Dedication events take center stage

Koller gift largest in Clinic history
BenchMarks - Winter 2008

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Dedication events take center stage

The October 9-10 dedication of the Laird Center for Medical Research and related events made for a momentous occasion for Marshfield Clinic and countless visitors.
With TV cameras rolling, a host of visiting dignitaries and an overflow crowd under a big white tent, the scene was set for the culmination of an event years in the making – the dedication of the Laird Center for Medical Research.

The completion of this state-of-the-art research facility is another step in “taking medicine from the passive, after-symptoms-appear, to the proactive phase,” said Karl Ulrich, M.D., M.M.M., Marshfield Clinic president and CEO. We are “a vibrant clinic,” he said, thanks to the efforts of forward-thinking leaders like Melvin R. Laird.

Giving the dedication address was Elias Zerhouni, M.D., the retiring director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a federal agency that employs more than 325,000 scientists and support staff. Laird was instrumental in founding the NIH.

“We are in a revolutionary period of medicine. Marshfield Clinic is right in line with this,” Dr. Zerhouni said. “What we needed in the 1950s to combat acute diseases we will need to combat chronic diseases today.”

Koller gift largest in Clinic history

When Frank and Betty Koller learned they had an opportunity to help Marshfield Clinic reach its goal for a fundraising campaign, they didn’t flinch.

The Kollers, of Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin, have included a charitable trust in their estate plan, which provides for a donation of $5 million for the $40 million campaign for the Laird Center for Medical Research. The donation, which received press coverage in local media as well as the Chicago Tribune, was announced by Laird himself at the Laird Center dedication dinner and reception. (See story on Page 6.)

Surprise guests pay tribute to Melvin Laird

Some of Melvin Laird’s closest friends and colleagues caught him by surprise by appearing at an October 9 dinner in Marshfield, recognizing the long-term congressman and former U.S. secretary of defense. Laird was visibly moved upon hearing their names and beamed as the following individuals, among others, came to welcome him:

• Former U.S. Rep. Robert Michel, R-Illinois, a friend for 55 years
• Greg Coleman, former president of Reader’s Digest when Laird served on the board
• Former Pentagon spokesperson Jerry Friedheim
• Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Robert Pursley, who was military assistant to Laird at the Pentagon
• Retired Army Gen. Jack Vessey, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
• Wheelock Whitney, a philanthropist who served with Laird on the boards of directors of Augusta National Golf Club and American Express Mutual Funds
• George “Spike” Beitzel, who served with Laird on the Conoco Phillips board

The evening included video tributes to Laird by former President George H.W. Bush, former Secretary of State Colin Powell and ABC news reporter Cokie Roberts, whose father, the late Rep. Hale Boggs, D-Louisiana, served in Congress with Laird.
Video tributes were played from Cokie Roberts (top), Colin Powell and George H.W. Bush.

Genetics experts urge public participation to shape future

When the first Laird Center was dedicated in 1997, the Honorable Louis Sullivan, M.D., former U.S. Department of Health and Human Services secretary, issued a challenge at a genetics ethics forum held at Marshfield Clinic. His challenge to reconvene the discussion in 10 years was answered on October 9, when he and some of the brightest minds in the field of medical research converged for a panel discussion on “Genetics in the Service of Humanity” as part of the dedication events.

With experts from the fields of science, ethics, religion, public policy and government represented in the discussion, several themes surfaced that will need to be addressed as research continues to move forward and new information and technology become available. Genetic research has provided powerful tools to understand health and wellness, but health care providers must listen to patients and consider the impact that culture, religion and science have on patient understanding, panelists said.

“We are at a transition that is exciting, scary and will change how we practice medicine,” said Howard J. Jacob, Ph.D., of the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. “Information is now available at such speed and volume,” added Norman Fost, M.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health. “Providers need to learn and to understand when to share health care information with patients and how to best present that information.”

Longstanding concerns on protecting health care information usage and personal privacy were raised in the discussion, as were calls to establish a core value of trust within the health care industry, government and the public. Panelists acknowledged the need to balance concerns of information misuse with efforts to continually move forward with genetics research in quest of the knowledge to understand the cause of disease.

