

A PUBLICATION OF GUNDERSEN MEDICAL FOUNDATION

PATHFINDERS

Where generosity changes lives



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

In this issue of Pathfinders, you'll meet two new leaders: the Vice President of Gundersen Medical Foundation, Lindsey Preston, MASL, RN, and the Regional President of Gundersen Health System, Heather Schimmers, MBA, RN.

While Heather and Lindsey each bring unique leadership experiences and strengths to their respective positions, both began their careers as nurses. Their dedication to patients, combined with their commitment to and passion for community health, will add so much to our organization. Lindsey is my administrative partner in the Foundation, and Heather has a vision to elevate the cooperation of the health system and Foundation to the betterment of our community.



All the best,

Dr. Stephen Shapiro
Chief Medical Foundation Officer
Chair, Gundersen Medical Foundation

Of course, our leaders are only as good as the teams who work alongside them—and the medical professionals and staff within our organization are among the best.

This issue of Pathfinders also features our 2022 annual report. This report highlights the contributions of another group of leaders—our donors. We hope the examples of your philanthropic impact on medical education, research, community initiatives, and programs like Resolve Through Sharing® are as inspiring to you as they are to us. We could not do what we do without your support.

Thank you for your vision and commitment! We are proud to be your partners in changing lives.

Gundersen Medical Foundation

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PATHFINDERS

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To learn more about the Foundation's medical education, research and community health outreach programs, or to inquire about making a charitable gift, please visit us at gundersenhealth.org/foundation or call the Foundation office at (608) 775-6600.

Editor: Jill Blokhuis, MS, CFRE
Manager of Philanthropy Operations

Photography: Tegan Blank, Mark Bronson, Brooke Doval, John Kerrigan, John Sake, Maureen Ashley Turner
Gundersen Medical Media

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A Gift to Gundersen Medical Foundation Changes Lives

On the cover: Two of Gundersen's new leaders, Heather Schimmers, MBA, RN, and Lindsey Preston, MASL, RN, are proud nurses who recognize the value their experiences in patient care bring to their new roles.

ONLINE
RESOURCES
HERE!



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Mary Freybler
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(608) 775-6658 | msfreybl@gundersenhealth.org

GUNDERSEN
MEDICAL FOUNDATION

JERRY ARNDT

A community advocate and volunteer



CURRICULUM VITAE

Board Length of Service

8 years

Expertise

- Finance
- Leadership
- Project management

Professional Role

(Retired) Senior Vice President of Business Services, Gundersen Health System

Our community is filled with generous supporters and advocates of Gundersen Medical Foundation—and Jerry Arndt is among those who hold the Foundation close to their hearts. In addition to being a grateful patient and former member of the Gundersen Health System leadership team, Jerry has served on the board of Gundersen Medical Foundation since 2015 and on the board of Gundersen Health System since 2016.

A HEAD FOR BUSINESS

Jerry Arndt grew up in Wisconsin Rapids, earned a degree in mechanical engineering from Michigan Technological University, and moved to the La Crosse area in 1970 to work for Trane Company.

Jerry met his wife, Marilyn, in 1974, and the two became true partners, each supporting the other's career. Marilyn spent 37 years as a teacher in the La Crosse School District teaching pre-K, kindergarten and first grade. While Jerry started his career as an engineer, he spent the bulk of his career in management, retiring from Trane as the senior vice president of manufacturing of the commercial division in 2005.

Retirement, however, did not come naturally to Jerry, who considers himself a lifelong learner. After briefly serving at Gundersen in a volunteer capacity, Jerry

was invited to join Gundersen Health System as the senior vice president of business services in 2005. During the next 11 years at Gundersen, Jerry was very involved in the Campus Renewal Campaign, which built the Legacy Hospital as well as the Behavioral Health building.

A HEART FOR SERVICE

Over the years, Jerry and Marilyn have supported a variety of community organizations, both through financial gifts and by volunteering. However, according to Jerry, the Foundation remains their single biggest philanthropic focus. "We give to the Foundation because we know that our gifts contribute to a better health system and a stronger community," says Jerry.

Jerry's business acumen and the expertise he has gained as a longtime board member give him confidence that the impact of the Foundation will continue to grow. "The Foundation is linked tightly with the strategies and direction of the system, so we are aligned to provide maximum impact—touching and improving many people's lives—both now and into the future." +



INTRODUCING

Gundersen's New President, Heather Schimmers, MBA, RN

Having grown up in Wisconsin and worked at several leading healthcare organizations throughout her career, Heather Schimmers, MBA, RN, has always been impressed by the reputation of Gundersen Health System. "Gundersen is well-known, both statewide and nationwide, for its high-quality, innovative care and its energy initiative," she explains.

Her first real introduction to Gundersen came in 2013 when Heather brought a group from St. Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton, Wis., to tour Gundersen. "I remember being impressed by Gundersen's principles and its practices," she says, "but what really resonated with me is that I felt an instant connection with the people. The staff and clinicians were engaged and patient-centered; the atmosphere was so collegial."

So, when a recruiter informed her in 2021 that Gundersen was searching for a chief nursing officer, she decided to apply. Heather accepted the position and joined Gundersen in October 2021 as the chief nursing officer and chief operating officer. After the merger with Bellin Health in December 2022, Heather took on the role of regional president of Gundersen Health System.

"In the short time I have served at this organization, I have been impressed by a lot of things, not the least of which are the people," shares Heather. "I am inspired by the level of clinician involvement—they care about the organization and want to be at the table to help—as well as by the involvement of staff. They get excited and rally around good ideas. Our complex work is accomplished because of these remarkable people and their commitment to getting things done."

FINDING A PASSION

As a youngster, Heather's family moved around a lot because her dad worked for a power company. She spent her teenage years in Mineral Point, Wis., where she graduated from high school.

