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SUMMER 2024

# MCW *magazine*

## ThriveOn King: A Vision Fulfilled



# MCW

magazine

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## Office of Alumni Relations

alumni@mcw.edu / (414) 955-4780

## MCW MAGAZINE STAFF

Sara L. Wilkins, MA, MPA – *Executive Editor*  
 Lisa Bergman – *Graphic Designer*  
 Lyniece Rzepka – *Web Production Senior Consultant*

## Contributing Writers:

Melissa Behling, Anthony Braza, Greg Calhoun, Chris Combs,  
 Richard Katschke, Alex Krouse, Caroline Ladd,  
 Michael J. Mathias, Rebecca Schulz, Karri Stock, Sara Wilkins

## Senior Vice President for University Engagement and Strategic Planning: Mara Lord, MBA

## Vice President and Chief Development Officer: Jason Kraiss

## Vice President for Marketing and Communications: Mary M. Reinke, MBA, MS

## CONTACT US

Phone: (414) 955-8016; E-mail: MCWmagazine@mcw.edu

Medical College of Wisconsin  
 8701 Watertown Plank Rd.  
 Milwaukee, WI 53226

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## LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

# Spring Celebrations

Spring 2024 was a time for many celebrations at the Medical College of Wisconsin, including the achievement of a significant milestone for our institution and the Milwaukee community as a whole.

On March 5, the MCW Cancer Center hosted an on-campus gathering to give students, researchers and community members alike an opportunity to “put their names” on future cancer breakthroughs by signing a celebratory beam that will become part of the permanent feature of the new MCW cancer research building, anticipated to be completed in 2025 (see story on pages 22–23).

In March and April, we continued our strong record of “matching” our graduating medical and pharmacy students into postgraduate year one (PGY1) positions well above the national averages. The Match rate for MCW’s medical students going through the Match and the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program was an astounding 100 percent, with 37 percent remaining in Wisconsin for PGY1 residency training. Ninety-six percent of MCW’s participating pharmacy students matched into PGY1 positions, with 64 percent continuing their training in the state.

On May 17, we celebrated the graduation of 331 students from our Milwaukee-based schools: 35 PharmD degrees; 182 MD degrees and 6 MD/MS dual degrees; and 108 graduate degrees (including the inaugural class in the Doctor of Public Health program and the second graduating classes of our Master of Arts in Biostatistics and Data Science, Master of Science in Genetic Counseling and Master of Precision Medicine programs). On May 24, MCW–Central Wisconsin conferred 15 MD degrees, and on May 30, MCW–Green Bay awarded 26 MD degrees. (See page 10 for the medical school’s residency distribution map and Commencement photos, and page 13 for information on the pharmacy school match.)

Also in May, Daisy Sahoo, PhD, was installed as the fourth dean of the MCW School of Graduate Studies – becoming the first woman dean of any MCW school. She was profiled on page 8 of the Spring 2024 issue of *MCW Magazine*.

We celebrated a significant milestone on June 6 when 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 – our 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 helping bring the building to life. The ThriveOn Collaboration’s vision is for a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all – and ThriveOn King is a physical manifestation of what that vision can become. (See cover story on pages 14–21.)

We look forward to many more celebrations and milestones in the coming year, and 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. ■

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

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



**“The Collaboration’s vision is for a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all – and ThriveOn King is a physical manifestation of what that vision can become.”**



# CONTENTS



## COVER STORY

---

14 / THRIVEON KING: A VISION FULFILLED

---

8 / NEWS FOR ALUMNI

10 / 2024 COMMENCEMENT AND RESIDENCY DISTRIBUTION MAP

11 / GRAD STUDENT LEVERAGES THE POWER OF REAL ESTATE TO DEVELOP HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

12 / EMBEDDED PHARMACISTS ACROSS HEALTHCARE TEAMS AND RESIDENCY MATCH RESULTS

22 / BEAM SIGNING: "PUTTING THEIR NAMES" ON FUTURE CANCER BREAKTHROUGHS

24 / CAN PREECLAMPSIA BE PREVENTED?

26 / FRIENDS OF MCW MARKS 55 YEARS OF SERVICE

28 / ROBERT ANDERSON, MD '83, FEL '89

29 / SAPNA BAMRAH MORRIS, MD '99, MBA

## FEATURES

---

4-7 / STAT REPORT

30-31 / ALUMNI NOTES

32-34 / IN MEMORIAM AND SPECIAL REMEMBRANCES

35 / CHANGE AGENT

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*MCW complies with all federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances prohibiting discrimination in private post-secondary education institutions including Title IX amendments, and will promptly address any such discrimination of which its Office of Equal Access is notified.*

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS: Melissa Behling, Meg Bilicki, Lee Dickert, Darren Hauck, Jim Moy, Dale Reince, Chris Verhyen, Sara Wilkins

**ON THE COVER:** 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 helping bring the building to life. Speakers included (l-r) Dalvery Blackwell; David Crowley; Ellen Gilligan; Greg Wesley; Ken Robertson; Kevin Newell; and Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr. (See cover story on pages 14-21.) (Photo courtesy of Sara L. Wilkins.)

# STAT REPORT

## 500 Stars Initiative Receives Federal Funding



In April 2024, President Joe Biden signed into law the Fiscal Year 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill. The bill included \$500,000 in one-time funds for MCW's CTSI 500 Stars project. The earmark was advanced by US Senator Tammy Baldwin and received bipartisan support in Congress.

The CTSI (Clinical and Translational Institute of Southeast Wisconsin) 500 Stars Initiative is a paid summer internship program for middle school, high school, undergraduate and graduate students offering hands-on professional, career training and educational opportunities in clinical and translational sciences.

The CTSI 500 Stars Initiative is a 10-year, comprehensive, multi-institutional and community-focused, education and workforce diversity plan, with the overarching objective of replenishing, while increasing diversity in the translational science workforce.

The CTSI, which was founded in 2010, comprises Children's Wisconsin, Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center, Froedtert Hospital, Marquette University, MCW, Milwaukee School of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin. The CTSI is a critical priority for MCW, as the institution continues to differentiate itself through transformative research, discovery and preeminent scholarship. ■

## Dr. Callisia Clark Named to National Cancer Advisory Board



In May 2024, President Joe Biden announced his intent to appoint Callisia N. Clarke, MD, MCW associate professor of surgery and chief of surgical oncology, to be a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB).

The NCAB plays an important role in guiding the director of the National Cancer Institute in setting the course for the national cancer research program, including investing in research and development that will help advance breakthroughs to prevent, detect and treat diseases like cancer.

“I am really proud and excited to see MCW on this stage,” says Dr. Clarke. “We have always known what great care we take of patients and our passion for cancer care and equity. I hope to champion our values as broadly as possible once appointed to this role.”

Dr. Clarke joined the MCW faculty in 2016. Her research efforts center on epigenetic regulation of pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors and surgical workforce diversification as a means to ameliorate cancer disparities. Dr. Clarke is nationally recognized as an expert in cancer disparities and management of gastroenteropancreatic neuroendocrine tumors, and holds several leadership positions in national organizations. ■

## Dr. Curt Sigmund Receives Prestigious National Award

Curt D. Sigmund, PhD, the James J. Smith & Catherine Welsch Smith Chair of Physiology, chair of the MCW department of physiology and associate director of the Cardiovascular Center, was honored with the 2024 *Presidential Outstanding Service Award* from the American Physiological Society (APS).

This award recognizes an APS member for extended and outstanding volunteer service to the society and the APS community.

Dr. Sigmund’s service to the APS began in 1994 as an associate editor for the *American Journal of Physiology: Endocrinology and Metabolism*. He went on to become editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Physiology-Regulatory, Integrated and Comparative Physiology* and, later, chair of the publications committee. He also has chaired the joint program committee and served as an elected member of APS Council. Dr. Sigmund’s service to the physiological community extends internationally, including as a past chair of the International Union of Physiological Sciences Genomics Commission. ■



## Dr. Ian Martin Elected to the AACEM Executive Board

Ian B. K. Martin, MD, professor and chair of MCW’s department of emergency medicine and emergency physician-in-chief for the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network, has been named president-elect of the Association of Academic Chairs of Emergency Medicine (AACEM).

Dr. Martin previously served terms as secretary-treasurer and as an at-large member of AACEM’s board and began his one-year term as president-elect in May.

The AACEM is the premier organization supporting academic chairs of emergency medicine as they lead innovative research, medical education, clinical care and faculty development in their institutions. ■





## CIC Launches New Division of Alcohol Policy, Prevention and Research

**M**CW's Comprehensive Injury Center (CIC) has launched a new division of alcohol policy, prevention and research which will work with other departments at MCW and other institutions and coalitions across Wisconsin to support policy, systems and environmental change that prevent and reduce excessive alcohol use and its associated harms in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Alcohol Policy Project, which supports local elected leaders, public health professionals and others as they identify local alcohol-related issues and implement policies to address them, will live within the new division and continue supporting prevention work around reducing excessive alcohol use with training, tools and technical assistance. ■



## Dr. Brandon Tefft Receives CAREER Award from the NSF



**B**randon J. Tefft, PhD, assistant professor of biomedical engineering in the Marquette-MCW joint department of biomedical engineering, has been awarded a \$572,770 CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a project seeking to reduce the need for repeat surgery for individuals with congenital heart valve defects and increase the visibility and reputation of scientific innovation and discovery to students in the Milwaukee area. The NSF's Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program provides prestigious awards to early-career faculty, aiming to foster leadership in research and education within their department or organization.

Children born with congenital heart defects often require repeat valve replacement over a lifetime, as the original valve replacement does not grow over time with the size of the heart of its host. Dr. Tefft seeks to use a novel origami-inspired approach to engineer a degradable scaffold for generating living heart

valve replacements. This approach will address valve durability obstacles present in current valve replacement options. Dr. Tefft will then populate the scaffold using cells derived from host umbilical cord blood, which can be engineered to develop into the types of cells normally found in human heart valves. This novel approach is anticipated to produce a growing heart valve solution superior in structure and function, thereby reducing the need for repeat surgery as the patient grows. Joy Lincoln, PhD, MCW professor and associate chief of pediatric cardiology, and the congenital heart disease tissue bank at the Herma Heart Institute of Children's Wisconsin, are integral collaborators on the project.

Dr. Tefft is the director of the Cardiovascular Regenerative Engineering Laboratory, also known as the CaRE Lab, which specializes in cardiovascular regenerative engineering, cardiovascular device design, tissue engineered vascular grafts, heart valves and biomedical nanotechnology. ■

## MCW Cancer Center Leads Groundbreaking Change in Medicare Policy

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recently issued a decision to expand Medicare coverage for allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplants (HCT) for eligible Medicare patients with myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS). This decision was based on decades-long research led by investigators at the MCW Cancer Center, in collaboration with investigators in the Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network (BMT CTN) and advocacy experts at the American Society of Hematology, American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy and the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). MDS is a group of cancers that affect the body's ability to produce healthy blood cells. Allogeneic HCT is the only curative therapy for patients with MDS.

"Until now, patients 65 and older with Medicare did not receive coverage for HCT, largely due to limited clinical research demonstrating that transplantations benefited patients in older age brackets," says Douglas Rizzo, MD, MS '05, senior scientific director of the Center for



International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR), a research affiliation of MCW and NMDP, and cancer service line director for the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network.

"We used our expertise in transplantation and the CIBMTR and BMT CTN research platforms to develop observational and interventional trials that would serve as a mechanism for gathering evidence to inform Medicare payment policy. For the first time in history, this made it possible for Medicare beneficiaries with MDS to enroll for treatment at

transplant centers across the country and get coverage to support their care," Dr. Rizzo adds. "In the first three years after Medicare agreed to provide coverage conditional on participating in approved studies, the number of transplants more than quadrupled."

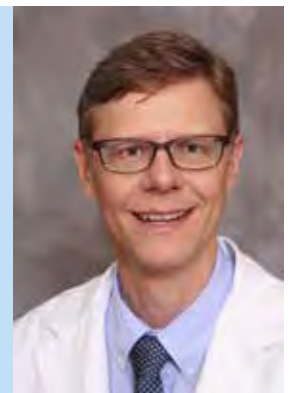
Since then, studies on MDS led by MCW and in collaboration with investigators from other institutions participating in the CIBMTR and BMT CTN have provided access to transplants for nearly 6,000 Americans with MDS over the age of 65. ■

## Dr. Mark Hohenwarter Named Executive Director of MCWAH, and DIO

Mark D. Hohenwarter, MD, GME '98, FEL '99, MCW professor of radiology, program director of diagnostic radiology residency and associate program director of interventional radiology-integrated residency, has been named executive director and designated institutional official (DIO) of the Medical College of Wisconsin Affiliated Hospitals (MCWAH) and associate dean for graduate medical education at MCW.

