

Leading with Heart



By Anthony Braza, Richard N. Katschke and Sara L. Wilkins

This summer, John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, president and chief executive officer of the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), will officially step down from the position he has held for the past 16 years.

When announcing his decision in late January 2025 to prepare for the transition from his leadership role, Dr. Raymond said, "After thoughtful consideration, I am making this announcement now to ensure a seamless leadership transition. 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."

Dr. Raymond also shared then that he would focus his remaining time as president and CEO on achieving MCW's strategic priorities, strengthening the institution's partnerships and continuing to work toward opening new doors of opportunity for MCW.

Setting the Stage for Strength Through Collaboration

The theme of Dr. Raymond's inauguration speech on October 21, 2010, was *Strength Through Collaboration* – a theme which has coursed throughout his leadership tenure. "Collaboration is essential now more than ever due to the enormous challenges and opportunities before us," he said at the time.

Dr. Raymond was optimistic, however, noting MCW's strong collaboration with its health systems partners on the campus of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. "I am confident that we can meet the challenges facing us quite effectively. My confidence is based on meetings with literally hundreds of faculty, staff, students and friends of MCW. I have been impressed and gratified by the remarkable level of

Before joining MCW, Dr. Raymond had served for eight years as vice president for academic affairs and provost of The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

In the April 28, 2010, announcement of Dr. Raymond's appointment as MCW's sixth president and chief executive officer, he said, "The Medical College of Wisconsin has dynamism, and I welcome the opportunity to lead an outstanding clinical, research and educational enterprise that is growing rapidly in scope, stature and prominence."

He did not disappoint.

Dr. Raymond's 16 years of visionary leadership has had a lasting impact on MCW, the community, region, state and beyond that will endure for generations to come.

It would be impossible to recount Dr. Raymond's myriad accomplishments since he joined MCW on July 1, 2010. To that end, what follows are highlights from his tenure that underscore MCW's position as a preeminent institution that is creating the new knowledge to change lives and improve health for all.

support that we receive from our friends and collaborators; and by the dedication and talents of our students, staff and faculty."

Dr. Raymond continued, "In order to move successfully into the future, we will need to focus on selective, targeted growth. We will focus on developing our people, programs, and partnerships. We must develop innovative and contemporary programs in education, research and



Dr. Raymond and Dr. Lisa Grill Dodson at the inaugural MCW-Central Wisconsin White Coat Ceremony, 2016



Dr. Raymond at the December 2013 news conference announcing Matthew Hunsaker, MD, as the founding dean for MCW-Green Bay



Dr. Raymond greets MCW-Green Bay medical students at Match Day, 2018



Dr. Raymond speaks at the MCW-Central Wisconsin White Coat Ceremony, 2016

service. Collaborations with diverse individuals and institutions will help us to build the strength to cope with the complexities of the healthcare terrain.”

Unquestionably, Dr. Raymond’s commitment to strengthening MCW’s collaborative efforts has been critical to the institution’s numerous successes.

Creating the Regional Medical School Campuses

On June 25, 2012, MCW’s board of trustees authorized the institution to develop community-based medical education programs in both the Green Bay and central Wisconsin areas based on a comprehensive evaluation including financial modeling and business plan, evidence of community commitment and detailed implementation plans for the two sites. (Authors’ note: The original term, “community-based medical education,” was replaced over time with “regional medical

education.”) The timeline for developing the community-based medical education initiative called for matriculating the first class of students at the initial site in July 2015 and the first class of students at the second site in July 2016.

The seeds had been planted more than a year earlier, when Dr. Raymond, along with several other institutional leaders, had conducted statewide tours of Wisconsin’s health systems. “What we learned is that the health systems hadn’t been asked to participate in a meaningful way in the preparation of the next generation of physicians and scientists, and that many of them, especially in northern Wisconsin, were having difficulty recruiting and retaining physician talent. And they asked us to help them by increasing the pipeline of medical students,” Dr. Raymond recalls.

