigator, which I have achieved. Now the goal is to continue to sustain a funded and productive research career. I don't think I would have gotten here without the CTSI programs," Dr. Knight shares.

Lubna N. Chaudhary, MD, FEL '15, MCW associate professor of medicine (hematology/oncology) also completed the KL2, CRS and CTSI masters programs, which she agrees are integral to her future clinical trials and grants. "These programs help with earlier pilot studies – internal small studies that can really generate the data for future trials and grants," says Dr. Chaudhary.

Anita D'Souza, MD, MCW professor of medicine (hematology/oncology), also a graduate of the KL2, CRS and CTSI masters programs, says that the programs position participants to become mentors – bringing her training full circle. "The CTSI trained me, and now I train my colleagues, with the ultimate goal that they become mentors themselves," she remarks.

Dr. D'Souza continues to encourage others to utilize the CTSI for its resources and services. "Use the CTSI, attend the talks and just start engaging," she adds.

The CTSI translational workforce development program also offers additional internship, degree programs and continuing education programs, such as the CTSI academy. For a full list of offerings, please visit <https://ctsi.mcw.edu/education>. ■

– MICHELLE SCHAEFER



*Dr. Jennifer Knight*



*Dr. Lubna Chaudhary*



*Dr. Anita D'Souza*

ALUMNI | CLINICAL | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | DISCOVERY | PHILANTHROPY | SCHOLARSHIP

# *Investment in Our Missions:* MCW's Impact is Far-Reaching



By Holly Botsford  
and Sara L. Wilkins





*A recent photo of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus, with MCW in the foreground, including the new MCW Center for Cancer Discovery under construction.*

**A**s a private institution committed to its public mission, the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) generates substantial economic and social impact throughout Wisconsin and beyond. MCW is a workforce magnet for the entire state, and in fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023), the institution supported thousands of jobs statewide and generated billions in total economic impact on Wisconsin. Direct spending by MCW on capital and operations, as well as by students, faculty and staff, generated millions in state and local taxes.

MCW and the contributions of its faculty through its hospital partners had a \$5.82 billion direct operational economic impact on the US economy in fiscal year 2023, according to a comprehensive report published in 2024 by the highly regarded private consulting firm Tripp Umbach. MCW is a workforce powerhouse for the entire state – recruiting and retaining more than 3,500 faculty, staff and students from outside the region over the past 10 years. Additionally, more than 38,500 jobs were directly and indirectly supported and sustained statewide by MCW and its partners in fiscal year 2023.

MCW's Milwaukee-based hospital partners include Froedtert ThedaCare Health, Children's Wisconsin and the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center. Versiti also is a key partner co-located on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus. MCW's total value to the economy is embedded in such collaborations.

According to Tripp Umbach's analysis, MCW generated \$2.74 billion in total economic impact on Wisconsin in fiscal year 2023 and supported more than 19,350 jobs statewide. Direct spending by MCW on capital and operations, as well as by students, faculty and staff, generated \$143.9 million in state and local taxes.

The institution's economic impact drives the \$8 billion southeast Wisconsin academic medicine ecosystem. MCW's impact is

nearly twice as high as the average economic impact of all 157 MD-granting medical schools across the US. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the average medical school had a total impact of \$1.5 billion in 2022.

"This report demonstrates that the Medical College of Wisconsin is not only an impactful academic and research institution, but also an economic driver and force beyond our state and into the nation," says John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, president and CEO of MCW. "We believe in being a transformational leader for healthier communities and a more vibrant economy in which individuals and families can flourish."

### Study Overview

The economic impact study measured the effect of direct, indirect and induced economic, employment and state and local tax impacts for MCW operations. The study quantified the impacts in quantitative and qualitative terms and highlighted the societal contributions made by MCW at the local, regional and state levels.

*The Economic and Community Impacts of MCW* defines "total economic impact" as both "the direct and indirect impacts generated in the economy by the institution." Direct impact includes institutional, employee and visitor spending on the



## Research Superiority is an MCW Hallmark

According to the National Science Foundation, MCW is one of the top 100 research institutions in the US (out of 20,000) and the largest private research institution in Wisconsin. MCW invested approximately \$400 million in research, training and related purposes during fiscal year 2023, including conducting more than 3,800 research studies and clinical trials, and leading the most cancer and neuroscience clinical trials in the state. Approximately 45 percent of this investment was through federally funded dollars. Additionally, MCW is among the top five percent worldwide in publishing new knowledge in clinical medicine.

MCW’s research expenditures (an important driver of activity and growth) and indirect and induced economic activity resulting from those expenditures totaled \$826.3 million during fiscal year 2023, and every dollar from external research funding generated eight dollars of economic impact, according to the report.

And when adding the contributions of our faculty through MCW’s hospital partners (Froedtert ThedaCare Health, Children’s Wisconsin and the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center), the combined direct operational economic impact on the US economy in fiscal year 2023 totaled more than \$5.8 billion.

MCW supports research through direct research with faculty and students and collaborative partnerships with Milwaukee, Green Bay and central Wisconsin hospitals. MCW also connects with the community by providing incubator space and fostering relationships between the community and the university to develop and sustain new business startups in the region.

The report included highlights from a number of startup companies originated by MCW faculty, including:

- **RPRD Diagnostics** specializes in providing innovative precision medicine solutions, including diagnostic, analysis and support services to clinicians, researchers and drug developers.

institution, while indirect economic impact (also known as the multiplier effect), includes “responding dollars within the local economy by vendors/suppliers and households.”

These impacts fell within the following categories: business volume impacts; direct, indirect and induced employment impacts; state and local tax impacts; impact of employee and student spending on goods and services; impact of alumni on the economy; impact of visitor spending on the economy; impact of the attraction of external research dollars on economic development throughout the region and state; and impact that employees and students have on the community through donations and volunteer work.

It is important to note that the findings outlined in the economic impact analysis are produced on an annual basis, and thus the impact in subsequent years may vary – influenced by such factors as the change in the number of employees and students, capital expansion, growth in external research and state appropriations.

## MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT

### ON THE STATE OF WISCONSIN



**\$2.74 billion**  
generated statewide in economic impact



**19,354 total jobs**  
supported and sustained statewide



**\$143.9 million**  
generated in state and local taxes

#### MILWAUKEE REGION

**9,354 total jobs**  
supported and sustained statewide

**\$2.60 billion**  
generated in economic impact

**\$143.9 million**  
generated in state and local taxes

**18,387 total jobs**  
supported and sustained

**\$136.7 million**  
generated in state and local taxes

#### CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGION

**\$41.2 million**  
generated in economic impact

**290 total jobs**  
supported and sustained

**\$2.2 million**  
generated in state and local taxes



Ulrich Broeckel, MD, postdoctoral fellow '00, is the founder and CEO, and a professor of pediatrics and section chief of genomic pediatrics at MCW.

• **Prism Clinical Imaging** equips physicians with innovative imaging tools for the planning and treatment of brain tumors and other neurological disorders. Prism Clinical Imaging was founded by practicing professionals at MCW, including Edgar DeYoe, PhD, MCW professor of radiology and Prism's chief scientist.