Heather went on to attend Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee where she earned —>

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Ascension Wisconsin/Legacy Affinity Health Care
- Chief Nursing Officer, Ascension Wisconsin/Legacy Affinity Health Care, 7/2019–12/2022
- Nursing Executive Committee Chair, Ascension Wisconsin, 8/2018–12/2022
- Vice President of Patient Care Services, St. Elizabeth Hospital, 11/2013–12/2022
- Director of Nursing, Mercy Medical Center, 9/2011–11/2013
- Manager of Perioperative Services, Mercy Medical Center, 11/2010–9/2011
- Director of Surgical Services and Specialty Clinics, Upland Hills Health, 11/2008–7/2010
- Total Joint Project Manager, Orthopedic and Sports Institute of the Fox Cities, 10/2005–4/2008
- Nurse Clinical Coordinator, Appleton Medical Center/Growth Surgery Center, 5/1998–1/2005

EDUCATION

- Master of Business Administration, Kaplan University
- Advisory Board Executive Leadership Fellowship, Advisory Board, Washington, DC
- Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing, Kaplan University
- Associate Degree in Nursing, Cardinal Stritch College

an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and Kaplan University (now Purdue University Global) where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). After graduating from college, she accepted a position as a nurse at a long-term-care facility in Appleton, Wis.

“I loved being an RN and caring for patients,” reflects Heather. “Eventually, I developed a curiosity about how the whole system of healthcare works. After a number of years, I earned a master’s degree, and my leadership experience began to grow. I will always consider myself an RN first, but when I moved from being a caregiver (as a nurse) to caring for caregivers (as a leader), I realized I’d found my passion.”

A MERGER THAT MAKES SENSE

For more than 20 years, Heather has worked in leadership roles within healthcare organizations throughout Wisconsin. She came to Gundersen from Ascension Wisconsin where she served as the chief nursing officer, and prior to that, she served as the vice president of patient care services for St. Elizabeth Hospital, the director of nursing at Mercy Medical Center, the director of surgical services and specialty clinics at Upland Hills Health, and other roles [see sidebar].

Those roles not only oriented Heather to Wisconsin’s healthcare system as a whole but also gave her opportunities to get to know a variety of organizations, including Bellin Health. In her view, Bellin and Gundersen share the commitment of supporting the communities and patients we serve by providing high-quality care, close to home, with a focus on affordability. As a result, she believes

the merger will positively impact the entire state.

“Gundersen and Bellin have incredibly dedicated, passionate and talented clinicians and staff,” says Heather. “The combination of our outstanding care and incredible people is transforming the healthcare experience; our commitment to serving our patients and communities will not change. Affordability will be fostered by developing payment models that deliver cost improvements to patients and businesses through partnerships with payers; combating inflation of supplies, devices, and drugs; and realizing efficient economies in technologic investment.”

THE RIGHT FIT

Not only does Heather feel she has found a great fit at Gundersen, she and her husband, Dave Schomisch, feel lucky to be settling into the La Crosse community.

“We felt a connection to La Crosse on our first visit,” she explains. “The community itself feels vibrant, and the area is beautiful. We love the outdoors, especially hiking and boating—the river is my happy place.”

A blended family, the couple has four adult children: Eiley, who works in digital marketing; Parker, who is a senior at Wartburg College studying neuroscience (with the hope of continuing on to medical school); Sam, who works in the banking industry; and Kal, who is a musician. While only their youngest relocated with them to La Crosse, Heather and Dave look forward to sharing the region with their entire family. +



Introducing Gundersen Medical Foundation's *New Vice President*

Lindsey Preston: caregiver, servant-leader,
community member and mom



Q & A



Gundersen Medical Foundation is excited to introduce our new vice president, Lindsey Preston, MASL, RN, who transitioned into the role in January 2023.

Lindsey first joined Gundersen Health System in 2002 as a dialysis technician. She went on to obtain her nursing degree, serving as a nurse in dialysis and primary care and, later, in a variety of nurse leadership roles on the main campus and throughout the region. Most recently, Lindsey served the Gundersen Sparta Campus and community as the regional clinic manager. She has earned additional certifications, a green belt in Lean Six Sigma, and a master's degree in servant leadership.

Outside of work, Lindsey is an active community volunteer, having served in years past on the board for The Boys and Girls Club of Sparta and as a Sunday School teacher. She is currently serving on the board for the St. Clare Health Mission of Monroe County, the board for the Sparta Girls Softball Association, and acts as a volunteer coach for various youth activities within Sparta Parks and Recreation.

"Several unique traits—including her enthusiasm for our work, for her team members, and for our system of care—elevated Lindsey to the top of the candidate list during our search," says the Foundation's Chief Medical Officer Stephen B. Shapiro, MD, FACS. "I'm confident that Lindsey will work cross-functionally with integrity, optimism, energy and collegiality to develop and grow connections to current and future systems of care."

As she settles into her new position, we invited Lindsey to share a bit about herself, her experiences and her goals:

Q: WHAT DREW YOU TO A CAREER IN MEDICINE?

A: I'm thoughtful about the one life we are each given and how I can use my time to serve as an instrument of goodness, offering benefit to others. Nursing was a natural and deliberate opportunity to care, serve and heal in ways that influence the well-being of others.

Q: WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT BEING A NURSE?

A: Relationships, patient stories and serving. Some of my most meaningful relationships have been cultivated through my work as a dialysis nurse. Developing trust through authentic connections and advocating makes me proud to be a nurse.

I've had the privilege of living out, with the support of GHS, what the impact of a nurse can be through different roles within the profession. Healthcare facilities have nurses functioning in a variety of ways to impact their missions, such as bedside nursing, education, research, advanced practice roles, nursing leadership, business strategy, population and community health, informatics and healthcare philanthropy. I've likely missed others, yet I recognize the opportunity to serve in a way that resonates in a unique and special way as a nurse.



Q: HOW DO YOU CONNECT YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES TO YOUR ROLE AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FOUNDATION?

