

VOLUME 22 • NUMBER 2 • 2020

FOR ALUMNI, FRIENDS, FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

# Quarterly

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Clinical Care, Research  
and Education

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School of Medicine  
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# QUARTERLY

The Magazine for Alumni, Friends,  
Faculty and Students of the University of Wisconsin  
School of Medicine and Public Health

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# AUGUST 2020

Week of August 17

WMAA Stethoscope Presentations

Friday, August 21

Virtual White Coat Ceremony

# SEPTEMBER 2020

Thursday, September 17

Virtual Middleton Society Celebration

# OCTOBER 2020

Friday, October 30,  
and Saturday,  
October 31

WMAA Board of Directors Meeting  
Reunions for the Classes of 1980,  
'85, '90, '95, 2000, '05, '10 and '15  
(Reunions will be virtual)

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## 100 Years of Care for Children

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## Seasonal Fun (above)

The "Well Red" Bucky sculpture in Alumni Park sports a face covering—a sign of the times during spring 2020—after the campus temporarily moved much of its activity online due to COVID-19.

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## ROBERT N. GOLDEN, MD



**T**he unprecedented COVID-19 crisis is revealing the true spirit and character of people and institutions. This issue of *Quarterly* describes the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's (SMPH) response to the pandemic, highlighting the way our tripartite missions of clinical care, research and education are serving as a platform for our faculty and staff's response to the novel virus and its profound, horrible impact.

Our students' resilience during this pandemic has been inspiring. Trainees quickly adapted to remote learning, and many volunteered to assist with pandemic-related needs. The MD Class of 2020 orchestrated its spring Match Day and Recognition Ceremony in virtual formats. These joyful online gatherings brought together the SMPH community during what could have been a period of isolation.

Now layered on top of the COVID-19 crisis is a longstanding epidemic of racism that has erupted with acute, deadly manifestations. The SMPH, along with the entire university and Madison community, is focused on recent examples of violence, discrimination and social injustice in a way that suggests we might finally be at a turning

point, ready to confront the demons that have tainted our nation's professed commitment to equality and justice for everyone.

Again, our students are revealing their passion and dedication to the best values of medicine, public health and social justice. We anticipate that together with our faculty, staff and UW Health partners, they will help us achieve the American promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all.

Our students draw much inspiration from their mentors and teachers. You will read about those who received well-deserved teaching awards from the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA), as well as past and present faculty members, staff and alumni who earned additional WMAA awards.

As you turn these pages, you will find articles that highlight storied people and places. I found it fascinating to review the 100-year evolution of children's hospitals at UW-Madison, starting with the Mary Cornelia Bradley Hospital for the Study of Children's Diseases up through today's American Family Children's Hospital. Another article provides a history lesson through stories told by Dr. Ralph Olsen, a graduate of our MD Class of 1954. He was a resident at the former Wisconsin General Hospital during

the polio epidemic. Fortunately, polio is now in the history books, where we hope to find COVID-19 as soon as possible.

We also focus on history-in-the-making through the remarkable work of a father and daughter partnership: Drs. David and Brittany Allen of our Department of Pediatrics.

Another type of partnership has guided the *Wisconsin Medical Journal (WMJ)* through a smooth transition to a new administrative and governance model. At the request of the Wisconsin Medical Society, the journal's original sponsor, the SMPH and the Medical College of Wisconsin have collaborated in creating a shared structure that should provide a bright future for the highly valuable and respected *WMJ*.

Recently, we have experienced several poignant losses. Our SMPH community is grieving the deaths of five dear colleagues and friends: Drs. Donata Oertel, Beth Potter, Alex Tucker, Jon Wolff and Ed Jackson. These losses are especially difficult as we navigate the emotional turbulence of the pandemic. In the Healer's Journey essay, Dr. Christine Seibert reflects upon the passing of three older women for whom she had provided care for more than two decades.

During this season of rejuvenation, we thank the alumni class representatives who strengthen connections among their classmates and with their alma mater. The Class of 1970 held a virtual spring class reunion, and other classes are planning virtual reunions for this fall.

More than ever, let us reflect on the strength of the "family" that upholds the SMPH's missions. We look forward to the time—hopefully in the not-too-distant future—when it is safe to shift back to real homecomings. It will be wonderful to see each of you when we emerge from COVID-19 and return to in-person experiences at *your* UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

**Robert N. Golden, MD**

*Dean, University of Wisconsin  
School of Medicine and Public Health  
Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs,  
UW-Madison*

## DANIEL JACKSON, MD '03 (PG '10)

**H**ello, fellow alums and supporters of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH). I hope my “farewell” message finds you safe and well. We are living through truly remarkable times. As I reflect on the past two years as the president of your Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA), I am struck by all the good that continues to happen at the SMPH despite any circumstances that occur in the world around us.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to health care, education and all aspects of life. Yet, your alma mater and its students have met these challenges with incredible resilience. This begins with members of our MD Class of 2020, who had a successful virtual Match Day followed by the SMPH's first online MD Recognition Ceremony to honor their graduation (see article on pages 8 and 9). This groundbreaking class was the first to complete all of their training in the school's ForWard Curriculum, and these graduates are now ready to spread the Wisconsin Idea to top-notch residency programs across the country.

As a physician, scientist and teacher, I have been inspired by how colleagues, staff and students have risen to the occasion during this pandemic. Seemingly overnight, our clinical practices, research programs and educational offerings transitioned to platforms such as Vidyo, WebEx, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. People have adapted and even thrived. While we all miss in-person interactions, I personally have enjoyed the opportunity to see my patients and their families through telehealth by Vidyo.

Each year, one of the highlights for the WMAA is its awards banquet, at which we honor the accomplishments of distinguished alums, teachers and others who make critical contributions to our school and elsewhere in

medicine and public health. Unfortunately, COVID-19 prohibited our in-person celebration in April. However, it cannot stop us from recognizing the amazing people who earned WMAA awards this year. Please see their stories starting on page 16 of this issue of *Quarterly* magazine.

The WMAA looks forward to celebrating with virtual reunions for the Classes of 1980, '85, '90, '95, 2000, '05, '10 and '15 during Homecoming Weekend. We will continue to innovate and find the best ways to connect online until it's safe to do so in person.

As individuals and as part of the SMPH community, we have an obligation to learn from history and address the impacts of racism and inequity in our society. In recent weeks, both peaceful protests and violent acts of civil unrest have taken place in Madison and throughout our nation. The SMPH has reinforced its steadfast commitment to eliminating health inequities exacerbated by racism. It is essential that we all recognize that our patients, students, faculty, staff and alumni of color continue to face significant challenges based on past and ongoing traumas. We hope you'll join us in the pursuit of social justice through peaceful, effective means, shaped by the shared values and vision of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health and the WMAA.

As a shining example, students in the school's chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) recently created a local White Coats for Black Lives (WC4BL) Chapter housed under the umbrella of the SNMA. WC4BL is a national movement that aims to eliminate racial bias in the practice of medicine with the recognition that racism is a threat to the health and well-being of people of color. The students' faculty advisors and others in the school and at UW Health supported the students' leadership as they organized and held a WC4BL rally at the Wisconsin State Capitol in June.



Despite all of these challenges around us, much positive movement continues at the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association! During the past two years, we welcomed a record number of new Middleton Society members. We have continued to make new and lasting connections with students and alums. As I end my term as the WMAA president on June 30, 2020, with much gratitude, the association remains in terrific hands under the leadership of Executive Director Karen Peterson and your new president, Dr. Mark Fenlon, who earned his medical degree in the SMPH Class of 1984. I look forward to continuing to serve this great school and organization as a past president.

Stay safe and well, and—as always—  
On Wisconsin!

**Daniel Jackson, MD '03 (PG '10)**  
*President, Wisconsin  
Medical Alumni Association*



*Hospitalist Ann Sheehy, MD, consults with a colleague at University Hospital, where they care for patients who have COVID-19.*

# COVID-19

## SMPH'S RESPONSES SPAN CLINICAL CARE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

**A**s COVID-19, caused by the highly infectious SARS-CoV-2, reached pandemic status in March 2020 and progressed throughout the United States—resulting in unprecedented personal and professional challenges—a strong message emerged: “We’re all in this together.”

Describing this era, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) Dean Robert N. Golden, MD, says, “To turn Charles Dickens’ quote upside down, I would say these are the worst of times, and these are the best of times.”

He explains, “It’s clearly the worst pandemic in the past century. But, it’s amazing how this is bringing out the very best in people and in our institution.”

Noting that his already-strong pride about the SMPH grows daily as he witnesses faculty and staff “banding together to battle this horrible pandemic,” he says the efforts build upon the school’s tripartite missions: clinical care, research and education.

“I am in awe of the bravery and dedication of our physicians, nurses and other front-line workers. I am profoundly

impressed with the resilience of our students, who made ‘lemonade out of lemons’ when COVID-19 forced their Match Day and graduation events to go virtual. Further, many staff members have found innovative ways to advance our missions while following the best public health practices. And administrators at our school, university and UW Health have shown remarkable leadership and self-sacrifice,” notes Golden.

### **Innovative Clinical Care**

At UW Health, the pandemic caused a race to open the Health Incident Command Center, acquire ample personal protective equipment (PPE), train people how to safely use it, and find ways to maximize its lifespan amid severe national shortages.

While countless faculty members are working tirelessly on the COVID-19 response, Golden describes several who are working around the clock to connect with local, state and national agencies, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). They are Nasia Safdar, MD, PhD (PG ’00), professor, Department of Medicine, SMPH, and medical

director of infection control, UW Health; Peter Newcomer, MD ’95, senior associate dean for clinical affairs, SMPH, and chief clinical officer, UW Health; Jeffrey Pothof, MD ’06, associate professor, BerbeeWalsh Department of Emergency Medicine, SMPH, and chief quality officer, UW Health; Aimee Becker, MD ’01 (PG ’05, ’06), MBA, associate professor, Department of Anesthesiology, SMPH, and chief medical officer and vice president, inpatient operations, UW Health; and Matthew Anderson, MD, clinical associate professor,



*Ann Sheehy, MD, prepares to enter a patient’s room.*



*Jeffrey Pothof, MD '06, has been a lead spokesperson throughout the pandemic.*

Department of Medicine, SMPH, and senior medical director, primary care, UW Health.

In record time, faculty and staff established 24/7 sessions in the UW Health Clinical Simulation Program and taught hundreds of health care workers how to safely don and doff PPE. Personnel dedicated herculean efforts to adapt clinical facilities to assure safety for patients and caregivers. Tapping into and adding to the national COVID-19 knowledge base, health care providers implemented many innovations to avoid unnecessary exposure to the virus.

The SMPH and UW Health formed collaborations with the UW-Madison College of Engineering to source items that protect health care workers. For instance, UW-Madison engineers worked with Madison-area manufacturers, the design consulting firm Delve, and UW Health faculty and staff to produce medical face shields—which were unavailable from usual supply chains. They frequently consulted with Robert Scheuer, UW Health director of materials management, to ensure a medical-grade product. The group published its design as open source to be shared worldwide.

Addressing another critical need, a team of surgeons, anesthesiologists and engineers—led by Hau Le, MD, assistant professor, Departments of Surgery, Pediatrics and Biomedical Engineering—in collaboration with the Sector 67 makerspace, developed the Box for Aerosol and Droplet Guarding and Extraction in Respiratory Infection (BADGER). It is placed above a

patient's upper body and head to contain viral particles during procedures that have a high risk of disease transmission. Designs for the negative-pressure BADGER are being provided for free to other health care systems.

When COVID-19 appeared in the region, UW Health and other area health systems temporarily suspended nonessential patient visits, procedures and surgeries to prepare for potential surges of the virus. They also ramped up telehealth services.

Tom Brazelton, MD, MPH, medical director of UW Health's Telehealth Program and a professor in the SMPH Department of Pediatrics, says the field "exploded," from a small service (see *Quarterly*, Volume 22, Number 1) into a high-demand commodity. The program has been able to train more than 2,000 providers to use the system since mid-March. Brazelton anticipates that patient demand for virtually delivered health care will remain high forever. The technology also allows providers inside a COVID-19 patient's room to communicate with those outside the room, reducing exposure and PPE usage.

Laboratory services also blossomed to meet pandemic-related needs. The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene—a key partner with the SMPH (see *Quarterly*, Volume 22, Number 1)—has been working in concert with the CDC and other agencies as it conducts COVID-19 tests and helps laboratories around Wisconsin develop diagnostic capabilities. UW Health is among those that established in-house testing.

### **Interdisciplinary Research**

Unless research could be conducted remotely, directly benefited patient care or gained permission related to COVID-19, studies were temporarily halted in March.

Describing pertinent investigations, Golden notes, "Our researchers are doing amazing things. For instance, Dr. Miriam Shelef had the early foresight to bank specimens from recovered patients so they are available for use in research projects."

Several SMPH programs are working with county, state and national entities to conduct COVID-19 research. Approved clinical trials are being managed centrally through an institutional process at the school. The descriptions below include only a small sampling of the efforts underway.

By early February, David O'Connor, PhD, professor, SMPH Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, and Thomas Friedrich, PhD, professor, UW School of Veterinary Medicine, reinvigorated previous research to study the virus.

"We are working to develop a plan to build out nonhuman primate models to test medical countermeasures such as vaccines and therapeutics," says O'Connor. "We want to make sure we are recapitulating the kind of clinical signs (of virus infection) that happen in people."

They are interested in understanding how much of the virus makes its way into the body and in bodily fluids, and where in the lungs the virus infects; and they aim to create opportunities to test new vaccines and antivirals. They also hope to look at how the immune system responds and whether there are indicators that can help distinguish who might be at risk for developing severe disease.

The SMPH and UW Health are part of a large national consortium, led by Mayo Clinic, that is investigating the use of convalescent plasma to determine whether it can shorten the duration or severity of illness from COVID-19. William Hartman, MD, PhD, assistant professor (CHS), Department of Anesthesiology, is the local principal investigator of the trial, which uses antibodies from people who have recovered from COVID-19 as an experimental treatment



for seriously ill patients. The first UW Health patient was treated in mid-April.

Another principal investigator, Daniel Jackson, MD '03 (PG '10), published a study indicating that respiratory allergies, asthma and controlled allergen exposure were associated with significantly reduced gene expression in a protein the coronavirus uses to infect cells with COVID-19. The research suggests a possible reason why people with respiratory allergies and asthma do not appear to be at increased risk of COVID-19. Importantly, previous studies have shown that higher expression of ACE2 is associated with smoking, diabetes and hypertension, which are risk factors for COVID-19 disease severity.

The Wisconsin Partnership Program at the SMPH has awarded 22 COVID-19 Response Grants totaling \$2.7 million. Grants support vital research at the SMPH and across campus, including projects for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments; grants also help community organizations address the immediate health needs of Wisconsin's diverse urban and rural communities.

"We are pleased to support a broad range of innovative projects, including those that aim to advance health equity by supporting the most vulnerable in our communities," comments Golden. "This approach is well aligned with our mission to improve health and well-being in Wisconsin."

### **Adaptable Education**

Golden recalls the "heavy lift" required by a large team—led by key medical education administrators—to convert the school's educational offerings into online deliverables due to the pandemic.



*On April 24, 2020, with lights and sirens, fire engines paraded around Madison hospitals, including University Hospital (in the background) to thank medical staff for their work during the pandemic.*

Elizabeth Petty, MD '86 (PG '89), senior associate dean for academic affairs, co-authored—with William J. Hueston, MD, of the Medical College of Wisconsin—an article, "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Medical Student Education in Wisconsin," in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal*. The article described complications faced by students in nonclinical and clinical portions of the curriculum when gatherings were banned to slow the community spread of the virus.

"I am immensely grateful for the talent, tenacity and thoughtful collaboration of our faculty members, education teams, and academic information services and educational technology staff as they embraced different ways to deliver curriculum in this time of unprecedented change. They quickly deployed virtual courses, including some new courses, for students when face-to-face classes and hands-on clinical learning were abruptly suspended," says Petty, adding that this helped final-year students graduate.

### **Future Perspectives**

Jonathan Temte, MD '87, PhD (PG '93), SMPH associate dean for public health and community engagement, and a professor in the Department of Family Medicine

and Community Health, is serving as the American Association of Family Physicians' representative on the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices COVID-19 Work Group.