• **Sonoptima** is a wearable, artificial intelligence-enabled ultrasound technology for patients to gain optimal timing of radiation therapy for pelvic malignancies. William A. Hall, MD, professor and chair in radiation oncology and the Bob Uecker Chair in Pancreatic Cancer Research in MCW's department of surgery, and Eric Paulson, PhD '08, FEL '09, GME '11, professor of radiation oncology and chief of medical physics, are the founders.

• **N-Zyme Biomedical** aims to enhance the quality of life for millions worldwide by pioneering the development of the first safe, effective and efficient treatments for laryngopharyngeal reflux. Nikki Johnston, PhD, is an MCW professor of otolaryngology and communication sciences, and a co-founder of N-Zyme Biomedical.

• **Protein Foundry** manufactures proteins for biomedical research. Specifically, it employs production methods that maintain the native N-terminal amino acid sequence. Brian F. Volkman, PhD, is an MCW professor of biochemistry and president of Protein Foundry.

• **XLock Biosciences** is a pre-clinical stage biotechnology company that addresses the hurdles in chemokine-targeted drug development through protein engineering. Francis Peterson, PhD, is both president and co-founder of XLock Biosciences and a professor of biochemistry at MCW.



**Alumni Contributions to Statewide Impact**

Nearly 60 percent of all MCW graduates remain in Wisconsin to practice in a wide range of healthcare and health science positions. The 12,000 MCW alumni living in Wisconsin collectively contribute \$19.5 billion in economic impact annually to the Wisconsin economy, according to the report. MCW also ranks in the top five percent nationally among medical schools in the number of resident physicians it trains (979 residents and fellows in academic year 2024-2025) and is the state's leading provider of specialty-trained doctors.

To illustrate, the report looked at MCW's 394 medical school graduates from fiscal year 2023 and estimated they will have an annual economic impact of \$630 million on the Wisconsin economy. MCW graduates from fiscal 2023 who remain in Wisconsin will generate \$25.2 billion over a lifetime of employment (40 years).

**MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT**



**ON THE UNITED STATES**



**\$3.20 billion**  
generated in economic impact



**21,030 total jobs**  
supported and sustained statewide



**\$167.5 million**  
generated in state and local taxes

**GREEN BAY REGION**

**\$96.1 million**  
generated in economic impact

**677 total jobs**  
supported and sustained

**\$5.0 million**  
generated in state and local taxes





### Contributions of MCW's Regional Medical School Campuses

MCW campuses in Green Bay and central Wisconsin also have significant local economic impact.

More than \$96 million in direct and indirect economic impact was generated in the Green Bay region in fiscal 2023. MCW plays a direct role in sustaining more than 675 jobs in that region, including more than 70 direct jobs and 600 indirect jobs.

Approximately \$41.2 million in overall economic impact was generated by MCW in the central Wisconsin region in fiscal 2023. This includes both direct spending of MCW as well as indirect and induced impacts of dollars in the region. MCW plays a direct role in sustaining nearly 300 jobs in that region, including 75 direct jobs and more than 200 indirect jobs.

### Clinical Partners Are a Major Driver

MCW is the state's leading provider of specialty-trained doctors. MCW's relationships with Froedtert ThedaCare Health,



Additionally, Tripp Umbach estimates that the total economic impact of the 175 residents who remain to practice in Wisconsin will add \$350 million to the Wisconsin economy annually. Residents and fellows, along with other MCW health science students, partner with attending physicians in providing care to more than five million patients annually in clinical settings.

## MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT MCW IMPACT

### ALUMNI IMPACT



MCW alumni living in Wisconsin collectively contribute **\$19.5 billion** in economic impact annually to the Wisconsin economy



### CHARITABLE GIVING AND VOLUNTEERISM

The **\$27.1 million** impact includes:  
**\$11.9 million** donated to local charitable organizations  
**\$15.2 million** in value of volunteer time



### WORKFORCE IMPACT

Tripp Umbach estimates that the 394 graduates from FY23 will have an annual economic impact of \$630 million on the Wisconsin economy. MCW graduates from FY23 who remain in Wisconsin will generate \$25.2 billion over a lifetime of employment (40 years).

Tripp Umbach estimates that the total economic impact of the 175 residents who remain to practice in Wisconsin will add \$350 million to the Wisconsin economy annually.





Children's Wisconsin and the Zablocki VA generate more substantial economic and social impact nationally. Tripp Umbach estimates that \$2.16 billion of Froedtert ThedaCare Health's total impact, \$273.6 million of Children Wisconsin's total impact and \$182.4 million of the Zablocki VA's total impact are directly attributable to MCW. Therefore, \$2.62 billion in additional economic impact on the national economy was generated in fiscal year 2023 by MCW's partnership with its principal clinical partners.

When added to the \$3.2 billion in the overall operational impact of MCW in fiscal year 2023, the total economic impact of MCW and the contributions of its faculty through its clinical partners totaled \$5.82 billion. Statewide, MCW generated \$246.1 million in state and local taxes with clinical partners.

### Community Engagement Spans the Entire State

MCW's community-based mission makes it unique among US medical schools – demonstrating an outsized commitment to addressing root causes of health disparities and generating substantial social impact. In fiscal 2023, 1,062 faculty and staff from MCW collaborated with 600 community partners, groups and organizations to improve health across Wisconsin.

MCW has invested more than \$338 million in more than 600 projects to improve health and reduce disparities statewide through the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (see the cover story in the spring 2024 issue of MCW Magazine), including \$20 million to improve behavioral health outcomes. The report estimates that MCW faculty, staff and students generated \$27.1 million annually in charitable donations and volunteer services.

This \$27.1 million impact includes \$11.9 million donated to local charitable organizations and \$15.2 million in value of volunteer time.

"Academic medical centers are immense gems for the communities they work within," says Matthew Lester, MCW's executive vice president for finance and administration, and chief operating officer. "This comprehensive economic impact report demonstrates the breadth of who we are as an institution. We educate students, do research, provide patient care and support community activities. It is important for us to be able to answer the question, 'What does MCW mean to the community?'" ■



## Future Impact of Biohealth

The biohealth industry – a multidisciplinary field that applies biological science to human health and society – generated \$37.7 billion in total economic impact in Wisconsin in 2023. It is poised to become an even larger economic engine for the state, and job growth in the biohealth industry is outpacing national growth. Wisconsin's opportunity is propelled in part by a \$49 million grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) in July 2024 to the Wisconsin BioHealth Tech Hub to implement five projects that will help position the state as a national leader in personalized medicine. The five interconnected projects are anticipated to provide \$9 billion in new economic activity.

MCW is one of 18 members of the Tech Hub Consortium representing Wisconsin's personalized medicine strengths across public and private sector partners that came together for a unified purpose: to advance Wisconsin. MCW is leading CAREScan Mobile Screening – one of three technology projects funded by the EDA.

"CAREScan aims to revolutionize the delivery of healthcare as a fully mobile platform that improves health through neighborhood-based access to screening and care," says Mara Lord, PhD '23, MBA, MCW's chief strategy and growth officer and co-lead on CAREScan.



# Leading with Gratitude:

## Philanthropy from Alumni Benefits the Next Generation of MCW Healthcare Professionals



“...as I continue to diligently pursue my dream of becoming a doctor – a dream I have had since I was a child – I promise that I will continue to work earnestly and to be diligent, so that when my time comes to work in my own realm of practice, I will be worthy of the profession and the lofty standards to which it is upheld...”