Dr. Hohenwarter's appointment follows an internal search and reflects his exemplary leadership in the interim role of MCWAH's executive director and DIO – a position he had held since November 2022.

In the permanent position, Dr. Hohenwarter will continue to work in collaboration with the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) to oversee all Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited programs sponsored by MCWAH and to ensure compliance with all program requirements. Additionally, Dr. Hohenwarter will continue to serve as the chair of the GMEC and is responsible for submitting its Annual Institutional Review to the MCWAH board of directors. ■



# NEWS

## FOR ALUMNI

### Expanding Our Outreach to Alumni

On behalf of the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association, I extend congratulations to the incredibly resilient Class of 2024 from the School of Graduate Studies, the School of Medicine and the School of Pharmacy! Many of these graduates matriculated in 2020 as the world was reimagining everything we do. They thrived in this environment because they were open to new information and receiving knowledge through different platforms with innovative ways of learning.



**The MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association is an important resource to our alumni, fostering a lifetime connection to MCW . . .**

— Dr. Betty Pace

Together with fellow association board members, we were proud to be a part of the very special graduation events celebrating the achievements of our graduates and the conferral of their academic degrees. We welcome all the new graduates to our accomplished MCW alumni community.

It has been an honor to have served MCW alumni. It's been a wonderful journey, and I am thankful to Angela Nelson for reaching out to share the executive committee's nomination in 2020. The MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association is an important resource to our alumni, fostering a lifetime connection to MCW by continually working to expand its outreach to alumni, offering professional development opportunities and philanthropic opportunities, and ways to work directly with the next generation of physicians, scientists, pharmacists and healthcare providers training at MCW. All of these can be accessed through our monthly Alumni E-Newsletter and the ENGAGE platform, [www.mcwengage.com](http://www.mcwengage.com).

I would like to thank Drs. Raymond, Kerschner, MacKinnon and Sahoo for their tremendous commitment to the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association and the MCW alumni.

I welcome Thomas E. Palmer, MD '71, GME '76, FEL '85, who will assume the role of MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association president in September.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve a great association of very distinguished alumni. I am so grateful for your partnership in the work we do! I deeply appreciate those who have chosen a course of gratitude. Together, MCW alumni are vital to advancing MCW. ■



### Join us for Alumni Weekend!

- Friday, September 20, and Saturday, September 21, 2024.
- Celebrating the Medical School reunion classes of 2014, 2009, 2004, 1999, 1994, 1989, 1984, 1979, 1969 and 1964.
- Scan the QR Code to learn more and register online.
- Contact the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association [alumni@mcw.edu](mailto:alumni@mcw.edu) | (414) 955-4781.







**MCW Class of 1974 – 50<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion**

*SITTING: Dr. Gregory Gnad; FRONT ROW (l-r): Dr. Jan Turcotte; Dr. Donato Stingham; Dr. Paul Hankwitz; Dr. Martin Starkman; Dr. Raymond Sloan; Dr. H. Edmond Whiteley; Dr. Anthony Machi; Dr. Ann Quinn Bogard; Dr. John Hron. ROW 2 (l-r): Dr. Stuart Eisendrath; Dr. Glenn Kershaw; Dr. Richard Wagner. ROW 3 (l-r): Dr. Tim Buckley; Dr. Edwin Sakamoto; Dr. David Kiener; Dr. Lief Erickson, Jr.; Dr. Richard Marks. ROW 4 (l-r): Dr. Norton Winer; Dr. Cynthia Bauer; Dr. William Dolan; Dr. Robert Ginsberg; Dr. Peter Gordon; Dr. Steven Bergin; Dr. William Brusky.*



*Alumni and guests visit the MCW STAR Center during their student-led Milwaukee campus tour.*



*Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr., connects with MCW alumni during the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Leadership Brunch.*



*FRONT ROW (l-r): Dr. Donato Stingham; Dr. Ann Quinn Bogard; Dr. Jan Turcotte. ROW 2 (l-r): Dr. Cynthia Bauer; Dr. Edwin Sakamoto; Dr. Stuart Eisendrath; Dr. Lief Erickson, Jr.; Dr. Raymond Sloan; Dr. H. Edmond Whiteley; Dr. Steven Bergin; Dr. Richard Marks; BACK ROW (l-r): Dr. William Dolan; Dr. Tim Buckley; Dr. William Brusky; Dr. Richard Wagner.*



*(l-r) Dr. Steven Bergin; Dr. H. Edmond Whiteley; Dr. Donato Stingham; and Dr. Edwin Sakamoto stand in front of their 1974 class photo.*

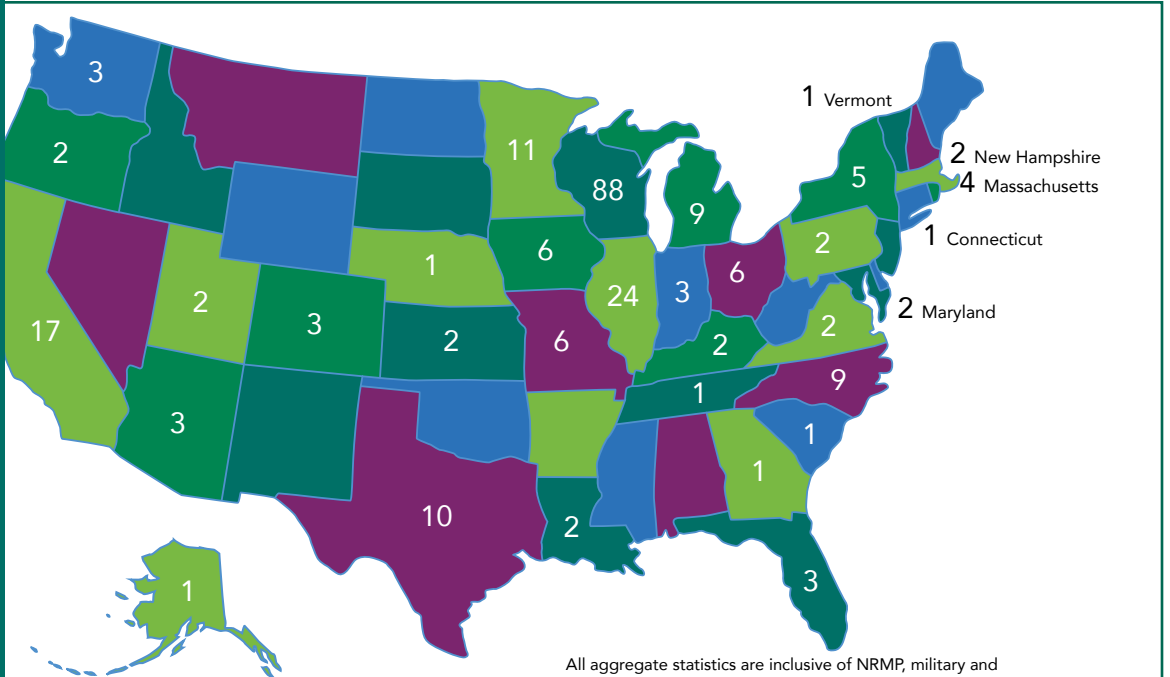


# Congratulations, Graduates!



## Summary of PGY1 Programs

Anesthesiology	19
Child Neurology	2
Emergency Medicine	7
Family Medicine	26
Internal Medicine	50
Internal Medicine/Dermatology	1
Internal Medicine/Pediatrics	4
Internal Medicine/Psychiatry	2
Interventional Radiology (Integrated)	1
Medicine-Preliminary	1
Neurology	5
Obstetrics and Gynecology	7
Ophthalmology	5
Orthopaedic Surgery	7
Otolaryngology	8
Pathology-Anatomic and Clinical	1
Pediatrics	18
Pediatrics/Anesthesiology	1
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	1
Plastic Surgery (Integrated)	5
Psychiatry	18
Radiology-Diagnostic	1
Surgery-General	23
Surgery-Preliminary	5
Transitional Year	16
Urology	1



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

## 2024 MCW RESIDENCY DISTRIBUTION

# Leveraging the Power of Real Estate to Develop Healthier Communities

**O**biageli (Oby) Nwabuzor, MBA, a third-year graduate student in MCW's Doctor of Public Health program, believes it is her mission in life to help people in Milwaukee flourish. Her career path in real estate development is enabling her – quite literally – to build healthier communities.

“There is a clear correlation between the built environment – which encompasses physical buildings, distribution systems and transportation systems – and health outcomes,” says Nwabuzor. “Real estate development has the potential to create built environments that spur economic activity, improve quality of life and increase life expectancy.”

Nwabuzor is taking an in-depth look into this intersection, as her dissertation focuses on the relationship among investment patterns, gentrification, displacement and racial mortality disparities. Born and raised on Milwaukee's north side, Nwabuzor understands firsthand the disparities that can exist between communities.

“There is a 10- to 12-year life expectancy gap between my childhood neighborhood and another one just 10 minutes away,” she says. “I want to focus my research to determine why that is and how the

social determinants of health driving this disparity can be influenced by real estate.” Nwabuzor will work on her PhD dissertation with the hope of collecting the requisite data to make recommendations about how to improve communities from a development standpoint.

Nwabuzor has an extensive educational background in real estate and business. She is an alumna of the prestigious Associates in Commercial Real Estate Program at Marquette University and the Urban Land Institute Health Leaders Network, received a certificate in commercial real estate from Cornell University, completed the Young American Leaders Program at Harvard University and holds an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University.

Her experience with the built environment, however, extends beyond academics. In 2019, she started Envision Growth, a Milwaukee-based real estate development firm focusing on projects that create a positive community impact in neighborhoods that face challenges.

The firm consults with developers to ensure that each new project takes into account access to food, healthcare, education and housing impact, and health and social equity for all the types of developments created.

Envision Growth already has worked on several significant projects to regenerate urban areas in Milwaukee. In July 2023, the firm was chosen as one of three to help develop 45 affordable homes for Milwaukee childcare workers. The project is part of a larger local effort to build 100 affordable homes annually on vacant city-owned lots. Envision Growth will help build 18 homes in the Bronzeville and Harambe neighborhoods, with the goal of beginning construction on the first home by year's end.



*Oby Nwabuzor is recognized at the 2022 Milwaukee Business Journal 40 Under 40 awards at the Miller High Life Theater.*

“Projects like this are extremely important because they're focused on the future of our community,” Nwabuzor says. “By building affordable homes for early childhood educators, we're setting up an environment that prioritizes children's education that can ultimately improve the quality of life for the next generation.”

Additionally, Nwabuzor was appointed to the Wisconsin Public Health Council in November 2022, where she helps make recommendations on areas of strategy and policy as they relate to public health in the state.

Ultimately, the driving force behind her academic studies, business ventures and public policy advocacy is her passion for helping to elevate the community in which she grew up. “I am a Black girl from Milwaukee's north side who is the daughter of Nigerian immigrants,” says Nwabuzor. “It's a beautiful thing to be able to use my knowledge and expertise to improve the city that made me who I am.” ■

– ALEX KROUSE



*(l-r) Maggie Beckley, Oby Nwabuzor and Melissa Allen are panelists at the 2022 Women Developing Wisconsin Conference | Fireside Talk Discussion on The Holistic Approach to Building a Community at the Milwaukee School of Engineering.*



# Embedded Pharmacists Across the Froedtert & MCW Healthcare Teams

Pharmacists, including faculty in the MCW School of Pharmacy, are medication experts who are constantly learning – as new medications continually come to market and new data is available to inform how existing medications should be used in various patient populations.

“Because I’m actively working in outpatient and inpatient settings and seeing what mental health treatment teams are doing in acute and chronic care, my lectures and examples I give to students speak a lot more powerfully than repeating information from a pharmacotherapy textbook,” says Kevin M. Bozyski, PharmD, BCPS, BCPP, a psychiatric pharmacist in the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin (F&MCW) health network and associate professor in the MCW School of Pharmacy.