Dr. Raymond’s statewide meetings with health systems leaders and a November 2011 board of trustees’ retreat to help develop MCW’s strategic direction were the impetuses for MCW’s plans to establish a statewide community-based medical education program. The need for expansion was reinforced by reports issued late that same year by the Wisconsin Hospital Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges’ Physician Workforce Committee – both of which noted an acute and worsening national shortage of physicians, especially in primary care and certain specialties in “both rural and underserved areas.”

Upon realizing that increasing class size in Milwaukee would not improve the physician shortage in northern Wisconsin,

Dr. Raymond declared at the time, “Let’s think about a different way of delivering medical education. Let’s deploy the talent that exists throughout the state and engage them in immersing students in their own communities. Let’s try to build roots for those students and have role models for those students in these communities.”

Working in tandem with, and the support of, local health systems, government, community and civic leaders, MCW-Green Bay, the first new medical school campus in the state of Wisconsin in more than 100 years, opened its doors to an inaugural class of students the first week of July 2015. Graduation ceremonies for 15 students from the first class occurred on June 1, 2018. The inaugural class of medical students at MCW-Central Wisconsin (located in Wausau) began on July 5, 2016, with 13 graduating on May 30, 2019.

To date, 184 medical students have graduated from MCW-Green Bay and 113 from MCW-Central Wisconsin. Importantly, 50 percent of these students have remained in – or returned to – Wisconsin to practice medicine.

A key component of the community-based medical education program – and an important factor in its success – would be the commitment of healthcare systems statewide to create new primary care residency training positions within their hospitals, if possible by the time the first class of students graduated. Dr. Raymond’s steadfast leadership and continued

MCW's Growth and Impact Under Dr. Raymond's Leadership

In addition to the achievements under Dr. Raymond's leadership noted throughout this cover story, MCW has:

- had a \$5.8 billion direct operational impact on the US economy in fiscal 2023, in partnership with Froedtert Health, Children's Wisconsin and the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center
- doubled top-line revenue, from \$798 million in fiscal 2009 to \$1.7 billion in FY 2025
- increased annual philanthropic support from \$18 million in FY 2010 to more than \$700 million in total to date
- more than doubled research expenditures, from \$157 million in FY 2009 to \$428 million in FY 2025; and expanded total clinical trials funding from \$7 million in FY 2010 to \$37.1 million in FY 2025
- tripled the number of annual patient visits, from 1.6 million in 2010 to 5.7 million in 2025
- facilitated an affiliation agreement among MCW, Children's Specialty Group and Children's Wisconsin that allows the partners to evolve the structure of the pediatric enterprise to collectively drive quality and outcomes, elevate the academic missions and achieve growth
- launched a joint biomedical engineering program with Marquette University and new master of science degree programs in genetic counseling and anesthesia
- created the MCW Ombuds Office to provide a confidential, neutral, independent and informal channel of communication for faculty, students and postdoctoral researchers to surface and address workplace issues
- further addressed primary care provider gaps with two new family and community medicine residency programs in the Milwaukee area
- led the development of a transformative partnership with the Kern Family Foundation that has empowered MCW to advance the concept of flourishing across medical education, both locally and nationally



Dr. Raymond photographed for MCW's 2014 Annual Report



Dr. Raymond and Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, 2019



Dr. Raymond speaks at the Milwaukee Business Journal's Power Breakfast, June 2018.

commitment to developing and sustaining meaningful collaborations with MCW's health system partners were instrumental in the creation of these new residencies.

A new MCW family medicine residency program at Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital, which began on July 1, 2017, is training six residents per year over a three-year period. Additionally, MCW created a new three-year family residency program in Green Bay in conjunction with Prevea Health and Hospital Sisters Health System; the inaugural class of residents began on July 1, 2021 and currently trains four residents per year. Further, in July 2015, MCW became an academic affiliate of the Fox Valley Family Medicine Residency Program in Appleton, Wis., which trains seven residents per year.