– MCW medical student Jesse VanWart, Class of 2027, in a letter thanking members of the MCW Medical School 50-year Class of 1975 for supporting student scholarship awards

In the academic year that ended June 30, 2024, 180 student scholarship funds established at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) generated more than \$3 million in awards. About 131 of those funds (the vast majority) are supported through gifts and pledges from MCW alumni.

In fact, contributions from alumni of MCW have grown significantly over the years – and now represents the largest single source of philanthropy for scholarship funds among all donors supporting student financial aid programs.

“This impressive achievement is made possible by the generosity of thousands of our alumni families,” says John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, MCW president and CEO. “Their generosity is having a direct impact on the future of healthcare in Wisconsin and around the country, for which we are very grateful.”

Current contributions have kept pace with donations that MCW alumni have made in past years. Total gifts and pledges supporting scholarship awards from alumni in the 2024 academic year totaled \$1.6 million. More than \$10.4 million has been contributed over the last five years.

“Alumni truly understand the journey that each student takes to earn their place as a physician, pharmacist, scientist and healthcare professional,” adds

Dr. Raymond. “In turn, recipients of these scholarship awards experience firsthand the collegiality and loyalty of their fellow alumni – many of whom they will be joining as they care for patients and make new medical discoveries.”

### Scholarship Support is Crucial for Student Recruiting

Deborah M. Costakos, MD '98, MS, interim dean of the MCW School of Medicine and former MCW department chair and professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences, agrees with Dr. Raymond's sentiments.

“As an MCW alumna, and with an educational financial debt of my own when I graduated medical school, I truly understand how much our students appreciate the support they receive from scholarship awards, and particularly from our alumni,” Dr. Costakos says.

A healthy scholarship program is also critical to MCW's efforts to recruit students to MCW's Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Graduate Studies.

“The availability of scholarship awards is an important part of our student recruitment strategy,” notes Dr. Costakos. “Many of our applicants are considering offers from other institutions, and a pool of scholarship awards that help defray tuition expenses can absolutely determine where they eventually will choose to enroll.”

Alumni often make gifts to the class funds established to recognize their respective graduation years. Additionally, some alumni choose to set up their own named funds or bolster funds that encourage students to consider service in a particular area of medicine or to work with certain populations of patients.

### Alumni Giving is Personal

For many alumni, the decision to give is personal and reflects a passion for the students undergoing an educational journey reminiscent of their own.

That journey is what inspired Marlene D. Melzer-Lange, MD '75, GME '78, and her husband, George M. Lange, MD '75, to support several scholarship funds at MCW, including a fund that support students in the Health Equity Scholars Program (HESP) – an innovative program aimed to increase the number of physicians who practice in Milwaukee and care for the city's at-risk populations. (See story on page 9 of the Fall/Annual Report 2024 issue of MCW Magazine for more information on the HESP.)

Both Dr. Lange and Dr. Melzer-Lange grew up in Milwaukee and attended Milwaukee Public Schools before going on to Marquette University for their undergraduate degrees, and to the Medical College of Wisconsin for their medical degrees.



Dr. George Lange and Dr. Marlene Melzer-Lange, 2024

Dr. Lange worked for many years in Milwaukee as an internist and geriatric physician. Dr. Melzer-Lange is an MCW professor of pediatrics and serves as a pediatric emergency room specialist at Children's Wisconsin, located on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus.

Their experiences growing up and working as doctors in Milwaukee amplified the importance of preserving access to care for residents living in underserved communities, both in the city and around the state. While the HESP addresses the shortage of physicians serving under-resourced neighborhoods in Milwaukee, underserved communities exist in urban and rural communities throughout the state.

Dr. Melzer-Lange points out that physicians choosing to work in underserved communities are often earning less than their equally skilled counterparts working in other areas or for large health systems.

"We know that all doctors are not paid the same amount, and it's those doctors who particularly are most in need right now, such as primary care physicians or psychiatrists," says Dr. Melzer-Lange, noting her own experience working in clinics in Milwaukee's central city during the early years of her career.

"That's an important reason that George and I have for supporting students in the Health Equity Scholars Program," Dr. Melzer-Lange continues. "The fact of the matter is that whether you live in the city, the suburbs or a rural area, everyone needs a primary care doctor. We wanted

to support students at MCW who have an interest in working in underserved areas so they won't have such a big loan and can have a choice about where they choose to practice."

"And, as Milwaukeeans, we feel that there should be a sufficient number of high-quality doctors to serve the people in our city," Dr. Lange adds.

Dr. Melzer-Lange and Dr. Lange are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> medical school class reunion in 2025, and both are hoping that their fellow classmates and everyone sharing a reunion in 2025 – including graduates of the School of Pharmacy and Graduate Studies – will consider making a gift that supports student scholarship awards.

"We certainly hope that other MCW graduates would make their own contributions," says Dr. Lange, "and consider providing support for scholarship awards."

### Making Connections

Anthony J. Perez, MSED, executive director of the MCW/Marquette Medical

Alumni Association, notes that there are numerous ways for alumni to connect with currently enrolled students at MCW.

"With the cost of healthcare education being what it is, scholarships play a pivotal role in ensuring that talented students are supported as they pursue their respective degrees," says Perez. "Our annual reunion weekend is one of the best ways that former MCW students can reconnect and rally around contributing to the next generation of healthcare professionals."

"Those connections have a way of building camaraderie that leads to even more opportunities to give back," adds Perez. "Alumni play a significant role in our mentorship programs, teach at all of our campus locations and help carry forward MCW's legacy as a leader in health education." ■ – MICHAEL J. MATHIAS

Celebrating an alumni reunion in 2025? Learn more at <https://www.mcw.edu/alumniweekend>.

### By the Numbers...

More than 20,000 extent alumni from MCW's Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Graduate Studies

131 endowed and current use scholarship funds supported by MCW alumni who support all three MCW schools

Alumni contributions to scholarships in the past five years total \$10.4 million

"As I progress through my medical training, I am constantly reminded of the responsibility that comes with this privilege, and I am determined to honor your generosity by striving for excellence in every aspect of my education and future practice. The opportunity to pursue a medical education is a privilege that I do not take lightly. I am committed to using my knowledge and skills to serve those in need, particularly in underserved communities like the one I grew up in."

– MCW medical student Zeina Nader, Class of 2026, recipient of a scholarship award from the MCW Medical School Class of 1979



# An Unwavering Commitment to Fighting Childhood Cancer

**T**he field of pediatric oncology and bone marrow transplantation demands a blend of advanced medical knowledge and compassionate care – and Julie-An Talano, MD, FEL '02, FEL '04, professor of pediatrics at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the Margolis Family Endowed Professor in Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy Research at Children's Wisconsin, is the personification of these important characteristics.

Fellowship-trained in pediatric hematology/oncology and pediatric bone marrow transplant, Dr. Talano has devoted her career to the fight against childhood cancer and blood disorders. Her journey, marked by unwavering commitment and profound compassion, has significantly impacted the lives of countless young patients and their families.

The progress Dr. Talano has witnessed over her 20 years of research is remarkable. When Dr. Talano began performing transplants, the survival rate hovered around 50 percent. Today, it has improved to between 80 to 95 percent, due to ongoing research, improved treatment protocols and a better understanding of the diseases.