A second School of Pharmacy faculty member who specializes in infectious diseases also works to infuse practical information into her curriculum. “I noticed when I became a hospital pharmacist that there was a disconnect between what I was learning in school and how medications are actually administered, as well as what could go wrong between the pharmacist verifying the prescription and someone giving the medication,” says Kristen Bunnell, PharmD, BCCCP, MCW associate professor.

MCW pharmacy students on the campus of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center can take the skywalk from their classrooms to Froedtert Hospital, a Level I trauma center. During clinical rotations, these students learn from pharmacists in specialized areas who see complex patient cases and also may be their professors. Thirty-two percent of MCW’s School of Pharmacy faculty are practicing pharmacists in the F&MCW system.

Another benefit of the F&MCW partnership is that guest lecturers from Froedtert bring their expertise into the MCW classrooms. During the 2023–2024 academic year, the MCW PharmD curriculum was enhanced by more than 140 guest lecturers from various partner health systems throughout Wisconsin who contributed more than 1,000 hours of teaching.

“The connection to Froedtert allows us to have powerful lectures based on firsthand experience,” says Zach Hovis, PharmD, BCACP, MCW assistant professor and clinical pharmacist in ambulatory care. “In my advanced cardiology course, cardiology pharmacists teach our students about how they have recently managed a patient experiencing a severe heart attack.”



*Dr. Ryan Feldman, assistant professor and emergency medicine pharmacist, and Ami Leigh Schmidt, PharmD '23, resident pharmacist, draw up medications in the Froedtert Hospital emergency department.*

## Access to Research Opportunities

Ryan Feldman, PharmD, BCPS, DABAT, MCW assistant professor, and Matthew Stanton, PharmD, BCPS, DABAT, MCW associate professor, both emergency medicine pharmacists at Froedtert Hospital, point out the world-class research opportunities for students on the academic medical center campus.

“It’s massively helpful to be colocated because I can walk across the hall and connect with pharmacy students who are interested in doing research,” says Dr. Feldman. “Early in their school careers, they can become involved in research initiatives or shadow to learn about what’s happening in the hospital’s emergency department. That’s not something you have access to at every pharmacy school.”

Erik Everton, PharmD '20, an alumnus of the inaugural School of Pharmacy class, worked with Dr. Feldman on a research project to cold-call pharmacies across the nation to ask if they knew about an abuse of a drug called loperamide. That study was published, accepted as a podium presentation at a national conference and became a steppingstone for Dr. Everton to begin his career in the pharmaceutical industry following his two-year fellowship.

Dr. Stanton worked with then-student Tracy Zook, PharmD '22, to review drug information on packet inserts for beta blockers and



It’s massively helpful to be colocated because I can walk across the hall and connect with pharmacy students who are interested in doing research. – Dr. Ryan Feldman





### MCW School of Pharmacy Celebrates Class of 2024 PharmD Recipients



In late May, the MCW School of Pharmacy conferred the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree on 35 students in the Class of 2024. A number of graduates are continuing their education through residencies and fellowships. Following the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Match, 22 of 23 participating students obtained postgraduate year one (PGY1) positions, yielding a 96 percent PGY1 match rate. Overall, 64 percent of these graduates are continuing their training in Wisconsin. An additional student also secured a postdoctoral fellowship position in the pharmaceutical industry.

found that the overdose sections were outdated and too broad. This study subsequently was presented at a national toxicology conference. Another student is repeating this research project reviewing package inserts for calcium channel blockers, and the FDA has shown interest in the research abstract.

### Preparing Students to Practice at the Top of Their Pharmacy Licenses

MCW pharmacy students engage in clinical rotations throughout all three years of the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum, with Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences every Friday during the first two years; then, as third-year students, they are immersed in Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences full-time.

“After some shadowing time, as students get more comfortable in their rotations, we’re getting them directly involved in patient care – from assisting with drug information for the providers to collecting medical histories and counseling patients on proper use of their medications,” says Zachary Pape, PharmD, BCACP, an ambulatory care cardiology clinical pharmacist and MCW assistant professor.

In psychiatric pharmacy rotations, students learn critical counseling skills beyond identifying the best medication and side effects that should be recognized.

“The pharmacist investigates what’s happening to the patient psychosocially and environmentally,” shares Dr. Bozymski. “If you’re not addressing what day-to-day things they’re doing in their routine and the coping skills they’re building, the medication alone will not make a difference.”

The Froedtert emergency department has received national attention for its progressive policies surrounding team-based care – which MCW pharmacy students observe and engage in during clinical rotations. The emergency medicine pharmacists have prescriptive authority and also can administer medications in the event of a large-scale emergency, allowing all team members to practice at the top of their education and licenses.

Dr. Feldman provides an example of a multivehicle crash that may occupy all nurses in the trauma bay. “We’ll step up to the bedside to suggest the dose, draw up the medication and give the patient the medication as well,” he says. “We’ll give 100 percent of the care and prevent people from experiencing catastrophic care gaps that would cause death or suffering.”

“We are doing every part of the medication use process,” adds Dr. Stanton. “We’re doing prescribing and transcribing to ensure that physicians are selecting the appropriate drug for the patient and administering the medication. The pharmacist giving the medication and seeing the effect it has on the patient – that’s something you can’t teach in the classroom.” ■ – MELISSA BEHLING

# ThriveOn King *A Vision Fulfilled*

*"A Local Inspiration, a National Model and a Dream Come True."*

By Holly Botsford,  
Richard N. Katschke  
and Sara L. Wilkins

**O**n June 6, 2024, the ThriveOn Collaboration ("the Collaboration"), a joint venture among the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), the Greater Milwaukee Foundation ("the Foundation") and Royal Capital (RC), 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 helping bring the building to life.

The Collaboration's vision is for a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all – and ThriveOn King is a physical manifestation of what that vision can become.

MCW, the Foundation and RC, along with the residents of the Halyard Park, Harambee and Brewer's Hill neighborhoods, are committed to working in partnership to make generational investments in Milwaukee communities with the ultimate goal of eliminating racial, health, economic and social disparities.

What follows is a brief history of events, spearheaded by MCW, that led to the creation of the ThriveOn Collaboration and, ultimately, ThriveOn King – the centerpiece of this community-centered, place-based collaboration.

## The Need Arises

Violence and protests swept the country during the summer of 2016, fueled in part by the fatal shootings of Black men in Louisiana and Minnesota by police officers.

Unrest simmered in Milwaukee throughout July 2016, culminating on August 13 when a riot began in the Sherman Park neighborhood, sparked by

the fatal police shooting of a 23-year-old Black male by a Black police officer.

During the three-day turmoil, several people – including police officers – were injured and dozens of protesters arrested. A nightly curfew was established for teenagers in the area.

On August 18, 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.

"Our institution's primary and deepest commitment is to the health of our communities – not just to the physical state of individuals, but also to their

mental and social well-being and that of society as a whole. 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 letter stated.

It further read, "Just as these events impact many individuals, it will take many to develop and implement solutions. Several decades of focus by MCW on the betterment of our communities have shown us that we can partner most effectively if we truly comprehend the needs of the individuals we serve. 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



*John Meurer, MD, MBA, then-professor and director of MCW's Institute for Health & Equity (second from right), facilitates a small group discussion with community members in August 2019.*





## Key Visionaries for ThriveOn King



**John R. Raymond, Sr., MD**  
President and Chief Executive Officer of the Medical College of Wisconsin



**Gregory M. Wesley, JD**  
MCW Senior Vice President for Strategic Alliances and Business Development (November 2016-July 2024). President and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (as of August 1, 2024)



**Kevin Newell**  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Royal Capital



**Ellen M. Gilligan**  
President and Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (July 2010-July 2024)



**Ken Robertson**  
Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (October 2020-August 2024)

with community leaders to determine how MCW could use its resources to address the disparities. John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, MCW president and CEO 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 have a large concentration of African Americans, as those areas have a high burden of poverty, health disparities, unemployment and fragmented resources. Dr. Raymond named Gregory M. Wesley, JD, then MCW’s senior vice president for strategic alliances and business development, to lead the planning and site selection for MCW’s Milwaukee location for its community-engaged programs.

Wesley was a respected leader in the Milwaukee community. Before joining MCW’s executive leadership team in 2016, he was an equity partner in the law firm of Gonzalez, Saggio and Harlan, LLP, and served as an MCW trustee from 2009–2016. Among other community leadership roles, he was co-chair of the Greater

Milwaukee Committee’s Downtown Task Force, a Milwaukee County Supplemental Court Commissioner, past president of the Wisconsin Association of African American Lawyers and former chair of the Milwaukee Urban League’s board of directors. In August 2024, Wesley began a new role as president and CEO of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

### The Seeds are Planted

In his May 2017 *Letter from the President* (disseminated MCW-wide), Dr. Raymond wrote 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 2017, Dr. Raymond 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. The objective was to bring together many of MCW’s community engagement programs

in a centralized, welcoming and accessible location that would benefit from further investment. The kickoff meeting was held in late September 2017.

In January 2018, MCW issued a request for proposals for a real estate development firm to formulate a plan and recommend a location. In March, MCW announced it had hired Milwaukee real estate developer Kevin Newell’s 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.

Wesley continued to work with community leaders to identify an

### Key Focus Areas of the ThriveOn Collaboration

- Economic Opportunity
- Housing
- Early Childhood Education
- Health & Wellness
- Social Cohesion

## Gimbels-Schuster's/ ThriveOn King *Fun Facts*

Built in 1907 by Edward Schuster

Future Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir worked as a clerk at the department store in 1915

In its heyday, the Schuster's Department Store building was noted for its state-of-the-art escalators

Gimbels bought Schuster's in 1962

The store closed in August 1970 and was used for department store storage

The building was wrapped in insulation and metal sheathing in 1984



CH Coakely & Co. purchased the building in 1992

The ThriveOn partners paid \$9.4 million for the property and an adjacent smaller warehouse in 2020

The building is a designated historic site on the State and National Registers of Historic Places

appropriate location for the initiative, and more than 20 sites were considered. 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, which announced it would join with MCW by relocating its headquarters to the new site. Founded in 1915, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is Wisconsin's largest community foundation. Since then, it has been at the heart of the civic community, helping donors achieve the greatest philanthropic impact, elevating the work of changemakers across neighborhoods and bringing people and organizations together to help the region thrive.

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. The Foundation brings expertise that MCW simply cannot in terms of place-based investment and racial equality, which are very important for what we want to accomplish in terms of dealing with the social determinants of health. It's almost a dream partnership for MCW."

Ellen M. Gilligan, president and CEO of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (who retired in July 2024), added, "Through each era of our history, the Foundation has invested in strengthening our region and addressing the greatest needs of the times. We are committed to ensuring access to opportunity and a high quality of life for all people, in neighborhoods throughout our community, a goal we can best achieve

by working together. This partnership is a perfect example of our enduring investment in place. The missions of the Foundation and the Medical College of Wisconsin complement one another well, and we look forward to applying our respective expertise and knowledge for greater collective impact."

During this time, as MCW continued to explore the possibility of a "Community Front Door" in downtown Milwaukee, many individuals began to refer to this potential project by the more inspiring title, "The Center for Flourishing Lives."

### Development Phase Begins and the Site is Chosen

In early 2019, the partnership launched work groups covering communications, program and philanthropy, tenant buildout and neighborhood development, comprising MCW and Foundation stakeholders, community members and individuals from partner organizations and organizations with similar commitments in the community. The work groups met every other week from early 2019 to mid-2020.

Concurrently, the Foundation was engaged with its board and leadership about where its next lease would be and how to combine its community-based strategies.

On March 26, 2019, MCW and the Foundation announced that they had selected a location for MCW's initiative and the Foundation's headquarters: the iconic Gimbels-Schuster's Department Store building located at 2153 N. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive in Milwaukee's Halyard Park neighborhood. The department store, built in 1907, was a community hub and gathering place but had closed in 1970 and was used for storage. In 1984 the building was wrapped in insulation and metal sheathing, and sold in 1992 to CH Coakley, a relocation, warehouse solutions and document management company.

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.



*ThriveOn Collaboration partners and community members, 2020*

Milwaukee's Halyard Park neighborhood was a fitting location for MCW's initiative, as it was home to Milwaukee's first "medical center" from 1898 to 1932. MCW's predecessor, the Wisconsin College of Physicians and Surgeons (which became the Marquette University School of Medicine) was located at Fourth Street and Reservoir Avenue, just blocks away from the Schuster's building.