He and Golden, in an editorial titled "A Prescription for a Healthier Wisconsin in the COVID-19 Era," wrote, "The dramatic shift in our collective behaviors has required great sacrifice. Our lives have changed, financial distress has devastated families and businesses, and the acute and cumulative stresses grow in intensity each day."

They outlined many future steps to recovery—including access to COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, isolation of infected individuals, tracking community spread, protecting individuals with PPE, assuring health care access for all, and responsibly reopening businesses and activities while monitoring data to assure safety.

Temte and Golden also provided a hopeful outlook, stating, "With strong conviction and an emphasis on evidence rather than emotion, we will get through this pandemic—but only if we are united by a shared vision. . . . Our recovery from COVID-19 will not follow a straight line. There will be inevitable flare-ups of new infections, at least until we have a safe and effective vaccine that is available for everyone. But by having the proper systems and resources in place, we can avoid having each flare-up turn into a raging, destructive forest fire that takes the lives of Wisconsinites."

*Through the Peer Support Program—developed by SMPH faculty in collaboration with UW Health—Mary Jean Erschen-Cooke, RN, MS, BSN (second from left), and Mariah Quinn, MD, MPH (in white coat), share gratitude and support as they provide snacks to help reduce workers' stress.*



# CELEBRATIONS

VIRTUAL MATCH DAY AND GRADUATION EVENTS ELICIT JOY



*Clockwise from top left (left to right): Tenzin Atruksang, Melissa Ricker and Jenn Mirrielees in the Match Day command center at the Health Sciences Learning Center; Kaylee Scott and Adam Yetzer; Dawn Sherman and Shoshana Rudin; Michael Tao and Katarina Nguyen.*

“Resilient” best describes the medical students in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health’s (SMPH) Class of 2020. As COVID-19 spread across the globe and became prevalent in Wisconsin, they quickly evolved their Match Day and graduation plans from traditional ceremonies into virtual events.

By Match Day on March 20, 2020, the state of Wisconsin had closed schools, UW-Madison was on the verge of online-only instruction for the rest of the semester,

and public health guidelines banned gatherings of more than 50 people and encouraged gatherings of fewer than 10.

To preserve this rite of passage, the medical students quickly turned their disappointment into action. They enlisted technical assistance and created an interactive WebEx celebration. Like a traditional Match Day, each fourth-year medical student was called to the “fore,” complete with photos and music, to reveal their upcoming residency location. While

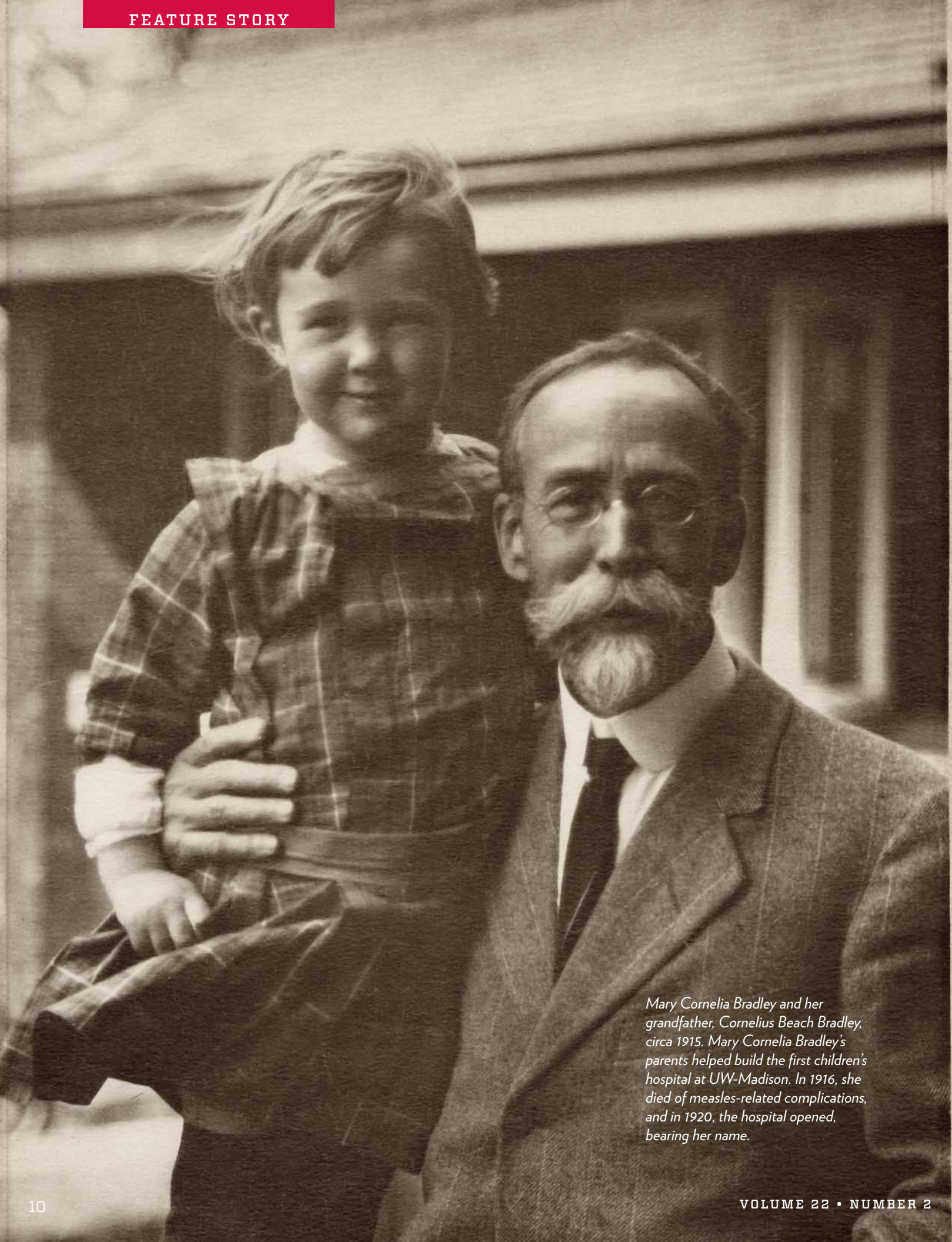
cheering on classmates, students were surrounded by housemates and relatives.

As the May 8 MD Recognition Ceremony approached, physical distancing had become the norm. As a unique gift for this class, the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) provided a yearbook for each student. Then, with help from SMPH and WMAA staff, the online recognition ceremony featured many traditional elements and proved that joyful celebrations are stronger than a virus.



Top row (left to right): Physical distancing before the MD Recognition Ceremony are (back): Alexander Brauer, Tess Battiola, Prashanth Prbakaran, Eleanor Sato and Alekses Clifton, (front) Melissa Ricker, Elena Kurudza and Madi Kenzie; Jason Stephenson, MD, faculty speaker. Second row: Nnenna Ezeh (right) and Gya' Williams; Bailee Stark and her family; Ali Jandal, class speaker. Third row: Minaliza Shhlapour and her parents; Savannah Vogel and her parents; Bottom row: Dean Robert N. Golden, MD, presides over the online ceremony; Elizabeth Petty, MD '86 (PG '89), participates in the event.





*Mary Cornelia Bradley and her grandfather, Cornelius Beach Bradley, circa 1915. Mary Cornelia Bradley's parents helped build the first children's hospital at UW-Madison. In 1916, she died of measles-related complications, and in 1920, the hospital opened, bearing her name.*

# 100 Years of Care for Children

## THE HISTORY OF PEDIATRIC HOSPITALS AT UW-MADISON

**W**hen you hear “University of Wisconsin-Madison,” what comes to mind first?

Perhaps it's the campus' reputation as one of the nation's greatest public universities, its status as an internationally known research institution, or its beautiful setting along Lake Mendota. Many identify with the Badgers' countless achievements over the past generation in football, basketball, hockey and other sports.

Few people, however, may realize that 2020 commemorates the 100th year in which UW-Madison faculty and staff have been caring for hospitalized children. Four campus locations have served as a children's hospital, although the first three pale in comparison to UW Health's beautiful, nationally recognized American Family Children's Hospital, which opened in 2007.

The story began in 1920, with the opening of the Mary Cornelia Bradley Hospital for the Study of Children's Diseases. Professor Harold C. Bradley, PhD, and his wife, Josephine Bradley, provided most of the funding to construct a pediatric hospital on Linden Drive in memory of their

daughter. At age 6, Mary Cornelia Bradley had been stricken with measles, and she died from complications in 1916.

“I am grateful that my grandparents did something so wonderful after something so devastating,” says Peggy Timmerman, the daughter of one of Mary Cornelia Bradley's brothers. “Although Mary's death was seldom talked about, I'm told that this generous gift to the university helped my grandmother cope with the tragic loss of her daughter.”

As befitted many hospitals of the early 20th century, the Bradley Hospital—and its successor, the Wisconsin Orthopedic Hospital for Children, which opened in 1930 nearby on Linden Drive—was not child-friendly by today's standards. Noise was constant, visiting hours were few, and privacy was nonexistent. Typically, a single, large room housed eight or nine young patients, with nothing or just a drape separating them.

In that era, children with acute, severe illnesses, which often were infectious diseases, commonly died at home. The region's acute-care pediatric wards were located at other community hospitals. Thus, patients admitted to the Wisconsin

Orthopedic Hospital for Children generally were suffering from chronic diseases or having orthopedic surgery.

Yet, early on, surgical procedures were not conducted at this facility. For more than 30 years, pediatric patients who needed surgery “had to be taken outside via gurney transport, covered by bundled clothing and blankets during inclement weather” to University Hospital at 1300 University Avenue, according to an unpublished memoir by the late Gordon A. Tuffli, MD '64, a longtime Madison pediatrician and faculty member of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health's (SMPH) Department of Pediatrics.

The outdoor gurney rides ended by the late 1950s with the construction of a long, dimly lit tunnel that connected the Wisconsin Orthopedic Hospital (later renamed UW Children's Hospital) to University Hospital, which opened in 1924. At the second children's hospital, other improvements included the addition of a pediatric intensive care unit and development of programs for children with cancer, cystic fibrosis and other life-threatening disorders. The two original children's hospital buildings and the old

University Hospital building (now called the Medical Sciences Center) still house various UW-Madison programs.

**Moving to the “New” Adult Hospital**

Fast forward to 1979, when pediatric and adult patients were carefully transferred to the colossal Clinical Science Center (CSC), home of today’s University Hospital, on the far west end of campus. Philip Farrell, MD, PhD (PG ’72)—who joined the Department of Pediatrics faculty after completing his residency in that department, served as its chair from 1985 to 1995, and later served as the SMPH dean—recalls how excited the children were to “take a ride west” in their beds and move into individual rooms with their own bathrooms and televisions.

“Having a private room for each child was innovative 40 years ago,” says Paul Sondel, MD, PhD ’75 (PG ’80), the Reed and Carolee Walker Professor in Pediatric Oncology at the SMPH and the research director for the Department of Pediatrics’ Division of Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant. “Yet, the rooms were cramped, and there was nothing child- or family-friendly about the space.”

Over his 40-year career caring for pediatric cancer patients and conducting research at UW-Madison, Sondel has seen myriad improvements.

Among them is security. While not as paramount a concern in 1979 as it is today, security was lacking; in fact, health care providers and visitors routinely passed through pediatric units on their way to other areas of the CSC.

A dedicated pediatric hematology/ oncology unit opened in 1990, and in 1993, Child Life—a profession of therapists who help children cope with hospitalization—entered the picture. And building upon a program that started in the 1920s, staff of the UW Children’s Hospital School helped inpatients keep up with schoolwork; the offering continues today.

Farrell recalls that, at the CSC, pediatric general and specialty clinics expanded, and collaboration among Department of Pediatrics’ faculty members and those in other fields enhanced patient care. Further, programs such as organ transplantation gained national and international recognition.

Reflecting on other changes, Aaron L. Friedman, MD (PG ’78), cites the evolving profile of hospitalized children during his three decades on the Department of Pediatrics faculty.

“The child we hospitalize today is, on average, much sicker than the child we hospitalized 30 or more years ago. Back then, we hospitalized kids for procedures now done on an outpatient basis,” says



*Upon being diagnosed with lymphosarcoma at age 10 (upper photo), Jon Elenius was not expected to live more than a year. Today (lower photo), Elenius is a 58-year-old corporate litigator whose parents, in their mid-80s, still get weepy when they recall the incredible doctors and nurses who treated their son at the old UW Children’s Hospital.*

Friedman, a pediatric nephrologist who completed his residency and fellowship in the Department of Pediatrics, joined its faculty in 1981 and served as chair from 1996 to 2005. “Today, we hospitalize mostly very sick children who, in the past, would have died. Now, most of them heal and go on to live normal lives.”

**Restoring its Name**

The lack of a true, identifiable children’s hospital proved a major drawback in several ways. The name “UW Children’s Hospital”—which existed before the 1979 move to the

UW-MADISON ARCHIVES (3)



**1920**

**Opening of the Mary Cornelia Bradley Hospital for the Study of Children’s Diseases**

**1930**

**Opening of the Wisconsin Orthopedic Hospital for Children (later named UW Children’s Hospital)**

**1979**

**Opening of the Clinical Science Center, which houses the current University Hospital for adult patients and—from 1979 to 2007—served as a “hospital within a hospital” for children**

**2007**

**Opening of today’s American Family Children’s Hospital**

adult hospital—disappeared until 1988, when leaders resurrected the name for its pediatric facilities. Marketing materials of the era described a pediatric “hospital within a hospital,” touting the ample resources of a major academic medical center.

By the late 1990s, leaders became increasingly aware that the “hospital within a hospital” was inadequate, as inpatient care for children had become subsumed within a large hospital designed for adults.

Farrell and Friedman—both of whom cared for pediatric patients before and after the department’s 1979 move to the CSC—had insights into the unique needs of sick children and their families.

“Taking care of a sick child means caring for an entire family. You need space for parents, space for siblings. Moreover, children are not merely little adults; caring for them takes a different mindset and skill set,” says Friedman, who retired in 2013 from his role as vice president of health sciences and dean at the University of Minnesota Medical School, before moving back to Madison.

“With more children getting better and living longer, pediatric nursing, and physical and occupational therapy were growing as career choices,” he adds.

Like Friedman, Gordon Derzon acknowledged that the “hospital within a hospital” status quo was inadequate for sick children. In the years preceding his 2000 retirement as CEO of UW Hospital and Clinics, Derzon created a UW Children’s Hospital Advisory Board composed of a dozen business, community and hospital representatives, beginning a process that culminated in a state-of-the-art children’s hospital. The community became increasingly supportive.

“We started looking at options to improve the situation, which everyone agreed were urgently needed,” recalls John Flad, a member and future chair of the advisory board, lifelong Madison philanthropist and president of Flad Development and Investment Corporation. “We talked about everything from building a separate children’s entrance to constructing a

## UW-Madison Advances in Pediatrics from 1920 to 2020

**Several breakthroughs relating to pediatric medicine took place on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus during the past century. Among them are the following examples:**

UW-MADISON ARCHIVES



### **FIRST BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT (1968):**

Medical history was made in Madison and Minneapolis, thanks to UW-Madison Professor Fritz Bach, MD (photo at left), and University of Minnesota Professor Robert Good, MD, PhD. Bach shared with Good a groundbreaking testing method Bach had discovered. Simultaneously, Bach and a medical team performed the first bone marrow

transplant on a 22-month-old boy with Wiskott-Aldrich Syndrome at the same time Good performed a successful bone marrow transplant on a patient in Minnesota. For the transplant in Madison, the patient’s sister donated the bone marrow, which allowed her brother to live into adulthood. *The Lancet* included side-by-side research papers on the transplants.

### **CYSTIC FIBROSIS NEONATAL SCREENING PROJECT (1984 TO PRESENT):**

Led by Philip Farrell, MD, PhD (PG ’72) (photo at right)—former chair of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health’s (SMPH) Department of Pediatrics and former dean of the school—this comprehensive initiative placed Wisconsin among the original states to require all newborns to be tested for cystic fibrosis at birth. Now required nationally, this test has resulted in 40 million newborns screened for the disease and 7,000 diagnosed. Early diagnosis and treatment greatly improve patient outcomes.