"We have been doing transplants with T-cell depletion for several decades, but with each new protocol we develop, we have made significant improvements," Dr. Talano says. "Right now, we have a novel research protocol where we take the harmful T-cells out of the transplant product before the cells reach the patient and we personalize the dose of some of the medicines used. This enables the patient to be on less medication during the transplant and gets them back to their regular life much quicker."

A poignant story from Dr. Talano's career in transplant is that of Evie, whose journey began shortly after birth when she came to the hospital with a skin rash that was later diagnosed as leukemia.

The oncologists discovered that her type of leukemia had a KMT2A mutation – for which the best chance for a cure was through a bone marrow transplant.

"It's rare for us to make a diagnosis so early and then to get to transplant so quickly," notes Dr. Talano. "We were unable to find a suitable donor for Evie, but our trial using alpha/beta T-cell depletion allows us to do parent-to-child transplant – essentially a half-match using a parent. With that, we were able to use Evie's mom as her donor and were incredibly successful with her and with many other patients."

Evie recently celebrated her third birthday and is cancer-free. "The way that we are treating patients now with T-cell depletion has revolutionized the transplant process," Dr. Talano says. "We have avoided immunosuppressive medicines after the transplant, and with that, patients can come out of the hospital quicker. Their immune system gets stronger faster, so they're able to get back to their normal life. It's all about the research. If we didn't do the research, we would be back to where we were 20 years ago."

Dr. Talano is often inspired by the resilience and positivity of her patients. "Whenever people ask me, 'How can you do what you do? You're an oncologist for children.' To me, working with children is so rewarding. They have a positive attitude. They're kids, and they play," Dr. Talano shares. "Keeping them happy and comfortable is the most important thing, especially when they have pain."

Dr. Talano's dedication to her research is driven by her passion for improving patient outcomes and survival rates. She believes that the medical field would stagnate without ongoing research – leaving patients with outdated treatment options. Her goal is to continue advancing this research until survival rates reach 100 percent. ■ – MEISI LI



# An International Beacon for Genomic Sciences and Precision Medicine

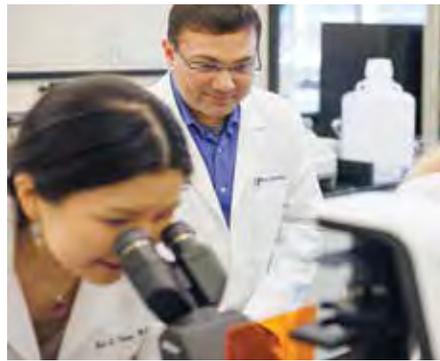
**M**CW, together with health system partners Froedtert Health (now Froedtert ThedaCare Health) and Children's Wisconsin, has a storied history in genomic and precision medicine dating back to the Human Genome Project and the 1999 founding of the MCW Human and Molecular Genetics Center.

MCW's work in this area gained international prominence in 2010 when the institution became the first in the world to deploy genetic sequencing to diagnose and recommend a treatment for a rare pediatric disease.

Since then, MCW and the center – named the Linda T. and John A. Mellowes Center for Genomic Sciences and Precision Medicine in 2022 to honor a \$10 million gift from the couple – has continued its groundbreaking work in these fields and is committed to raising awareness and understanding of their potential to improve diagnosis and treatment of disease.

“One of the biggest challenges we currently face is a lack of literacy about these fields, both locally and internationally,” says Raul A. Urrutia, MD, director of the Mellowes Center and the Warren P. Knowles Chair of Genomics and Precision Medicine. “Many clinicians today do not consider genomics and precision medicine when diagnosing a disease and developing treatment plans, which leads to missed opportunities. We aim to change that.”

Originally focused on its strength as a sequencing core, in 2017 the Mellowes Center adopted a new mission reflected in a new slogan, “Beyond the Base Pairs.” The phrase heralds a new approach to research at the center, one which recognizes that



*(top of page) Performers at the Narrative Medicine event in the fall of 2024*

*(above) Precision oncology researchers at the Mellowes Center*

fully understanding the genome requires not only sequencing it, but also uncovering its structure, function and evolution, as well as how it interacts with other organisms in the body.

Today, research at the center falls into one of four pillars: Inherited Diseases of Children and Adults; Community and Precision Public Health; Precision Oncology and Cancer Genomics; and Systems Biology Resources in ‘Omics and Bioinformatics.

This reorganization has led to accolades. In 2021, the Mellowes Center, in partnership with the MCW department of pediatrics and Children's Wisconsin, was named a National Organization of Rare Disorders (NORD) Center of Excellence, and in 2023, both entities were named to the National Institutes of Health's Undiagnosed Disease Network (UDN).

“The UDN designation is on par with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation for cancer centers,” says Dr. Urrutia. “It, coupled with the recognition from NORD, reflects our evolution into a modern center

for the study of genomic sciences and precision medicine.”

Under Dr. Urrutia's seven years of leadership, the center has helped build a regional network of other US institutional partners and established collaborations with 15 institutions around the globe. It launched the annual Rare Diseases and Rare Cancers in the Era of Systems Biology Symposium in 2023 and regularly hosts Narrative Medicine seminars in partnership with the Milwaukee nonprofit Harmony 4 Hope. The seminars feature patients who share their stories and perspectives on their healthcare journeys, an important – but often overlooked – part of healthcare, notes Dr. Urrutia.

The center also helps train the next generation of practitioners through three graduate degree programs at MCW: a master of science (MS) in genetic counseling, an MS in precision medicine and an MS in bioinformatics (a joint program with Marquette University).

“We're taking the lead in educating a workforce with the knowledge and skillset to bring genomic sciences and precision medicine into everyday practice,”

Dr. Urrutia says. “It's another way in which we're raising the profile of MCW and the Mellowes Center in these fields.” ■

– DEVON MCPHEE



*Dr. Raul Urrutia*

# BRAVE Program Marks Two Years of Steady Growth

The BRAVE (Building Resilience through Action in Veterans and First Responders) program at the Wisconsin Institute of NeuroScience (WINS) is a traumatic brain injury recovery program specifically designed for military veterans and first responders. The first program of its kind in the Midwest, BRAVE also is the fastest growing such program in the country.

WINS integrates the extraordinary expertise, resources and clinical experience of four partners: the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), Children’s Wisconsin, the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network and the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans’ Administration Medical Center.

April 2025 marks the two-year anniversary of a \$12.5 million gift from Avalon Action Alliance that created the BRAVE program and one year since it began treating its first patients.

Since that time, BRAVE has graduated 31 individuals from its intensive, three-week outpatient program. Meanwhile, another 83 have completed a three-day intake evaluation, which prepares them for the customized treatment plan that BRAVE delivers. And more than 200 have completed applications to enter the program.

This level of growth is unseen among similar programs connected with Avalon nationwide – most of which took several years to achieve success.

“Veterans and first responders can be reluctant to seek treatment for so-called ‘invisible wounds’ such as brain injury and the emotional effects of their service,” says Gregory Burek, MD, GME ’18, medical director of BRAVE and MCW associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine. “When they do look for care, they tend to trust friends, other service members or word-of-mouth for where to go for treatment. So we didn’t really know how long it might take to build a network of program participants.”