Additional panel members were:
- Ellen Wright Clayton, M.D., J.D., director of the Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee
- Robert G. Kennedy, Ph.D., Department of Catholic Studies and Department of Ethics and Business Law at University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota
- Cathy McCarty, Ph.D., M.P.H., interim director, Center for Human Genetics and director of the Personalized Medicine Research Project at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation
- Justin Starren, M.D., Ph.D., FACMI, director of the Biomedical Informatics Research Center at Marshfield Clinic
- Clive N. Svendsen, Ph.D., director, National Institutes of Health-funded Stem Cell Training Program, and co-director of the University of Wisconsin Stem Cell & Regenerative Medicine Center.
Governor announces genomic research collaboration

Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle unveiled a historic collaboration with Marshfield Clinic and three other Wisconsin research institutions to advance personalized among health care. The Wisconsin Genomics Initiative is a collaborative research effort among Marshfield Clinic, the Medical College of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and UW-Milwaukee.

“This is an exciting step forward in medical research, not only in Wisconsin, but in the country as well,” said Gov. Doyle. Wisconsin is a leader in genomic research and personalized health care, and the Wisconsin Genomics Initiative will solidify the state’s national and international leadership position.

Humberto Vidaillet, M.D., Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation director, will serve as principal investigator for the Genomics Initiative. “With four institutions working together, we can make personalized medicine a reality,” he said. “It has the potential to reduce health care costs, better predict diseases and manage chronic conditions, and save lives.”

Doyle said the initiative will be supported by the federal government, the state and the four partnering institutions. The announcement was covered by statewide television and newspapers, as well as the Chicago Tribune and specialty publications such as Forbes and MarketWatch.

“**We have an incredible opportunity to become a worldwide leader in personalized health care.**”

– Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle

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Calendar

- **April 4-5, 2009**
  - "Shooting for a Cure" Pool Tournament for breast cancer research
    - Wisconsin Rapids

- **April 18, 2009**
  - Rich Seubert’s Celebrity Trap Shoot
    - Eau Claire Rod & Gun Club
    - Eau Claire

- **June 16, 2009**
  - Steven Meissner Memorial Classic: Fore the Kids
    - RiverEdge Golf Course
    - Marshfield

- **August 18, 2009**
  - Golf For Research
    - Lake Arrowhead Golf Club
    - Nekoosa

- **August 22, 2009**
  - Rally for a Cure
    - Eagle River Golf Club
    - Eagle River

- **August 31, 2009**
  - Fore a Cure
    - Wausau Country Club
    - Wausau

- **September 24, 2009**
  - Auction of Champions
    - Clearwaters Hotel & Convention Center
    - Marshfield

- **September 26, 2009**
  - Pink Heart of Wisconsin Breast Cancer Health Fair
    - Munson Bridge Winery
    - Withee
Frank and Betty Koller stepped forward in unprecedented fashion to help Marshfield Clinic reach its $40 million goal for the Laird Center for Medical Research. The Kollers, of Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin, have included a charitable trust in their estate plan to provide a donation of $5 million. While contributions continue to be accepted, their gift essentially put the campaign “over the top.”

“We are extremely grateful to Frank and Betty Koller for this exceptionally generous contribution,” said Karl Ulrich, M.D., M.M.M., Marshfield Clinic president and chief executive officer. “It represents the single largest individual financial commitment Marshfield Clinic has ever received in its long history of fund raising. Over time, contributions like this will become even more important to advance health care. What a wonderful precedent this couple has set.”

Betty noted she has been a Marshfield Clinic patient since she was 12 years old, when she saw Dermatologist Stephen Epstein, M.D., for a skin problem. Dr. Epstein, because of his interest in medical research, would go on to set the stage for what is now Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation.

Frank, a retired cranberry grower, and Betty, a retired real estate broker, are both in their 80s. Generous philanthropists, they have contributed to numerous research projects and capital campaigns at Marshfield Clinic and in their community. The Kollers have seen several Clinic physicians over the years, which led them to become what they call “friends and advocates” of the Clinic.

“I usually recommend my Clinic physicians to other people,” Betty said. “The doctors who have treated me have been excellent. I’ve always felt they were thorough, and we’ve had a very positive relationship.”

The Kollers also know Melvin Laird, for whom the Laird Center for Medical Research is named. They remember the former congressman’s strong support during the “cranberry scare” in 1959, when the government banned the sale of cranberries because of growers’ use of aminotriazole, a weed killer that was later found to be safe. Betty’s father was chairman of the board of Ocean Spray Cranberries at that time and tried to call on a number of congressional leaders in Washington, D.C.

“Mel was one of the few in Washington who would even talk to him,” Betty recalled. “One refused to meet him and actually sneaked out a back door to avoid him.”