A: My various roles and training in the areas of nursing, service and leadership have fostered listening and critical thinking skills, as well as humility, kindness, patience, integrity, commitment and accountability. Community engagement and running the operations of a rural campus provided insights into business relationships, cross department and system work, finance and service line development. All of these shape my capacity to lead people within the changing landscapes in healthcare.

Q: WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THE LA CROSSE AREA?

A: I grew up in the small community of Houston, Minn. I watched (and continue to see) my parents and family members demonstrate a commitment to kindness and the care of fellow community members. This dedication to caring for neighbors and doing good is a hallmark of many small communities, La Crosse and the rural communities served by Gundersen Health System. The generosity and care of the people in our region is something special; it doesn't exist everywhere.

Q: WHAT MAKES GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM SPECIAL?

A: Gundersen is special for so many reasons! We are proud of our rich history and dedication to preserving our core values. At the same time, we are committed to innovation and providing cutting-edge care. I have deep respect for what our system has done to impact our community's health and well-being, while leaning into opportunities for the future.

Q: WHAT DREW YOU TO THE WORK OF THE FOUNDATION?

A: Service to system and community. I believe in the mission of the Foundation to provide support for quality healthcare through education, research, philanthropy and community outreach. I'm committed to providing support and creating alignment within the services of the Foundation to complement the strategies of the system. Ultimately, this collaboration and alignment delivers improved outcomes to our community and patients.

Q: WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT YOUR NEW ROLE?

A: I am looking forward to developing and deepening relationships with my Foundation co-workers, our system partners, friends in our community and like-minded organizations looking to improve the health of others. TOGETHER, we'll have our greatest impact.

Q: HOW DO YOU LIKE TO SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?

A: Any time I get to spend with my family—including my husband, Brian (Buck), and our two daughters (Brailey, who is 12, and Marley, who is 10)—brings me joy. We spend time at our boathouse on the Mississippi River. We appreciate the outdoors. Attending ball games (as coaches and/or spectators) keeps us busy year-round. In addition to time with family, I enjoy friends, running, reading and developing new skills.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE QUOTE?

A: "We are each made for goodness, love and compassion. Our lives are transformed as much as the world is when we live with these truths." ~Desmond Tutu +



The Gundersen Medical Foundation family sends our best wishes to Jack Schwartz, CFP, who served as the executive director since October 2015.

Jack retired in early 2023 and has relocated to Kansas to be near his adult children and grandchildren.

A Pioneer in Bereavement Care



Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS) is an evidence- and relationship-based bereavement education program for healthcare professionals.

Opposite: RTS staff members (L–R) Catherine Pelletier, Amanda Weyer, Dr. Randi Berg, Melissa Koch, Dr. Rana Limbo, Mary Beth Hensel and Kathleen Cassidy. (Not pictured: Anna Veglahn)

Rana Limbo, PhD, RN, CPLC, FAAN, began her career at Gundersen Health System (then Lutheran Hospital) in 1979 as a postpartum and labor and delivery nurse. Through that work, she developed a passion for perinatal bereavement care, a passion that became the focal point of her highly successful career. Her work at Gundersen followed her early work as a nurse caring for new mothers and babies and, subsequently, teaching maternal/child nursing at a major university.



Not only was Dr. Limbo involved in the early design and implementation of Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS), Gundersen Medical Foundation’s innovative bereavement education program for healthcare professionals, she was—and still is—instrumental in the program’s success. In addition to her continued support for the RTS program, Dr. Limbo is an advocate for Gundersen Medical Foundation, especially in the area of medical education.

Though she retired in 2018, Dr. Limbo continues to support RTS as the program’s Director Emerita—and there is no question that her work as a nurse, a researcher, an educator and a leader has changed countless lives.

A CAREER IN CAREGIVING

As a young girl growing up on a farm in Nebraska, Dr. Limbo remembers being struck by the compassion and empathy her father and paternal grandmother showed to others. “Daddy was always genuinely interested in other people and their experiences,” remembers Dr. Limbo, “and Grandma was the same. They showed care in the way they talked and listened to people; they made sure others felt heard.”

Looking back, Dr. Limbo believes these role models inspired her to become a caregiver, too. After high school, she attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. In the years that followed, she would go on to receive a Master’s Degree in Maternal/Child Nursing from the University of Colorado, a Master’s Degree in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing from Indiana University, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

In 1979, Dr. Limbo, a maternal/infant nurse, moved to La Crosse and began working at Gundersen Health System (formerly Lutheran Hospital). While she had always been interested in mental health, Dr. Limbo soon developed an interest in perinatal bereavement care.

“The delivery room is not always a happy place,” explains Dr. Limbo, who observed the trauma in patients experiencing a miscarriage, stillbirth, ectopic pregnancy or the death of an infant shortly after birth. “I found myself wanting to shine a light on people who I felt were being overlooked. At the time, there were few—if any—standards for this type of care.”



In 1981, Dr. Limbo worked with several colleagues to develop a bereavement education program called Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS), with the initial goal to positively impact the quality of patient care at Gundersen. The program received so much internal support that Dr. Limbo was hired as a bereavement coordinator, the first such position at Gundersen, and—perhaps—the first position of its kind in the nation.

Some of her early research on perinatal bereavement focused on miscarriage, a topic that was not well understood at the time. “Research showed that up to 75 percent of women experiencing a miscarriage grieved the loss,” shares Dr. Limbo. “Therefore, the choice of language—personal language vs. medical language—used by healthcare professionals is an extremely important part of providing comfort and care.”

By 1983, the model was developed enough for Dr. Limbo and a colleague to present on the subject at two national healthcare conferences. The topic was so popular, she remembers, that at one of the conferences, an entire ballroom full of nurses attended their workshop to learn about the approach being used at Gundersen.