Relationships have been key to BRAVE’s growth. Dr. Burek, a former Marine, along with BRAVE’s veteran outreach coordinator, who is a former soldier, have built extensive connections among military veteran and first responder groups across the country – enabling BRAVE to pull in participants from 12 states, with many individuals traveling hundreds of miles to participate.

This rapid growth has the program seeking to expand. “We’ve outgrown our current space and are actively looking for a larger office,” Dr. Burek shares. “This will give us the ability to diagnose and treat more participants, but also to provide more treatments that address each person’s individual needs.”

Increasing treatments isn’t the only way the program will expand. In January 2026, Avalon plans to execute a randomized-controlled clinical trial to assess the efficacy of the intensive interdisciplinary rehabilitation program that the BRAVE program and other Avalon sites provide. MCW is slated to lead this effort with Avalon.

MCW and WINS are global leaders in the science, research and treatment of neurotrauma. Under the direction of Michael McCrea, PhD, MCW professor of neurosurgery and director of the WINS Clinical Neuroscience Research Center, participants in the BRAVE program will gain the ability to take part in clinical trials and other brain trauma research.

“This is exciting news for MCW, BRAVE and program participants because it gives us the opportunity to bring together what we at MCW do best – using science to drive the future of medicine, especially in the field of traumatic brain injury. It also enables us to treat people who have dedicated their life to service,” says Dr. McCrea. “Ultimately, BRAVE is about helping people who have been injured protecting us, so they can return to the best version of themselves. This gives us new ways to do that, while also furthering science.” ■ – CHRIS COMBS

*Much of BRAVE’s success is due to the connections it has built. This includes supporting the community as shown here by members who are sorting food for Feeding America.*

*(front row, l-r) Jenna Haberkorn, Matt Seidl, Meaghan Donnellan*

*(back row, l-r) Michelle Weiss, Lisha Blake, Dr. Greg Burek, Chad Kline, Neal Bork*



*BRAVE has created an inclusive community of veteran and first responder alumni who continue to support each other outside of the program. Shown here are participants in the first alumni event in December 2024, at the Wauwatosa (Wis.) Christmas Market.*



# Alumna's Career Focus Motivated by Mother's Illness

Elizabeth M. Wendt, MD '20, MPH, has focused her education and career around providing care to the underserved, many of whom are facing health challenges. Her interest started at a young age, at the time that her mother's cancer returned.

Her mother, Madonna, was diagnosed with cancer at age 19; it returned 12 years later, when Dr. Wendt was a little girl. She remembers the impact of going with her mother to her doctors' appointments.

"From this experience, I became interested in providing good care to people going through difficult times," says Dr. Wendt. "Some of the lessons I learned then continue to impact my decisions and focus today – such as having a service mindset and helping the people whom the healthcare system had forgotten."

Dr. Wendt chose MCW–Central Wisconsin (MCW–CW) so that she could provide care to individuals from rural areas, who historically have been considered underserved – and also to conduct a service project, in which she helped launch PATCH (Providers and Teens Communicating for Health) in the Wausau, Wis., area.

As part of PATCH Wausau (which has expanded to serve 15 north central Wisconsin counties), 10–12 local high school students are hired to lead educational workshops with peers and healthcare professionals, during which they learn to more effectively discuss topics such as sexual health, mental health and substance abuse.

"I am so passionate about the PATCH project, and to have it integrated into the community in three years was amazing. The commitment of MCW–CW to help this program provide value to the community was inspiring – and just one of the many things that makes MCW–CW a special place," Dr. Wendt shares.

Dr. Wendt currently is caring for the underserved on a global level through



*(clockwise from above) Dr. Wendt in northern Ghana studying treatments for river blindness.*

*Dr. Wendt at the Epidemic Intelligence Service Conference highlighting the global reach of the CDC's Parasitic Diseases Branch.*

*Dr. Wendt and her parents celebrating Match Day 2020.*

an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Fellowship with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global Health Center, in the division of parasitic diseases and malaria. EIS officers serve at the forefront of public health, protecting Americans and the global community while training under the guidance of seasoned mentors. When disease outbreaks or other public health threats emerge, EIS officers investigate, identify the cause, rapidly implement control measures and collect evidence to recommend preventive actions.

Dr. Wendt's two-year fellowship in applied epidemiology has enabled her to collaborate with teams in Senegal, Liberia and Ghana on projects to help people with onchocerciasis (river blindness). In September and October 2024, Dr. Wendt traveled to American Samoa to assist with a drug intervention for lymphatic filariasis, which causes elephantiasis/lymphedema. The disease carries a stigma and makes it hard for individuals to move their limbs.



"It was such an impactful experience," says Dr. Wendt. "I was on the ground, helping teams and interacting with patients. I am hoping that this work leads to the disease being eradicated in a few years."

Dr. Wendt currently lives in Atlanta and plans to return to the Midwest when her fellowship is completed in June 2025. The experience has been everything she thought it would be and has prepared her for the next stage in her career.

"The work is making me a better physician because I am learning how to communicate complicated topics so that patients can understand," she says. "Also, the world is becoming more global, and thus we will work with more patients who suffer from these diseases and who come to the US for treatment. I look forward to educating healthcare providers about how to treat those who do so." ■

– ANTHONY BRAZA

# ALUMNI NOTES

## 1980s

**Stuart Rice, MD '87 (below left), and Greg Heal, MD '89 (below right),** are members of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. Dr. Rice, the South Dakota Mayflower Society State Surgeon, is a retired neurosurgeon. Dr. Heal, the Wisconsin Mayflower Society State Surgeon, is an OB/GYN in Delafield, Wis.



**Jeffrey Gibbs, MD '88, FEL '95,** has been appointed chief health officer for the International Community Health Services (ICHS) in Seattle, where he oversees clinical operations at ICHS's 11 service sites in the state of Washington's King County. He previously served as the quality improvement medical director at Washington State's Sea Mar Community Health Centers (one of the largest federally qualified health centers), serving primarily Medicaid patients and the uninsured.

**William D. Hanna, MD, FEL '88,** is an internist with Henry Ford Health in Roseville, Mich.

**Eduardo M. Martinez, MD '88,** is a vascular surgeon with the Southeast Health Cardiovascular Institute in Dothan, Ala.

**Mark L. McDermott, MD, FEL '89,** is an ophthalmologist with Henry Ford Hospital's Eye Institute in Warren, Mich.

## 1990s

**Louis Remyne III, MD, GME '90,** a urologist, has joined the Cullman Regional Medical Group in Cullman, Ala.

**Marlon Levy, MD, GME '91,** has been appointed senior vice president for the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System. He previously was professor and chair of transplant surgery for VCU Health.

**Former US Congressman Larry Bucshon, MD, GME '93, FEL '95,** has joined Holland & Knight as a senior policy advisor in its public policy & regulation group in Washington, DC. Dr. Bucshon recently retired after seven terms in Congress as a member of the US House of Representatives representing Indiana's Eighth District.

**Judy Kim, MD, FEL '96,** serves on the editorial board of *Modern Retina*. She is a professor of ophthalmology and holds the Jean and Tom Walter Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

**Cathleen McCabe, MD '96,** has joined the Bausch + Lomb Corporation as a strategic medical advisor. In her new position, Dr. McCabe will provide input into the expansion of Bausch + Lomb's product portfolio and lend her expertise to the research and development team.