In addition to their support of Marshfield Clinic, the Kollers have been active contributors to community causes in the Manitowish Waters and Minocqua area. These include a library, park, Veterans Monument, the local Masons and Lions Clubs, the Manitowish Waters Fire Department, and Koller Behavioral Health Services at Howard Young Medical Center. They are also strong supporters of Rawhide Boys Ranch, New London, which helps troubled boys make positive choices.

The Kollers began their cranberry-growing enterprise with humble beginnings. They moved to Manitowish Waters in 1946 because Frank had heard of a group of people starting cranberry
marshes in the Northwoods and thought it sounded like a good way to make a living.

“I hardly knew a cranberry from a grapefruit,” he said with a laugh. They spent their first winter in a cottage that was not winterized and heated only with a kerosene stove. They built their first wooden drying racks in that small cottage, leaving sawdust all over their living quarters. Conditions were tough, especially with their newborn son, Frank, and a crop that took five years to produce any meaningful results.

But they persevered, with Betty working alongside her husband in the bogs, driving a truck or tractor when necessary and helping keep the books. She later started what turned out to be a prosperous real estate business during a time when the Northwoods experienced a great deal of development because of demand for vacation properties.

“The Kollers are two of the most genuine people I have ever met,” said Reed Hall, Marshfield Clinic executive director. “I have had the pleasure of knowing them for many years, and they are an absolute delight. I’m very pleased that they have put us over the top on our fundraising campaign. The Laird Center for Medical Research will be a part of their own great legacy in central and northern Wisconsin.”
Researchers at Marshfield Clinic are learning more about the role of genetics in the disease process. Much of that knowledge is coming from the Personalized Medicine Research Project, one of the major initiatives under way at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation.

The ultimate goal of this project is to learn how to apply genetic science to human health. We know that genetic factors play a role in the development of nearly every disease. Some have identified genes that put some women at greater risk for breast cancer, and others that affect an individual’s response to the anti-clotting medication warfarin. Research continues to probe how and why these genes operate.

The concept of personalized medicine is a lifelong, individually tailored health care approach to the detection, prevention and treatment of disease based on knowledge of an individual’s precise genetic profile.

Scientist Deanna Cross, Ph.D., has been involved with the project for more than a year, under the direction of Principal Investigator Catherine McCarty, Ph.D., M.P.H. Cross’ work involves analyzing DNA samples from thousands of Marshfield Clinic patients living within a certain geographical area. Their medical histories often go back more than 20 years, and most have received care only from Marshfield Clinic, so the data are remarkably stable.

“If a gene, or a variation of a gene known as a polymorphism, has been closely associated with a disease, an individual is more likely to get that disease,” Dr. Cross said. “But there are well-defined cases with exclusions to that. So the question is, can you take that information and apply it to an entire population, or does it not stand up?”

Dr. Cross, a native of the Texas Gulf Coast, earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Texas A & M University. Her Ph.D. degree was in plant pathology, but she’s easily adapted to work involving human DNA because genetics are essentially the same across species. She has also done postgraduate work at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation on prostate cancer.

Dr. Cross said her job is to put together an assay, a type of test or survey, that uniquely identifies as many polymorphisms as possible that fit stringent criteria. From these, she’s aiming to have about 40 available for researchers to use. This will essentially translate genetic data from these patients into specific knowledge about disease that is clinically relevant and will enhance patient care. Armed with this information, physicians will be better able to:

• Diagnose genetically influenced problems
• Prescribe personal preventive measures
• Select the most effective medications that are least likely to cause adverse reactions.

Researchers already using data from the Personalized Medicine Research Project are studying Alzheimer’s Disease, cardiovascular disease, cataracts, fibromyalgia, glaucoma and osteoporosis.
Lab automation saves time on routine tests

Medical laboratories perform a vital role in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, but some of the work is relatively routine. That is why Marshfield Clinic Laboratories’ new home in the Laird Center for Medical Research is highly automated.

In the 24-hour lab, two automated lines handle most of the specimens. A third-generation robot cart shuttles specimens to other sections in the 350-employee lab.

“When 80 percent of the work that comes into the entire lab is handled on our two automated lines,” said Jenny Salzwedel, operations manager of 24 hour services. “We run between 3 and 4 million tests per year, or thousands per day.” The shorter of the two lines is devoted to hematology, which includes one of the most commonly ordered blood tests, the complete blood count. The other line, for chemistry and immunoassay tests, is 70 feet long and joins together multiple belt-driven tracks.