Seeing the potential, Dr. Limbo returned to Gundersen and submitted a proposal to grow and develop the healthcare education program. “I have always felt blessed to have begun this work here—at Gundersen,” Dr. Limbo explains. “Leaders need to have support at the organizational level in order to make a big impact, and Gundersen is that kind of place.”

Today, more than 60,000 healthcare professionals throughout the U.S. and beyond have received RTS training. The program is widely considered to be the gold standard in industry—and Dr. Limbo is viewed as a pioneer and leader in this field of study.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Even though Dr. Limbo loved the work she was doing and feared she may never find another role more suited to her passion she left RTS in 1990 to work in behavioral health as a psychotherapist until enrolling in a PhD program in nursing at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in the fall of 1993.

There, she had what she calls a “transformative experience,” thanks in part to Karen Pridham, PhD, the advisor for her



Dr. Rana Limbo (left) and members of the RTS team with Dr. Karen Pridham (center)

doctoral program. At the time, Dr. Pridham was conducting a randomized clinical trial that applied the teaching and learning theory called Guided Participation (GP), which focuses on helping individuals become more competent in a practice by working alongside a guide (healthcare clinician).

As a research assistant, Dr. Limbo worked closely with the participants in the study, all of whom had pre-term babies. “I will never forget the families and the babies I worked with during that study,” says Dr. Limbo, “or the impact of what I learned.” Two articles by Drs. Pridham and Limbo about GP are accepted for publication in a major nursing journal.

In 2004, Dr. Limbo was invited back to Gundersen to serve as the director of Resolve Through Sharing, and she brought the theory of Guided Participation with her. The tenets of Guided Participation were integrated into care practices at Gundersen, and this relationship-based intervention is a core part of all RTS trainings.

A CAREER FULL OF HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Limbo retired from Gundersen in 2018, but she continues to volunteer in support of RTS, serving as the Director Emerita. In addition to her work with RTS, Dr. Limbo has co-edited or co-authored six books including three named as American Journal of Nursing Books of the Year: *Perinatal and Pediatric Bereavement* (2016), *Guided Participation in Pediatric Nursing Practice* (2018) and *Handbook of Perinatal and Neonatal Palliative Care* (2020). She has also authored numerous journal articles and textbook chapters.

The Gold Standard in Bereavement Care

Following the Gundersen Medical Foundation mission of improving the lives of patients and our larger community through medical education, research and outreach, Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS) is an evidence- and relationship-based bereavement education program for healthcare professionals. RTS trains clinicians providing bereavement care and support (e.g., nurses, chaplains, physicians, social workers) at Gundersen Health System facilities, across the country and around the world.

The innovative program was created at Gundersen in 1981 and has since become the gold standard in bereavement education. To date, training has been provided to more than 60,000 caregivers. While the program initially focused on bereavement training for those supporting perinatal loss, programming has since expanded to include bereavement education across the lifespan.

The program's core two-day courses focusing on perinatal, neonatal and pediatric, and adult death experiences were delivered in-person until the COVID-19 pandemic imposed the need for a virtual transformation. Today, these RTS education sessions are offered live on Zoom.

Additional programming offered by RTS includes online modules, a webinar series featuring renowned bereavement experts, training for genetic counseling students, a protocol for emergency responders, resources for veterinary professionals, and a complete catalog of patient grief support materials for the clinical setting.

Director Mary Beth Hensel reflects, "Every time we deliver an RTS training, comments from attendees identify the experience as the best training these healthcare professionals have received. This Foundation program serves as an example of how investments in medical education not only raise the quality of care locally, but position Gundersen as an industry leader." +

Having experienced first-hand the impact of investments in medical education, Dr. Limbo has supported Gundersen Medical Foundation for the past 27 years. "I feel so fortunate to have ended up at Gundersen, in a place so committed to high-quality patient care—and a place that values and supports medical education and research," says Dr. Limbo. "My gifts to the Foundation are one way I can give back for what they have given to me."

One very personal gift to the Foundation occurred in 2010 when Dr. Limbo and her sister sponsored a bereavement room in honor of their grandmother, Christena Estrem Limbo. The bereavement room allows patients to spend time in a warm, comfortable environment with their loved one who has died.

In 2012, Dr. Limbo was recognized for her RTS work by being inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing. Of the 4.2 million nurses in the U.S., only about 2,900 have been named Fellows—and Dr. Limbo is the only person at Gundersen to have received this honor.

"It is the highlight of my nursing career because it places me within a group of esteemed nursing leaders," explains Dr. Limbo, "and I'm also especially proud because of the recognition it brings to Gundersen and the Foundation." +



The RTS program offers a variety of training and support materials.

Norman and Judy Halderson: Partners in Life and Philanthropy

Because Norman and Judy Halderson each grew up in small, rural towns within hours of La Crosse, they have always been familiar with Gundersen Health System. In fact, they consider themselves to be grateful patients, which is part of the reason they have chosen to support Gundersen Medical Foundation over the years. “We appreciate having access to great medical care that we trust right here in our community,” shares Norman.

However, the Haldersons also cite another reason for their support. As the owner of The Halderson Corporation (1975–1999), Norman was contracted to upgrade Gundersen’s HVAC control systems, and he was able to see first-hand the organization’s business practices. “I had a great deal of respect for the honest practices, the attention to building relationships and the willingness of Gundersen leaders to support small businesses doing good work,” remembers Norman.

Today, it is this unique combination of appreciation for Gundersen as a healthcare provider and as a business making a community-wide impact that has led the Haldersons to regularly and generously support the Foundation.

BUILDING A FAMILY AND A BUSINESS

Norman and his eight siblings were raised on a 120-acre farm in Galesville, so, according to Norman, they all “grew up knowing what work was.”

After graduating from Galesville High School in 1952, Norman joined the U.S. Army where he completed basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and was then assigned to duty at Fort Carson, Colo. In 1954, Norman received orders to report to Fort McCoy to support the National Guard troops who were training there during the summer months. It was during this time that Norman met Judith Ann Fleming from Gays Mills, Wis., when they were set up by friends on a blind date.