**Family physician Greg Miller, MD '96,** recently returned from a three-month Army National Guard deployment in Kuwait.

**Adam Summers, MD, GME '96, '98,** is founder and director of Maryland Plastic Surgery and PURE MedSpa in Baltimore. A talented artist, his artwork has been showcased at the National Library of Medicine.

**Jonathan D'Cunha, MD '97, PhD '95,** is chair of cardiothoracic surgery at Mayo Clinic Arizona and a professor of surgery at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. In addition to his clinical interests (which

include expertise in minimally invasive and robotic thoracic surgery, lung, mediastinal and esophageal oncology), Dr. D'Cunha specializes in the care of the most complex lung failure patients.

**Abel Kho, MD '99,** was named by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker to serve on the state's board of health. He is a professor of medicine and preventive medicine at Northwestern University, specializing in research that integrates diverse data within public health applications. As a co-founder and board member of the Medical Research Analytics and Informatics Alliance, Dr. Kho has contributed to improving community health in Chicago by providing low-cost infrastructure and informatics to public health agencies and nonprofits.

**Sukhjit Takhar, MD '99,** is the infection control and antibiotic stewardship co-director at Mills-Peninsula Medical Center in Burlingame, Calif. He also is a visiting associate clinical professor of emergency medicine at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine - Fresno.

## 2000s

**Jeffrey T. Arrington, MD '00,** specializes in endometriosis treatment and advanced minimally invasive gynecologic surgery at Lone Peak Hospital in Draper, Utah.

**Yolanda Holler-Managan, MD, GME '00,** was awarded the Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine's 2024 *Faculty Excellence in Education Award*. She is an associate professor of pediatric neurology.

**Renee Smith, MD '03, GME '06,** has been named chief medical officer for Security Health Plan of Wisconsin in Marshfield. Before joining Security Health Plan, she was system chief medical officer with Blanchard Valley Health System in Ohio.

**Candice Lovell\*, MD '04, GME '08, and Aronica V. Williams, MD, GME '08,** were recognized as

“Women on the Leading Edge of Medicine” and 2025 *Milwaukee Black Excellence Award* honorees. Dr. Lovell is an assistant clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at MCW. Dr. Williams is a family practice physician and chief medical officer at Milwaukee Health Services.

**Hariharan Shankar\*, MD, GME '04, FEL '05**, was selected as the 2024 *Distinguished Service Award* recipient by the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine. Dr. Shankar is a professor of anesthesiology at MCW.

**Richard Schaefer, MD, GME '05**, is a plastic surgeon with the SSM Health Fond du Lac (Wis.) Regional Clinic. He practices at SSM plastic surgery clinics in Fond du Lac, Waupun and Ripon.

**Michael Rosenblum, MD '06, PhD '03**, is a professor of dermatology at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine and senior associate vice chair of research. He also is a composer and musician who performs under the pseudonym “PrettyBoy Chance.” He released his first single, “Dance with Me,” in September 2024. While his musical career is taking off, he says he has no plans to give up his day job.

**Cindy Salm Bauer, MD '07, FEL '13**, is the new division chief of allergy and immunology at Phoenix Children’s Hospital. She founded Phoenix Children’s Allergy and Immunology Clinic in 2013 and has served as its medical director since 2019.

**Stephanie Schwarz, DO, GME '07**, is a hospitalist at the University of Toledo (Ohio) Medical Center.

## 2010s

**Shilpa Dhar, PhD, FEL '10**, is an assistant professor of gastrointestinal medical oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. With expertise in molecular biology, cancer

biology and epigenetics, her research focuses on histone-modifying enzymes and their roles in cancer genetics.

**Julian Berrocal, MD '11**, is a breast cancer surgeon at Jupiter (Fla.) Medical Center’s Anderson Family Cancer Institute. Before joining Jupiter Medical Center, he was associate program director for the general surgery residency program for the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Regional Campus.

**Lisa Bradford, MA '12**, teaches health communication and interpersonal communication in the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee’s School of Continuing Education. She sits on the Ethics Advisory Board at Children’s Wisconsin and has taught medical ethics at MCW and Marquette University’s School of Dentistry. The focus of her research and teaching is on improving communication between patients and healthcare providers.

**Nicole Mubanga, MD '13**, has been appointed chief medical officer for Milwaukee’s Outreach Community Health Centers. Dr. Mubanga is a family medicine practitioner and serves on the board of directors of the Prestige Wellness Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving health and social conditions in underserved Zambian communities.

**Ahmeneh Ghavam, MD, FEL '14, MS '19**, has joined Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs, as an intensivist. She is an assistant professor of pediatrics – critical care medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Dr. Ghavam previously served on the faculty at The University of Chicago Comer Children’s Hospital.

**Khushbu Shah, MD, MPH '15**, is medical director of psychiatric acute care services at Chicago’s Lurie Children’s Hospital. She also is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Shah also directs school and community mental health

training for Lurie’s Center for Childhood Resilience, which provides mental health services to children and adolescents throughout Illinois.

**Abraham Schlauderaff, MD '16**, is a neurosurgeon with East Falls Neurosurgery and Spine in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He specializes in minimally invasive spine surgery.

**Jack A. Trebelhorn, MD '16**, is a urologist with Henry Ford Health and the Michigan Institute of Urology in St. Clair Shores, Mich.

**Krista Bratt, MD '17, GME '21**, is a pediatric hospitalist at the Mayo Clinic’s Children’s Center in Rochester, Minn. She was lead author of a July 2024 article in *Hospital Pediatrician* entitled, “The Rounds Efficiency Index: A Novel Physics-Based Construct for Patient and Family-Centered Rounds.”

**Vipal Durkal, MD, GME '17**, is a hematologist/oncologist with Texas Oncology–HCA Houston Healthcare Medical Center. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Texas Society of Clinical Oncology.

**Eileen Hwang, MD, FEL '19**, is a clinician-scientist with the John A. Moran Eye Center of the University of Utah. As an ophthalmology researcher, she is developing imaging and biochemistry techniques for analyzing vitreous structure.

**Kaitlyn M. Simpson, MD '19**, is a pediatrician with Intermountain Health’s Intermountain Medical Center in Murray, Utah.

## 2020s

**David Beam, MD '20**, is a hospitalist and clinical associate of medicine at UChicago Medicine. While at MCW, he was in the health systems management pathway studying the macroeconomics of health/business policy and the structure of global health systems.

# IN MEMORIAM

## 1950s

**Philip Hessburg, MD '55**, of Grosse Pointe, Mich., died on October 2, 2024, at the age of 94. He was a member of Grosse Point Ophthalmology, one of the nation's first multi-subspecialty ophthalmic practices. Following his retirement from private practice in 2005, Dr. Hessburg joined the staff of Henry Ford Health System's Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology (DIO), which he had founded in 1970 to assist the visually impaired. He was medical director of DIO until his retirement in 2024.

**Karl John Kassity, MD '58**, of Santa Barbara, Calif., died on September 29, 2024, at the age of 92. Dr. Kassity was a member of the Santa Barbara Anesthesia Medical Group and served as chief of staff at Santa Barbara's Cottage Hospital. He was the founding medical director of the Cottage Outpatient Surgical Center and was a member of President Ronald Reagan's Western White House medical team.