Concurrently, MCW leaders realized the need for additional residencies in psychiatry – as a 2012 analysis by the state determined that Wisconsin needed more than 200 additional psychiatrists to address shortages. With state and VA funding support, new four-year mental health training programs were launched in July 2017 that train three residents per year in central Wisconsin and four residents per year in northern Wisconsin, which has increased the training of psychiatrists in the state by more than 40 percent. Thirty-five psychiatrists have been trained to date, with 28 practicing in Wisconsin – 25 of whom practice in rural areas.

Dr. Raymond recognizes the significance of this more than 14-year journey to regional medical education, noting, “The success of our regional campuses is a direct result of the new partnerships that we have built with health systems, educational institutions, the medical communities, and leaders of central and northeastern Wisconsin. We are grateful for our shared commitment to address healthcare workforce shortages through novel programs and partnerships.”

Creating the MCW School of Pharmacy

In 2012, Dr. Raymond realized that creating a school of pharmacy would be an opportunity to enhance interprofessional education. “By working in partnership with MCW's medical school, we can



Dr. Raymond and Dr. MacKinnon at the latter's installation as founding dean of the MCW School of Pharmacy in 2016

teach pharmacists how to lay hands and a stethoscope on patients in a retail pharmacy setting. We're addressing a need for higher accessibility and higher competencies in the delivery of healthcare," he said at the time.

MCW's consideration for creating a school of pharmacy was driven in part by a projected shortfall of 157,000 pharmacists nationwide by 2020, and by the continuing maldistribution of pharmacists in Wisconsin's rural and underserved areas.

Following the completion of a feasibility study and an initial planning process, in late May 2015, MCW's trustees approved the creation of the new pharmacy school – one of the first in the country to offer a three-year Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree – with an expected opening in either 2017 or 2018. On June 1, MCW announced that it would open a school of pharmacy in Milwaukee to address an overall need for highly-qualified pharmacists who could provide expanded services as part of a healthcare team as well as a need to address pharmacist maldistribution in underserved communities in the state.

Dr. Raymond shared that the creation of the new pharmacy school was part of MCW's strategy to grow, diversify and build MCW's brand. "MCW's School of Pharmacy will be transformative in reshaping how pharmacists contribute to healthcare through our emphasis on interprofessional, team-based practice experiences," he said at the time. "It will address rapid changes in the pharmacy profession – including an increase in the aging population, impending retirements of many practicing pharmacists, and the continued demand for primary care and health services in rural and underserved urban areas. Also, our pharmacy students will be exposed to research and specialty practice in pharmacogenomics, pediatrics, cancer, mental health and other fields – and all the richness of an academic medical center."

COVER STORY



George E. MacKinnon III, PhD, MS, RPh, was named as founding dean of MCW's School of Pharmacy in late August 2015 and began at MCW a month later. At the time, Dr. MacKinnon was founding dean and professor of pharmacy, and vice provost for health sciences at Roosevelt University's College of Pharmacy in Chicago. Dr. MacKinnon had been involved in a leadership capacity in the establishment and accreditation of three new colleges of pharmacy in the US, making him an ideal leader for the MCW School of Pharmacy.

The inaugural class of 48 pharmacy students matriculated in August 2017. Since that time, MCW's School of Pharmacy has graduated 252 PharmDs from six cohorts, with approximately 66 percent pursuing residencies and fellowships across the US. In each given cohort, between 64 and 80 percent of those pursuing PGY1 residencies have continued their training in Wisconsin.

Building Community Partnerships During COVID-19 and Beyond

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic – and MCW leaders saw both a need and an opportunity for response. The **need** was for someone with a steady voice from the medical and scientific community who could provide credible, understandable information to the people of metropolitan Milwaukee and the state on the pandemic, its spread and the latest fact-based scientific information. The **opportunity** was for Dr. Raymond – a leader with the knowledge, credentials and community stature – to take on the role.

Concurrently, MCW had received a call from the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) asking if Dr. Raymond could participate in a webinar on COVID-19 for the business community. He agreed. Dr. Raymond later told the *Milwaukee Business Journal* that while he preferred to work outside the spotlight, he embraced the public role he assumed in southeast Wisconsin, initially advising business leaders and later serving the public as a local voice of science and medicine. His mission included delivering responses to the infodemic of misinformation and disinformation in social media and sensationalized headlines in other outlets.