Upon completion of the National Guard support duty at Fort McCoy, Norman was given orders to join the 25th Armored Division, which had just returned to Oahu, Hawaii, after the end of the Korean War. Norman served with this unit for approximately two years before being honorably discharged in 1956. Norman and Judy continued their relationship and were married on December 27, 1958.

After their marriage, the couple lived in Madison. Judy worked as a secretary at the University of Wisconsin–Madison while Norman attended the college. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1961, the same year their first son, Terrence (Terry), was born. Subsequently, the family moved to Milwaukee when Norman was hired by Lofte and Frederickson, an HVAC consulting engineering firm.

The following years were busy for the Halderson family, both personally and professionally. In 1963, their daughter, Lori, was born. At work, Norman was gaining a lot of valuable experience. By 1965, he had become licensed by the state of Wisconsin as a professional engineer, and in 1967, he and two partners decided to launch their own HVAC and plumbing engineering firm. Their business was successful, working on major projects such as a



(Left) Norman and Judy's grandchildren (L–R) Andrea, Yvonne, Steven and Natalie; (Right) Norman with philanthropy officer Jon McKenzie, CFRE, at Gundersen Medical Foundation

50-acre JCPenney regional distribution center in Atlanta, Ga. In 1969, Norman and Judy's third child, Mark, was born.

During this time, Norman also continued to develop his knowledge and establish professional relationships by being active in ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers), serving as the president of the Wisconsin chapter from 1971–1972. He also volunteered for the Brookfield Boy Scout Chapter.

BACK TO THEIR ROOTS

Despite the success of the Milwaukee-based business, though, Norman and Judy found themselves wanting to be closer to family in their hometowns. So, in 1973, they moved to La Crosse and bought a home in the township of Shelby. Initially, Judy worked at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as an administrative assistant while Norman was employed by HSR, an architectural and engineering firm.

After getting reacclimated to the area, Norman decided once again to go into business for himself. In 1975, he started his own HVAC consulting firm, The Halderson Corporation. The following year, he was contacted by Barber Colman Company of

Rockford, Ill., a leader in the field of control systems automation, with a proposal to represent the company and market its products.

"After many struggles and learning experiences, we succeeded in building a firm that grew to 35 employees, with offices in La Crosse, Eau Claire and Wausau," says Norman. Some major clients through the years included Gundersen, Wausau Insurance, Cray Research and the Eau Claire School System.

Norman remembers that, at times, the process of bidding for contracts could be competitive and even occasionally unscrupulous. However, he always appreciated the business practices of the Gundersen representatives with whom he interacted. "I was thankful for the fair and honest business practices of Gundersen representatives like Norm Baker," shares Norman, who attributes his own success to a combination of honesty, respectful relationships and good products.

"When my business became successful and it came time for me to give back, I initially donated to Gundersen out of respect and loyalty, from one local business to another," Norman explains. "Later, as both a patient and community

member, I came to understand more about the mission and observed all of the good that Gundersen does for the community. This made me want to support the organization even more."

The Halderson Corporation was purchased by Trane Company in 1999, but Norman continued to work there until his retirement in 2002.

GIVING BACK

This past December, Norman and Judy celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary. Although Judy was diagnosed with Alzheimer's a few years ago and now lives at Springbrook in Onalaska, Norman visits her every day. The couple also enjoys spending time with their children and four grandchildren (Andrea, Natalie, Steven and Yvonne).

Throughout the years, the Haldersons have chosen to support cancer research, the breast care fund and the greatest needs fund. They are also members of the Foundation's Legacy Society. "We have been fortunate in many aspects of life," says Norman. "It feels good to give to community organizations like Gundersen—and several others—that make a positive impact on individuals, communities and all of humanity." +



Mandy L. Richardson, CFRE
Director of Philanthropy



Todd A. Mahr, MD
Medical Director of Philanthropy

Honoring your impact

Gundersen Health System is widely recognized as an industry leader, a designation made possible not only because of internal teams and leaders, but also because of our donors, whose philanthropic support for Gundersen Medical Foundation leads directly to better patient care.

In this issue of Pathfinders, you'll learn how your support for CMN Hospitals, along with several individual and corporate gifts, allowed for the purchase of a dental laser that will help pediatric dentists treat more patients with less discomfort. Another grant from CMN Hospitals helped our Pediatric Therapy Department purchase additional sensory tools for pediatric therapy patients. To these young patients, you are more than role models in generosity; you are heroes.

Your gifts have also allowed Gundersen to invest in expanding our telemedicine options so that rural patients have access to high-quality care closer to home. And, because of you, Gundersen's mobile medicine team is able to bring care directly to unsheltered community members and those who have access to the fewest resources.

Truly, there is no shortage of examples to illustrate the impact of your leadership in strengthening our community or the power of your gifts.

Your continued support will allow Gundersen to fulfill even more of our vision. Support for medical education continues to be important for our needs today and tomorrow. Investing in education opportunities for our current staff will allow our caregivers to grow in their knowledge and skills, resulting in even better patient experiences.

Plus, investing in the programs that train the next generation of healthcare professionals, many of whom will choose to stay and work in our community, will contribute to the future health of our community. With the nationwide shortage of doctors and nurses expected to grow, your investments in medical education are more important than ever.

Thank you for your vision, your leadership and your dedication. The impact of your giving is leading our community to become a happier, healthier place for us all. +

—————COMMEMORATIVE GIFTS—————

October 1, 2022–February 28, 2023

Expressions *of Caring*

Gundersen Medical Foundation thanks
our many friends for their generous gifts.

Commemorative gifts made after February 28, 2023, will appear in the next issue of Pathfinders.

Charitable gifts to Gundersen Medical Foundation are a thoughtful way to celebrate a specific individual on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries or holidays. Our donors also find this method of giving is a meaningful way to express appreciation to Gundersen care providers or entire departments for exceptional care received.