### Implementation Phase Begins; Partnership Named the "ThriveOn Collaboration"

In February 2020, MCW and the Foundation 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 on the progress of the partnership, 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."

Dr. Raymond added, "We remain fully committed to this generational partnership and we intend to commence redevelopment of the Gimbels-Schuster's building later this summer. In addition, we have continued to co-host virtual listening sessions with community residents, have begun to hold virtual office hours and will create a Community

Advisory Council with the residents of the respective neighborhoods."

In a news release issued 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, "It should come as no surprise that the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis have had disproportionate impacts on people of color, and especially African American and Black people. By honoring

this community's history, culture and people, and by listening and collaborating every step of the way, we hope to accomplish our shared mission to support and sustain a united, equitable, thriving community."

The ThriveOn Collaboration identified five priority areas for program development and investment which were informed by the social determinants of health; factors that contribute significantly to health (such as where people live, access to healthy foods and affordable housing); and social support networks. The priority areas identified were: housing; early childhood education; health and wellness; social cohesion; and economic opportunity.

The ThriveOn Collaboration reflects the views and values of community, shared through continuous dialogue and participation among residents, the collaborating organizations and other community leaders. To that end, it established a Community Advisory Council, comprising 15 members who live or work in the Halyard Park, Harambee and Brewer's Hill neighborhoods to integrate community perspective and participation by ensuring residents have meaningful decision-making power within the Collaboration, and to include a community voice in grantmaking and program initiatives that promote an equitable, healthy and thriving community with a focus on those neighborhoods.

### "ThriveOn King" is Unveiled

On January 26, 2021, the ThriveOn Collaboration announced "ThriveOn King" as the name of its physical home at 2153 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Created through strong neighborhood input, the ThriveOn King name honors the spirit





of its significant location between King Drive and Vel R. Phillips Avenue 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, the Collaboration sponsored virtual job fairs, open house tours and other intentional efforts to ensure a high level of economic empowerment for the adjacent neighborhoods because of jobs and local small business participation.

The place-based collaboration is designed to bring economic and social benefit to the community, leveraging the complementary expertise and resources of MCW, the Foundation and Royal Capital.

“Through the ThriveOn Collaboration, the expansion of community assets will be a primary goal,” Wesley said at the time. “ThriveOn King will house many of these within the first-floor space of the building. It is thrilling to see the ongoing

conversation and input of the community be developed and constructed in the building.”

### Construction Commences

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.

“We are thrilled to start construction for ThriveOn King,” said Kevin Newell, co-chair of the Collaboration. “From inception, this project has been a collective effort with the community, and we are excited to bring that collaborative vision to life in this next stage.”

With the increase in construction and other labor-intensive activities that would bring ThriveOn King to life, the development and construction team took a proactive approach to maximize local hiring of unemployed and underemployed

individuals. Among the first construction activities were internal asbestos abatement, demolition of the loading dock and elevator steel tower, and removal of the metal panels on the east and north sides of the building.

### ThriveOn King Welcomes First Tenants

In April 2024, the Foundation moved into its 28,000-square-foot office space on ThriveOn King’s fourth floor, with the large Chicago-style windows putting the surrounding Bronzeville, Halyard Park, Brewer’s Hill and Harambee neighborhoods on full display.

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.

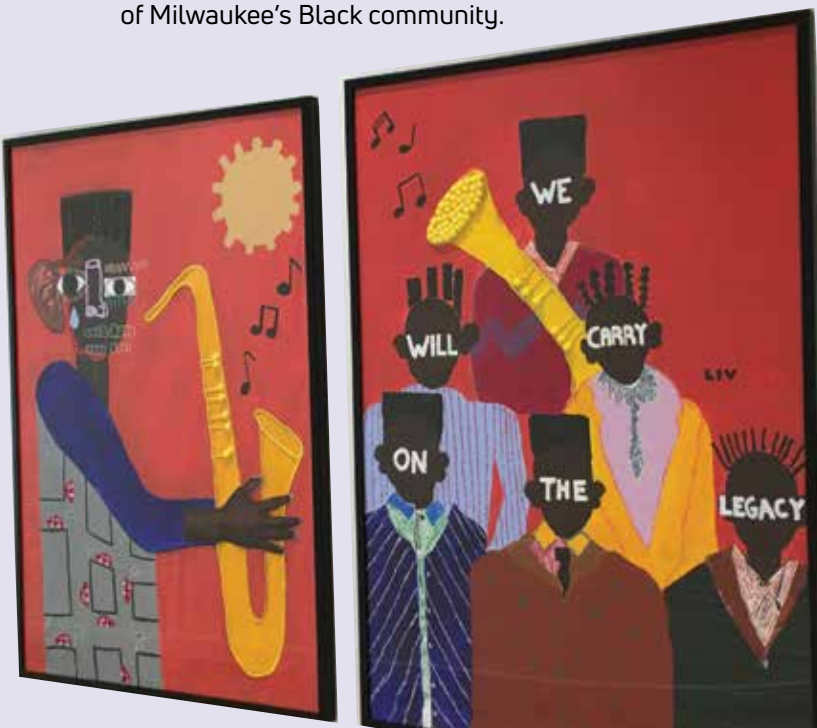
During May, many of MCW’s community engagement programs moved their offices

## Arts to Bring Inspiration and History to ThriveOn King

More than 20 acclaimed and home-grown artists will bring the history, heritage and culture of Milwaukee’s Bronzeville neighborhood to life throughout the first floor of ThriveOn King. From tile to embroidery, painting to sculpture, the art of ThriveOn King will vary in size, medium and placement. Collectively, however, the works will immerse guests in the legacy, vibrancy and potential of Milwaukee’s Black community.

Neighborhood residents have emphasized the importance of art to the community and have helped lead plans to ensure its meaningful integration into ThriveOn King since the project’s inception.

Early community visioning throughout 2019 shaped the priorities of the Collaboration as a whole and set the stage for art to have a prominent place in the work that emerged. This was reinforced as relationships among





into two floors of the building (56,000 square feet in total) including:

- Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
- Center for AIDS Intervention Research
- Center for Advancing Population Science
- Comprehensive Injury Center – the Division of Community Safety, 414LIFE and the Division of Data Surveillance and Informatics
- Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Cancer Center – Community Outreach and Engagement Team
- HIV Care and Prevention Program
- Institute for Health & Equity – Division of Epidemiology & Social Sciences and the Public & Community Health PhD Program
- Maternal Fetal Health Center of Excellence
- Office of Community Engagement
- School of Medicine’s Health Equity Scholars Program

## Center for AIDS Intervention Research (CAIR)

In 1990, MCW sought to initiate a major new program in HIV prevention research and began the recruitment of an interdisciplinary team of behavioral science, social science and public health faculty with research backgrounds in HIV prevention areas. In 1994 (30 years ago), the institution was awarded a center grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) that established the Center for AIDS Intervention Research (CAIR).

Since that time, CAIR has been continuously dedicated to the development, conduct and evaluation of new strategies to prevent HIV among persons most vulnerable to the disease.

In 2023, the center formally expanded its name to the Division of Community Health and Intervention Research (CHAIR) and mission to include the development, evaluation and dissemination of behavioral, social and structural interventions to combat other health conditions.

Jeffrey Kelly, PhD (*at center*), has served as director of CAIR since 1994.



collaboration partners and community were built through years of neighborhood meetings, one-on-one interviews, office hours, meet-and-greet gatherings, community events and more.

Art began taking center stage in 2022 as the Collaboration held a series of three intensive arts visioning sessions for residents in the fall, followed by an information session specifically for artists. The resulting insight informed a truly unique “call for art” issued in early 2023 seeking engagement specifically with artists who have strong

Milwaukee ties and understanding of the Bronzeville community fabric.

Keeping with the ThriveOn Collaboration’s inclusive approach, the art initiative is supported by aligning partner resources, the Foundation’s grantmaking and the generosity of many donors who share an interest in art and its power to communicate important community narratives.





## Tenants on the First Floor of ThriveOn King

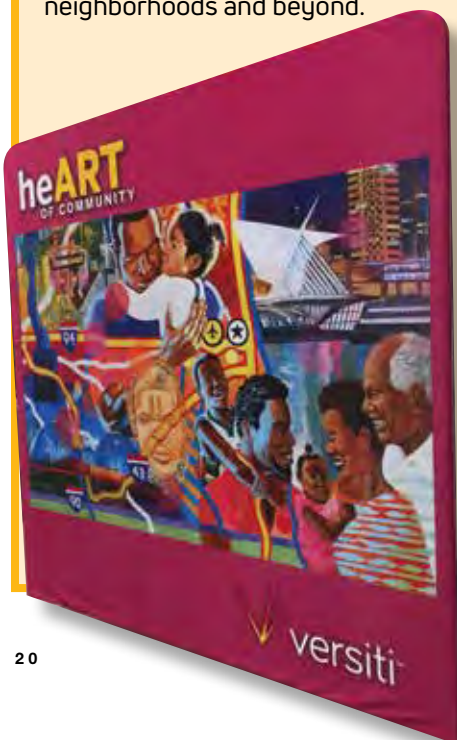
The sprawling first floor of ThriveOn King will be a hub for community engagement, including gathering spaces, healthy food options and public art.

A series of nonprofit partners also will occupy ThriveOn King's first floor:

**JobsWork MKE**, a local nonprofit that helps community residents achieve sustainable employment while strengthening neighborhood economies.

**Malaika Early Learning Center** will operate a new center in ThriveOn King to support quality and better prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond. It also will provide training for other early childhood education programs in the neighborhood.

**Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin** will offer a new community resource and permanent blood donation center within ThriveOn King and will serve as a community hub for Versiti, focused on providing resources to address healthcare disparities in Milwaukee neighborhoods and beyond.



On May 9, 2024, the ThriveOn Collaboration received the *Frederick I. Olson Historic Preservation Award* from the Milwaukee County Historical Society for its role in shaping the greater Milwaukee community through a commitment to equitable and sustainable revitalization of the ThriveOn King building. The Collaboration was honored for its commitment to the health, equity and economic well-being of the people of Milwaukee.

The Collaboration also is a finalist for the 2024 *Husch and Blackwell Building Block Award* (a component of the Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation), which will be announced in mid-August.

ThriveOn King also plans to include approximately 90 units of mixed-income

housing for families, seniors and students. The residential portion of the project is scheduled to be completed in 2025.

A groundbreaking was held in late April 2024 for the Residencies@ThriveOn King in honor of Ruth and Roosevelt Wright, the aunt and uncle of Kevin Newell.

## Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony: A Vision Fulfilled

On June 6, 2024, ThriveOn King hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the milestone completion and occupancy of the building's administrative floors by MCW and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. The event showcased the building's community space, and the energetic crowd of more than 300 individuals highlighted the enthusiasm the surrounding communities have for the

## Office of Community Engagement Moves into ThriveOn King

MCW's Office of Community Engagement (OCE) officially moved to ThriveOn King on May 13, 2024. The OCE's area on the third floor has workstations for 10 faculty and staff, including Staci Young, PhD, senior associate dean for community engagement, director of the OCE and faculty director for the ThriveOn Collaboration.

Dr. Young shared that her father worked in the building when it was the department store as an overnight stock boy.

"We have a unique opportunity to work in partnership across MCW's academic units and highlight the best of our communities to create and grow initiatives that achieve health and wellness for all residents," Dr. Young says.



## Distinguished African American Leaders to Receive Lasting Tribute at ThriveOn King

Public spaces in ThriveOn King will be 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 had a lasting impact on the Halyard Park, Harambee and Brewer's Hill neighborhoods surrounding ThriveOn King, as well as on Milwaukee overall. These leaders will be named shortly.



More than 300 community members and guests attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers provided a prerecorded congratulatory message.