With Dr. Raymond on board to serve as a steady voice, he needed input about the messages to deliver – and key information channels had to be identified. Additionally, other COVID-19 experts within MCW needed to be trained regarding how to deliver scientific information to the public. MCW brought Tim Sheehy (then-president of the MMAC) and Milwaukee business leaders into the conversation to advise about what was needed from the business community to navigate the early days of the pandemic. Within days, a first webinar was held, focusing on the intersection of health and the economy. It turned into a daily 20-minute briefing that ran throughout the summer of 2020; more than 200 in total were produced with various stakeholders around the region and beyond.

"Dr. Raymond became an early, instrumental and trusted voice with these business leaders," Sheehy recalls. "We asked him for the facts around COVID, and how it was transmitted and what he



Dr. Raymond participated in the May 29, 2020, Wisconsin CEO Leadership Series Webinar

Throughout the historic health crisis of COVID, Dr. Raymond, with his steady, fact-first presence, provided the strongest tether to anchor this community. On behalf of thousands of business leaders and employers searching for what to do to protect and prepare their employees, we will always owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Raymond and his MCW colleagues.

– Tim Sheehy, former president, MMAC

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

MCW saw the opportunity to share objective information and dispel misinformation – and Dr. Raymond, with his credibility and knowledge, was the most effective messenger to reach the public. In addition to the MMAC, Dr. Raymond worked with other business and professional groups statewide. Every Friday, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the Regional Leadership Council – representing economic centers across Wisconsin – hosted a COVID-19 CEO Leadership Series during which Dr. Raymond provided a medical update. MCW also provided webinars to the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Wisconsin Counties Association, Greater Milwaukee Committee, Hispanic community leaders, Black/African American community leaders and pastors, and state, local and regional government officials.

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

Dr. Raymond has made a significant and enduring contribution to Wisconsin private higher education through his leadership on the WAICU Board of Directors. His guidance, commitment to advancing our strategic plan, and personal support and wise counsel have been invaluable.

– Eric W. Fulcomer, PhD, President and CEO
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges
and Universities (WAICU)

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

Under Dr. Raymond's leadership during the pandemic, MCW spearheaded numerous projects and initiatives to keep the Milwaukee region safe and informed. Among these were:

- MCW medical students assembled 80,000 face masks made of surgical mask material, which were distributed to underresourced communities.
- MCW's COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic, staffed predominantly by approximately 50 pharmacy students and MCW pharmacy faculty, administered more than 20,000 vaccinations – nearly 12,500 of which to members of the external community.
- MCWs' advocacy in the state legislature resulted in the passage of Act 98 in December 2021, enabling pharmacy students to provide immunizations earlier in their pharmacy matriculation.
- Comprehensive communications were launched to provide valuable vaccination information to vulnerable communities across the region.

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

Community leaders noted that Dr. Raymond responded calmly with authority, serving as a trusted voice for the community in a time of crisis. He not only represented MCW, but more importantly, represented Wisconsin by giving people the

information they needed to move forward, run their businesses and run their lives. Sheehy recalls, "If there was a takeaway, it was that the Medical College of Wisconsin played a preeminent role in making sure that Milwaukee got through the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic."

ThriveOn King: A Vision Fulfilled

On June 6, 2024, the ThriveOn Collaboration, a joint venture among MCW, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and Royal Capital, hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the completion and occupancy of the administrative floors of ThriveOn King – the partners' foundational investment in the restoration and redevelopment of the iconic Gimbels-Schuster's Department Store building in the heart of Milwaukee's Historic King Drive district.

The gathering also celebrated the work of hundreds of partners and community members who are bringing the building to life. ThriveOn's vision is for a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all – and ThriveOn King is a physical manifestation of that vision.