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A gift that endures— a lasting tribute

A gift to Gundersen Medical Foundation in the name of the person or persons you wish to honor provides both the donor and the recognized, or bereaved family, the satisfaction of having made a lasting contribution to others.

Your gift will touch their hearts

In response to your gift, we send a note of acknowledgment to the honored individual or, in the case of a memorial, to the family. You will be notified that your gift has been received and designated according to your wishes. The names of those recognized by tribute gifts are included in this publication, Pathfinders. Specific amounts are confidential.

Throughout the year, Gundersen Medical Foundation is honored to be the chosen recipient of special gifts made in remembrance of friends or loved ones who are no longer here to carry on their own legacy of caring.

Memorial gifts pay lasting tribute to a person's life and accomplishments, while also advancing healthcare quality for the future.

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Gundersen Medical Foundation
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals®

THE *Miracle* CONNECTION



Give today. gundersenhealth.org/foundation

Meet our 2023 Heroes

Your generosity each year helps hundreds of kids and their families, including our Heroes. As Heroes, these five youngsters will be our CMN Hospitals ambassadors this year.

Thank you to our Hero program sponsors:



Amanda
Age 16
Houston,
Minnesota

FOXG1 Syndrome

Amanda enjoys painting class, having her hair and make-up done and being part of Darby's Dancers. Her favorite school subject is reading, and she likes to listen to audiobooks and music.

iPad for audiobooks and music, gas cards and meal vouchers



Trey
Age 5
Hillsboro,
Wisconsin

Micropreemie

Trey loves playing in the park, baseball and basketball and working on writing in kindergarten. He wants to be a policeman when he grows up.

Meal vouchers, gas cards and medical expenses



Brynleigh
Age 3
Hillsboro,
Wisconsin
(and Trey's
younger sister)

Micropreemie

Brynleigh loves playing with babies and ponies. She wants to be a firefighter when she grows up.

Meal vouchers and gas cards



Charlie
Age 10
Viola,
Wisconsin

Emery Dreifuss Muscular Dystrophy

Charlie is an expert on dinosaurs and got to visit a paleontologist to learn more about one of his favorite subjects. He wants to write and illustrate a book on dinos some day.

Meal vouchers, gas cards and durable medical equipment



Eduardo
Age 13
Onalaska,
Wisconsin

Leukemia

Eduardo enjoys hanging out with his friends and being outside. His favorite sport is football, and he likes going on bike rides.

Gas cards, store gift card and meal vouchers

Learn more about our Heroes at gundersenhealth.childrensmiracletnetworkhospitals.org.



2022 Radiothon Sponsors

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Partnering in support of local kids

With donations totaling \$105,106, Radiothon had a record-breaking year in 2022!

These funds were raised with help from 16 Miracle Teams comprised of volunteers from various community organizations, businesses and Gundersen Health System departments.

The event was held from 6 a.m.–6 p.m. on October 13–14 in the clinic lobby at Gundersen's La Crosse campus and was broadcast live on three of Mid-West Family La Crosse's radio stations: Z93, 95.7 The Rock and KQ98. This is the second year that Mid-West Family La Crosse partnered with CMN Hospitals to produce and broadcast Radiothon.

Twenty-four stories (one during each hour of the broadcast) were shared,

featuring families that have benefitted from CMN Hospitals services, Gundersen pediatric providers and community organizations.

"Mid-West Family takes very seriously its role as media partners with our local Children's Miracle Network Hospital," said Jean Taylor, vice president of programming & content for Mid-West Family La Crosse. "Learning the number of families in our area that are assisted by CMN every single year is eye-opening, and getting to know our local Heroes and their families is a highlight for everyone on our team. We are looking forward to what we can accomplish together for CMN in 2023!"

Save the date!

Radiothon 2023 will be October 12–13. If you're interested in sponsoring the event or creating a Miracle Team of phone bank volunteers, email Beth Noffsinger at banoffsi@gundersenhealth.org.



Honoring Miracle Makers

Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals proudly recognized WXOW News 19 with the 2023 Miracle Achievement Award at the 2023 Miracle Gala on April 14.

Since the 1980s when Gundersen joined CMN Hospitals, WXOW has been a long-standing supporter. For years, WXOW helped by hosting the annual CMN Hospitals telethons. Today, WXOW raises awareness and support for CMN Hospitals by airing stories about CMN Hospitals Heroes and promoting special events and programs.

“All of us, especially those of us who are also parents, can empathize with families whose kids may be going through a difficult time,” says Dave Booth, general manager of WXOW. “We are proud to help make sure CMN Hospitals is there for families, and we like knowing that the donations have a local impact.”

CMN Hospitals would like to thank WXOW for their role in making miracles happen.

Your generosity helps kids and families

In 2022, Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals allocated more than \$1.2 million to help local families with children facing a difficult medical diagnosis.

Thanks to your generosity, a variety of support is available.



37%

provides charitable care for patients



33%

helps purchase lifesaving equipment



11%

provides education for patients, family and the community



9%

contributes to patient services for overall family wellbeing



5%

provides advancement services that support innovative programs and projects



5%

supports research initiatives for children’s care

Of the \$1.2 million, over \$377,000 was provided directly to families through 534 separate grants; of this, \$144,000 was used to help children attend specialty camps or participate in adaptive recreational programs.

CMN Hospitals Specialists, Sierra Lyon (left) and Beth Noffsinger (right) presenting a grant check to Mark Moeller, DDS (center). The grant from CMN Hospitals helped Gundersen Pediatric Dentistry purchase a new dental laser.

Improving the health of our community

Evidence of the power of philanthropy is all around us. For example, your support of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, a program of Gundersen Medical Foundation, recently made a substantial grant to Gundersen's Pediatric Dental Specialties possible.