TODD BROWN/MEDIA SOLUTIONS



### **INNOVATIVE CHILDHOOD ASTHMA RESEARCH (1983 TO PRESENT):**

About one in 12 children in the United States has asthma, a condition that costs billions in medical expenses, and lost time at school and work. SMPH faculty members have a long history of conducting innovative asthma research. Among them is Robert Lemanske, Jr., MD ’75 (PG ’80) (photo at left), a retired UW Health pediatrician

and SMPH professor emeritus of pediatrics and medicine, who specializes in the pathophysiology and treatment of childhood asthma and allergic diseases. He was the principal investigator of several studies, including COAST (Childhood Origins of ASThma), a \$35 million project funded by the National Institutes of Health. From 1998 through 2019, Lemanske’s team longitudinally assessed 287 patients born with at least one asthmatic or allergic parent, to follow the inception and progression of asthma among the children. A key COAST finding is that children who wheezed by age 3 while experiencing a rhinovirus infection were 10 times more likely to develop asthma by age 6 as compared to non-wheezers. Continued study of the COAST participants is improving the precision of various treatment and prevention strategies for asthma.

free-standing children's hospital elsewhere in Madison. The words 'fun, exciting and whimsical' were tossed around because we understood the importance of a more soothing, child-friendly environment."

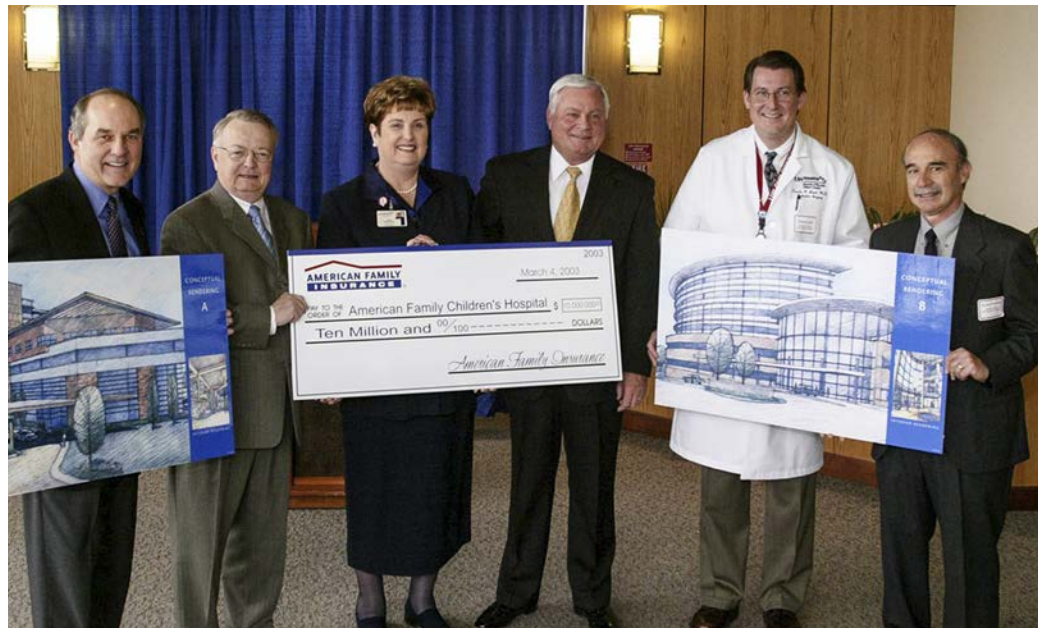
### Altering the Landscape

Two highly accomplished leaders arrived on the scene in 1999, infusing UW Health with new direction, energy and possibilities regarding pediatric hospitalization. First came Dennis Lund, MD, hired as the pediatric surgeon-in-chief who called upon his experience developing a Level 1 trauma program and large pediatric surgical practice at Boston Children's Hospital. A few months later, from City of Hope cancer center in California, came Donna K. Sollenberger, who served as president and CEO of UW Hospital and Clinics from 1999 until 2007 and has since retired after a 44-year career in health care. They were determined to build a state-of-the-art children's hospital in Madison—sooner rather than later.

"I remember taking Donna on a tour of our pediatric units during her first week as CEO," says Lund, now chief medical officer for Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford in Palo Alto, California. "She saw the small inpatient rooms, the lack of family amenities and the bone marrow transplant unit where kids would stay for weeks without a window. She got it right away, and that was unmistakably important."

Friedman reflects, "Denny and Donna were instrumental—especially within the organization—in saying not only that patients and families deserve better, but our physicians, nurses and staff deserve better."

What seemed to be a dream for many began crystallizing into reality. Flad Architects, a Madison-based planning and design firm founded by John Flad's father and grandfather, agreed to provide feasibility and design services at no cost. This work suggested that any pediatric hospital should stay on campus to minimize duplication of culinary and other central services. Plans called for bright colors and an engaging "All-Things-Wisconsin" design, with spacious patient rooms, lounges and living amenities that make life as tolerable as



*Posing with American Family Insurance Company's lead gift for American Family Children's Hospital are (left to right) Philip Farrell, MD, PhD (PG '72), David Anderson, Donna K. Sollenberger, Harvey Pierce, Dennis Lund, MD, and Aaron L. Friedman, MD (PG '78).*

possible for families that literally move in with their sick children.

### Raising Needed Funds

Sensing that the community would financially support a modern children's hospital, Sollenberger and the UW Hospital and Clinics Authority Board agreed to bond for approximately half of the \$78 million cost, providing that the other half would be raised through philanthropy, a monumental task managed by the UW Foundation.

Step one in such a multi-year capital campaign is identifying a lead gift, which often includes naming rights.

"I told Donna I would like to ask American Family Insurance about a naming gift," recalls Flad, whose development company had worked on several projects with the corporation. "And I didn't think the marketing department would need to stay up late because we could call it 'American Family Children's Hospital.' Here is a Fortune 500, Madison-based company, and I thought they might be interested."

After weeks of discussions, American Family Insurance, led by then-Chair and CEO Harvey Pierce and then-President David Anderson, gave the thumbs-up. In exchange for having its name on the building, American

Family Insurance made a \$10 million gift with the understanding that its generosity would continue. As of 2020, the company's total contributions approach \$25 million.

Remembering his initial impression, Pierce says, "I visited the old pediatric ward and saw these sick kids struggling. We felt there was no finer gift than providing an environment where these children could heal more comfortably."





The news about plans to build a children's hospital adjacent to UW Hospital and about American Family Insurance's generous gift was announced in early 2003. Construction of the six-story facility began the next year.

Addressing the need to raise the remaining \$41 million, countless businesses, organizations and individuals from Madison and beyond responded overwhelmingly to the "No Finer Gift" capital campaign.

In 2004, Friends of UW Hospital and Clinics (now called Friends of UW Health)—a non-profit organization aimed at supporting patients and families—held a well-attended gala that yielded \$250,000 for the building fund. Friends' galas, which typically attract more than 1,000 guests, have been held biennially since. Cumulative proceeds to American Family Children's Hospital from the galas and other Friends' fundraisers total \$7.95 million.

"The case for this children's hospital made for an incredibly compelling story," notes Nancy Francisco-Welke, vice president and managing director, UW Foundation. "All across the community and beyond, so many people reached into their hearts, allowing our most vulnerable children to get the very best care close to home."

### Building and Growing

Following the hospital's 2007 opening, demand for rooms and clinical care grew sharply, resulting in plans for a major

expansion just five years later. Again, UW Foundation launched a successful campaign, "Sick Kids Can't Wait," to raise \$16 million. By 2014, the hospital included two additional stories and was able to offer enhanced care for acutely ill babies and children.

Key additions included a 24-bed surgical neonatal intensive care unit and a pediatric imaging suite, including a first-in-the-world "hybrid" catheterization/angiography lab with very low-dose radiation.

While it is beautiful, spacious and technologically advanced, American Family Children's Hospital represents much more than a state-of-the-art building. Located at 1675 Highland Avenue, the 111-bed hospital's nurses, physical and occupational therapists, physicians and other health care professionals—many with national reputations—make it a world-class place.

There have been many extraordinary accomplishments at American Family Children's Hospital, including:

- recognition as a top children's hospital in multiple specialties by *U.S. News & World Report* each year since 2011;
- a three-star (highest) rating for outstanding pediatric cardiothoracic surgical outcomes by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons in 2019;
- the honor of having its childhood cancer program chosen among a select few as part of the Pediatric Cancer "Dream Team"—sponsored by the St. Baldrick's Foundation and Stand Up To Cancer—and the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot, both of which are research initiatives focused on finding immunotherapies that are more effective and less toxic than usual treatments; and
- a 10th-place national ranking for the Department of Pediatrics, attracting \$23.7 million in extramural funding from the National Institutes of Health.

### Celebrating a Century of Evolution

Four phases of children's hospital development at UW-Madison have brought together people and programs dedicated to improving the care of children and their families. During each era, advances led to



*Supermodel Cindy Crawford holds a patient during one of her many visits to Madison, where she and her family generously have supported pediatric cancer research at the American Family Children's Hospital and the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. Her younger brother, Jeff Crawford, was treated at the old UW Children's Hospital for acute lymphoblastic leukemia before losing his battle at age 3 in 1975. Looking on is Paul Sondel, MD, PhD '75 (PG '80), who helped organize fundraising events with Cindy Crawford.*

the need for better facilities, and this has culminated in the magnificent American Family Children's Hospital.

"It is really a remarkable story," says Ellen Wald, MD, who was named chair of the Department of Pediatrics and physician-in-chief of UW Children's Hospital (now American Family Children's Hospital) in 2006. "And our strong place on the national and global maps validates the decision to build this hospital. We've been on an amazing journey of pediatric care, and we're looking forward to another 100 years of outstanding care and clinical discoveries."



*Ellen Wald, MD*



*Katryn Furuya, MD, a pediatric transplant hepatologist, smiles at a young patient at American Family Children's Hospital.*

# WMAA Awards

## RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE AND SERVICE

by Kaine Korzekwa

**Although the annual Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) Awards Banquet was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the association and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) community are “virtually” celebrating the myriad contributions made by the following award recipients.**

### MEDICAL ALUMNI CITATION AWARD:

**William A. Gahl, MD '76 (PG '80), PhD '81**

**RESIDENT CITATION AWARD:**  
**Patrick A. Turski, MD (PG '79)**

### EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

**Amy J. Kind, MD '01 (PG '07), PhD '11**

### EMERITUS FACULTY AWARD—BASIC SCIENCE:

**Robert H. Fillingame, PhD**

### EMERITUS FACULTY AWARD—CLINICAL SCIENCE:

**Daniel M. Albert, MD, MS '97**

### RALPH HAWLEY DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

**Rebecca L. Hawkins, MD '78**

### WMAA SERVICE AWARD:

**Kay A. Gruling, MD '88 (PG '91)**

### SIGURD SIVERTSON MEDICAL EDUCATION AWARD:

**David J. Henningsen, MD '91**

### HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP:

**Micaela D. Sullivan-Fowler, MS, MA**

### **William A. Gahl, MD '76 (PG '80), PhD '81**

A native of Waukesha, Wisconsin, Gahl earned his medical degree at the SMPH and completed his pediatrics internship and residency at UW Health. He also completed a PhD in oncology research at the SMPH. Gahl then completed fellowships at the National Institutes of Health, where he dedicated his four-decade career.

Gahl now leads the Human Biochemical Genetics Section of the National Human Genome Research Institute's Medical Genetics Branch. For 16 years, until 2019, he was the institute's clinical director.

In 2008, Gahl spearheaded the Undiagnosed Diseases Program, which he directs. This interdisciplinary effort brings to bear the latest advances in diagnosis.

His research on rare disorders has uncovered conditions, including genetic and molecular defects responsible for Salla disease, infantile free sialic acid storage disease, Hartnup disease and others.

“To be recognized with this award represents the highest honor because it comes from my colleagues and from a great university,” he says. “I have always been proud of the education and training provided by the University of Wisconsin.”

### **Patrick A. Turski, MD (PG '79)**

A nationally known neuroradiologist, Turski has had an impact on the SMPH for more than four decades. While completing his medical degree at Rush Medical College in Chicago, he was planning to pursue internal medicine, but the SMPH Department of Radiology chair opened his



eyes to the field. Turski completed a radiology residency at UW Health and—following a neuroradiology fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco, and training in France—he joined the SMPH faculty.

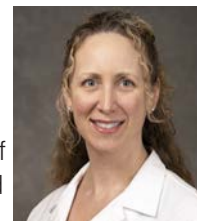
A variety of leadership positions culminated in Turski serving as chair of the Department of Radiology from 1995 to 2005, during which time he greatly expanded its space and faculty, and elevated the department's status. He retired as an emeritus professor of radiology and medical physics and has received several distinguished awards, including the Wisconsin Radiological Society Flaherty Lifetime Achievement Award and American Society of Neuroradiology Gold Medal.

Throughout his career, Turski has been at the forefront of developing techniques such as magnetic resonance angiography. His dedication to patients and the field of radiology embodies the Wisconsin Idea.

“Receiving this WMAA award touches my heart and reminds me of the deep bond I feel to the University of Wisconsin,” says Turski. “Few things are more rewarding than the feeling that one has contributed to the development of the next generation of physicians and scientists.”

### **Amy J. Kind, MD '01 (PG '07), PhD '11**

Kind's service includes and transcends her appointment as an associate professor in the SMPH Department of Medicine. Having earned her medical degree from the SMPH, Kind completed an internal medicine residency at Massachusetts General Hospital; she returned to UW Health for fellowships in geriatrics and older women's health, and earned a PhD in population health sciences at the SMPH.



A national research leader, Kind founded and directs the Department of Medicine's Health Services and Care Research Program, and she leads the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center's Dementia Care Research Core.

Further, Kind led the creation of the innovative Neighborhood Atlas, a free tool that uses ZIP codes to quantify neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage to assist in understanding social determinants of health. Among many leadership positions, she chairs the Wisconsin Partnership Program's Oversight and Advisory Committee.

"I am deeply honored and grateful to receive this award," Kind says. "Having grown up in an area of northern Wisconsin, in which socioeconomic disadvantage was and still is commonplace, I am a firm believer in the profound impact poverty has on health."

She has earned multiple prestigious awards, such as the American Geriatrics Society's Thomas and Catherine Yoshikawa Award for Outstanding Scientific Achievement in Clinical Investigation.

### **Robert H. Fillingame, PhD**

With a lifelong commitment to basic research and education, Fillingame earned a doctorate from the University of Washington. He soon became an assistant professor in the SMPH Department of Physiological Chemistry (now Biomolecular Chemistry). In 2002, he became chair and led the department for more than a decade.

Fillingame earned the WMAA Distinguished Teaching Award in 1986 and a WMAA named professorship soon after that. He also has received an SMPH Dean's Teaching Award and a UW-Madison Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award.

"Over the last four decades, Bob Fillingame's tireless commitment to excellence in teaching, research and service to the SMPH has benefited thousands of medical students and their countless patients," says nominator David Brow, PhD, professor and vice chair, SMPH Department



of Biomolecular Chemistry. "He is most deserving of this recognition."

For 22 years, Fillingame oversaw the first-year biochemistry course and spearheaded innovative education with computer-based, small-group learning exercises. Throughout this time, he ran a research program focused on membrane proteins and bioenergetics, trained 10 graduate students and nine postdoctoral fellows, and published 70 research papers and 22 scholarly reviews. He has received a National Institutes of Health MERIT Award and a Kellett Mid-career Research Award from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

### **Daniel M. Albert, MD, MS '97**

While many people say hindsight is 20/20, Albert's foresight appears equally acute. His career—focused on improving vision for all—included two decades of impactful service at the SMPH.



He earned his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and completed an ophthalmology residency at the University of Pennsylvania. Albert also earned a master's degree in health administration at UW-Madison.

His academic career began at Yale and Harvard universities before he became chair of the SMPH Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences in 1992. Ten years later, he helped establish and became the founding director of the McPherson Eye Research Institute, a leader in basic vision science.

"To me, this award represents recognition by the WMAA of the important role the department and institute have played in keeping the SMPH in the top rank for ophthalmic training, care and research," Albert says. "It also provides a vote of confidence for their continued excellence."

Some call Albert a "Renaissance man" because of his fascination with medical history and the humanities. He earned the Friedenwald Award from the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the

American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), and the Laureate Award from the AAO.

### **Rebecca L. Hawkins, MD '78**

To Hawkins, "service" just means doing her part—and in her case, it's helping run a ministry for homeless veterans after spending 30 years healing veterans at the VA Medical Center in Phoenix.



Upon earning her medical degree at the SMPH, the Onalaska, Wisconsin, native completed an internal medicine residency at UW Health. She then moved to Phoenix, where she eventually worked at the VA.