The seeds for the ThriveOn Collaboration/ThriveOn King were planted in August 2016, when frustration over socioeconomic disparities in Milwaukee's inner city reached a boiling point, resulting in civil unrest in Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood. This turbulence prompted internal discussions at MCW, followed by meetings with community leaders to determine how MCW could best use its resources to address the disparities.



Dr. Raymond speaks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for ThriveOn King, June 6, 2024



On August 18, 2016, MCW’s executive leaders disseminated an institution-wide email that reflected on the recent events, both locally and nationally, and how to best move forward. “When we are faced with events such as those of this past week, it punctuates and highlights the importance of the work that MCW and our partners undertake across the city and state. Thus, we must continue to focus on the needs of our community. We can, and should, do more,” the email stated.

It further read, “Just as these events impact many individuals, it will take many to develop and implement solutions. To that end, we must take the time to listen to the individuals who are most affected – to fully understand what resources, programs and support will be impactful and sustainable.”

The turbulence prompted internal discussions at MCW as well as meetings with community leaders to determine how MCW could use its resources to address the disparities. Dr. Raymond said at the time, “MCW needs to reinvigorate our highly visible commitment to the communities we serve. To that end, we are planning to invest in a building in or near downtown Milwaukee that would house most of our community-facing programs and would serve as a front door for our faculty to interact with colleagues and partners.”

He added that MCW wanted the geographic focus of the new facility to be within ZIP codes that had a large concentration of African Americans, as those areas had a high burden of poverty, health disparities, unemployment and fragmented resources.

In May 2017, Dr. Raymond shared that MCW was in the earliest exploratory phases of assessing the feasibility of leasing or acquiring a 100,000–150,000–square–foot facility in or close to downtown Milwaukee that could house community-facing programs and serve as an interactive space for community partnerships, noting the possibility of sharing the space with other not-for-profit entities. In August, he invited community leaders to serve on the MCW “Community Front Door Task Force” which would explore the possibility of creating a substantial physical presence for MCW in Milwaukee by providing direction on strategic goals, guiding principles, planning and implementation.

In March 2018, MCW announced that it had hired Milwaukee real estate

developer Royal Capital as its site selection consultant to help find and analyze potential locations, discuss needs and potential plans with prospective partners, community organizations, neighborhood leaders and residents, and to make recommendations about how to best finance, govern and sustain the project.

A priority was to locate the facility in a Milwaukee neighborhood with a population that faced significant health disparities and socioeconomic needs while also possessing other assets that could be leveraged to advance positive change. MCW sought to partner with like-minded organizations that had similar goals and had demonstrated a commitment within the same Milwaukee neighborhood where MCW would locate its facility. In late 2018, MCW found such a partner in the Greater Milwaukee Foundation – Wisconsin’s largest community foundation – which announced it would join with MCW by relocating its headquarters to the new site.

Dr. Raymond said at that time, “Collaborating with like-minded partners helps create solutions for our community’s biggest challenges, and we are grateful for the opportunity to partner with the



Greater Milwaukee Foundation. This collaboration aligns our missions and will spark catalytic changes in the community through addressing social, economic and environmental factors that are key to improving health.”

On March 26, 2019, MCW and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF) announced that they had selected a location for MCW’s initiative and GMF’s headquarters: the iconic Gimbels–Schuster’s Department Store building located in Milwaukee’s Halyard Park neighborhood. The building also would house MCW’s community-facing programs, space for service-learning opportunities for MCW students, office space for other organizations, an early childhood education center, a wellness center, 90 units of mixed-income housing and a parking structure.

In February 2020, MCW and GMF signed a generational lease with Royal Capital, and the partnership’s website went live. In his July 1, 2020, *Letter from the President*, Dr. Raymond updated the MCW community, saying, “We are implementing a place-based investment strategy in the Halyard Park, Brewer’s Hill and Harambee neighborhoods to inspire others and spur broad investment and access to communities that are disproportionately affected by the many disparities that limit our potential as a community.”