The grant from CMN Hospitals of \$153,490, plus additional donations from individual and corporate donors, was used to purchase a Solea All-Tissue laser—a cutting-edge piece of equipment that will help Gundersen provide outstanding care to pediatric dental patients while also increasing the number of patients who can be served.



“The laser will allow us to care for patients more quickly, without pain, because no local anesthesia is required,” says Nicole Fultz, clinical manager. “Additionally, the treatment is safer. First, there is more control than with a drill, so there is less risk to children, including those with special needs who sometimes struggle to hold still during procedures. Next, laser restorations are considered non-aerosolizing, so it is a safer alternative in our COVID-19 world.”

In addition to a better patient experience, the laser will decrease the amount of time required for some procedures, which means more patients can be served each

week. “We have an incredibly busy practice, and we’re seeing the demand for services increase significantly,” shares Nicole. “The ability to serve more patients, more efficiently, will positively impact the communities served by Gundersen Health System.”

This grant serves as a powerful example of the way philanthropy can ensure the highest quality of care and improve the overall health of our community members.

TOGETHER, WE HELP CHILDREN

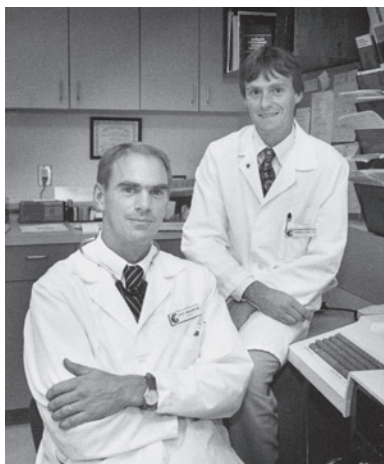
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals®, a service of Gundersen Medical Foundation, is dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children. We directly assist children and their families and support pediatric programs and services that help kids battle diseases and injuries of every kind. In the Gundersen service area, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals has raised more than \$22 million since 1986. Each charitable donation—whether through special events, annual gifts, business partnerships, sponsorships or planned giving such as bequests—benefits children in this region and provides support for specialty medical care, research and preventive education.

Children's Miracle Network Hospitals | Gundersen Medical Foundation

Mail to: 1900 South Avenue, Mailstop FDN-001, La Crosse, WI 54601 | Office location: 201 Third St. N., La Crosse, WI 54601 (608) 775-4424 | gundersenhealth.org/foundation

Happenings

Gundersen Medical Foundation News



Honoring a surgeon and friend

Gundersen Medical Foundation extends our deepest sympathy to the family of Tom Cogbill, MD, who passed away on New Year's Eve, 2022, at age 70.

Tom was dedicated to his career as a broad-based general surgeon who would ultimately focus his clinical practice on vascular and trauma surgery. Following medical school and surgery residency at the University of Colorado, Dr. Cogbill began his career at Gundersen Clinic in 1982.

He led the Department of Surgery as Chairman, served on the Board of Governors and Executive Committee of the Health System and was the Program Director of the general surgery residency for 17 years—a role he considered the most rewarding of his illustrious career. He was a proud member of the Wisconsin Surgical Traveling Club and the Wisconsin Surgical Society, ultimately serving as the Society's President.

Dr. Cogbill was also selected to serve on the American Board of Surgery (ABS) as an At Large representative and was the first to be selected from that role to be named the chairman of the ABS. Throughout his career, he championed rural surgeons and rural surgery and advocated for resource-depleted America in his quest to reduce disparities in rural care.

In addition to his skills as a surgeon and leader, Tom was beloved because of the care he showed to others. He was intentional and proactive in his mentoring and advocacy, striving to support those around him in establishing their dreams and fulfilling their goals. +

Helping kids grow

There is nothing more important to pediatric therapists at Gundersen Health System than helping every child reach their full potential. That is why your gifts to Gundersen Medical Foundation make such an impact.

Thanks to your support, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, a program of Gundersen Medical Foundation, was able to provide nearly \$20,000 to Gundersen's Pediatric Therapy Department in 2022 for the purchase of new and additional therapeutic tools, including \$3,100 for sensory equipment.

"We have seen an increase in need for sensory tools that are both therapeutic in nature and can be trialed in the therapy setting prior to recommendation

for home use," says Danielle Bosshart, a pediatric occupational therapist. "Additionally, the COVID-19 protocols that designate some items as single-use and require others to be cleaned between use can limit the number of tools available at any given time. Increasing our offerings means we can promote inclusive play more consistently for our patients."

Some of the tools that were purchased include therapeutic swings, tactile-based play opportunities and weighted tools, which can help children who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, Down Syndrome, hypotonia and toe walking develop fine motor and gross motor skills.

Along with the sensory tools, the department was able to purchase a light table that would provide therapy options for patients who have limited vision, Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), cerebral palsy or are limited by their upper extremity engagement.

This grant represents just one example of the impact donations to Gundersen Medical Foundation can make on the quality of patient care. +



Grateful pediatric patient, Lincoln (right), working with sensory tools alongside his pediatric occupational therapist, Kate Halverson.

"This equipment has helped my son be able to participate in OT. He is working on feeding and sensory difficulties and requires this equipment to help his body regulate so that he is able to participate and learn the skills that are being taught in OT."

~ Lincoln's mom
(and a grateful patient)

save the date



Sue Eber Memorial
Drive for HOPE
 Golf Tournament

Monday, June 5, 2023
LA CROSSE COUNTRY CLUB

Proceeds benefit lung cancer research at Gundersen Medical Foundation.



**STEPPIN' OUT
 IN PINK**

Gundersen Medical Foundation

Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023
RIVERSIDE PARK



Looking to sponsor an event?

Connect with Olivia Moths, special events program coordinator, at Olmoths@gundersenhealth.org or call (608) 775-6634.



Please welcome
 Carly Frerichs
 to Gundersen
 Medical
 Foundation!

As the annual support coordinator, Carly will coordinate mailings to benefactors and provide support for the employee campaign and phone-a-thons—plus a whole lot more!