Following her 2012 retirement, Hawkins began running a charity for homeless veterans. By working with a network of organizations such as Community Bridges, she helps identify homeless veterans, gets them into the VA system, and helps them apply for housing vouchers. When they move into new homes, Hawkins greets them with everything needed for their bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms, including cleaning supplies. She brings the gifts on behalf of the Casa Veterans Ministry at the Franciscan Renewal Center.

"Receiving this award is the frosting on the cake," Hawkins says. "It's wonderful to be recognized for your work, but the main reward is the work itself. It is a joy to see a homeless veteran get placed in a safe, fully stocked apartment. We have been blessed with fascinating careers, and it is important to be charitable to those less fortunate."

### **Kay A. Gruling, MD '88 (PG '91)**

Compassion, service and giving are how Gruling summarizes her philosophy as a WMAA member. Among her numerous forms of community service, she served on the association's board of directors from 2007 to 2013 and now serves on its board advisory council. In 2018, she co-chaired a successful campaign



for the Class of 1988's 30-year reunion scholarship fund.

Gruling earned her medical degree at the SMPH and completed a family medicine residency through the SMPH Department of Family Medicine and Community Health's (former) Wausau Program.

"All of us who trained at the SMPH received far more than we ever gave," she says. "That can be in knowledge secured, education funding received, compassion afforded us, lifelong friendships developed, and more. Above all, there is a bond that we share. I strongly believe in the importance of giving back."

Gruling has held numerous positions in the Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians, and she has volunteered or served on the board of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, UW-Madison Wisconsin Singers, Wausau School District, Marathon County Medical Alliance, and the Performing Arts Foundation for The Grand Theater in Wausau, Wisconsin. In 2006, she was named a fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

### **David J. Henningsen, MD '91**

For Henningsen, participating in and giving back to medical education is a family affair. He has been involved in the UW Preceptorship Program



since he started his medical career at the Marshfield Clinic Health System in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. In 2000, he became its preceptor director, a role held by his father, John Henningsen, MD, 25 years earlier.

After the younger Henningsen earned his medical degree at the SMPH, he completed his residency at St. Francis-Mayo Family Practice. He is the family physician preceptor for the Chronic and Preventive Care Block of the SMPH ForWard Curriculum, as well as its Ambulatory Acting Internship.

He is a former president of his region's Tri-County Medical Society and a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians. He also has hosted college and high school students for mentoring opportunities.

"I was surprised and humbled when I learned that I received this award," Henningsen says. "I think it's important to identify one's moral philosophy in regard to one's vocation, and life in general. I try to help students identify their talents and develop them to best help other people and to recognize the great privilege and responsibility of our profession."

His son, Lucas Henningsen, MD '20, earned his medical degree in the SMPH's Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine.

### **Micaela D. Sullivan-Fowler, MS, MA**

Having joined the UW-Madison staff in 1988, Sullivan-Fowler is currently the head of rare books and special collections and of marketing and communications at Ebling Library for the Health Sciences, located in the Health Sciences Learning Center.



She earned a master's degree in library science at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and a master's in public history at Loyola University in Chicago. Before joining UW-Madison, she helped inform one of the first online medical databases, and was a historical and clinical librarian at the American Medical Association in Chicago.

Sullivan-Fowler has a long history of helping the WMAA by providing historical information and photos, and serving as a "whistle stop" on alumni tours. Her exhibits—such as those on the SMPH's 100th anniversary, and the histories of maritime medicine, human experimentation, and radiation and public health—have enriched experiences for medical students, faculty members and alumni.

"To think that I am now an honorary lifetime member of such an enthusiastic, engaged group of professionals makes my heart soar," she says. "The SMPH is all about educating, supporting and challenging each medical school class. Ebling Library helps support the school and students by providing resources, knowledgeable staff, and a comfortable, functional space for those students to do their intensive learning."

# WMAA Teaching Awards

*compiled by Andrea Larson*

The Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association presents annual teaching awards to individuals who are highly regarded by students for outstanding teaching efforts in these three categories:

- clinical teachers in each of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's (SMPH) teaching locations: Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison, Marshfield and Milwaukee;
- an outstanding resident; and
- a distinguished instructor in Phase 1 of the SMPH's ForWard Curriculum.

### **GREEN BAY: RILEY MEYER, DO**

A hospitalist at Aurora Baycare Medical Center (ABMC) in Green Bay and an SMPH clinical adjunct associate professor, Meyer is the SMPH Forward Curriculum's Acute Care



Block leader at ABMC. He completed his medical degree at Nova Southeastern University in Florida and his internal medicine residency with Aurora Health Care in Milwaukee. A medical student shared, "Dr. Meyer is a gifted teacher. He is approachable and has the unique ability to stretch students in their learning all while being encouraging and caring. ... I will be a better physician for it!"

### **LA CROSSE: KYLA LEE, MD '98**

Lee is an internal medicine physician at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. She serves as the SMPH ForWard Curriculum's Acute Care Block site



director and internal medicine rotation lead for phase 2. She also oversees the phase 3 Inpatient Acting Internships in internal medicine, cardiology and pulmonary critical care. Further, Lee is Gundersen's co-director for

the Intern Preparation Course. She earned her medical degree at the SMPH and completed an internal medicine residency at Gundersen. A medical student wrote, "To say Dr. Lee is an outstanding teacher is an understatement. Her devotion to medical students and our learning is unprecedented. Her love for medicine shines through her teaching and continues to inspire students."

**MADISON: ANN O'ROURKE, MD '02, MPH '06 (PG '09)**

O'Rourke is an associate professor in the SMPH Department of Surgery and the trauma medical director at University Hospital, a Level 1 trauma center. She is the integrated block leader for the ForWard Curriculum's Surgical and Procedural Care Block. She earned her medical and master of public health degrees at the SMPH, completed a residency at UW Health, and also completed a trauma surgery and critical care fellowship at the University of Tennessee-Memphis. A medical student shared, "I've had the privilege to learn from many doctors. None have had a bigger impact on me than Dr. O'Rourke. She has been a clinical teacher for students rotating on her service, a mentor to students applying to general surgery, and a leader for all students on surgical services. ... She pushes us to learn and grow, while being patient with us. She teaches us with respect and compassion."



**MARSHFIELD: STEPHEN HOLTHAUS, MD**

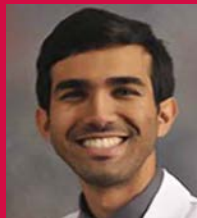
A family medicine physician at the Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS) in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, Holthaus has a long history in medical education. He serves as the



MCHS's director of the SMPH Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM), and provides oversight and planning for the program in cooperation with the Marshfield Clinic Division of Education. He greatly enjoys working with students as a preceptor for the Chronic and Preventive Care Clerkship, Acting Ambulatory Internship and family medicine electives in the SMPH's ForWard Curriculum. Holthaus earned his medical degree from Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago and completed a family practice residency at the University of Minnesota. A medical student wrote, "It has been a privilege to learn from Dr. Holthaus during my time as a WARM student in Marshfield. His unwavering dedication to students, patients, families and communities humbles and inspires me. He has been an invaluable mentor in my pursuit of a career in family medicine."

**MILWAUKEE: ANKOOR BISWAS, MD**

An internist, Biswas provides inpatient and outpatient care at Aurora Health Care in Milwaukee. He is passionate about medical education for students and residents, and has won multiple teaching awards. Biswas earned his medical degree at the Medical University of Lublin in Poland and completed his internal medicine residency at Aurora Health Care. A medical student shared, "Dr. Biswas' commitment to his patients and students is illustrated by his own words. When introducing medical students to patients, he says, 'This student doctor is in charge of the show here, and I'm here to support them.' He treats us as valuable team members, giving us the confidence to learn and step up to care for our patients. ... He is incredibly devoted to providing the highest quality of patient care and teaching!"



**OUTSTANDING RESIDENT TEACHING AWARD: ANNIE DUNHAM, MD '17**

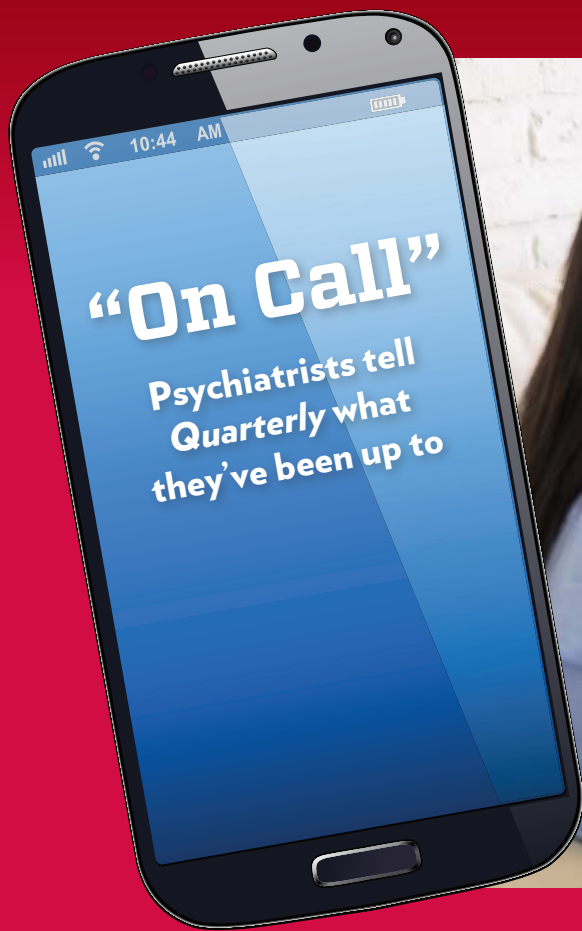
A third-year general surgery resident in the SMPH Rural and Community Surgery Track, Dunham earned her medical degree at the SMPH in the WARM program. She attributes her passion for medical education to the amazing teachers and mentors she worked with, and she hopes to inspire future physicians in rural medicine and surgery. A medical student said, "Dr. Dunham is one of the most kind-hearted, genuine residents I have worked with. She is willing to go above and beyond to make sure all members of the health care team understand what is going on. She always is open to any questions and makes you excited to learn."



**DISTINGUISHED PHASE 1 TEACHING AWARD: KAREN KRABBENHOFT, PHD '92**

A senior lecturer of anatomy in the SMPH Academic Affairs unit, Krabbenhoft oversees the Anatomy Teaching Group and directs the Body Donor Program. She is grateful for her long relationship with UW-Madison and the SMPH, where she earned a doctorate from its former Department of Anatomy and has dedicated her career. Krabbenhoft has directed and taught courses for undergraduate, medical and physician assistant students. A medical student wrote, "Dr. Krabbenhoft and the anatomy team have continually gone above and beyond to provide the best possible lectures, dissections and workshops. Her lectures were well organized and often funny. She was always eager to help students. It is clear that she is passionate about teaching. Her positive attitude and enthusiasm made a profound impact on my education."





## JENNIFER L. DERENNE, MD '01

I completed a general psychiatry residency, and a child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at the combined Massachusetts General Hospital and McLean Hospital Training Program. I am a clinical professor at Stanford University and the psychiatric director of the Comprehensive Care Program Unit, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, both in Palo Alto, California.

I typically see patients who have a combination of medical and psychiatric illnesses, and I work collaboratively with a multidisciplinary

team. Occasionally we have some surprises that make me glad that I stay current with my general skills. For instance, we recently had a patient who was not eating because they were psychotic and paranoid, and another who was depressed and catatonic!

Most of our patients have eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, which has been my area of expertise throughout my career. We have medical students, pediatric interns, adolescent medicine and child psychiatry fellows, and

psychology doctoral interns rotating through our unit.

In addition to clinical work and teaching, I'm active in the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, where I am a co-chair for the committee on transitional-age youth and college-student mental health. I'm also a fellow in the Academy for Eating Disorders.

I went into medical school thinking that I was going to be a pediatrician, so I was surprised that I really liked my inpatient rotation on the psychiatric unit. Initially, I was



worried that I wouldn't be considered a "real" doctor if I went into psychiatry, but experience has taught me that we rely on our doctoring skills every day in this field, especially for those who do any sort of consultation/liaison work.

## ALEXANDER SCHARKO, MD '93 (PG '99, '01)

**A**fter eight years of directing the Psychiatry Consultation Service at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, I am the psychiatrist supervisor at Winnebago Mental Health Institute—Youth Services in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Board certified in general adult psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry, and consultation/liaison psychiatry, I specialize in caring for children who have

medical illnesses along with psychiatric issues.

I have cared for an adolescent with an artificial heart, young people with severe eating disorders and individuals with HIV/AIDS. One memorable patient is a girl with N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor encephalitis who presented with a seizure episode followed by a manic psychotic state. She was hospitalized for 216 days. Today, she is a sophomore in college and doing well!

I completed an internship at Milwaukee County General

Hospital, and a psychiatry residency and child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at UW Health. I also completed a post-doctoral research fellowship at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. My work as a hospital psychiatrist qualified me to take the board examination for psychosomatic medicine (now called consultation/liaison psychiatry).

I am involved in the American Psychiatric Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent



Psychiatry, and Academy of Consultation/Liaison Psychiatry.

I find psychiatry gratifying in terms of patients and families, as well as my personal growth and reflection.

## CASSANDRA WANZO, MD '78

**I** practice psychiatry in Atlanta as the medical director of the North Fulton Treatment Center and Georgia Rehabilitation Outreach (GRO). The North Fulton Treatment Center provides outpatient opiate addiction treatment. We use medication and therapy to assist those going through opiate addiction. GRO is an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team. ACT teams—which specialize in treating individuals with severe and persistent mental illness in the community where they live—were established in Madison. In the model, individuals meet with case

managers three times weekly and see me in the clinic for monthly medication visits. The nurse and I regularly conduct home visits.

A memorable patient was a middle-aged gentleman who lived at a bus stop with his shopping cart of earthly possessions. He was psychotic and covered in excrement. It took several months of interactions with team members and me before he agreed to treatment. He is now living in a personal care home, and he is clean and stable. He comes for his biweekly injections smiling

and yelling, "Hey, Dr. Wanzo, I'm doing great!"

I always wanted to be a psychiatrist. I was influenced by my father, a pastor who did counseling. My desire was energized when I did my third-year psychiatry rotation at Madison General Hospital in Madison with the dynamic Dr. Robert Pambakian.

I completed my psychiatric residency at St. Vincent's Medical Center in New York City's Greenwich Village. The service area included patients from Chinatown, SoHo, Little Italy and The Village. My time there was exciting!



I'm an American Psychiatric Association Distinguished Life Fellow.

I encourage medical students to consider psychiatry. It's a dynamic, fulfilling field with limitless possibilities to help others achieve their full potential by addressing the mind-body-spirit connection.

# Know Your Class Representatives

Each University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) graduating class has one or more class representatives who play an integral role in working with the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) to keep in touch with their classmates. Those featured here are planning virtual reunions for fall 2020. Social connection remains an important part of the SMPH community, so please watch for additional details from the WMAA.

## Patrick McBride, MD '80, MPH

### What type of practice are you in now, and where?

I'm retired, but I provide mentoring for faculty members, medical students and pre-medical students.



### What's your fondest memory of medical school?

My fondest memories are meeting my wife, Kim, and my classmates, as well as planning and performing class skits.

### What SMPH faculty do you remember the most, and why?

Drs. James Pettersen, Dennis Maki and Peter Hanson were incredible role models.

### What are your hobbies/interests?

I enjoy writing, reading, working on our barn and farmhouse in Waupaca, golfing and fishing.

### Message for your classmates?

The Class of 1980 has a long history of the highest percentage of donors to the school, and the highest turnout for reunions! We are fortunate to be part of this generous, kind, fun and successful class. Let's show the next generation how to combine a career of service, success and fun!

## Timothy Gundlach, MD '85, MBA

### What type of practice are you in now, and where?

I am president of the Aurora Health Care Medical Group's Anesthesia Division. Each week, I spend four days on administrative work and one on clinical duties at Aurora Grafton and Aurora West Allis in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, area.



### What's your fondest memory of medical school?

I made lifelong friends, many of whom remain my closest friends.

### What SMPH faculty do you remember the most, and why?

I most remember Drs. James Pettersen and Jim Weese. Dr. Weese is the vice president for Advocate Aurora's Clinical Cancer Program, and we regularly work together. One day he may forgive me for leaving general surgery for anesthesia!

### What are your hobbies/interests?

I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling and watching Badger sports.