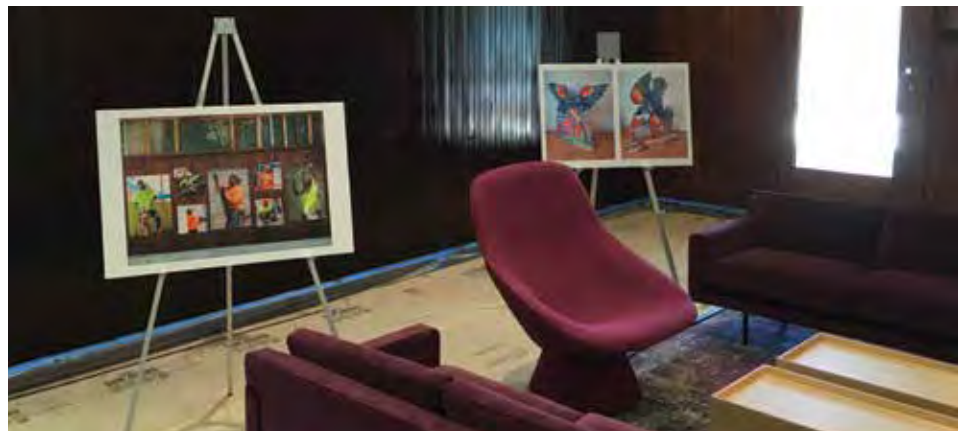
transformational impact of the project.

“What we have here is a local inspiration, a national model and a dream come true,” Dr. Raymond said during the event. “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.”

Also during the program, Wesley spoke about the process of coming together. “It was critical to have all the neighborhoods where this location sits to be committed to what we were doing. Thank you to the neighbors who trusted us. Thank you to the neighbors who pushed us. And thank you to the neighbors who continue to challenge us. This is truly about community. This shows what is possible when you commit to people and meet them where they are.”

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley added, “In order to foster a healthy community, we need partnership, and I believe ThriveOn truly represents what that partnership looks like. Not only are they bringing resources for families and children, they are bringing support services for those who are experiencing hardship. I want to say thank you to the entire ThriveOn team for their commitment, their collaboration and, more importantly, for their investment in this neighborhood on Martin Luther King Drive.”

Other speakers at the inspiring and powerful program included Ken Robertson; Kevin Newell; Cydney Key, senior director



Inspirational artwork was on display on the first floor of ThriveOn King during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

for the ThriveOn Collaboration guest experience and strategic partnerships; Milele Coggs, Milwaukee alderwoman; Dalvery Blackwell, representing the Collaboration’s Community Advisory Council; Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers

(via video presentation); and Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson (whose remarks were read).

A grand-opening event that will be open to the Milwaukee community is being planned for later in 2024. ■



“A local inspiration, a national model and a dream come true.” — Dr. John R. Raymond, Sr.



# A Beam of Discovery and Hope

*Celebrating the Momentum of the New MCW Cancer Research Building*

It has been hard to miss the exciting influx of construction equipment and workers in hardhats on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC) campus who are bringing the new MCW cancer research building to life. Anticipated to be completed in 2025, this state-of-the-art, 150,000-square-foot architectural landmark will be eastern Wisconsin’s first and only cancer-dedicated biohub and research facility. Discoveries made in this new building will drive the latest innovations in cancer prevention, therapies and solutions at Froedtert Hospital, Children’s Wisconsin and affiliated hospitals.

“People will turn off Watertown Plank Road and say ‘WOW!’” says Jeff Gruhn, vice president of project development at Mortenson, the construction manager for this ambitious project. “We are on the front end of creating the best facility for the brightest minds in cancer discovery and are building some of the greatest laboratory spaces Wisconsin has ever seen!”

With more than 20 years of construction experience across the MRMC campus, Gruhn and the Mortenson team are committed to supporting cancer research and care, including recent generous corporate gifts to MCW and Froedtert Hospital. “The Mortenson tagline, ‘Let’s

Redefine Possible’®, aligns perfectly with MCW’s cancer mission,” notes Gruhn. “The new cancer research building is a beacon of hope and life-changing possibilities for those facing a challenging diagnosis.”

A major milestone for any building project is the completion of the structural phase of the project. To that end, the MCW Cancer Center hosted an on-campus gathering on March 5, 2024, to give students, researchers and community members alike an opportunity to “put their names” on future cancer breakthroughs by signing a celebratory construction beam that will become a permanent fixture in the new building.

The gathering included remarks from Joseph E. Kerschner, MD ’90, FEL ’98, executive vice president, provost and the Julia A. Uihlein, MA, Dean of the School of Medicine; and Gustavo Leone, PhD, director of the MCW Cancer Center, senior associate dean of cancer research, and the Dr. Glenn R. and Nancy A. Linnerson Endowed Chair for Cancer Research.

“This meaningful beam signifies our lasting commitment to addressing the cancer burden in Wisconsin and improving clinical outcomes for our patients,”

Dr. Kerschner said at the event. He and other MCW leaders expressed their gratitude to the state of Wisconsin for a \$10 million grant that is helping to fund the construction of the new building.

Dr. Leone noted that having a dedicated cancer research facility has been a priority for MCW for a long time, and that it was exciting to have achieved such a key milestone in pursuit of this goal. Attendees also learned that the building’s scientific neighborhoods and entrepreneurial biohub will enhance collaborative team science and provide access to cutting-edge technologies and shared resources for more than 650 Cancer Center investigators and staff.

“The new MCW cancer research building is the engine that will fuel innovation, accelerate research breakthroughs and make possible new cancer treatments for patients across our state and beyond,” Dr. Leone remarked at the event. “It will also spark collaboration among some of the world’s top cancer researchers who are working every day, right here at MCW, to eradicate cancer as we know it.”

While marking an important step in the facility’s construction, the beam-signing



David A. Margolis, MD, GME '92, FEL '95, chair of pediatrics



(l-r) Dr. Joseph E. Kerschner and Dennis McBride, mayor of Wauwatosa, Wis.



David Hotchkiss, vice president of information services and chief information officer

celebrated the community’s momentum behind MCW’s cancer mission. As shared by Sheila Parrish–Spence, JD, co–chair of the MCW Cancer Center Community Advisory Board, “The beam is a symbol of increased progress in the fight against cancer. I am excited that the cancer research building will benefit people of all ages, ethnic groups, generations and communities nationwide.”

Parrish–Spence’s sentiments are echoed by Jan Claussen, a retired nurse who previously worked at Froedtert Hospital. “My family has a long history of cancer, so cancer discovery and care have been a lifelong mission for me,” says Claussen, who generously made a planned gift to MCW in gratitude for the exceptional care she received for breast cancer. With her drive to find a cure, Claussen was touched by the opportunity to sign her name on the beam. “I want to increase community awareness of cancer prevention and support research that prolongs the lives of men and women, especially diverse populations that are often ignored.”

Like Claussen, Cindy Johnson’s experiences with cancer, along with her passion for improving community health and access to quality care, inspired her to attend the beam–signing event. “I wanted to be on the ground floor to meet the people



*Ginny Bolger, MCW donor*

who are so enthusiastic about the new building,” shares Johnson. “I wanted to show the researchers and clinicians what this new building means to people like me.”

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2022, Johnson had a lumpectomy, which was performed by Amanda Kong, MD, MS ’10, MCW professor of surgery and section chief of breast surgery. “I told Dr. Kong near the end of my treatment that based on the impact of the quality care and compassion I received, I felt I needed to help others,” shares Johnson. “I’ve been fortunate to be able to invest in a new breast surgery fellowship program at MCW. It’s so important that we continue to attract, train and retain great cancer clinicians in our state. Accelerated by gifts like mine, the new cancer research building creates a



*Dr. Gustavo Leone and Wisconsin State Representative Robyn Vining*

community, bringing everyone together – patients, surgeons, researchers, physicians and students – to advance the best care in Wisconsin.”

With this commemorative beam in place, Mortenson, along with architectural partners at Cannon Design and the project team at Concord Group, are well on their way to realizing the physical manifestation of MCW’s collective aim to eradicate cancer.

“Everyone on our team has been on campus at some point, and most of us have a personal connection to cancer,” says Gruhn. “Mortenson has led the construction of the most exciting cancer projects across the MRMC, including the patient–focused Clinical Cancer Center at Froedtert Hospital, which was completed in 2008, and most recently, the vault for the hospital’s new proton therapy system. We are not only excited to be a part of this prominent new building, which will accelerate even greater research collaborations, but are grateful to give back to the MCW Cancer Center through our company’s philanthropic mission. It’s an important cause for our employees and our entire community to rally behind.”

As the construction continues, Gruhn hopes all visitors to the MRMC will be inspired by the remarkable progress and groundbreaking achievement that is the new cancer research building. Mirroring Gruhn’s enthusiasm, Dr. Leone shares, “There’s no doubt, together, we are changing the course of cancer for generations to come.” ■

– LEE DICKERT AND REBECCA SCHULZ



*Jan Claussen, MCW donor and patient*



*Ekokobe Fonkem, DO, chair of neurology*



# Can Preeclampsia be Prevented?

*New Research from MCW Scientists on Cellular Stress in the Placenta as a Possible Cause of Preeclampsia was Published in the Latest Issue of Science Advances.*

*(l-r) Dr. Justin Grobe, Dr. Megan Opichka and Dr. Jennifer McIntosh, upon the receipt of Dr. Opichka's PhD from MCW in May 2023*

Preeclampsia is a mysterious condition that occurs in about one of 10 pregnancies without any early warning signs. After 20 weeks or more of normal blood pressure during the pregnancy, patients with preeclampsia will begin to experience elevated blood pressure and may also have increased levels of protein in their urine due to hypertension reducing the filtering power of the kidneys. Prolonged hypertension due to preeclampsia can lead to organ damage and life-threatening complications for mothers and fetuses.

There is no cure for the underlying causes of preeclampsia, so physicians focus on managing and monitoring patients' blood pressure to allow for as close to a full-term gestation as possible. With severe disease, preterm deliveries are necessary.

"For some patients who can make it to full term, a preeclampsia diagnosis is scary at first but ultimately a bump in the road," says Jennifer McIntosh, DO, MS, MCW associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology.

"For those who get it earlier on, it can be terrifying and life-changing, potentially including a long hospital stay before delivery and significant supportive care for the infant in the NICU afterwards," Dr. McIntosh adds.

More research is needed into what causes preeclampsia to guide the development of potential new ways to diagnose, treat and prevent this common yet cryptic condition.

"The worldwide incidence of preeclampsia is rising, so research grows more important by the day," Dr. McIntosh says. "Preeclampsia has existed for as long as women have been giving birth, and yet the only cure for it is delivering the baby. I believe we can be innovative and do better for our patients."

In December 2023, MCW scientists published in *Science Advances* the results on a study of one of the emerging theories for what causes preeclampsia. The experiments focused on a particular layer of cells of the placenta called the syncytiotrophoblast (STB), which is a key part of the barrier between the mother and developing fetus. This blockade helps keep a mother's fully formed immune system from reacting to the fetus and potentially responding as if the fetus were a foreign threat, such as a viral or bacterial invader. The barrier also works in reverse to keep the fetus's growing immune system from reacting to its mother's cells and tissues. The study's authors investigated the hypothesis that an abnormal amount of cellular and molecular stresses to the STB can damage the placenta and lead to preeclampsia.

"There is considerable evidence that these stresses accumulate. However, how and why it happens continues to be an open question," says Justin Grobe, PhD, MCW professor of physiology and biomedical engineering and the co-corresponding author with Dr. McIntosh on the *Science Advances* manuscript. "We felt it was important to continue to validate the STB stress findings before advancing work on our hypothesis that elevated hormones of pregnancy contribute to the accumulation of stress by overstimulating the STB."

The research team began by studying placentas donated for research purposes through the MCW Maternal Research Placenta & Cord Blood Bank. By comparing "normal" placentas with placentas from pregnancies in which patients suffered from preeclampsia, investigators demonstrated that preeclampsia was associated with higher levels of cellular stresses in the STB layer on the placenta.



Additionally, the researchers found a hyperactive level of activity of the Gαq protein known to play a role in transmitting signals related to the levels of several hormones present in excessive amounts during preeclampsia.

“The donated human placenta samples were critical to identifying potential mechanisms of STB stress,” says Megan Opichka, PhD '23, a research and development scientist at BioSpyder Technologies and first author on the publication. “Because these samples are collected upon delivery, we then needed to develop an animal model to determine if these sources of stress may actually be causative.”

Based on the findings of hyperactive signaling through G-protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) in samples from patients with preeclampsia, the scientists developed a new mouse model genetically engineered to enable the precise manipulation of GPCR signals within specific cell types. This allowed the researchers to activate the signaling pathways associated with preeclampsia within the STB layer of the mouse’s placenta.