On September 10, 2020, the community-centered partnership announced that it had chosen the name, “ThriveOn Collaboration,” and that it was continuing deep resident and stakeholder engagement to inform priorities and investments for supporting a thriving King Drive corridor and its connected neighborhoods.

“The ThriveOn Collaboration champions a vision for a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all. Achieving this vision will require partnerships with the community, focus on places where investment has been scarce and supporting people of color, especially African Americans, who are disproportionately affected by health and social disparities,” according to the news release. Dr. Raymond was quoted as saying, “By honoring this community’s history, culture and people, and by listening and collaborating every step of the way, we hope to accomplish our



Dr. Raymond with community members of the ThriveOn Collaboration, 2020

shared mission to support and sustain a united, equitable, thriving community.”

ThriveOn’s initiative was built on five key pillars based on community input: early childhood education; health and wellness; economic opportunity; housing; and social cohesion. These pillars guided the selection of ThriveOn King’s tenant partners.

On January 26, 2021, ThriveOn announced “ThriveOn King” as the name of its physical home. Created through strong neighborhood input, the ThriveOn King name honors the spirit of its significant location and pays reverence to the history and legacy of those who have brought pride and vibrancy to the community for generations. As the construction planning and organization phase commenced, ThriveOn sponsored virtual job fairs, open house tours and other intentional efforts to ensure a high level of economic empowerment for the adjacent neighborhoods.

Following delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic and finalizing a unique financing model, on June 7, 2022, the ThriveOn Collaboration announced the official start of construction on ThriveOn King, with occupancy expected in early 2024.

In April 2024, GMF moved into its 28,000-square-foot office space on

ThriveOn King’s fourth floor. Half of the Foundation’s space is dedicated to the organization’s approximately 70 employees, while the other half is set up as a large high-tech gathering space for community organizations. Throughout that next month, 10 of MCW’s community engagement programs moved their offices into two floors of the building.

At the ThriveOn King ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 6, 2024, Dr. Raymond said, “What we have here is a local inspiration, a national model and a dream come true. I thank everyone for being here to celebrate what is a dream that is beyond anything any of the partners imagined. This building has become something we should all be proud of and that can serve as a national model for partnership.”

ThriveOn King reflects and honors the community it serves. Public spaces are being named for distinguished African American leaders past and present through an innovative community-designed opportunity for donor partnership. Community residents and other stakeholders nominated 48 leaders who have, or have had, a lasting impact on the Halyard Park, Harambee and Brewer’s Hill neighborhoods surrounding ThriveOn King.

Dr. Raymond’s leadership is characterized by the courage to pursue new opportunities when the outcomes have the potential to be transformative. His agreement to align MCW in partnership with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and Royal Capital to form the ThriveOn Collaboration required deep trust and long-term vision, and we are already seeing how our collective, place-based investments are changing lives and benefiting the broader community.

– Gregory M. Wesley, JD, President and CEO, Greater Milwaukee Foundation



More than 20 local artists are bringing the history, heritage and culture of Milwaukee's Bronzeville neighborhood to life through their artistic creations displayed on ThriveOn King's first floor. From tile to embroidery, painting to sculpture, the art of ThriveOn King varies in size, medium and placement.

Collectively, however, the works immerse guests in the legacy, vibrancy and potential of Milwaukee's Black community.

Kinship Community Food Center – which serves residents in the Riverwest and Harambee neighborhoods – operates a signature café in ThriveOn King. In addition to bringing healthy food options to the community hub, the nonprofit partner also provides a workforce training program for residents encountering barriers to employment.

Milwaukee BizTimes named ThriveOn King the nonprofit *Community Leader of Year* in December 2025, citing it as “a monumental milestone for the catalytic development aimed to lift up Milwaukee's underserved communities.”

As noted in a 2025 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* opinion editorial, Dr. Raymond and his colleagues wrote, “It quickly became clear that ThriveOn King was much more than a building. It was a living, breathing concept coursing through the arteries and veins of an underserved community. The shared investment in the project became an authentic investment in the people and surrounding neighborhoods.”