**Michael John Kuhn, MD '58**, of Elm Grove, Wis., died on January 29, 2025, at the age of 92. During his more than 50-year career as an obstetrician, he delivered more than 10,000 babies. As a runner, he completed the Boston Marathon several times. He ran in his last marathon at age 70.

## 1960s

**Anthony A. Herrmann, MD '60**, died in Racine, Wis., on November 8, 2024, at the age of 89. He began his career as general practitioner and was corporate medical director with Johnson Wax in Racine. He finished his career as the vice president of health, safety and environmental affairs for Johnson & Johnson Worldwide Headquarters for 20 years until his retirement in 1998.

**Thomas Henry Roberts, MD '64**, died in Menomonee Falls, Wis., on November 5, 2024, at the age of 86. A general surgeon

in the Menomonee Falls area, he served as chief of staff and chief of surgery at Medical Associates and Community Memorial Hospital of Menomonee Falls from 1971 to 2001. He then served as medical director and chief compliance officer at Medical Associates until his retirement in 2007.

**Edward W. Waldeck, MD '65, GME '71**, of Wind Point, Wis., died on October 3, 2024, at the age of 85. He was an ophthalmologist in Cudahy, Wis., and served on the medical staff of Milwaukee's Ascension St. Francis Hospital.

**John Raymond Jacobson, MD '66**, of Butte, Mont., died on January 15, 2025, at the age of 85. Dr. Jacobson and his family relocated to Butte in 1973, where he practiced as a gastroenterologist at Rocky Mountain Clinic and St. James Hospital. He retired in 2004.

**James C. Bull, MD '68**, died on March 25, 2024, in Twining, Mich., at the age of 82. He was a urologist in Great Falls, Mont.

**George Cochran, Jr., MD, GME '68, '69**, of Springfield, Ohio, died on January 6, 2025, at the age of 91. He was chief of surgery at Springfield's Mercy Medical Center and football team physician for Catholic Central High School and Shawnee High School, both in Springfield. He retired from practice in 2001.

**Louis Marzano, MD '68, GME '73**, of Eugene, Ore., died in October 2024, at the age of 81. From the mid-1970s until his retirement in 2000, Dr. Marzano was a partner with the Center for Women's Health in Springfield, Ore. During the course of his career as an obstetrician/gynecologist, he cared for thousands of women and delivered more than 3,500 babies.

**Richard Donovan "Dick" Stewart, MD '69**, died on October 3, 2024, in St. Paul, Minn., at the age of 84. He was a pediatrician in Winona and Alexandria, Minn., for more

than 25 years before becoming a Level I trauma physician later in his career.

## 1970s

**Ronald Shansky, MD '71**, died on September 16, 2024, in Austin, Texas. Dr. Shansky was a respected national expert on prison health reform and a pioneer in correctional healthcare. His professional life was spent in Chicago, where he served as the medical director for the Illinois Department of Corrections. Dr. Shansky served on the National Commission on Correctional Health Care and won the *Bernard P. Harrison Award of Merit* in 2011.

**Frank Joseph, MD '76, GME '81**, of Atlanta, Ga., died on November 7, 2024, at the age of 74. He was a founder of Atlanta's Resurgens Orthopaedics in 1999, where he was a hand, wrist and shoulder surgeon.

## 1980s

**Roger A. Jones, MD '80**, died in Lamoille, Nev., on January 4, 2025, at the age of 77. An orthopedic surgeon, he practiced at Elko's Ruby Mountain Orthopedics. Dr. Jones was a colonel in the US Army Reserves and served deployments in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan.

**Andrew J. Packer, MD, FEL '81**, of Hartford, Conn., died on December 22, 2024, at the age of 74. An ophthalmologist, he served on the faculties of the University of Iowa and Louisiana State University. Dr. Packer relocated to Connecticut in 1988 where he continued his career as a vitreoretinal surgeon in private practice at Consulting Ophthalmologists and Retina Consultants in Farmington, Conn.

During his career, Dr. Packer was the president of the American Society of Retina Specialists, president of the Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians and a recipient of the *American Academy of Ophthalmology Life Achievement Award*.

**Gary Paul Fait, MD '84**, of Mequon, Wis., died on February 4, 2025, at the age of 66. He was an obstetrician/gynecologist for over 35 years. Dr. Fait was affiliated with Northeast OB/GYN with offices in Glendale and Cedarburg, Wis.

**George M.A. Fortier, IV, MD '84**, of Little Falls, Minn., died on October 31, 2024, at the age of 67. Dr. Fortier and his father (George III) owned Little Falls Surgical Center. He worked as a surgeon in Minnesota from 1993–2014 and then practiced at Banner Health in Torrington, Wyo., until his retirement in December 2023.

**Thomas Martin Rouse, MD, GME '84**, of Zionsville, Ind., died on November 1, 2024, at the age of 71. Dr. Rouse was associate professor of surgery at Indiana University School of Medicine and attending physician in the division of pediatric surgery at Riley Hospital for Children for 24 years. He also served as director of pediatric trauma at Riley Hospital for Children for 15 years. Dr. Rouse retired in 2021.

**Ann Marie (Franz) Wunsch, PhD '86**, died in Milwaukee, Wis. on October 13, 2024, at the age of 73. She was a professor of physical therapy at Concordia Wisconsin University from 1996 to 2020.

## 1990s

**Vladimir Maletic, MD, GME '92**, died on December 11, 2024, at the age of 68, while on vacation in Jamaica. Dr. Maletic was a professor of psychiatry at the University of South Carolina and a practicing psychiatrist in Greenville, S.C. He was a member of the US Psych Congress Steering Committee and spoke at national conferences on developments in psychiatry, neurobiology and psychopharmacology.

## 2000s

**Jason L. LeMoines, DDS, GME '02**, of Green Bay, Wis., died on January 26, 2025, at the age of 52. He was an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in Green Bay, where he practiced with his father at Bay Oral. He inspired his son, TJ, to continue the family legacy by becoming a third-generation oral surgeon.

**Juhi Anil Jagiasi, MD, GME '03**, died on January 21, 2025, in Wilmington, Del., at the age of 60. In recent years, she was an attending anesthesiologist at Bayhealth Hospital in Dover, Del. She had a passion for Indian fashion, art and beauty events. Dr. Jagiasi founded the India Day Parade in Dover, and her fashion designs were displayed in New York City.

## 2010s

**Kathryn Anne Altonji, MD '17**, of Glenview, Ill., died on October 8, 2024, at the age of 34. She was an assistant professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. At Northwestern, she also served as associate director for the brain injury medicine fellowship program.

## Special Remembrances

**Former MCW trustee John Chamberlain, MD '52**, died on December 1, 2024, at the age of 97. Dr. Chamberlain was a longtime member of the medical staff at Milwaukee's Columbia Hospital, where he served as chief of staff. He was elected by his classmates and the medical school's faculty members as the 1952 *Millmann Award* recipient. He was an active member and officer of the Medical College of Wisconsin/Marquette Medical Alumni Association, and served on MCW's board of trustees from 1979–1990.

**Patrick Robert Walsh, MD '73, PhD '84**, died on October 7, 2024, at the age of 76. He was a professor of neurosurgery at MCW from the late 1970s to the late 1990s, where his research focused on head-neck biomechanics and a bioengineering analysis of head and spine injuries.