The team demonstrated that even a very brief activation of the identified signaling cascades during the early or middle portions of gestation led to significant consequences during the mouse pregnancy. These mice developed all the signature signs of preeclampsia, including high blood pressure, kidney damage and other anatomical and cellular changes. In some mice exposed to the preeclampsia-inducing signals, the scientists tested the effects of a medicine that reduces stress on the mitochondria that generate energy within each cell. The drug provided substantial protection against developing the signs and symptoms of preeclampsia.

“With our unique model, we can study the effects of contributing factors to preeclampsia throughout pregnancy,” Dr. Grobe shares. “We can test specific signaling cascades in specific cells and tissues at specific times to observe their effects. We have only scratched the surface on what we can learn.”

“This will absolutely be a springboard for future research,” Dr. McIntosh adds. “Because the drug we tested, MitoQ, is generally known to be safe, we’re working on plans for a clinical pilot study to test appropriate dosage and efficacy in advance of pursuing larger clinical studies of preeclampsia in the future.”

So, can preeclampsia be prevented? While today the answer is “no,” MCW scientists now are one



(l-r) Dr. Jennifer McIntosh and lab technician Alexa Derayunan in the McIntosh Lab, 2019

step closer with these experimental results. And they are continuing to work as a team to achieve this goal through additional studies.

“What drives my research is my frustration about the lack of understanding of what causes preeclampsia,” says Dr. McIntosh. “We need to continue linking the bench and the bedside together so that we can understand the causes and use them to bring a cure to the bedside.” ■

– GREG CALHOUN



We need to continue linking the bench and the bedside together so that we can understand the causes and use them to bring a cure to the bedside.

– Dr. Jennifer McIntosh





# As the Friends of MCW Marks 55 Years of Service, Members Reflect on its Legacy and Chart its Future

In 1969, an act of generosity benefiting new mothers at the former Milwaukee County General Hospital helped launch a mission to support the Medical College of Wisconsin in its formative years – a mission that continues to this day as the Friends of MCW.

At the time, the institution that would eventually become MCW had recently separated from Marquette University and was operating as the Marquette School of Medicine. The school’s leadership, research and clinical faculty, along with many civic boosters, saw the value in supporting an institution in Milwaukee that would train physicians and treat patients – but its future was by no means certain.

In a 2015 interview with MCW Chief Historian Richard N. (Dick) Katschke, an early leader of the Friends, Jane Klockman, recalled how a group of spouses (at the time, all women) of department chairs and section chiefs met with a parliamentarian for guidance about how to establish an auxiliary organization to raise money and awareness for the struggling medical school.

Klockman recollected that she shared the organizational documents with then Medical School Dean Gerald Kerrigan, MD, who “read it and said, ‘you could run General Motors with this.’ That was the genesis of starting the Friends, which morphed and became far more inclusive and open – and has done great things,” she said.

As Klockman noted, that early group of women were among the “visionaries” who would go on to help ensure that MCW evolved into the nationally regarded institution it is today.

One of their first projects was volunteering to escort patients and staffing an information desk in the Newborn Nursery at the Milwaukee County Hospital, which was served by the medical school’s clinician faculty members and residents. They also took photographs of the babies in the nursery with a Polaroid camera to present to new mothers and their families, free of charge.

Throughout the 1970s, the auxiliary organization would go on to undertake projects that would generate MCW’s earliest philanthropic support – including events that featured appearances by nationally known celebrities such as Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, Chita Rivera, Bob Newhart and John Denver.

Those events helped raise more than \$140,000 (approximately \$600,000 in today’s dollars) for a fund for low-interest student loans – establishing the Friends as an important source of support for medical students, graduate students and residents working at the Milwaukee County General Hospital and what is now the Zablocki VA Medical Center.

Several new Friends’ events followed, including an annual *An Evening with Friends* gala and an annual chili fundraiser. The Friends established an endowment in the 1990-91 academic year to provide sustainability of funding for future academic scholarships and service awards.

In 1999, the highly successful Friends Café, a coffee and gift shop, opened in the newly built Health Research Center on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus. Under the direction of longtime Friends member Vera Wilson and many others, the Friends’ Café helped raise \$1.2 million to support students and research at MCW before it closed in 2015.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Friends also held annual raffles and periodic one- or two-day fundraisers at MCW that were well-supported by members of the faculty and staff. Currently, Friends continues to support snacks provided to new MCW students at their orientation.



Members of the Friends of MCW with Ella Fitzgerald, 1976



*Friends Café, 2015*

Jan Lennon recalls the Friends as not only an organization that took on “big projects” to advance the growing education and research programs of MCW, but also as fostering a supportive environment for members. She was encouraged in her own involvement with the Friends by Klockman and other Friends’ founders.

“We supported each other,” Lennon says. “We laughed, we had fun, we did whatever we had to do to get through. The fact that we were able to put on these wonderful events and be successful was because we made it collaborative. . .we brought people together.”

“Those were the things that gave us a sense of belonging to something bigger than ourselves,” she adds.

Today, the Friends of MCW continues its work and is open to a new generation of leaders. Lennon’s daughter-in-law, Martha Lennon, serves as treasurer, and former MCW employee Gail Schemberger is secretary. Lennon serves as vice-president and endowment chairperson, and Margaret Haagensen, a local bank officer, serves as the president and leader of Friends. The remainder of the Friends board comprises MCW faculty, individuals with a close association to MCW and community volunteers who are dedicated to the Friends mission.

Haagensen got involved with the Friends while volunteering for Women for MACC (Midwest Athletes Against Childhood Cancer) after losing a daughter to pediatric cancer and meeting Jan. Haagensen notes that she met MCW clinicians, oncologists and residents while her daughter was undergoing treatment, and was struck by their professionalism and compassion as her daughter went through treatment. Children’s Wisconsin was expanding and had created a brain tumor support team comprising an oncologist, researcher and clinician – all faculty members of MCW – who provided care throughout her daughter’s treatment.

“It really made me appreciate what a critical clinical and research resource we have in our community and in the state,” Haagensen says, noting the robustness of MCW’s School of Graduate Studies, creation of the MCW School of Pharmacy and the



*(l-r) Ginny Bolger and Patricia Dunn at a student snack day in 1997*

expansion of MCW’s School of Medicine campuses in Green Bay and Central Wisconsin.

“Because I experienced what a teaching hospital is and what a difference it makes to the treatment and the information that’s shared with parents and patients, I’m inspired and honored to support MCW students in memory of my daughter, my cousin who was a researcher at MCW and by Jan’s passion for MCW,” Haagensen adds.

The Friends of MCW is reexamining its mission and efforts in light of the difficulties all nonprofits faced raising funds during COVID-19 and since then. Haagensen notes that strategic planning discussions are beginning now to help determine “what our future looks like and how we can engage not just our current membership, but also how we can bring in new members.”

“What won’t change,” says Haagensen, “is Friends’ commitment to supporting awards for academic excellence and laudable service opportunities for students enrolled in every MCW school.” ■

– MICHAEL J. MATHIAS

## 55 Years of Support

Since 1969, the many contributions of the Friends of MCW are difficult to gauge in total, but an active legacy is the more than \$1.4 million in financial contributions that continue to support students directly. In the last fiscal year, the work of the Friends past and present provided \$33,000 in scholarship awards for students in MCW’s medical, pharmacy and graduate schools; support for student research projects; service awards; an award recognizing excellence in preparing and defending a dissertation; and awards for students obtaining a master’s degree in public health.



# Getting Athletes Back in the Game

## *Dr. Robert Anderson Helps Elite Athletes and Weekend Warriors Alike Recover from Foot and Ankle Injuries*

Orthopaedic surgeon Robert Anderson, MD '83, FEL '89, has become the go-to foot and ankle surgeon for elite athletes across the country. Much of his work centers around helping NFL players get back in the game, but success in this arena has led to him working with elite athletes across every sport.

Dr. Anderson says this career path, and the success he has experienced as a result, has really been a matter of timing.

"I was in the right place at the right time," says Dr. Anderson. "At MCW, I was in one of the first classes of foot and ankle fellows with Dr. John Gould, who was professor and chair of orthopaedic surgery at the time, and because of that, I became one of the first sports foot and ankle specialists in the country. Things grew from there."

Dr. Anderson's journey working with elite athletes began in the early 1990s when he consulted with the Green Bay Packers from his office in Charlotte, N.C., and with the NBA's Charlotte Hornets. He then became assistant team orthopedist for the NFL's Carolina Panthers, a position he held for 18 years until he was hired by the Green Bay Packers in 2017 to serve as associate team physician.

For the past 20 years, Dr. Anderson has served on and chaired various NFL committees – which, after spending decades helping athletes recover from foot and ankle injuries, he viewed as an opportunity to help reduce those injuries before they even occur.

Dr. Anderson's efforts have led to numerous accolades, including his most recent one in February 2024 – *The President's Award*, which he received from the NFL Physicians Society and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society for his decades of dedicated service to the Panthers, Packers and NFL players.

"It is nice to be recognized by my peers, and it is rewarding to feel like I made an impact in my patients' lives," he says.

Dr. Anderson shared that working with elite athletes has a much different feel from working with weekend warriors because of the condensed timelines and pressure to get the person "back in the game."

"The player is your patient, and you need to treat the patient, not the athlete," he says. "But professional sports is a business, which means there is considerable pressure from general managers and coaches to get the player back as quickly as possible, and from the patient, whose career is on the line."

Dr. Anderson, who was voted by his classmates to deliver the 1983 MCW Commencement speech, remembers his medical school days fondly. He appreciated both the education he received and his fellow classmates. "We worked hard, but also had great social events," he says with a smile.

Interestingly, Patrick McKenzie, MD, '83, GME '88, the long-standing and current Packers head team physician, was an MCW classmate of Dr. Anderson. "My time with Bob Anderson began back in 1979 when we both started our careers at MCW. From our first encounter, I was incredibly impressed with his knowledge and work ethic – which has never changed and continues to drive him today. Without question, Bob has become the premiere foot and ankle surgeon in the country," Dr. McKenzie stated at the time that Dr. Anderson received *The President's Award*.

Dr. Anderson is proud of his contributions to professional sports, but is even more proud of what he has accomplished at home. "I am blessed to be married almost 43 years to a great woman I met through medical school colleagues, and to have three wonderful sons and four grandchildren," he shares. "I look forward to slowing down a little and spending more time with them." ■

– ANTHONY BRAZA



(l-r) Dr. Robert Anderson and Dr. Patrick McKenzie, in 1995 and 2023



Dr. Robert Anderson on game day in Green Bay, 2021



# Bringing Worldwide Attention to Tuberculosis

“I am, at heart, a tuberculosis (TB) doctor,” says Capt. Sapna Bamrah Morris, MD '99, MBA. “Unfortunately, Namibia is in the top 30 for burden of tuberculosis in the world. We haven't made the same strides in TB as we have in HIV. I really enjoy that I get to bring attention to TB.”

Dr. Bamrah (her preferred moniker) serves as an associate director of clinical programs with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Namibia office, leading a team engaged as technical advisors to the Ministry of Health and Social Services of Namibia in all aspects of HIV and TB disease management. The hope is for this work, supported by funds through the President's Emergency Program For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to be completely supported by the Ministry of Health and Social Services in a sustainable manner. Dr. Bamrah joined the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS) in 2006 and is deployed through 2026.

During her education and work with the CDC, Dr. Bamrah has gained incredible insight into global health and disease outbreaks among displaced populations. She has expertise in not only TB but also HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, refugee health and mPOX, and has published numerous research articles about this work. She previously worked with the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination and served as the clinical team lead for multiple CDC-wide public health responses to help bring under control global outbreaks.

“Other than smallpox eradication, the PEPFAR program has probably been the most successful public health program in the world. There are 25 million people living with HIV currently on treatment, most of whom are virally suppressed and will live normal lives,” Dr. Bamrah says.

Dr. Bamrah's work in global health is driven by a passion for social justice that she pursued before her years as an MCW student. It started at home in Milwaukee, where her biggest influences had dedicated their lives to medicine. Her father, Virinderjit Bamrah, MD, is a cardiologist, and her mother, Paramjit Bamrah, MD, practiced family medicine. Both were passionate caregivers and shared their expertise with MCW in faculty and advisory roles.

Her brother, Bindu Bamrah, MD '96, an orthopedic surgeon practicing in southeast Wisconsin, attended MCW – and she would follow his lead. She was one of 15 students chosen for an early admissions to Marquette University and MCW while in high school.