### Message for your classmates?

It will be great to reconnect with people I haven't seen in decades. Our classmates have earned federal research grants, served in the White House, and helped develop and

lead clinical departments and health care systems. We are scattered across the United States. This will be an opportunity to catch up with friends, honor classmates we've lost and remember the four years that started us on our uniquely rewarding careers.

## John Hokanson, MD '90 (PG '93)

### What type of practice are you in now, and where?

I completed a pediatric residency at UW Health; practiced for a year as a hospitalist in the United Kingdom; completed a pediatric cardiology fellowship at the SMPH; and worked for three years in private practice in Illinois. Twenty years ago, I joined the SMPH faculty, and I'm a professor of pediatrics.



### What SMPH faculty do you remember the most, and why?

Two professors I remember most fondly are Dr. Robert Schilling, who was still deer hunting in his 90s, and Dr. Norm Fost, who remains an important voice in medical ethics.

### What are your hobbies/interests?

I can't run as much as I did in medical school, so I've had to devolve back to swimming.



### Message for your classmates?

It has been exciting to watch the health sciences campus grow so much since we were students.

---

## Joshua Safer, MD '90

### What type of practice are you in now, and where?

I am the executive director of Mount Sinai Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery and a professor of medicine at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.



### What's your fondest memory of medical school?

Our class was quite social, and I had fun at the WMAA's Friday afternoon dance parties. My favorite learning experiences were inpatient clinical rotations, especially those in Marshfield and Janesville, and at the Veterans Administration Hospital. During those months, I felt like I was "getting it" and marveled at my luck in becoming a physician.

### What SMPH faculty do you remember the most, and why?

Dr. Patrick McBride was a great role model. He outlined an achievable path to success.

### What are your hobbies/interests?

I enjoy running and traveling.

### Message for your classmates?

Madison and the campus are better than ever. Lake Mendota is beautiful, and the restaurant scene has great new places and many old classics.

---

## Courtney Scaife, MD '95

### What type of practice are you in now, and where?

I have an academic surgical oncology practice with a subspecialty interest



in hepato-pancreato-biliary conditions, gastrointestinal cancers and intra-abdominal sarcomas. I am a professor of surgery, vice chair for cancer affairs in surgery, and section chief of surgical oncology at the University of Utah's Huntsman Cancer Institute.

### What's your fondest memory of medical school?

My great memories including sitting with friends on the front "patio" for lunch, biking to class in storms, "Ants," clicking our four-colored pens in unison so we could draw anatomy pictures when the color of the board changed; and trying to figure out the University Hospital pod system.

### What SMPH faculty do you remember the most, and why?

I revered many faculty members in the Department of Surgery—my field.

### What are your hobbies/interests?

I love living in Utah, where we have mountains and desert, and all seasons. I spend much of my hobby time trail running or alpine touring.

### Message for your classmates?

It will be fun to catch up and see how well everyone is doing. I am hoping many class members will attend the reunion. After all, who doesn't want to see Rock, "The Dom," Danno and the rest of the gang? Ants will be missed.

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## Tanya Kausch Hoerneman, MD '00

### What type of practice are you in now, and where?

I work at the Marshfield Clinic Colby/Abbotsford Center, which provides care to a rural population in central Wisconsin.



### What's your fondest memory of medical school?

My fondest memories of medical school include gross anatomy with my lovable tank mates and meeting my future husband.

### What are your hobbies/interests?

I enjoy cheering for my three boys at their sporting events, including cross country, hockey, track and soccer, and spending family time at our cabin in the northwoods.

### Message for your classmates?

I am looking forward to the reunion, and I hope many classmates can join in and catch up with each other.

### There's more online!

See updates at [med.wisc.edu/class-reps](http://med.wisc.edu/class-reps) from the following class representatives:

- Gary Brunette, MD '00, MS, FFTM (RCPSG);
- Scott Anderson, MD '05 (PG '10);
- Brian Arndt, MD '05 (PG '08);
- Lisa Shen, MD '10 (PG '14, '15);
- Sarah Tevis, MD '10 (PG '17);
- Allison Saiz, MD '15; and
- Augustine M. Saiz, Jr., MD '15.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVES HONORING MILESTONES

1980: Patrick McBride, MD '80, MPH

1985: Timothy Gundlach, MD '85, MBA

1990: John Hokanson, MD '90 (PG '93), and Joshua Safer, MD '90

1995: Courtney Scaife, MD '95, and Thomas Weigel, MD '95, MBA

2000: Gary Brunette, MD '00, MS, FFTM (RCPSG), and Tanya Kausch Hoerneman, MD '00

2005: Scott Anderson, MD '05 (PG '10), and Brian Arndt, MD '05 (PG '08)

2010: Lisa Shen, MD '10 (PG '14, '15), and Sarah Tevis, MD '10 (PG '17)

2015: Allison Saiz, MD '15, and Augustine Saiz, MD '15

# Class Notes

compiled by Andrea Larson

We want to hear from you!  
[med.wisc.edu/shareyournews](https://med.wisc.edu/shareyournews)

## Class of 1998



**Alison Craig-Shashko** and her team created a plexiglass droplet barrier to help protect the several dozen doctors she oversees from getting sick while caring for patients with COVID-19. Craig-Shashko is chief of staff for Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin and a pediatrician there. She realized a plexiglass barrier could allow providers to test patients for COVID-19 without exposing them to respiratory droplets from a patient's sneeze or cough. This would keep the practitioner's PPE clean to help conserve the supply. Her idea inspired collaborations with other medical professionals, engineers, designers, and personnel at a medical supply company and an out-of-work woodworking company, all of whom contributed to the design. Anyone can find the Open Source specs at [https://www.ghcscw.com/sitecollectiondocuments/GHC\\_SCW\\_desktop\\_droplet\\_barrier.pdf](https://www.ghcscw.com/sitecollectiondocuments/GHC_SCW_desktop_droplet_barrier.pdf) or can order prefabricated shields at [www.covidassist.net](http://www.covidassist.net) (please note that Craig-Shashko has no financial interests, but she feels that good ideas should be shared, particularly at times like these).

## Class of 2009



**Matthew Niesen** is pursuing a master of health care administration degree at Cornell University to complement his clinical practice as an orthopedic surgeon. He plans to use this degree and additional training for leadership opportunities in health care. Niesen lives in Columbus, Wisconsin. He enjoys spending time with his five children and wife, Mallory Niesen; watching Badgers' football and basketball; traveling; and coaching sports for his kids.

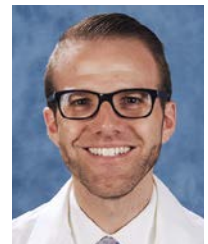
**Matthew Oberley** was appointed executive medical director at Caris Life Sciences®, a leading innovator in molecular science focused on precision medicine. He joined Caris in August 2019 as the senior medical director. His responsibilities have included managing the medical science liaison team and helping connect key oncology research leaders with the large datasets that Caris has generated through its technology. In his expanded role, Oberley will oversee Caris' quality medical operations facilities to ensure patient safety, and he will lead its pathology and genetics teams. Previously, Oberley held roles at



the University of Southern California and Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He lives in South Pasadena, California, with his wife, Khanh Oberley—who earned her master of social work degree at UW-Madison—and two daughters. Oberley's father, Terry Oberley, MD, PhD, was a tenured faculty member in the SMPH Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and a staff member at the Veterans Administration for more than 30 years.

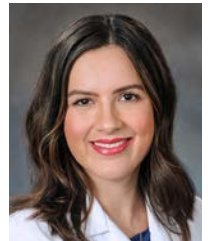
## Class of 2011

**Johnny Tackett** is completing a pediatric surgery fellowship at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami, and in September 2020, will become an assistant professor in the Department of Surgery, Division of Pediatric Surgery, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. He served as co-class president in medical school.



## Class of 2013

**Heather Haq** was appointed chief medical officer of the Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) at Texas Children's Hospital. The BIPAI network has operations in nine low- and middle-income countries to address maternal and child health, with more than 300,000 patients in care. The BIPAI network is the largest provider of pediatric HIV care in the world.



## Class of 2016

### Katie Berndtson

**Gradick**, a pediatric hospice and palliative medicine fellow in Utah, has a tradition of bringing her dog, Freya, to visit with children in the hospital. When COVID-19 made the visits impossible, Gradick made a series of YouTube videos, including "A Virtual Storybook: Freya and the Missing Unicorn," for the patients to enjoy.



Point Health-Meriter Hospital in Madison on the same unit where she had worked as an RN for three years before medical school and on weekends during her first 18 months of medical school. In June 2020, she began a family medicine residency at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Kanwar's husband also is a nurse in UW Hospital's intensive care unit and is in a nurse anesthetist training program in La Crosse. They have a 1-year-old child and a rescue dog.



## Class of 2020

**Kavita Kanwar** worked as a nurse before starting her studies at the SMPH. Near the end of completing her medical degree, she jumped back in as a nurse to help care for COVID-19 patients at Unity

### CORRECTION

In *Quarterly*, Volume 22, Number 1, on page 24, the news item titled "Faculty Develop Device to Better Locate Tumors During Surgery" included a photo of Fred Robertson, MD, MBA, rather than a photo of Daniel van der Weide, PhD. We regret the error.

## New Date for Vote about WMAA's Corporate Status

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) rescheduled the vote about its potential change from a 501c3 organization to a new model. Details can be found in *Quarterly* magazine, Volume 21, Number 4, 2019, page 23.

**The vote will be done on Friday, October 30, 2020, from 3:30-4 pm,** at the Health Sciences Learning Center, 750 Highland Avenue, University of Wisconsin-Madison. All WMAA members are welcome to attend the meeting and vote. A virtual opportunity will be provided, if necessary. Contact the WMAA for more information (see back cover).

## IN MEMORIAM

Donald S. Schuster, MD '51  
Madison, Wisconsin  
March 7, 2020

Ralph C. Whaley, MD '55  
Barron, Wisconsin  
March 14, 2020

Clayton W. Wickham, MD '68  
Escondido, California  
July 24, 2019

Donata Oertel, PhD  
Madison, Wisconsin  
April 22, 2020

William A. Dittman, MD '53  
Spokane, Washington  
May 13, 2019

John C. Ellis, Jr., MD '57  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
January 20, 2020

Alex S. Tucker, MD '75  
Mequon, Wisconsin  
March 21, 2020

Beth Potter, MD (PG '99)  
Madison, Wisconsin  
March 31, 2020

Deborah J. Eid, MD '53  
Santa Rosa, California  
February 24, 2020

E. Dolf Pfefferkorn, MD '57  
Madison, Wisconsin  
April 23, 2020

**FORMER FACULTY MEMBERS**  
Edward F. Jackson, PhD  
Madison, Wisconsin  
June 2, 2020

Jon A. Wolff, MD  
Denver, Colorado  
April 17, 2020

Armin R. Fuhlbrigge, MD '55  
Toledo, Ohio  
December 30, 2019

Howard H. Johnson, MD '67  
Franksville, Wisconsin  
January 22, 2020

# Goodbye Dear Friends



## DONATA OERTEL, PHD

**O**n April 22, 2020, Donata Oertel, PhD, Mary Herman and Lucien Rubinstein Distinguished Chair of Neuroscience, passed away.

She was a member of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) faculty for more than 38

years. Oertel was the founding chair of the Department of Neuroscience, created in November 2014 through the integration of parts of three departments. Earlier, she served as the chair of neurophysiology and interim chair of physiology. The school community deeply misses her.

“Donata was remarkable in many ways: a creative scientist, a dedicated teacher and mentor, and a selfless leader,” says SMPH Dean Robert N. Golden, MD. “I had the privilege of working closely with her over the past six years in her role as department chair. I was consistently impressed with the way in which every administrative decision she made, whether large or small, was shaped by her values, ethics and humanity.”

Oertel earned a doctorate from the University of California, Santa Barbara,

and completed postdoctoral training at UW-Madison and Harvard University. In 2018, she was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. And when she received a UW-Madison Hilldale Award in 2014, her nominator Tom C.T. Yin, PhD (now an emeritus professor), noted, “The body of work Dr. Oertel has produced in 30 years of continuously funded research on the auditory system represents a major advance in our understanding of how the brain processes and interprets sound. Her pioneering contributions in research have established her as a world leader.”

Oertel was married to William Sugden, PhD, who holds the James A. Miller Professorship in Oncology at the SMPH.

A memorial has been established; see [supportuw.org/giveto/oertel](http://supportuw.org/giveto/oertel)



## BETH POTTER, MD (PG '99)

**T**he University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) community is grieving the loss of Beth Potter, MD (PG '99), associate professor (CHS), Department of Family Medicine and Community Health (DFMCH),

and her husband, Robin Carre, who died tragically on March 31, 2020.

Potter was a physician at the Access Community Health Center’s Wingra Family Medical Center and the medical director of Employee Health Services for UW Health. She dedicated her career to the health of families, women and underserved communities, and to the education of medical students and residents. She also championed initiatives aimed at fostering the wellness of her health care colleagues.

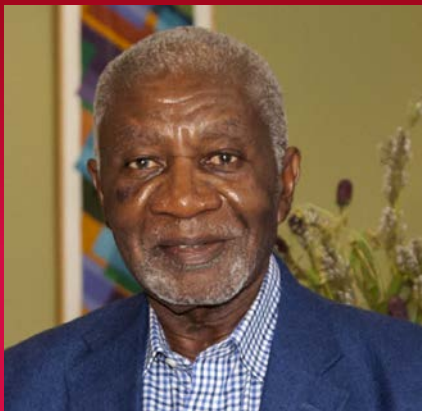
“Words cannot express our grief. In addition to being a wonderful family physician and teacher, Beth was a dedicated leader at the Wingra Clinic and in our health system. She was wise, warm and always supportive. There are so many in our department whose lives have been touched by Beth; her loss weighs heavily within us,” says William Schwab, MD, professor and interim chair, DFMCH.

An Illinois native, Potter earned her medical degree at Rush Medical College in Chicago. She completed a family medicine residency in the DFMCH.

Colleagues indicate that Potter approached the practice of family medicine with tremendous compassion and demonstrated innovation in clinical care. Further, her multilingualism in French and Spanish brought clarity and comfort to the diverse patient population she served.

In Employee Health Services, Potter led a team focused on occupational health for employees. She also taught and mentored hundreds of medical students and family medicine residents. She focused on teaching evidence-based medicine, wellness and women’s health.

A memorial has been established; see [supportuw.org/giveto/Potter-Carre](http://supportuw.org/giveto/Potter-Carre)



## ALEX TUCKER, MD '75

**E**steemed Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) Board Member Alex S. Tucker, MD '75, died on March 21, 2020. The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) community mourns the loss of a steadfast friend and mentor, says Karen Peterson, WMAA executive director.

Born in Sierra Leone, Tucker found his way to the United States to attend Fisk

University in Nashville. He later followed his brother to Wisconsin and attended the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, where he worked in a biology laboratory. Next, he earned his medical degree from the SMPH class of 1975, which had a small percentage of Black students.

Since completing a family medicine residency at St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, he cared for patients from the greater Milwaukee area in his private practice and as the medical director and lead physician of Outreach Community Health Center. It provides high-quality medical and behavioral health services while maintaining its mission to serve people who are homeless, uninsured and facing extreme poverty. He served for years on the board of SaintA, which provides foster care, education and mental health services.

Tucker was an active WMAA board member and a co-representative of his

medical school class. Over the years, he kept an eye out for promising students of color, and he mentored them throughout their medical education.

Lawrence Moore, MD '19, MPH '19, now a family medicine resident at Aurora Health Care in Milwaukee, shares, "I am honored to have received a stethoscope donated by Dr. Tucker, who made a concerted effort to meet with me whenever he visited the SMPH. I find comfort knowing that he is with me each time I use my stethoscope."

Tito Izard, MD '96—a family medicine physician, the president and CEO of Milwaukee Health Services, Inc., and a WMAA board member—says, "Dr. Tucker cherished each opportunity to encourage all medical students. His vision was to ensure that the future of health care would reflect the diversity of communities served by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health."



## JON A. WOLFF, MD

**G**enetic therapy pioneer Jon A. Wolff, MD, died on April 17, 2020. In 1988, he joined the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) Department of Pediatrics, where he became a professor and served for many years as chief of the Division of Genetics and Metabolism.

He also strongly supported the Master of Genetic Counselor Studies Program.