**Dorothee Weihrauch, DVM, PhD**, died on September 20, 2024. Dr. Weihrauch was a member of MCW's department of anesthesiology for almost 24 years, most recently at the rank of professor. She joined MCW in 1996 as a postdoctoral fellow in the department of physiology, was promoted to assistant professor in the department of anesthesiology in 2000 and associate professor and professor in 2008 and 2018, respectively. Dr. Weihrauch transitioned to the department of medicine as a research scientist in 2021 and returned to the department of anesthesiology in 2022. Dr. Weihrauch

was an accomplished researcher with expertise in extracellular matrix in chronic inflammatory diseases, anesthesia imaging, cardiovascular, preeclampsia, novel therapeutic modalities in phototherapy and traumatic brain injury.

# Unexpected Turns Shape a Career

*Dr. Suma Thareja (Samudrala) has shared her "Voice of the Student" column since the spring of 2017 (her M1 year). After receiving her PhD in May 2022, she completed a one-year postdoctoral fellowship, reentered medical school and will graduate in May 2025. Most recently, Suma won the Match Day T-shirt design contest (see collage below). We are very grateful for Suma's many insights and contributions, and wish her well in the next step of her journey!*

As a 20-year-old starting medical school at MCW in 2016, I was convinced my path was set. As an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I had researched cranial radiation therapy in fruit flies – an experience that taught me never to take any assumption for granted. That spirit of discovery led me straight into a physician-scientist trajectory in pediatric cardiology, where I spent late nights in the Mitchell Lab studying cardiomyocytes, refining CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing and presenting at national conferences such as Experimental Biology. My work on Ebstein's anomaly and left ventricular noncompaction earned multiple research awards and resulted in first-author publications in journals such as the *American Journal of Physiology-Heart* – reinforcing my certainty about my future.

But medical school has a way of reshaping expectations. Midway through my training, I noticed how many of my classmates lost some of their empathy during clinical rotations. To address this, I launched the Zablocki VA's "My Life, My Story" (MLMS), aiming to integrate patient narratives into electronic medical records so that we could see our patients more completely. After meeting with more than 50 educators to advocate for sustainability, MLMS was incorporated into MCW's M3 medical school curriculum – one of my proudest achievements. Although I never envisioned a career in education, leading MLMS revealed a passion for teaching and curriculum design, especially in fostering empathy and connection among future physicians.

Around the same time, my sister persuaded me to take an ophthalmology elective – a decision that changed my course entirely. During rotations at the VA and the MCW Eye Institute, I was captivated by the immediacy of restoring vision through cataract surgery and fascinated by advanced imaging tools. The combination of microsurgery, innovation and the profound impact on patients' quality of life drew me in.

Switching specialties so late felt daunting, but I found an invaluable mentor in Dr. Aparna Ramasubramanian, who guided me through research on retinoblastoma imaging, vascular tumors and ophthalmic artery anatomy. I co-authored case reports on choroidal hemangiomas in Sturge-Weber syndrome and transillumination-enhanced fundus photography, sharpening my clinical acumen and investigative skills.

Outside the lab, I volunteered at the Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured, where I performed slit lamp exams, screened for diabetic retinopathy and helped expand vision care to uninsured patients. I also founded the Food as Medicine initiative, integrating USDA-approved food insecurity screening into routine visits and linking patients with local resources. Addressing social determinants of health in a meaningful way felt as significant to me as any bench research I'd undertaken.

Now as a 29-year-old, preparing for my ophthalmology residency at the University of Rochester Flaum Eye Institute in New York, I realize how much the past nine years at MCW have shaped me. To those still navigating medical school: be open to the unexpected. My original plan to become a physician-scientist in pediatric cardiology unexpectedly evolved into a dual passion for ophthalmology and medical education. Neither path was in my original blueprint, yet both now stand at the heart of the physician I aspire to become. ■





## Jon Lehrmann, MD '90, GME '94

Jon A. Lehrmann, MD '90, GME '94, is the Charles E. Kubly Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine and a professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral medicine. He also is associate chief of staff for mental health at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee.

**D**r. Jon Lehrmann didn't set out to change the landscape of mental health care in Wisconsin. Yet, in the face of headwinds such as the stigma often associated with mental health care, rising demand for mental health services, lower clinician reimbursement for behavioral medicine and an aging psychiatry workforce, his numerous contributions will leave a lasting impact.

Dr. Lehrmann completed medical school and his psychiatry residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and has spent his entire 30-year career at the institution. He joined the MCW faculty in 1996 and has served as chair of the department of psychiatry and behavioral medicine since 2013. Dr. Lehrmann was the recipient of MCW's prestigious *Distinguished Service Award* in 2024.

He is keenly aware of the growing and urgent need for more mental health care professionals. Under Dr. Lehrmann's leadership, MCW has launched several new residency programs to boost Wisconsin's behavioral health workforce. He also has more than doubled the number of faculty in the department.

Recognizing the gaps that exist in access to mental health care, Dr. Lehrmann has worked tirelessly to advance novel strategies that address the mental health needs of Wisconsin's youth, veterans and medically underserved communities.

He pioneered the development of the statewide Child Psychiatry Consultation Program (CPCP), an innovative care delivery model that connects a primary care provider to an on-demand consultation with a child psychiatry specialist when a young patient needs timely mental health care. Since launching in 2015, the CPCP has fulfilled more than 11,000 consultations.

Reducing disparities in access to care continues to fuel Dr. Lehrmann. He is building a comprehensive psychiatry consultation program that expands upon the CPCP model and increases real-time access to mental health care for adults in Wisconsin. ■

— COLLEEN MCDONALD

### What Drives You?

I am driven by a strong sense of duty to my community to improve access to mental health care, grow the mental health care workforce, eliminate stigma and address the disparities of mental health.

### What Has Been the Highlight of Your Career?

It's hard to narrow this down. In addition to leading such an incredible group of people, I am proud to have helped develop several training programs — such as MCW's psychiatry residencies in Green Bay and central Wisconsin, the internal medicine-psychiatry residency and the APP psychiatry fellowship. Additionally, my career highlights have included co-leading development of the Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program and supporting the formation of the Periscope Project, the statewide perinatal psychiatry consultation program.

### What Do You Still Hope to Accomplish Over Your Career?

My dream is to utilize our child and perinatal program infrastructure to create a statewide Comprehensive Psychiatry Consultation Program. This means building out an adult pillar with general, geriatric, addiction and veteran psychiatry consultation that's available to all primary care providers in Wisconsin, and, in turn, making access to psychiatry expertise available to every Wisconsinite from birth to the grave.

### What Would You Like Your MCW Legacy to Be?

To be remembered for my efforts to increase parity for mental health care; for developing a supportive, inclusive, family-friendly culture; growing the department from 57 faculty to more than 130; increasing the psychiatrists graduating in Wisconsin by 40 percent; and improving access to mental health care across Wisconsin.

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

Please take care of yourselves. Though fulfilling and very rewarding, our journeys as healthcare professionals can be stressful and challenging. To navigate this journey successfully, we must prioritize our own well-being. No one is immune from burnout, and if you're feeling this way, please seek assistance. It's a strength to ask for help when you need it.



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