While Dr. Bamrah completed her undergraduate studies in social work, she had the opportunity to study in Namibia. “My time there really changed me. Because of my experience in Namibia, a lot of the work I did at MCW really helped to solidify that I wanted my medical career to focus on populations living in poverty,” Dr. Bamrah says.



*Dr. Bamrah Morris with her husband, Daniel, and their children, Arya and Ryker*



*Dr. Bamrah Morris and her brother, Dr. Bindu Bamrah, on the occasion of his wedding in Tuscany in June 2024*

Dr. Bamrah curated her MCW experience by seeking out volunteer and credit-earning experiences that included volunteer work in Milwaukee at the Isaac Coggs Heritage Health Center and other clinics and shelters. Earnestine Willis, MD, MPH, and James Sebastian, MD – among others at MCW – helped Dr. Bamrah envision her career in medicine through a social justice lens.

She recalls a small group of medical school classmates planning a senior retreat with the intention to enjoy a nice weekend in the outdoors, but also to take the time to absorb the responsibility they were about to take on in residency. “It was time to consider the weight of being an intern and actually being responsible for people's lives, and what that means. There was a group of us that really felt the responsibility spelled out in the *Hippocratic Oath*, and the retreat was a really special way to culminate our time in med school.”

After her deployment ends in 2026, Dr. Bamrah may consider returning to the US with her husband, Daniel Morris, and three children, Damon, 19; Arya, 11; and Ryker, 10. ■ – JOY WICK



# ALUMNI NOTES

## 1970s



**Michael F. Nolan, PhD '75**, professor of basic science education at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and a trailblazing figure in the field of clinical anatomy, has been awarded *Honored Membership* in the American Association of Clinical Anatomists. The award, which is comparable to a lifetime achievement award, recognized Dr. Nolan for his “unparalleled commitment and contributions to the field.”

## 1980s



**Lt. Col. Roy J. Guse, MD '83**, has retired from his 27-year practice of adult reconstructive orthopedic surgery in Lufkin, Texas. During his career, he served as Angelina County Medical Society president, chief of surgery at Woodland Heights Medical Center and chair of the board of directors, Woodland Heights Medical Center. Prior to moving to East Texas, Lt. Colonel Guse studied, practiced and taught orthopedic surgery in the US Air Force. While at Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, he served as a deputy department chair of orthopedic surgery, head of adult reconstructive surgery and consultant to the Air Force Surgeon General.



**Colleen Lawton, MD '83, GME '87**, was named Marquette University's 2024 *Alumna of the Year*. She was honored for her work advancing world-class cancer care at the Medical College of Wisconsin, from which she recently retired as professor emeritus of radiation oncology.

**Patrick McKenzie, MD '83, GME '88**, team physician for the Green Bay Packers, has joined Prevea Health in Green Bay as an orthopedic and sports medicine surgeon. He specializes in arthroscopic treatment and ligament reconstruction of the knee and shoulder. (See story on page 28.)

**Brian Bear, MD '84**, is assistant medical director for Bio Tissue, a biotechnology company which produces regenerative wound healing products from human birth tissue, including placental, amniotic membrane and umbilical cord tissue. He is retired from his obstetrics practice in the Milwaukee area.

**Sukhwinder Singh Sandhu, MD '88**, a gastroenterologist with the Washington Hospital Healthcare System in Fremont, Calif., volunteers by returning to his native Punjab, India, to provide free medical care to villagers in the Moga district. Dr. Sandhu also is a clinical assistant professor of medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine.

## 1990s

**Louis Remyse, MD, GME '90**, has joined Beaufort Memorial Urology Specialists in Beaufort, S.C. He is a member of the Society of Urologic Oncology and specializes in robot-assisted surgical treatments for bladder, kidney and prostate cancers.

**William J. Brady, MD, GME '94**, is an academic emergency physician at the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville, Va. He is a tenured professor of emergency medicine, medicine and nursing, and the David A. Harrison Distinguished Educator at the UVA School of Medicine. He also is a professor of emergency medical services at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville.



**Jon A. Lehrmann\*, MD '90, GME '94**, professor and the Charles E. Kubly Chair in Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, is lead author on “Smart Strategic Choices Enhance Success in Managing Under-Resourced Academic Psychiatry Departments,” published in the journal *Academic Psychiatry* in June 2024.



**Robert P. Chayer\*, MD, GME '92, FEL '94**, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine and vice chair of child and adolescent services at the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the Chucker Aring Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Children's Wisconsin, has been elected president-elect of the American Association of Directors of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Chayer will serve two years as president-elect and then ascend to president for an additional two-year term. Dr. Chayer was elected by his peers for his services as a national leader in child and adolescent psychiatry.

**Julie Schuller, MD, GME '95**, is president and CEO of Milwaukee's Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers. She was named to the *Milwaukee Business Journal's* 2024 40-Under-40 Hall of Fame.

**Jeffrey K. Bahr, MD '98, GME '02**, was named Chief Aurora Medical Group Officer in Wisconsin for Advocate Aurora Health. Dr. Bahr joined Aurora in 2002 and oversees medical group operations, physician recruitment, service lines and clinical access.

**Kenneth Dell Dembny, MD, GME '98**, a plastic surgeon, has joined the Center for Aesthetics and Plastic Surgery in Neenah, Wis.

**James J. McGovern, MD '98**, has been promoted to chief hospital executive of the PeaceHealth Oregon network; he was

previously chief medical officer. He is responsible for all hospital operations at PeaceHealth Oregon's hospitals in Florence, Cottage Grove and River Bend, Ore.

**Isaac Douglas Pierre, MD '98**, is a family medicine practitioner with Kaiser Permanente in Denver, Colo.

**Fedja Rochling, MD, FEL '98**, has been named chief of the division of gastroenterology and hepatology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). He also is professor of medicine at UNMC and chief of gastroenterology at the Omaha Veterans Administration Hospital.

## 2000s

**Michael J. Uihlein, MD '00, GME '03**, is the recipient of USA Hockey's 2024 *Dr. Alan Ashare Excellence in Safety Award*. Dr. Uihlein spent more than a decade serving the US National Sled Hockey Team as the team physician and is regarded as one of the top authorities on adaptative sports medicine. He is an emergency medicine physician at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center in Milwaukee.



**Lisa Uherick, MD '01**, has been appointed the inaugural chief well-being officer for Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. She joined the then-new medical school in 2007 as a founding faculty member of the emergency medicine residency program.

**Mark Viktor Silver, MD, FEL '03**, is the founder of the Silver Spine and Neurological Center in McKinney, Texas. He specializes in minimally invasive and complex neurosurgical procedures aimed at alleviating neck, back, arm and leg pain.

**Renee Smith, MD '03, GME '06**, has been appointed associate chief medical officer for Security Health Plan of Marshfield, Wis. She continues to serve part-time as a family medicine practitioner in central Wisconsin.

**Khadijah Ahmad, MD, GME '04**, is a board-certified family physician at Marshfield Clinic Wisconsin Rapids Center. Her expertise lies in managing complex diseases such as diabetes.

**Daniel Castillo, MD '04, MBA**, is chief executive officer of the Midwest region of Optum Health (a business platform of UnitedHealth Group) and leads all aspects of executing Optum's growth strategy across 12 states. He continues as an emergency physician at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago.

**Pejman Babakhanlou, MD '05**, a general surgeon in Findlay, Ohio, has joined the team at Surgical Associates of Northwest Ohio, part of the Blanchard Valley Health System.

## 2010s

**Anila Bindal, MD '10**, is associate medical director for Abbott Laboratories' diabetes care business in the US, where her focus is on diabetes education, clinical research and advocating for greater access to life-changing diabetes technology. She continues her endocrinology practice part-time at Erie Health Center in Chicago to help the west side region's medically underserved residents.

**Henry L. Chang, MD, FEL '12, '15**, is assistant professor of pediatric surgery at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and is surgical critical care fellowship program director at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in Tampa, Fla. His clinical focus includes minimally invasive surgery and colorectal conditions.

**Jody C. Benson, MA '13**, is a freelance writer and editor. She is the author of *Behold: A Reflection Journal Where Wonder, Creation, and Stewardship Meet*.

**Tyler Boschuetz, MD '15**, has joined SSM Health Dean Medical Group in Janesville, Wis., as an obstetrician/gynecologist.

**Je Ajayi, MD '16**, a psychiatrist in Georgia, has launched Connected Minds, which provides accessible, compassionate and culturally sensitive mental healthcare to individuals from all backgrounds.

**Chelsea Venditto, MD, GME '18**, recently opened Avenue Aesthetic & Reconstructive Surgery in Athens, Ga. Dr. Venditto says her practice is about 50/50 between reconstructive surgery and aesthetic surgery. She does breast reconstruction for patients who have had mastectomies or lumpectomies for breast cancer and lower extremity reconstruction.

## 2020s

**Sivani Aluru, MD '20**, is the 2024 national vice chair of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology's Junior Fellow College Advisory Council. She will be chair of the council in 2025. Dr. Aluru is an obstetrician/gynecologist with HSHS St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Ill.

**John deVries, MD, GME '20**, was appointed chief of the division of orthopaedic surgery at City of Hope in Duarte, Calif, where he is building City of Hope's burgeoning clinic for bone, joint and soft tissue tumors.

**Colton Wiesner, MD '20**, has joined Essentia Health – St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth, Minn., as an emergency medicine physician. Also joining St. Mary's Medical Center as a trauma surgeon is **Isaac Hanson, DO, FEL '23**.

**Jonathan Birdsall, MD, GME '23**, an emergency medicine physician, has returned to his hometown of Winona, Minn., to join Winona Health.



# IN MEMORIAM

## 1950s

**L. Thomas Plouff, MD '55**, died on January 30, 2024, at the age of 96. He founded Radiology Associates in Appleton, Wis., where he worked until his retirement in 1992.

**Arthur Carl Plautz, Jr., MD '58**, died on March 9, 2024, at the age of 89. Dr. Plautz was a urologist at the Janesville (Wis.) Riverview Clinic and the Dean Medical System.

**Col. John Michael Haas, MD '59**, died on March 11, 2024, at the age of 89. Dr. Haas had a 20-year career in the US Army as a cardiologist, including his promotion to colonel and his appointment as chief of cardiology at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Colorado. Upon his retirement from the military, he joined Aurora Denver Cardiology Associates. In 1981, he became the first physician in Colorado to perform the then-revolutionary procedure of a heart coronary angioplasty.

## 1960s

**Donald Rudolf Laub, MD '60**, founder of the international medical relief organization Interplast, died on April 26, 2024, in Redwood City, Calif., at the age of 89. Dr. Laub was chief of plastic surgery at Stanford University School of Medicine from 1968–1980 before entering private practice. In 1969, he founded Interplast, Inc. (now ReSurge International), pioneering the concept of surgical teams working in developing countries to help the medically underserved. He was recognized for his work by President Ronald Reagan, Mother Theresa and the Dalai Lama. In 1999, he was named the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association's *Alumnus of the Year*.

**Eugene Bozymski, MD '60, GME '66**, a luminary in the field of gastroenterology, died on February 15, 2024, in Chapel Hill, N.C., at the age of 88. He was a professor of medicine and head of endoscopy at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine (UNC). He played a pivotal role in establishing the Endoscopy Center and the Motility Center at UNC and assisted Duke University in establishing its unit. Dr. Bozymski received numerous awards, including the *Distinguished Clinician Award* of the American Gastroenterological Association and the *Master of Endoscopy Award* by the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

**John James Woods, Jr., MD '69**, died February 22, 2024, at the age of 80. For 30 years, Dr. Woods was a general and vascular surgeon in Galesburg, Ill., and with Mercy Health Systems in Missouri.

## 1970s

**John Lent, MD, GME '70, '73**, died on February 16, 2024, at the age of 82. Dr. Lent practiced internal medicine and cardiology for 37 years at the Fond du Lac (Wis.) Regional Clinic and Aurora Healthcare. He was one of the founders of Fond du Lac's Samaritan Free Clinic at the Salvation Army. He received the *Physician Citizen of the Year* award from the Wisconsin State Medical Society.