Wolff played a huge role in developing gene therapy for liver and brain disorders, and helped develop techniques to transfer genes and nucleic acids into cells. With more than 150 scientific publications and 80 patents to his credit, he served on boards of numerous national organizations and as a scientific advisor to the French Muscular Dystrophy Association.

He helped transform standards of care for genetic conditions. As an advisory member for the Wisconsin Newborn Screening Program, Wolff helped create programs to detect metabolic and genetic conditions. He also improved educational offerings at various levels.

Having earned his medical degree from The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Wolff completed pediatrics and medical genetics clinical training at the University

of California, San Diego, and did a post-doctoral fellowship at the Agouron Institute.

In 1995 in Madison, Wolff co-founded MirusBio Corporation, where he led work on siRNA-transfer nanotechnologies. Throughout his career, he was dedicated to ensuring the ethical use of genetics and providing innovative, compassionate care for people with genetic disorders. This led to his creation of the non-profit, charitable Genetic Support Foundation.

SMPH Professor Emeritus Patrick Remington, MD '81, MPH, as a colleague and friend, shares, "In addition to being a brilliant physician-scientist, Jon treasured the time that he spent with his family and friends. He transformed from a New York City kid into a consummate Wisconsin silent sports enthusiast. He taught us all how to embrace each day as a new adventure with passion, curiosity and gratitude."



# 73 Years of Memories, Service and Support

RALPH N. OLSEN, MD '54

**“Heading west to Madison, as soon as I see the Capitol on the horizon, I know that I’ll be on campus soon, and my batteries are recharged.”** – *Ralph Norman Olsen, MD '54, Col. Ret., U.S. Army*

by Jordana Lenon

Ralph N. Olsen, MD '54, has shared myriad stories with his wife, Eugenie Olsen, and his five children—Cecily Olsen, Wendy Olsen, Jordana Lenon, Charles Olsen and Paul Olsen—yet they never tire of hearing them. When they drive with “Doc” around the campus of his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the tour usually begins on Langdon Street.

“There is the Badger House, where I was living on the coldest day recorded in Madison. It was minus 37 degrees Fahrenheit on January 30, 1951,” Ralph Olsen exclaims. “Our boiler blew, and there was no heat, so I moved into the Memorial Union for a few days, showering, eating and studying there, and returning to my

apartment only at night to slip into my sleeping bag and try to keep warm.”

Turning left from Langdon onto Park Street, he continues, “And there is Science Hall! That top window is where I dissected my first human cadaver.”

Next, taking a right off Park Street and heading west on University Avenue, he proclaims, “There is the old Wisconsin General Hospital, where I worked as the chief pediatric resident during the height of Wisconsin’s polio epidemic in 1955.”

Descriptions of his earlier time as an undergraduate in the late 1940s are interspersed, as Ralph Olsen travels up Henry Mall to Linden Drive and sees Agricultural Hall, where he took many classes. He lived nearby in the lakeshore dorms, in the Mack House, which also housed his grandson 64 years later.



*Ralph N. Olsen, MD '54, and Eugenie Olsen*

Ralph Olsen’s fondest memories as an undergraduate, however, are from the time he lived at Truax Field for two years following World War II.

“The UW men’s residence halls took over the barracks and hospital at Truax, which afforded a wonderful environment and great camaraderie,” he recalls.

Ralph Olsen’s recollections circle back to West Washington Avenue, with its rows of old, three-story, balconied wooden houses.

"I see that my old apartment is still full of students," he says.

From there, it's time to check into a nearby hotel and get ready to attend either a reunion of his graduating class from the UW Medical School (now called the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, or SMPH), or a dinner for the school's Middleton Society—through which he has donated a scholarship, the Ralph Olsen American Indian Award, which was given in 2019 and 2020 to grateful medical students.

Sometimes Ralph Olsen visits UW-Madison to attend the graduation of a grandchild, or to don his military uniform and join his son Charles Olsen and the cadets at the annual ROTC Scabbard and Blade dinner.

A veteran himself, Ralph Olsen is proud that his family is Army-strong: Paul Olsen achieved the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Charles Olsen became a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Signal Corps; and Eugenie Olsen was a first lieutenant and Korean War veteran in the U.S. Army Medical Specialist Corps.

Other than Paul Olsen, who lives in Virginia, Ralph Olsen's children all live in Wisconsin. Four of them—Paul, Charles and Wendy Olsen, and Jordana Lenon—earned degrees from UW-Madison.

Ralph Olsen, born in 1929, is the son of Norman and Margery Olsen of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is an Eagle Scout who has always enjoyed camping, fishing, hunting, canoeing, sailing, ice boating and woodworking. He remains active in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), a family tradition that began when his "Uncle Paul was scoutmaster of Troop 1 in Milwaukee." One of Ralph Olsen's sons, Paul Olsen, and three grandsons have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. For years, Ralph Olsen served as a pediatrician for the Bay Lakes Council, among the BSA's largest geographic councils.

Rewinding to 1947, Ralph Olsen entered UW-Madison as a zoology major and studied under Professor John T. Emlen, PhD.

"I was Dr. Emlen's teaching assistant for Introduction to Bird Watching and also his lab assistant, which was rare for an undergraduate," says Ralph Olsen, adding



Family members pose on Park Street in 1980. Back row (left to right): Ralph N. Olsen, MD '54, Eugenie, Paul, Jordana and Charles Olsen; front (in UW Marching Band uniform): Wendy Olsen.

that he proudly supports the Department of Zoology's John T. Emlen Distinguished Lecture Series to this day.

This experience helped launch a lifelong interest in birds for Ralph Olsen, an active member of the Horicon Marsh Bird Club. He has presented bird lectures to clubs and societies throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

After receiving his bachelor's degree in medical science, Ralph Olsen began medical school at UW-Madison, earned his medical degree in 1954 and received his Wisconsin medical license in 1955. That summer, he was thrust into the height of Wisconsin's polio epidemic as a young pediatric resident. (Read his essay at [med.wisc.edu/polio](http://med.wisc.edu/polio).)

In the ensuing years, Ralph Olsen completed an internship at Eastern Maine General Hospital in Bangor, where Cecily Olsen was born during his brief marriage to her mother, Sally Van Cleef. Ralph Olsen then began a residency at Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Denver. He earned his American Board of Pediatrics certification in 1958. From 1958 to 1959, he served in the 101st Airborne Division and received the paratrooper's badge.

While at Fitzsimons, Captain Ralph Olsen met First Lieutenant Eugenie Fisher, and they married on July 4, 1959, in New York City. The newlyweds promptly moved overseas, where Ralph Olsen was stationed as the chief of pediatrics at the 34th General Hospital in La Chapelle, France.

Three years later, after they moved to Wisconsin, Ralph Olsen entered private

pediatric practice in Milwaukee. The couple raised a family in Elm Grove, and Ralph Olsen remained active in the Wisconsin National Guard as the artillery surgeon for the 32nd Division. Achieving the rank of colonel, he returned to active duty in 1984 as the chief of pediatrics at the U.S. Military Academy West Point. In 1988, he and his wife built a house in West Bend, Wisconsin, near their beloved Big Cedar Lake, and near family and friends. He completed his career at the West Bend General Clinic and retired in 2002.

Called "Doc" by just about everyone who knows him, Ralph Olsen is proud to have served so many patients—including multiple generations of patients—over the decades.

"In the care of children, it's the attitude and the approach that count the most, not just the specific procedures," he says.

Ralph Olsen is most proud of his family, his lifelong passion for birds, his years at UW-Madison, and his service and friends in the U.S. Army.

"I have such fond memories of the Army and I am proud of all the physicians who have served," he reflects.

Ralph Olsen looks forward to his next visit to Madison and the university campus, where—most certainly—the old stories will pour forth once again.

—About the author: Jordana Lenon, senior editor at the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center at UW-Madison, is Ralph Olsen's daughter.



There's more online:  
[med.wisc.edu/polio](http://med.wisc.edu/polio)

## Mathew Named Chief of Biomedical Informatics

Jomol Mathew, PhD, joined the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) in April 2020 as the



first chief of biomedical informatics. She will lead the Clinical and Health Informatics Institute (CHI2) within the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research and oversee the schoolwide enterprise in informatics. Mathew is based in the school's Department of Population Health Sciences.

She came to UW-Madison from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, where she most recently served as the chief research informatics officer. While there, she helped found the Center for Data-Driven Discoveries in Healthcare, which researches mobile health devices and digital sensors.

Mathew completed her doctorate at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and a postdoctoral fellowship at the New York University School of Medicine.

Her work guiding research and strategy for the SMPH biomedical-informatics effort will include serving the UW Carbone Cancer Center, the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, the Center for Human Genomics and Precision Medicine, and other centers and units on campus.

"The evolving COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for effective and efficient data- and informatics-centric approaches to quickly translate findings into clinical care and public-health interventions," says Mathew. "This school is well-positioned to evolve into a national leader in this vitally important area."

## Safdar Elected as Fellow in the American Academy of Microbiology

Nasia Safdar, MD, PhD, has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, the honorific leadership



group within the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). The academy, with more than 2,500 fellows, recognizes scientists for outstanding contributions to the field. Fellows are elected annually through a rigorous peer-review process.

Safdar is a professor and the vice chair for research in the Department of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH). She subspecializes in infectious disease and is the medical director of infection control at University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics. In addition, Safdar serves as the associate chief of staff for research at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison.

Her research team focuses on measures to reduce health care-associated infections, especially in acute-care settings. Current projects include evaluation of novel therapeutics for *C. difficile* and other multi-drug resistant organisms. On the prevention side, her lab is investigating new approaches to decolonization of the skin and gut to prevent infections. Broadly, her research seeks to understand relationships between microbiome and infectious diseases across multiple body sites.

In 2018, Safdar and multiple colleagues published in the *BMJ Open* early findings from the WARRIOR (Winning the War on Antibiotic Resistance) Project, which examines associations between the consumption of dietary fiber and the composition of the gut microbiome.

## Ge Honored by the American Society for Mass Spectrometry

Ying Ge, PhD, is the 2020 recipient of the Biemann Medal, awarded by the American Society for Mass Spectrometry.



The organization was established in 1969 and has more than 8,500 members who work in research and development in mass spectrometry and fundamental research in chemistry, biological sciences and related fields.

A professor in the Department of Cell and Regenerative Biology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), and in the Department of Chemistry at UW-Madison, Ge received the award for her significant contributions to high-resolution, mass spectrometry-based, top-down proteomics and their application to heart diseases. This tool can help determine the structure and chemical properties of molecules, and identify disease biomarkers and new therapeutic targets. Ge's research program is highly interdisciplinary, aiming to gain a transformative understanding of cardiac disease, regeneration and aging. Her innovative research also enables new strategies for early diagnosis, prevention and better treatment of heart diseases.

"I believe that to make a significant impact in molecular medicine, we need to combine technological advances with functional studies and bridge the silos between chemical and biological sciences," Ge says.

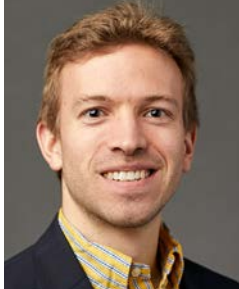
She earned her doctoral degree in chemistry from Cornell University, and she joined UW-Madison in 2006 to direct the SMPH Human Proteomics Program.

The Biemann Medal recognizes significant achievement in the early stages of a researcher's career.



## Denu Named STAT Wunderkind by Boston Globe Media

In 2017, the national life-sciences and medicine news outlet STAT, produced by Boston Globe Media, announced its



first Wunderkind Award to recognize researchers “on the cusp of launching their careers but not yet fully independent.” In December 2019, when he was in his final year of medical school, Ryan Denu, MD '20, PhD '20, was one of 22 investigators in the nation and among five at public institutions to receive that award.

Two years after Denu entered the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), he joined the lab of Mark Burkard, MD, PhD, associate professor of medicine and MSTP associate director, to complete the doctoral component of a dual MD/PhD degree.

When Burkard introduced him to a patient who had a rare genetic disorder called Nager syndrome and bilateral breast cancer, Denu was intrigued by the combination of terrible diagnoses and decided to conduct research. The woman had a mutation in the SF3B4 gene, which is involved in RNA splicing. Burkard and Denu thought the mutation may have caused the cancer. After publishing a case report, Denu located another patient with both conditions; designed a study to collect tumor samples and skin biopsies; and worked with a UW-Madison team to generate induced pluripotent stem cells from the biopsies for future study.

Burkard says, “Ryan has had a sustained impact on me and my research group.”

Denu has started a residency in Boston.

## Kalin Receives the Institute for Living's Burlingame Award

Ned Kalin, MD, was named the recipient of the C. Charles Burlingame Award, given to one psychiatrist in the nation per year by the Institute for Living in Hartford, Connecticut.



The honor recognizes “outstanding leadership and lifetime achievement in psychiatric research and education.” Established in 1988, the award is named for legendary physician C. Charles Burlingame, MD, who in the 1930s helped create a model community for psychiatric treatment at the (former) Hartford Retreat. Burlingame expanded the organization to become a national leader in patient care, education and psychiatric research.

With 28 years of service at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Kalin is the longest-serving chair of the Department of Psychiatry. As a scholar and physician-researcher, he has conducted and published groundbreaking investigations into the neurobiology of anxiety. And as an educator, he has worked with Richard Davidson, PhD, of the Department of Psychiatry and UW-Madison Department of Psychology, to found and host the annual Wisconsin Symposium on Emotion. In 2007, the two also jointly founded the HealthEmotions Research Institute, which studies the complex relationships between emotions and health.

Kalin has held numerous leadership positions, including as president of the Society of Biological Psychiatry, editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, and president of the International Society of Psychoneuroendocrinology.

## Galipeau Chosen President-Elect of Global Society

Jacques Galipeau, MD, is the new president-elect of the International Society for Cell and Gene Therapy (ISCGT), a global



organization of more than 1,800 clinicians, regulators, researchers, technologists and industry partners from more than 60 countries. His two-year term began June 1, 2020. The president-elect provides leadership and direction for the society's special initiatives and guides the development and implementation of its strategic plan. Galipeau will become the ISCGT president on June 1, 2022.

A board-certified hematologist, Galipeau holds multiple titles at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH). He joined the school in 2016 to lead the UW Program for Advanced Cell Therapy (PACT), which is charged with developing personalized cell therapies for patients who have immune and malignant disorders. The center also develops and carries out clinical trials of cell-based innovations.

Galipeau is the inaugural associate dean for therapeutics development at the SMPH, where he also holds the Don and Marilyn Anderson Professorship in Oncology.

His National Institutes of Health-funded research program focuses on the study and use of mesenchymal stromal cells as immunotherapy for devastating illnesses, including cancer and immune disorders. In April 2019, the PACT launched its first clinical trial, testing virus-specific white blood cells to treat cytomegalovirus activation that can occur after a bone marrow transplant.



*Two generations of Allens—David B. Allen, MD (PG '84, '88) (left), and Brittany J. Allen, MD '09—are on the Department of Pediatrics faculty.*

# The “Other Dr. Allen”

DAVID B. ALLEN, MD (PG '84, '88), AND BRITTANY J. ALLEN, MD '09, TAKE TURNS WITH THIS REFERENCE

by Masarah Van Eyck

A father and daughter pair of pediatricians are making an impact at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) and American Family Children's Hospital, where they trained and practice. Their personal stories meld and diverge, and they honor each other's differences—all for the love of their patients and their family.

Rewind to the growing-up years for Brittany J. Allen, MD '09, and the family was frequently discussing an “issue of the day” over dinner, says her dad, David B. Allen, MD (PG '84, '88). Now a professor and head of the Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes in the SMPH Department of Pediatrics, David Allen's early research focused on the effectiveness and ethics of treating children with human growth hormone (hGH). He often came home and described—de-identified, of course—a challenging patient he saw at work or read about in the literature. Or Brittany Allen's mom, Sally Allen, might return from teaching students with learning disabilities and share a helpful approach she'd discovered. Today, the grown siblings remember those discussions as formative.

“Our parents see each of us as individuals who bring our own qualities to the table,” says Brittany Allen, who joined the Department of Pediatrics faculty in 2013. “About our personal and professional lives, they say ‘You are driving this bus, and we are excited to see where it's going!’”

Brittany Allen's passion and talent for teaching is apparent, says her father, who adds with a laugh, “The tables have turned from her to me being ‘The Other Dr. Allen.’”

Watching his daughter—a specialist in the care of transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse (TNG) youth—advise residents or develop innovative modules for medical students reminds him of his

15 years as the program director of the Pediatrics Residency Program.