Specimens come to the lab from Marshfield Clinic or Saint Joseph’s Hospital via a new, improved pneumatic tube system. Specimens from other locations arrive via daily courier routes throughout Wisconsin and surrounding states. Once placed on a line, a series of electronic readers constantly check the bar codes on each sample tube. These bar codes identify all the information about the patient and the type of test being ordered. Most specimens go directly to one of two big chemistry analyzers, each capable of performing 1,440 tests per hour.

“They also perform functions that we previously had to do manually that created safety issues,” Salzwedel said. “Some of our staff developed wrist problems from repeatedly popping the caps off the tubes, but that is done automatically now. The machines also put caps back on after the testing has been completed.”

When test results fall within normal ranges, the specimens need no human contact, and many are automatically completed. When abnormal results are present, as they often are for cancer patients, the hematology line automatically creates a slide of the specimen and stains it for manual review.

The automated lines are fascinating to watch, as is SADIE. An acronym for Specimens and Aliquots Delivered Internally Everyday, SADIE is a robot transporter that collects and delivers specimens throughout the lab. This efficient and versatile machine can cover six different routes, following an ultraviolet strip embedded in the floor, and can even ride an elevator unassisted.

“She inches through tight corners, beeps to let people know she’s coming, and she will not bump into anything. She stops within inches of people or other objects,” said her caretaker, Jean Erbst, specimen processing manager.

SADIE and the automated lines were significant financial investments. “But I couldn’t even begin to calculate how much time they have saved us,” Salzwedel said. “Our physicians want to get results back quickly and accurately so they can provide the best service to their patients, and these automated devices help us accomplish that.”
TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT "HELPING OTHERS"

One of the first lessons parents teach their children is the importance of sharing. They need to share their toys with friends or share mom with a sibling. Another value has stemmed from that lesson for many families – giving. Teaching children to help others can be difficult in theory. But in practice, children often understand, better than their parents, the importance of helping others.

I understand that people are in need
I say, “help others”
I dream of being successful
I try to do my best
I hope other people who need it get help
I am caring and talented

 Twelve-year-old Zach Meissner wrote those messages for a school project. He has learned the lesson of giving from his parents, Dave and Tammy Meissner of Chili. The work he has seen his parents do in organizing an annual charity golf event has transformed his outlook on the world.

“It made a big impact on my life. I decided that I wanted to give back to the community,” he said. Now the entire Meissner family, including Zach’s siblings Mandy and Jeremy, are involved in “Fore the Kids.” During the tourney’s inaugural event three years ago, Zach set up a lemonade stand with his cousins and donated all proceeds to charity. The last two years he’s been helping with a special chipping game with his brother and sister, raising more than $2,500 this year alone.

“He can be very persuasive,” Tammy said, comparing his approach to that of a carnival Barker. Zach is low-key about his success, saying, “It makes you feel better knowing you are giving back to others who need it.” Most of the money raised during the last two years has gone to the Child Advocacy Center, a program of Marshfield Clinic with support from Saint Joseph’s Childrens Hospital and community agencies that will provide services for children and families dealing with abuse and neglect. The money also helped buy a cart for pediatric patients.

“I really can’t imagine what those families are going through,” said Zach, a sensitive boy who struggles with the loss of his uncle. He mentors classmates who are having difficulties in school, and seems to be able to identify with them in ways that adults cannot, according to Tammy.

Amy Herbst’s three young daughters receive a full explanation whenever their parents participate in activities to help someone else. Herbst, a Marshfield Clinic pediatrician, has daughters aged 5, 3 and 1. Although the two youngest are too young to absorb much of the message, she and her husband, Todd Risa, still spend time talking with the girls.

“We always make sure we explain to them what we are doing and why,” Herbst said. “If we go to a fundraiser, we explain to them why. They always want to know why. We’ll explain that there are some little girls or boys who are sick, or who aren’t as lucky or blessed as they are, and we take that as a teaching opportunity.” As the holidays approach, the girls will help their mother pick out items for toy drives or book drives.

Speaking as a pediatrician, Herbst said empathy is an important trait for all people to possess. “We know that the earlier you start to teach your kids about various concepts or skills, the more easily they will grasp them. The earlier a parent starts to teach their children about empathy and generosity, the more likely they are to adopt these traits.” Children naturally model their parent’s behaviors, she noted, so the best way to teach empathy and generosity is to demonstrate these behaviors to your children.

“We’ve also talked about involving the kids in doing some medical mission work,” she added. Herbst spent a month in Nevada, working on the Navajo Indian Reservation, and would like to return to do similar work when the girls are older. “For my family, there was a very clear message that when we leave the earth, we are expected to leave it better than when we got here. That will be an important lesson for my kids as well.”