**Sister Mary Annel, MD '71**, died on April 14, 2024, at the Maryknoll Sisters Center, Maryknoll, N.Y., at the age of 84. She had been a Maryknoll Sister for 66 years. In 1992, she led an investigation and analysis of data from the Maryknollers' worldwide HIV & AIDS ministry resulting in a document titled *Worldwide Trends in AIDS and Recommendations for Future Maryknoll Sisters' AIDS Ministry*. Sister Mary was assigned to El Salvador in 1993 and became the impulse behind

the Catholic Church's commitment to the HIV & AIDS ministry. In 2005, she was presented with the *National Catholic HIV/AIDS Network's Lumina Award* for her work in El Salvador. Sister Mary received the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association's *Humanitarian Award* in 2011 for her work in rural health and for stemming the spread of HIV and AIDS in El Salvador.

**Gerald G. Govin, MD '73, GME '83**, died on January 27, 2024, at the age of 76. Dr. Govin was a plastic surgeon whose practice in the Milwaukee area and focused on cosmetic, reconstructive, hand and burn surgery. He also had a distinguished career as a general surgeon in the US Navy with special expertise in trauma and critical care.

**Marshall Dale Morgan, MD, GME '74**, a retired radiologist in Oakland, Calif., died on November 27, 2023, at the age of 81. In the late 1970s, Dr. Morgan pioneered ultrasound scanning of patients at Oakland's Highland General Hospital. He also performed the majority of the hospital's angiograms over 34 years and was chief of mammography.

**Roger A. Gremminger, MD '76, GME '78, '79**, died on December 30, 2023, in Denver, Colo., at the age of 76. Dr. Gremminger was an emergency medicine physician at St. Joseph Hospital in Milwaukee and Marshfield Medical Center in Beaver Dam, Wis.

## 1980s

**James Alan Johnson, MD, GME '82**, died at home in Wisconsin Rapids on January 28, 2024, at the age of 73. He was one of the founding orthopedic surgeons at Wisconsin River Orthopedics for 37 years and retired in 2014.

**Jeffrey R. Thomson, MD '84, GME '87**, died at home in West Bend, Wis., on April 28, 2024, at the age of 68. Dr. Thomson was an anesthesiologist at Milwaukee's Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital.

## 2020s

**Matthew P. Gray, MD '07, MS '14**, chief medical information officer and associate chief medical officer for Children's

Wisconsin, died on April 16, 2024, at the age of 44. He also was an assistant professor of pediatrics (emergency medicine) at MCW.

**Aaron Jurgens Bauer, MD '02**, died on September 27, 2023, at the age of 47. He was a pediatrician with offices in Kenosha and Mt. Pleasant, Wis., and served on the medical staff of both Children's Wisconsin and Aurora Burlington hospitals.

## 2010s

**Keith Christopher Weitze, MD '18**, died on April 5, 2024, in Artesia, N.M., at the age of 36. He was an emergency medicine physician at Artesia General Hospital.

## Special Remembrances

**M. Joseph Chusid, MD**, professor emeritus of pediatrics whose career at MCW spanned five decades, died at home on April 13, 2024, at the age of 79. Dr. Chusid, a pediatric infectious disease specialist, joined MCW in 1976 as an assistant professor and rose through the ranks to become a full professor of pediatrics in 1984. Before joining MCW, he completed a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, where he published six papers with Anthony Fauci, MD, who later directed the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.



At MCW, Dr. Chusid was chief of the pediatric infectious disease section and served on the executive committee for the department of pediatrics from 1983–2018. He served on the board of directors of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (now Children's Wisconsin) from 1984–2009. His research included studies on Lyme disease, central venous line infections and corneal inflammation.

**John J. Eversman, MD**, MCW's former senior associate dean for clinical affairs, died on March 21, 2024, at the age of 89. Before joining MCW in 1993 as the leader of MCW's adult clinical services and physicians, he was an endocrinologist at the Cleveland Clinic, where he also served as the clinic's first chief operating officer. During his six-year tenure at MCW, Dr. Eversman led the expansion of MCW's clinical practice operations, managed care contracting, ambulatory care and clinical informatics. He also helped lead the transition of physicians and adult clinical services from John Doyne Hospital (formerly Milwaukee County Medical Complex) to Froedtert Hospital when Doyne Hospital closed in 1995.

**Jordan Fink, MD**, one of the nation's preeminent allergists and immunologists, died on May 10, 2024, at the age of 89. Dr. Fink was appointed to Marquette University School of Medicine's (MCW's predecessor institution) faculty in 1968 as an assistant professor in the departments of medicine and microbiology. He was promoted in 1973 to full professor. From 1971–1999, Dr. Fink served as the chief of the allergy-immunology division in the department of medicine at MCW and the Zablocki VA Medical Center. He also became a professor of pediatrics during this period of time. His other leadership roles included head of MCW's General Clinical Research Center and associate chief of staff for research and development at the Zablocki VA.



In 1994, Dr. Fink and colleagues at MCW were the first to identify latex hypersensitivity due to environmental exposure as a potentially lethal threat to healthcare workers and chronically exposed children. In a follow-up study in 1996, Dr. Fink and colleagues reported that latex gloves may not be resistant to penetration by viruses.

In 2012, MCW presented Dr. Fink with the *Distinguished Service Award*, its highest faculty and staff honor.

*(continued on page 34)*



# IN MEMORIAM

## Special Remembrances

**Thomas J. Flatley, MD '59, MS '64, GME '63**, died on January 18, 2024, at the age of 90. Donald Hackbarth, MD '77, GME '82, shared the following memorial to Dr. Flatley:

“Dr. Flatley was a full-time professor and faculty member in the MCW department of orthopaedic surgery during the last 10–15 years of his career when he retired at age 78 in 2012. He was performing complex spine surgery and seeing patients in clinic until the day he retired, to care for and spend time with his wife. Tom and Dr. Jeff Schwab influenced me to return to MCW in 2000 to restart the orthopaedic oncology section. Tom and Jeff also supported my promotion to professor. During the 1960s through 1980s, Dr. Flatley was a clinical professor. Residents worked with him at Childrens Hospital, the VA and Milwaukee County Hospital. We also were able to occasionally assist him at St. Joseph’s Hospital and the old Lutheran Hospital. He was an outstanding educator, surgeon and friend.”

**Gregory Harrington, MD '67**, MCW emeritus associate professor of neurology and psychiatry and behavioral medicine from 1973–2023, died on May 16, 2024, at the age of 82. Dr. Harrington cared for patients with multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and genetic neurological disorders. In 1976, Dr. Harrington and colleagues at MCW developed a model for exchange transfusions for the treatment of Reye’s syndrome. In 1977, he was among the first to report on the hazards related to prolonged inhalation of isobutane, a gas used in aerosol products and refrigerants.



**Arthur West Kaemmer\*, MD '70**, a philanthropist and pediatrician, died in St. Paul, Minn., on January 31, 2024, at the age of 80. In 2011, Dr. Kaemmer established the Kaemmer Professorship in Pediatrics: The “Super Kid” Chair in Special Needs at MCW. At the time, he said, “Children often have a limited capacity to comprehend the circumstances of their illness or hospitalization. I wanted the hospital to be a better place for kids, especially those with special needs.” As he and his fellow Class of 1970 graduates prepared for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, Dr. Kaemmer challenged his classmates to match his \$250,000 pledge to MCW for student scholarships. Dr. Kaemmer was a pediatrician in St. Paul with Group Health, now Health Partners.



*\*MCW is grateful to the late Dr. Kaemmer for his Legacy Society membership.*

**Henry Miziorko, PhD**, a nationally prominent biochemist who served on MCW’s faculty from 1977–2004, died in Kansas City, Mo., on March 17, 2024, at the age of 76. While at MCW, Dr. Miziorko studied mevalonate kinase as an enzyme implicated in human disease. He was interim chair of biochemistry from 1990–1991.

In 2004, Dr. Miziorko joined the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Missouri–Kansas City as an endowed professor of structural biology and head of the division of biochemistry and molecular biology, a position he held until his retirement in 2013, when he was named professor emeritus.

**Alfred Rimm, PhD**, a world leader in biostatistics and epidemiology and cofounder of the International Bone Marrow Transplant Registry (now the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research) at MCW, died on June 28, 2023, at the age of 89. While at MCW from the early 1970s to 1993, he made several significant research contributions.



In the 1970s and 1980s, Dr. Rimm conducted pioneering studies on the relationship of girth measurements and disease in women.

Based on his research of changing medical practice patterns, Dr. Rimm in 1987 was the first to challenge the prediction of the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges that there would be a large surplus of physicians in the United States. In 1992, Dr. Rimm reported that hip fractures are twice as deadly if they occur in men over 65 compared to women.

He left MCW in 1993 to become chair of the department of epidemiology and biostatistics at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Ohio.

**Michael J. Thomas, PhD**, professor of pharmacology & toxicology, died on May 12, 2024, at the age of 77. At MCW, he was a member of the Cardiovascular Center and the Neuroscience Research Center. His research focused on the application of mass spectrometry to biomedical and biochemical studies. He is survived by his wife, Mary Sorci–Thomas, PhD, MCW professor of medicine (endocrinology) and associate director of the Cardiovascular Center.



## Elizabeth (Libby) Ellinas, MD, MS, FEL '00

Elizabeth Ellinas, MD, MS, FEL '00, is a professor of anesthesiology, associate dean for women's leadership and founding director of the Center for the Advancement of Women in Science and Medicine (AWSM).

You may be surprised to know that Dr. Ellinas, who has devoted her career to supporting and advancing women in academic medicine, has a tattoo – and it's of a woodpecker. The bird signifies her approach to pushing for gender equity in the health sciences. Just like her feathered friend, she tirelessly chips away at tough obstacles to break through barriers and create a new, more welcoming environment.

Dr. Ellinas joined the Medical College of Wisconsin's department of anesthesiology in 2000. A specialist in obstetric (OB) anesthesiology, she has held roles as diverse as director of OB anesthesia and program director for MCW's OB anesthesia fellowship. She also served as the chief of OB anesthesiology at Froedtert Hospital from 2009–2017 and Wheaton Franciscan Hospitals from 2005–2017.

As MCW's associate dean for women's leadership, Dr. Ellinas has worked for nearly a decade to help the institution become a destination of choice for women in academic medicine by assisting in the recruitment, retention, advancement and recognition of women faculty.

Her advocacy includes the conception and creation of MCW's Center for the Advancement of Women in Science and Medicine (AWSM), which launched in 2018 with Dr. Ellinas as its founding director, a position she still holds today. Developed in conjunction with the Council for Women's Advocacy and Provost Joseph E. Kerschner, MD '90, FEL '98, AWSM highlights the accomplishment of women faculty, supports their career advancement and works to ensure that MCW has a welcoming culture for all genders.

In November 2024, Dr. Ellinas will become chair of the Association of American Medical Colleges' Group on Women in Medicine and Science, during which she will have the opportunity to support and help advance women in academic medical centers across the country. ■

– DEVON MCPHEE

### What Drives You?

My whole career has been about serving, helping and promoting women and gender equity. As an anesthesiologist, I spent my career on labor and delivery, working mostly with women physicians, nurses and patients, doing my best to support them. In my "Phase Two," I work specifically in gender equity and the social sciences, supporting women to leadership, promoting women's careers and working toward an MCW environment in which all genders thrive.

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

The highlight for me is seeing women succeeding and feeling appreciated for their work and successes. Two prime examples include MCW's annual Women Full Professor Recognition Ceremony and the Women's Leadership Learning Collaborative. Another major accomplishment was working with so many people to launch AWSM.

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

The thing AWSM has tried to work on but has yet to feel great success at is culture. Nationally, academic medicine has high rates of gender-based harassment – as high as 50 percent for women in some areas. MCW can and must do better – striving to become a destination for women in the health sciences. It's a tough problem to work on, but we are moving forward at MCW, always learning and planning something new.

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

If people think that I have helped make substantial progress toward ASWM's mission of supporting and encouraging women to pursue and become leaders in academic medicine and making MCW a destination where all genders grow and thrive, I'd be thrilled.

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

As someone who is perpetually hard on myself, one of the things I strive to consistently work on is this – try to know in your heart that success and failure are really the same thing: opportunities to grow, learn, change. If you can achieve that, not only will you grant yourself the grace you should, but you will always be in a space of curiosity and renewal . . . a great place to be!





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8701 Watertown Plank Road  
P.O. Box 26509  
Milwaukee, WI 53226-0509  
414-955-4725  
MCWmagazine@mcw.edu

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