“We both strive to help people develop ways of thinking rather than memorizing knowledge,” says David Allen.

He and Brittany Allen each hold awards that recognize their efforts. She has twice earned the Top 25 Pediatric Teachers Award based on evaluations from SMPH students and residents. And David Allen has received numerous teaching honors, including the Parker Palmer Courage to Teach Award and the UW Health Clinician Educator Award.

Other parallels exist for David and Brittany Allen. They both left Midwestern homes for college on the coasts—he to Stanford University in California, and she to Wesleyan University in Connecticut—and were eager to become anything other than a doctor like their fathers. They earned undergraduate degrees in the humanities while quietly satisfying pre-med requirements. While David Allen attended medical school at Duke University in North Carolina before coming to UW-Madison for his pediatrics residency, chief residency and fellowship, Brittany Allen chose the SMPH for medical school. And now, they both embrace Madison as home.

## A Generation Back

For David Allen—whose father, Richard Allen, MD, was a highly respected pediatrician in the Chicago suburbs—it was a challenge to navigate a career path that was similar yet different. While sharing his father's love for medicine, and specifically pediatrics, he recalls, “I see how choices in life reflect a balance between accepting inherited professional attractions while taking paths that separate us from our parents.”

Thankfully, he says, “My parents were always excited to see how my story was turning out.”

Attracted to an academic pediatric specialist career, David Allen joined the SMPH

faculty in 1988. His early research improved newborn screening for endocrine disorders and described how recombinant hGH could reverse growth failure in glucocorticoid-dependent children, and—with colleague Aaron Carrel, MD (PG '98)—improve physical function and body composition in children with Prader-Willi syndrome. David Allen is lauded equally for his work on the growth-suppressing effects of inhaled corticosteroids in children with asthma, for which his growth study design is regarded by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as the gold standard for analysis of the systemic effects of these medications in children.

Today, David Allen leads the Department of Pediatrics' Endocrinology and Diabetes Fellowship Program. Over the past decade, he and his colleagues have focused on improving the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity, insulin resistance and Type 2 diabetes. And in 2010, Nan Peterson, RN, MS, and David Allen co-founded the Dane County Healthy Kids Collaborative to advocate for and create healthy physical activity and nutritional environments for children.

Referring to his longtime teamwork with Norman Fost, MD, MPH, an SMPH professor emeritus and pediatric bioethicist, David Allen shares, “From the get-go, my most recognized work was collaborating with Norm to look at the ethical challenges of growth hormone treatment.”

Since then, David Allen has continued to analyze and write about prescribing hGH and other endocrinology treatments in ethical and cost-effective ways. He credits his strong interest in the “social conscience” aspect of medicine to his mom, Joyce Allen, RN.

“It made sense to her that pre-med studies should interface with humanities in college,” says David Allen, adding that his

daughter shares his concern with medicine's ethical and philosophical underpinnings.

### **The Next Generation**

Having completed a pediatrics residency at the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, where she also served for a year as chief resident, Brittany Allen's career calls upon her expertise in the burgeoning field of health and wellness for TNG children and adolescents. She also is committed to improving health care access and care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) youth.

Noting that her undergraduate education piqued her interest in health and sexual education, she was thrilled when the opportunity to co-direct—with Jennifer L. Rehm, MD—the groundbreaking Pediatric and Adolescent Transgender Health (PATH) Clinic at American Family Children's Hospital materialized.

PATH is the first clinic of its kind in Wisconsin to provide gender-affirming transition care for TNG children and adolescents, and services for their families, using the most up-to-date knowledge. As of April 2020, the clinic has provided care for 350 youth from Wisconsin and Illinois; Brittany Allen has seen more than half of these patients. Since 2017, the clinic's frequency has doubled, and it's expected to grow an equal amount within the next year.

While PATH's clinical work is recognized as a national model, Brittany Allen notes the equal importance of the faculty and staff's work toward enacting systemic change. She engages with health care, academic and community organizations as an expert and an advocate. At UW Health, with the

goal of helping practitioners know how to best address their patients, she founded the LGBTQ+ Patient Care Task Force, which has initiated the use of a "preferred name" field and the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity SmartForm in the organization's medical-record system.

But "just inputting that information is not enough," Brittany Allen says. "You also have to teach people to create a truly safe and affirming environment and to understand the data that's being captured."

To ensure ongoing cultural integration, the task force advocated for the creation of the UW Health position of chief diversity officer, a role now held by Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, a member of that group.

"We realized that we needed to hear the voices of people reflected in our policies," shares Brittany Allen, who used this inspiration to found the Transgender Youth Resource Network, and serve as the principal investigator of a statewide survey by the multidisciplinary Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition Data Team.

A report by that team described significant gaps in the medical and mental health care of TNG youth and provided guidelines for future improvements.

In just the few years since those findings, UW Health's policies on access to bathrooms and changing rooms ensure that all patients have access to facilities they consider safe.

"It's a good start," she says. "But we have a lot more work to do in terms of thinking about how we honor a person's gender identity and experience in different types of care."

"Although I'd like to think we've moved beyond the 101-level of information about

these issues, patients often describe interactions that are riddled with mistakes or assumptions, such as calling patients by the wrong name, ignoring their gender identity, or creating undue attention to it in a clinically inappropriate setting, such as when a person has a sinus infection or a sprained ankle."

### **Stage Left, Stage Right**

David Allen says, "As I begin to 'exit stage left' in my career, I am excited about Brittany's contributions to our colleagues, patients and students. She's asking, 'How do we think about this new thing we're doing?' 'How are we going to do this responsibly and effectively?' 'How do we help families navigate difficult decisions in doing the best thing for their kids?' And that's where I see parallels between my era of growth-hormone treatment and her era of caring for transgender individuals."

Brittany Allen chimes in, "I appreciate that both of my parents are open to learning from their kids. It's been great to work with my dad and to be able to teach him about my field."

### **A Growing Family Tree**

David and Sally Allen have thrived on watching Brittany Allen and her siblings grow and change, and they are celebrating yet another generation, as Brittany Allen and her partner, Peter Witucki, have had children.

The elder Allens admit to being preoccupied with "spoiling the heck" out of their grandchildren, now ages 7 and 4.

"I'm fascinated by how generations both follow in and separate from one another's footsteps, and how much less complicated it can be to emulate grandparents rather than parents," observes David Allen, who adds with a laugh, "In our grandkids' eyes, we can do no wrong!"

As for whether he hopes one of the grandchildren chooses the path of medicine, he concludes, "While there are some things I miss about the profession I entered 40 years ago, medicine keeps reinventing itself and always will present wonderful opportunities to serve and discover."

*David Allen, MD (PG '84, '88) (left), and Sally Allen (right) explore a fort with their grandchildren.*



# Wisconsin's Medical Schools Collaborate to Publish Journal

by Beth Pinkerton and Kendi Neff-Parvin

**P**ublished continuously since 1903, the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* (*WMJ*) is one of the longest-standing medical journals in the world. In 2020, the Wisconsin Medical Society transferred ownership of the journal to the state's two medical schools: the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW).

After publishing the journal for 117 years, the society felt it was time for a change.

"As the society looked to focus our efforts while continuing to offer members tools and resources to improve their personal and professional lives, we felt the journal could have broader impact through the medical schools while continuing to be a resource for the physicians of Wisconsin," says the society's CEO, Bud Chumbley, MD, MBA.

Wisconsin's medical schools welcomed the opportunity to partner as the journal's new stewards. *WMJ* operations are overseen by a publication board that includes representatives from each school, as well as an ex-officio member from the society. The editor-in-chief and deputy editor responsibilities will alternate between the schools.

"We are excited to bring the *WMJ* forward into its second century of publication. In supporting this peer-reviewed journal, our aim is to provide a forum for thought leadership and an outlet for our faculty, residents and students that showcases high-quality, 'home-grown' research and discussion of the most pressing health issues in Wisconsin and beyond," says Robert N. Golden, MD, dean, SMPH, and vice chancellor for medical affairs, UW-Madison.

Serving as publishers of the journal is a complement to each school's mission to train future generations of physicians, as well as an opportunity to engage practicing clinicians from the Midwest and far beyond.

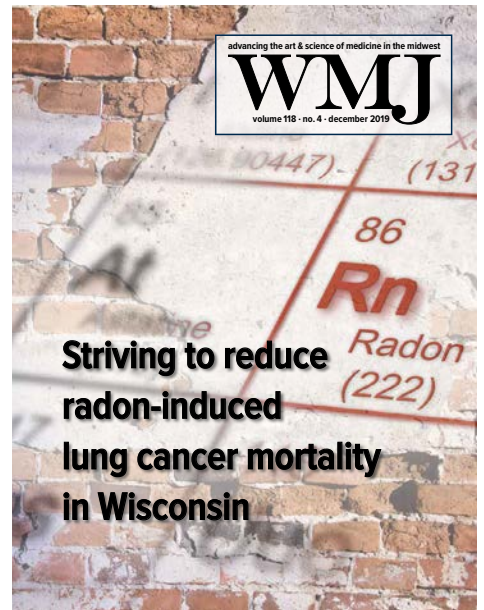
"This collaboration offers an opportunity for each of our institutions to come together and advance some of our common scholarly goals: fostering professional communication, nurturing emerging research, broadening the dissemination of public health science, and encouraging continuing education for medical and public health professionals," notes Joseph E. Kerschner, MD, dean of the MCW, provost and executive vice president.

More than 100 volunteers were peer reviewers in 2019, and anyone with an interest is encouraged to register (see <https://go.wisc.edu/wmj-reviewer>). Some reviewers have expertise in a specialty area, but generalists also are needed to review content to ascertain each article's relevance to practicing physicians.

"For faculty members at Wisconsin's medical schools and for practicing physicians around the state, being a peer reviewer can have many benefits," says Sarina Schrage, MD, MS, *WMJ* interim editor-in-chief and a professor in the SMPH Department of Family Medicine and Community Health (DFMCH). "Reviewers have the opportunity to learn about new topics or read updates on old topics. Serving as a reviewer is an opportunity to start thinking about your own writing as well. What worked well in this article? What didn't work well?"

The *WMJ* also welcomes submissions and subscribers. E-mail subscriptions to the journal are free, and the publication board hopes to attract authors from other health professions, including nursing and pharmacy—something which fits well with its mission to cover a broad range of topics from public health to specialty care.

The former chair of the DFMCH, upon retiring as the *WMJ* editor-in-chief in late 2019, John Frey, III, MD, reflected, "The journal creates a forum for the profession. It's a place to come together, where people can



actually exchange ideas in ways that help them understand each other better. I believe that the *WMJ* has a really important place in the history of the profession, not just in the state, but in the country."

Journals dating back to the first volume in 1903—archived at the UW-Madison Ebling Library in the same building as the SMPH—reflect how the dialogue in the field of medicine has changed.

The early journals were essentially transcriptions of meetings at which physicians gathered to present lengthy papers, and the format has evolved over time. Ads throughout the years reflected cultural norms of the day; for instance, it was common to see a 1950s ad proclaim, "My doctor recommends Marlboros®!" Journals also included articles about the socioeconomic impact of medicine and updates from county medical societies that provided a snapshot of the patient population at the time.

The *WMJ* web site—which augments content published in the journal—features a section called "The COVID-19 Collection" to share knowledge about research and care.

With the strength of this new medical school partnership, the *WMJ* will continue to thrive as a peer-reviewed, indexed, scientific journal. Information about subscribing or becoming a peer reviewer is available at [wmjonline.org](http://wmjonline.org).

# Ode to My Ladies

by Christine Seibert, MD, associate dean for medical student education and services, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), and professor of medicine, SMPH Department of Medicine



For the third time this week, I struggle with what to write as the official medical certifier of death on the State of Wisconsin Vital Records Office form in the CAUSE OF DEATH box.

It is ironic that during the past two weeks while attending on the inpatient wards at University Hospital in Madison, I was not called upon to perform this function, but in my outpatient role as a primary care physician, death-form completion recently has become far too commonplace.

Without a doubt, our lives have been upended by COVID-19, and we know that the most vulnerable among us—as for most other health conditions—are disproportionately affected. We all agonizingly watch our health care colleagues across the world struggle against the virus and bear witness to the economic hardships felt by so many in our community and elsewhere. Equally important is what former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and internist Dr. Alice Chen have coined the “social recession” of COVID-19. In a recent article for



*The Atlantic*, Drs. Murthy and Chen predicted that “as people around the world retreat behind closed doors and sever connections with others, the damage COVID-19 causes could be no less profound and long-lasting.”<sup>1</sup> Here is my firsthand attestation of that truth:

Anne\* was a self-proclaimed “super grandma” in her late 70s whom I have taken care of for more than 20 years. She had a never-ending supply of proud-grandma

attire, and at our last visit—while wearing her eggshell blue sweatshirt that read, “My favorite people call me Grandma”—she again shared how her family propelled her forward, despite the metastatic cancer she had lived with for more than a decade. In early March 2020, as nursing homes and assisted-living facilities wisely started closing their doors to visitors, Anne’s family could no longer make their nearly daily visits to her facility nor, since she was a wheelchair user, could they lovingly carry her up the steps to their homes for family dinners each Sunday. At the end of March, Anne was admitted to the hospital with a new brain metastasis and, due to an appropriate COVID-19 mitigation policy, was unable to have her family at her bedside as they surely would have been. When I walked into her hospital room one afternoon, her face lit up as soon as she figured out who I was beneath my mask and shield. I had a hard time leaving because she had so many stories to share, seemingly starved for familiar human contact. About 10 days after her hospital discharge, I got my first death notification phone call of the week, which told me that Anne had died in her sleep at the nursing home where she was rehabbing after brain surgery.

Diane\* was in her 80s and coincidentally went to the same Chicago-area high school as I did. We figured this out because her husband, Joe\*—before his death a few years ago—still wore his letterman jacket, which I immediately recognized. Over the years, especially after Joe developed cognitive impairment, he regularly regaled me with the story of his playoff-winning basketball shot in the same gym where I had a far-less-storied sports career many years later. Diane took meticulous care of Joe as his

memory worsened, leaving him detailed instructions about food prep and his agenda for each day's activities while she still worked part-time at a karate studio—where she had earned her black belt just a few years earlier. Diane developed rapidly progressive Parkinson's disease and related dementia, and for the past few years had resided in an assisted-living facility. Her daughter saw her nearly every day on her way home from teaching elementary school. After these visits stopped in March due to COVID-19, Diane became progressively withdrawn, despite the staff's best attempts to help her use her phone to call her daughter. A few days after her 80th birthday, Diane died with only her daughter at her side and other loved ones on Facetime. I got the call notifying me of her death two days after I heard about Anne.

Caroline\* was in her mid-80s and gave me one of my most unusual and heartfelt gifts as a physician. She was a successful and prolific romance-novel writer, and she wrote a character in my honor as one of her novel's heroines. When she presented me with "my" novel, I was a bit taken aback by the cover illustration of a buxom, long-haired brunette who, fortunately, bore little resemblance, and I have cherished this book ever since. About a year ago, Caroline began to have uncharacteristic troubles remembering names and important details of her life, and she began seeing small gnomes on the patio outside her window. She was diagnosed with dementia and had a rapid decline, necessitating admission to a memory-care facility. In March, her family tried regular window visits to make up for the in-person visits they were no longer able to make, but these had to be almost immediately suspended because Caroline became upset when she could not reconcile why she could see her family in the window yet their voices came only from the phone in her hand. This woman, who told me her family was "everything" to her, quickly became non-communicative once their visits stopped, and she died three days ago—my third such call of the week.

While it is not correct to list "COVID-19 infection" as the cause of death on their death certificates, I am convinced that it played a leading role in the demise of these three lovely, gregarious and strong matriarchs who were completely adored and fiercely loved. To battle my sadness about no longer having visits with each of them, I will

choose to reflect and remember them as their engaging and vital selves wearing sweet sweatshirts, showing me a hard-earned black belt and proudly handing me the novel with the beautiful brunette on the cover.

\*Names were changed to protect the identities of these amazing women to allow for private grieving by their families and friends. Permission to share these stories was obtained from the families.

<sup>1</sup>Murthy V and Chen A. The Coronavirus Could Cause a Social Recession. *The Atlantic*. March 22, 2020. Accessed on April 22, 2020, at <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/america-faces-social-recession/608548/>

## SEEKING SUBMISSIONS TO HEALER'S JOURNEY

Healer's Journey, a section of *Quarterly* magazine, showcases creative work by members of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) family. We seek prose, poetry and photographs that are moving, humorous or unusual and that reflect personal experiences in our world of healing.