Enhancing the Milwaukee Campus and Milwaukee Regional Medical Center Infrastructure

From the early stages of his tenure, Dr. Raymond invested in MCW's long-term health and growth. The most visible of these investments were infrastructure changes on the MCW-Milwaukee campus.

In 2012, MCW's trustees approved funding for, among other things, enhancements to facilities that supported the institution's educational mission. This included a renovation of the human anatomy lab, (renamed the form and function lab) and construction of the Discovery Classroom (DC). The DC is a versatile education space that can accommodate up to 240 students in a

pod-style set-up designed to promote collaboration and interaction among learners. It also offers numerous display monitors for effective presentations and group discussions.

In 2017, MCW completed construction of a professional office building that houses up to 1,200 faculty and staff who, at the time, had office space in Froedtert Hospital and within the adjacent main buildings on the Milwaukee campus. Named the Hub for Collaborative Medicine, it provides 322,300 square feet of space over nine stories and includes a two-story administrative wing.

“The Hub brings our clinicians together and in closer proximity to our research, educational and community engagement endeavors, and promotes clinical growth

and an improved patient experience while preserving space for future expansion on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC) campus. And it has served as a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining top talent,” Dr. Raymond shares.

In 2023, MCW completed renovation of approximately 100,000 square feet of the 45-year-old Basic Science Building. This investment in the research enterprise enhanced the lab space and provided more opportunity for collaboration and connectivity, made the space more flexible and adaptable, and increased the amount of sunlight that came into the space.

In August 2025, MCW opened the doors to the new Center for Cancer Discovery (CCD), a 161,00-square-foot facility located

Center for Forensic Science and Protective Medicine

Beginning in 2015, Dr. Raymond led conversations, brought potential collaborating partners together and worked to secure funding for a facility on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus that would provide educational opportunities in the forensic sciences, positively impact each of MCW's four missions and create larger societal benefit through workforce development.

His vision is coming to fruition with the opening of the Center for Forensic Science and Protective Medicine in April 2026. The new four-story, 217,000-square-foot building, located adjacent to MCW's Milwaukee campus, brings together the state of Wisconsin's Milwaukee Crime Lab, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management, and Versiti Wisconsin's Organ Procurement Organization and Tissue Bank. MCW is leasing the land for the building but does not have any office space or programs located within the facility.

“Our consistent engagement in these conversations has provided future opportunities for MCW as well as the larger community, and has shown to the state and the region that MCW can participate in economic development and that we can bring partners together that have not been able to work well together in the past,” Dr. Raymond says.



on the Milwaukee campus that represents MCW's most significant investment in accelerating discovery. The CCD is designed for collaboration, featuring scientific "neighborhoods" organized by the center's scientific focus areas. Shared labs, meeting spaces and centralized shared resources support seamless interaction and high-impact science. It is the only building in the region dedicated entirely to cancer research.

"Dr. Raymond has been an anchor for the city's business and civic community . . . Milwaukee is a healthier, stronger and more connected community because of his extraordinary dedication and humanity."

– Julia Taylor, former president
Greater Milwaukee Committee

Currently, MCW is developing plans to build student housing on the Milwaukee campus, which Dr. Raymond views as an investment in MCW's fiscal sustainability and long-term institutional value. "This project connects the dots on so many levels," Dr. Raymond says. "It will enhance the campus environment, offer a new tool for recruitment and engagement and show that we are good community partners. It also will offer economic impact for the surrounding city and improve our bottom line." The project is anticipated for occupancy in spring 2028. (See story on page 5.)

Dr. Raymond also has made a new Eye Institute building a top construction priority. The current building was built in 1976 and has outlived its useful life. Dr. Raymond and MCW's government relations team helped secure a \$10 million state of Wisconsin grant to jump-start construction as part of the 2025–27 budget.

Throughout his tenure, Dr. Raymond also has been instrumental in spearheading infrastructure enhancements on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus.

Dr. Raymond has served MCW well for the past 16 years, building essential community partnerships, bolstering our statewide healthcare workforce, and helping to build a healthier state for us all – all while advancing medical knowledge through his own critical research. I thank him for his great work and wish him the best in his next chapter.