We are so happy to have Carly join our team.

Carly Frerichs
 (608) 775-0012

carly.frerichs@gundersenhealth.org

Honoring excellence

In remembrance, we pay tribute to the medical staff who served Gundersen Health System during their careers and who passed away between October 1, 2022, and February 28, 2023. We recognize their individual dedication to patient care and their collective contribution to the field of medicine.

- K. Roger Gilbert, MD



GRATITUDE FOR A REWARDING CAREER

Dear Friends,

When I joined (what was then) Lutheran Hospital in 1988, I met many employees who had been with the organization for decades. At that time in my career, I couldn't imagine what that would be like. But now, as I prepare to retire in June after 35 years at Gundersen, I couldn't be prouder to count myself in such a group.

I have been fortunate to work with leaders who recognized my skillset and supported my career. After working in the Education Department for 10 years, I spent 3 years in Human Resources as an Operations Manager and the Support Staff Recruitment Manager before joining Gundersen Medical Foundation.

Here at the Foundation, I found a most fulfilling fit, serving first as Associate Director of Development-Annual Support and, currently, as Manager of Philanthropy Operations.

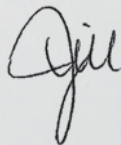
Some of my fondest Foundation memories include overseeing more than 35 phone-a-thons, leading 10 annual Heritage Donor Recognition Events, and serving as the editor for 22 Annual Reports and 44 issues of Pathfinders (my favorite project). It has been my honor to work with a fabulous team to create these publications, where we highlight the power of philanthropy.

If I had to start my career all over, I would definitely choose Gundersen. I care deeply for this organization—what it accomplishes and how it impacts people.

Now it's time to enjoy the next chapter of my life. My husband, Mike, has been retired for four and a half years, and I'm looking forward to time with him. Making memories with our two grandkids, traveling, and volunteering with local organizations are all at the top of my to-do list.

The last 35 years have flown by. Looking back, I am so grateful for a career filled with meaningful experiences, changes (lots of changes), fun, great colleagues—and best of all—supporting the power of philanthropy to benefit patients, staff and our entire community. I will transition into the next phase of life with great memories and a heart full of gratitude.

With many thanks and warmest regards,



Jill A. Blokhuis, MS, CFRE
*Gundersen Medical Foundation
Manager of Philanthropy Operations
Pathfinders Editor*



Leadership

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Vice President

Lindsey Preston, MASL, RN

Executive Assistant

Jean Hougom

Philanthropy

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Mandy Richardson, CFRE, Director

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Designated Institutional Official
Jennifer Lee, Director

Medical Research and Grants

Dr. Jennifer Kleven, Medical Director
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Nicole Aponte
Sarah Worman

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Courtney Daniels Burke
Carly Frerichs

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Mary Freybler
Jon McKenzie, CFRE
Andrew Steger, CFP®

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Katie Berkedal
Jill Blokhuis, CFRE

Fund Allocations

Ashley Zibrowski

Special Events

Olivia Moths

Children's Miracle Network Hospitals®

Sierra Lyon
Beth Noffsinger

Changing Lives Through Philanthropy



A gift to Gundersen Medical Foundation changes lives and improves the well-being of our entire community.

Your support leads to investments in medical education, research and community health initiatives. And, because of you, funding for pediatrics, mental and behavioral health, staff education, hospice care—and so much more—is possible.

As the proud stewards of your philanthropy, we offer a variety of giving pathways and recognize your gifts through three recognition Societies:

THE LEGACY SOCIETY

The Legacy Society recognizes those who create a gift bequest through a will, life insurance, property transfer or life income program (gift annuity or charitable trust). These gifts can play an important role in the estate planning process, enabling donors to make a gift in a size many may have thought impossible.

THE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Your gift today will support innovative education and research programs and foster community outreach programs that will have a lasting impact. The Heritage Society recognizes annual giving at these levels:

FRIENDS	\$1–199	PACESETTERS	\$1,500–2,499
ADVOCATES	\$200–499	TRUSTEES	\$2,500–4,999
ASSOCIATES	\$500–999	VISIONARIES	\$5,000–9,999
BENEFACTORS	\$1,000–1,499	CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE	\$10,000+

THE FOUNDERS SOCIETY

When your cumulative support reaches \$50,000 or more, you will be honored as a member of The Founders Society, and your lifetime contribution at one of the following levels will be permanently recognized.

BRONZE	\$50,000–99,999	EMERALD	\$500,000–1 MILLION
SILVER	\$100,000–249,999	RUBY	\$1 MILLION–2.5 MILLION
GOLD	\$250,000–499,999	DIAMOND	\$2.5 MILLION+

Every gift—in any size—makes an impact. We invite you to consider these ways to give:

DIRECT GIFTS

The most popular form is through cash or checks, but real estate or stocks and bonds can also be gifted directly.

TRIBUTES & MEMORIALS

Gifts to commemorate loved ones on a special occasion can be a meaningful reminder to those who care.

PLANNED/ESTATE GIVING

Gifts can be in the form of a bequest in a will or living trust. Gundersen Medical Foundation may also be a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, retirement plan or financial account.

LIFE INCOME

Life-income gifts, such as a charitable gift annuity or trust, can provide immediate tax savings and annual income.

We are deeply grateful for the generosity and vision of our benefactors. It is our honor to recognize our Society members on a display in the Legacy Hospital lobby, as well as on an electronic display in the lobby of Gundersen Medical Foundation.

If you have any questions or would like further information on these Societies or our Pathways of Giving, please contact the Foundation office at (608) 775-6600.



**GUNDERSEN
MEDICAL FOUNDATION**

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La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

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Our Mission

We improve the lives of patients and our larger community through medical education, research, outreach and the philanthropic support of Gundersen Health System.

gundersenhealth.org/foundation



**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE!**

2022
YEAR IN REVIEW