Guidelines are as follows: Manuscripts, subject to editing, can be no longer than 1,000 words. Photos must be high resolution. Subject matter should relate to any aspect of working or studying at the SMPH or, generally, in the medical field.

Send submissions via e-mail to [quarterly@med.wisc.edu](mailto:quarterly@med.wisc.edu) or by mail to:

Managing editor, *Quarterly* magazine  
Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association  
750 Highland Ave.  
Madison, WI 53705

## Molds Damage Lung's Barrier to Spur Asthma Attacks

**A**spergillus molds, which are ubiquitous in the environment, sensitize some people to develop a strong asthmatic reaction. A University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health research team recently identified how *Aspergillus* prompts that reaction.

Led by Bruce Klein, MD (PG '89), professor, Departments of Pediatrics, Medicine and Medical Microbiology and Immunology, and Darin Wiesner, PhD, post-doctoral researcher, the study was published in *Cell Host*

*and Microbe*. This work was conducted with researchers at several other universities.

Molds secrete enzymes to digest proteins in the decaying matter on which they feed. One such enzyme, Alp1, is a known allergen to the lungs. Wiesner focused on club cells, an epithelial cell that eliminates pollutants from the lungs.

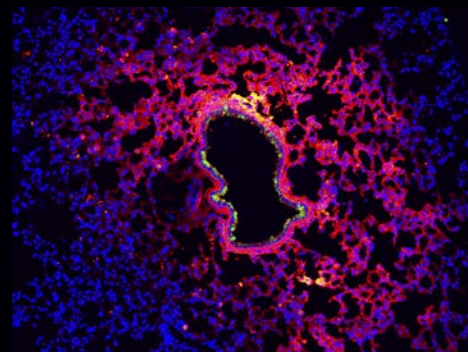
These cells are tightly bound together by proteins. When Wiesner exposed mouse cells to Alp1, their lung barrier became leaky, revealing that the Alp1 enzyme had disturbed the club cell junctions.

Then Klein's team went back to the Childhood

Origins of Asthma study, a large longitudinal effort led by UW-Madison scientists, and found a link between a particular mutation near the TRP4 gene and mold-sensitive asthma in children.

Back in the lab, Wiesner deleted TRPV4 in mouse club cells, and the mice became much less sensitive to Alp1. When he induced the club cells to produce more TRPV4, the mice became hypersensitive to the enzyme.

The researchers believe that Alp1 jostles the lung cells, prompting TRPV4 to signal that the barrier is damaged. When too much TRPV4 is present,



the signal is exaggerated, and the lungs are primed for an asthmatic reaction upon the next encounter with Alp1.

The work points toward new ways to prevent asthma, possibly through club cell-targeted use of existing medications.

## Deleting a Specific Gene Prevents Diabetes in Mice

**T**he deletion of a cellular stress-response gene from insulin-producing pancreatic beta cells in mice led to an unexpected result: after a short period of hyperglycemia, these mice not only produced normal levels of insulin, but they also were protected from autoimmune diabetes.

Feyza Engin, PhD, an assistant professor in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's Departments of Biomolecular Chemistry and Medicine, and her colleagues investigated how eliminating IRE1 $\alpha$ , a key cellular stress-response gene, from beta cells could

affect disease progression in mice genetically destined to develop Type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes occurs when T-cells of the immune system wrongly identify beta cells as threats and destroy them, eliminating the body's production of insulin. The resulting instability in glucose levels can be managed but not cured. Type 1 diabetes affects approximately 3 million people in the United States.

When the Engin team deleted the IRE1 $\alpha$  gene from the beta cells, they expected the diabetes would get accelerated. What ultimately happened was quite the opposite. IRE1 $\alpha$ -deficient mice exhibited elevated levels

of blood glucose for a brief period of time as their beta cells actually become less differentiated. In that more primitive state, beta cells reduced the expression of genes that affect the activity and the function of T-cells. IRE1 $\alpha$  deletion induced immune tolerance and stopped T-cells from killing beta cells.

Engin says "Beta cells can play a significant role in their own demise. Here we showed that beta cells that lack IRE1 $\alpha$  are safe from the immune destruction up to a year later—the equivalent of 40 to 50 years in a human life."

The study was published in *Cell Metabolism*. Engin



was the lead author, and Hugo Lee, graduate student in the UW-Madison Integrated Program in Biochemistry, was the first author.



## Newly Identified Cellular System Helps Create Neurons

Recently published research by University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health scientists has shown how a cellular filament called vimentin helps neural stem cells clear away damaged and clumped proteins, which accumulate during the aging process, chemical exposures or dormancy.

Darcie Moore, PhD, assistant professor of neuroscience, and graduate student Christopher Morrow led the research. The study was published in *Cell Stem Cell*.

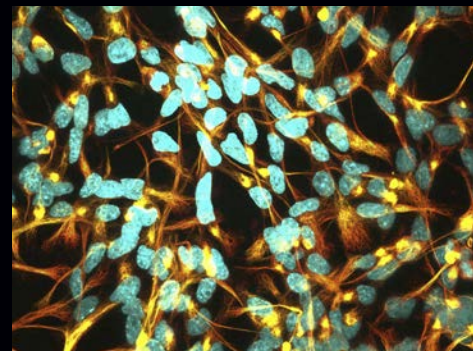
The long-term goal of the research is to help cells recover from increased amounts of toxic protein build-up that can occur in disease and during aging. For that to happen, cells must clear away accumulated proteins.

Moore and Morrow found, in a mouse model, that vimentin is a key part of the protein-removal process in neural stem cells. The filament brings targeted proteins, to the right location. If vimentin is absent from the stem cells, they have more difficulty clearing away damaged proteins and

recovered less from exposure to toxins.

Protein clearance is a necessary component of neurogenesis because without it the stem cells won't enter the cell cycle and divide. When the mice couldn't produce vimentin at all, they had less ability to produce new neurons.

The ability to increase neuron production would be of obvious benefit for patients who have suffered various brain injuries. In addition, understanding the process of clearing damaged proteins from the brain could help with diseases like Alzheimer's,



which often features clumps of toxic protein in the brain.

Vimentin also plays a role, not yet fully understood, in cancer metastasis. The new findings, says Moore, "give us a lot to follow up on."

## Stem Cells with Edited Genes Model Parkinson's

By inserting a single gene mutation—one nucleotide of more than 2.8 billion pairs—into marmoset stem cells, a University of Wisconsin-Madison research team has created a powerful model for evaluating disease progression and potential therapies for Parkinson's disease.

Marina Emborg, MD, PhD, a professor of medical physics at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, led the scientists on the study published in *Scientific Reports*. Scott Vermilyea, PhD '19, a former neuroscience graduate student, was the first author, and Jenna Kropp Schmidt, PhD,

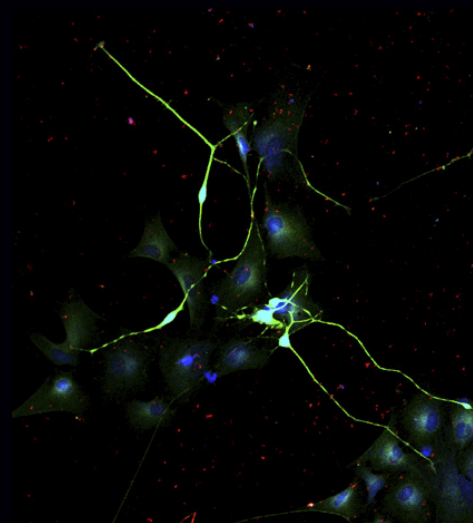
an assistant scientist at the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center, was a co-author.

Parkinson's affects more than 10 million people worldwide, degrading the nervous system and resulting in, among other things, tremors, loss of muscle control, and cardiac and gastrointestinal disorders.

In human patients, the G2019S mutation causes overactivity of the LRRK2 enzyme, which is involved in cell metabolism. Until now, virtually all gene-editing studies have used methods that produced both mutated and normal enzymes, making

it difficult to know the specific role of the mutation.

The UW-Madison study, however, resulted in cells that produced only mutated enzymes. Those cells were less metabolically efficient, had shorter lifespans in the dish, and were less resilient to oxidative stress. And when the researchers prompted the stem cells to differentiate into nerve cells, the neurons had fewer connections to other cells. All of those features mimic those in human patients with Parkinson's disease. They also found that deleting part of the LRRK2 gene blocked LRRK2 production and could be used as a therapy.



Schmidt says establishing the CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) technique will be helpful in the study of other diseases in monkeys, as well.

# Once in a Lifetime

**A**s a curator and public historian in a health sciences environment, it was imperative that I bring attention to the history of World War I and the influenza pandemic of 1918 during the 100-year anniversary of those impactful realities. I opened the exhibition, “Staggering Losses: WWI and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918,” in November 2018 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Ebling Library in the Health Sciences Learning Center. Due to its popularity, the exhibition was extended three times, until it ironically became shuttered by a pandemic.

There are many ways to approach the storytelling inherent in exhibition work. Research in the amazing resources at Ebling and other campus collections is a double-edged sword. So much information to read and sift through! During the nine months of research in myriad directions—ambulance-driver stories, plastic-surgery scenarios, wound-management techniques, diseases contracted in the trenches, nurses’ chronicles, physician discoveries in antiseptic, attempts at treating the flu, mules wearing gas masks—I wondered, how could I possibly portray these accounts in just 13 glass cases?

I came away with this: How do I convey the loss? Seventeen million people died in WWI, and between 37 and 40 million were injured. Another 650,000 died in the United States from the erroneously named Spanish Flu, adding to the 20 to 50 million (some suggest 100 million) who died worldwide.

The pandemic started in March 1918, ebbed in the summer and peaked during the following fall and early winter. The statistics were numbing, staggering.

These losses went beyond lives and limbs, into livelihoods, relationships, future children, artistic talents, education, mental health and inquiring minds; a loss of a generation of primarily men, but also women. There

was the loss of opportunity and inclusion, as Native American code talkers, African American physicians and Latino troops who contributed to the American effort came home and became victims of Jim Crow laws and other restrictive political certainties and social agendas.

I did what I traditionally do. I drilled down to singular people whose stories could represent the hundreds, thousands, millions of people who had lost their lives or saved the lives of others. While I anticipated interest, I did not realize the power inherent in those 100-year-old stories.

Visitors of all ages wrote in the guest book or sought me out. They’d lean into the cases, point at the clippings, photographs and postcards, and speak reverently, “My grandmother died from the flu, leaving four children.” “My great-granddad had gotten a new job, he died from the flu; his young son, my grandpa, had to work to support my great-grandma.” “My grandpa was gassed in the trenches and never recovered.”

In that hallowed space, they remembered family members they had not thought about for as long as decades. My work had transported them home, and in that moment, they recalled someone whose loss had created a cascading effect on their family history.

Based on the last sentence of my prescient exhibition essay, suggesting that a new global outbreak might make 1918 look like child’s play, I recall thinking, if something like this happens again, we should do all we can to quell the loss.

Our world is very different than it was then in terms of its robust worldwide travel, global supply chain and epidemiological record keeping. Medical treatment is more sophisticated, including established isolation protocols, the availability of antibiotics and antivirals, and the existence of specialists in respiratory care and infectious diseases. Yet,



*Micaela Sullivan-Fowler, MS, MA, poses next to one of the display cases for “Staggering Losses.”*

JENNIE GAO

in terms of the approach to the spread of the virus—in 1918, an H1N1, in 2020, the novel coronavirus—the dynamic includes the important interplay between medicine and public health in caring for people and populations.

As of summer 2020, I do not believe anyone is suggesting that COVID-19 will approach the number of people who died in the United States in 1918, though many wonder, as we did over 100 years ago, whether it will have a second wave in the fall. Still, no one knows how the Black Lives Matter protests and the phased return to physical gatherings worldwide will affect the numbers. Stay home as able, wash hands, resist public spitting, mask effectively and do not gather in groups. This was basic, good advice in 1918, and it remains good, albeit inconvenient, advice now.

Till we are able to meet again ...

**Micaela Sullivan-Fowler, MS, MA**  
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 History of the Health Sciences Librarian  
 Head of Marketing and Communications  
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 micaela.sullivan-fowler@wisc.edu



**There are many resources online:**  
[med.wisc.edu/1918tocovid19](https://med.wisc.edu/1918tocovid19)

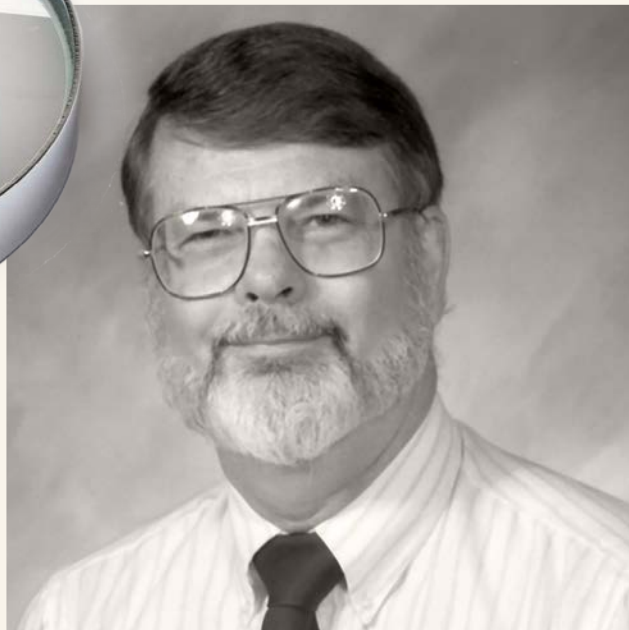


# I Know YOU

## ... OR DO I?

If you think you can identify the person in the photograph at right, send your guess to [quarterly@med.wisc.edu](mailto:quarterly@med.wisc.edu). We'll draw one of the correct responses and announce the winner in the next issue of *Quarterly*.

For the last issue (see below), Marc Olsen, MD '77, won the prize drawing and will receive a gift from the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association!



## HINT ABOUT PHOTO ABOVE:

He loved to share his knowledge about the history of his field of medicine.



## ABOUT LAST ISSUE'S PHOTO:

In the past issue of *Quarterly*, 18 people correctly identified Donn Fuhrmann, MD '76 (PG '80), a family medicine physician in New London, Wisconsin. He earned his medical degree at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and

completed a residency in the school's Department of Family Medicine and Community Health.

Randy Judd, MD '77, who grew up with Fuhrmann in the small town of New London, shared, "I followed him to UW-Madison, where I was pursuing chemical engineering, when Donn convinced me that I would be much better off with a career in medicine! And, as they say, the rest is history."

Scott Gylling, MD '81, said Fuhrmann was his housefellow in Sellery Hall and inspired him to go into medicine.

Christal Sakrison, MD '78, who was two years behind Fuhrmann's medical school class, recalled that he greeted her class at the beginning of their first year.

"He assured us that as entering first-year students, the school and state of Wisconsin had already made a big investment in us, and everything would be done to help us succeed,"

wrote Sakrison, adding that Fuhrmann's mustache and bow tie are iconic.

Similarly, Marc Olsen, MD '77, shared, "I can still picture him wearing a crazy bow tie on his way to the secretary's office in the old medical school."

Dirk Fisher, MD '79, recognized Fuhrmann as a past-president of the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA); they both have served on the WMAA Board of Directors and now serve on its Board Advisory Council.

Fuhrmann's classmates chimed in, too. For instance, Richard Clasen, MD '76, correctly indicated that Fuhrmann was their MD class president and continues to serve as a class representative. And Gary Adamski, MD '76, said Fuhrmann was one of his anatomy lab partners; he added, "I still consider him to be a very good friend. . . . He is a person with a good heart, and he is always fun to be with."

# We Want to Hear From You

Please send us information about your honors, appointments, career advancements, publications, volunteer work and other activities of interest. We'll include your news in the Alumni Notebook section of *Quarterly* magazine as space allows. Please include names, dates and locations. Photographs are encouraged.

**Have you moved?** Please send us your new address.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association  
750 Highland Ave.  
Madison, WI 53705



OR online at [med.wisc.edu/alumni/share-your-news](http://med.wisc.edu/alumni/share-your-news)  
OR e-mail [quarterly@med.wisc.edu](mailto:quarterly@med.wisc.edu)  
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## ***WMAA 2020 FALL REUNIONS***

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