– Tony Evers, Governor, State of Wisconsin

In 2016, MCW, Children's Wisconsin and Froedtert Hospital acquired a coal-fueled thermal plant located within the MRMC from the WEC Energy Group.

Steam generation and chilled water are essential for the entities' operations, and the purchase provided the partners with oversight of these resources. They invested \$200 million to upgrade the plant to gas-burning (increasing boiler capacity and adding redundancies to ensure consistent service) and added chilling towers. In 2022, the partners also acquired the water distribution system for the MRMC campus.

According to Dr. Raymond, these investments will save the partners more than \$500 million over 30 years – benefits that will accrue to the member institutions, the environment, people and programs.

In 2020, the MRMC partners purchased 202 acres of land on the Milwaukee County grounds from Milwaukee County to secure the acreage for future development.

MCW also holds options to purchase a parcel of land along Watertown Plank Road, between 92nd Street and Interstate 41 to the west.

As part of the 2020 land purchase, the MRMC partners own the streets on which their respective buildings are located, and worked together to reconstruct 87th Street in 2021, 92nd Street in 2024 and 95th Street in 2025.

The work along 87th Street resulted in a much cleaner, straighter roadway along the front entrance of MCW that allowed for bicycle and turn lanes as well as a safer pedestrian experience.

"Between the acquisition of the thermal plant, the water supply and water distribution system, we gained control of the assets that are critically important to our missions, and the land is among the most valuable real estate in Wisconsin," Dr. Raymond shares. "This has enabled us to control our own destiny."

I am deeply proud of the research, education and practice partnerships our institutions have built over the past 15 years, made possible in large part by Dr. Raymond's steady, courageous leadership and commitment to collaboration. He has strengthened MCW's impact on public health, talent development, and the healthcare profession, and he deserves meaningful recognition for that work.

– Mark A. Mone, PhD, Chancellor Emeritus,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Looking Toward the Future

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.

While Dr. Raymond will step away from his executive leadership position in the coming months, he plans to remain on the MCW faculty as a practicing nephrologist.

"MCW is on a clear upward trajectory in all our missions and in the value that we deliver to our stakeholders," Dr. Raymond shares. "MCW's future is bright, and I am confident that our new leadership team will take us to unprecedented levels of achievement and impact." ■

Authors' Note: More about Dr. Raymond's exceptional leadership and countless contributions can be found in *Knowledge Changing Life: A History of the Medical College of Wisconsin, 1893–2019* (published in 2021) and *The Medical College of Wisconsin: The COVID Years and Beyond* (to be published shortly) – both of which were written by Richard Katschke, MCW's chief historian. MCW Magazine, published three times per year, and available at mcw.edu/departments/mcw-magazine, also contains detailed coverage of Dr. Raymond's impactful legacy.



The Heart of Leadership: Leading with Heart

Throughout his 16-year tenure, Dr. Raymond has been recognized by faculty, staff, students and community leaders alike for his deep commitment to leading with heart: guiding, making decisions and interacting with others through compassion, empathy and authenticity – rather than relying solely on authority.

Dr. Raymond is held in high esteem for his dedication to the human side of leadership, such as valuing relationships, understanding others' perspectives and fostering a supportive, trust-driven environment. Among the many thousands of letters Dr. Raymond has received during his years at MCW, hundreds pay tribute to his exceptional, motivational and inspiring leadership as shared on this page.

Thank you for your thoughtful and compassionate message.

**Thank you for
sharing your
poignant thoughts
and personal
responses to all
that is happening
around us.**

*Thank you again
for your continued
support in allowing
employees to share
their opinions
and perspectives.*

Thank you so
much for your
message of care
and support.
It is so very
meaningful.



Continue your
admirable and
heartfelt work.
We are lucky
to have you at
the helm.

*Thank you for
your message.
I hear your
virtuous heart
and good soul.*

Thank you greatly
for your leadership
and efforts to offer
guidance, wisdom
and clarity.