Dave Meissner said he’s never been involved in anything that feels this good. “The most amazing thing about the golf event is how it has brought us much closer as a family. It has made me realize what a wonderful mother my children have. It has also brought out talents and values in my children that I had never seen before. So as a husband and father, there have been many blessings associated with reaching out and helping others.”
Zach Meissner, and the new pediatrics cart purchased with proceeds from the “Fore the Kids” 2008 event.
Memorial & Honor Gifts

Every day, friends of Marshfield Clinic remember and honor relatives and others by making contributions that support the Clinic’s mission of high quality health care, research and education.

Memorials honoring these individuals were received from July through September 2008.

In memory of

Gordon A. Abegglen
Gertrude Adams
Marjorie Allgood
Kenny W. Anderson
Olga Ankiam
Mary M. Arendt
Steven L. Arendt
Wilbur Arendt
Adriene Lee Baker
Clarence Ballsieper
James Baltus
Jackie Barum
Bernard Bauer
Harland A. Beier
Lois Biechler
Dennis R. Blanchard
Audrey Blum Williams
Casey L. Blume
Donald G. Bores
Clara A. Bornberg
Terrence W. Bradley
Jane Brown
Mary “Barney” C. Bruner
Joe Buberger
Lloyd H. Buck, Sr.
Victor W. Cegler
Bea Chun
Joseph F. Cicha
Donald D. Clark
Evelyn Clark
Gene Cook
Charlie Cummings
Troy D. Cwikla
Virginia M. Derfus
Cyrena M. Dietzauer
Glorianna Dubbe
Donald W. Dunn
Gertrude Durst
Ronald E. Eggebrecht
Rosemary Elias
Samuel Emil
Elmer Fink
Mary C. Frick
Robert Gehman
Patricia Gehweiler
Rich & Ila Gilbertson
Thomas Gisvold
Rosetta Glitz
Phil Grau
Mitchell J. Graves
Dr. Robert H. Greenlaw
Mrs. Eugenia L. Greenlee
Thomas F. Grunewald
Robert J. Gruny
Harold J. Gust
Glenn R. HaasL
Susan Marie HaasL Mancl
Adam R. Harniman
Clarence C. & Lorraine M. Hasenhohl
Robert Hattamer
Lila Haukeness
Richard F. Heiting
Marvin L. Hemp
David W. Herrmann
Willard HoelN
Jeanne Hoever
Ray & June Hoff
Dorothy E. Hoffman
Carole Hubing
Dr. Daniel M. Jacobson
Hilda Johnson
Thomas Joyce
Marion F. Kaiser
Father Roman F. Kaiser
Thelma L. Keding
Donald Keeley, Sr.
George Kelley
Theodore Kellinofer
Patricia Kelty
Lawrence L. Keppert
Mary A. Kern
Donald Kester
Gordon Koch
Kathryn J. Koch
James R. Kohne
LeRoy Kolenda
Geraldine Koran
Bobbie Kornig
DuWayne B. Kunding
Joyce K. LaGasse
Patricia Lemke
Michael A. Lindner
Diane Louze
Emil Lupeke
Stuart MacDonald
Karri A. Maier
Gladys Martin
Margaret M. Martin
Eugene McManus
Shirley E. McMillian
William Melchiori
Thomas L. Meyer
Joe Mikula
Nancy E. Miller
Alex Mroczenski
Carol B. Nelson
Russell M. Nelson
George H. Newman
James L. Niblett
Herbert Nikolai
Timothy J. Nikolai
Dr. Bob Nolta
Mary Oberweis
Marilyn A. Olichwier
Connie Olson
Duane A. Olson
Ellen Peterson
Tim Pfaffendorf
George J. Pfliester
Denise A. Pichler
Arthur M. Pilsner
Doris E. Ploeckelman
Chester Poplawski
Sarah Prescott Michel
Donald J. Propson
Norman Prosser
Suzanne J. Provost
Dr. Louis J. Pucek
Matthew H. Raasch
Ronald G. Rasmussen, Jr.
Gerald I. Rice
Roger Rieckman
Kathleen Rieheh
dale Riske
Anton Rosandich
Tony Rosandich
Marlene Rottler
Nancy R. Ruffalo
Bette L. Schloesser
David Schmidt
Gene Schmidt
Mildred E. Schulta
Emery Schultz
Lorraine M. Schultz
Gladys M. Serum
Nate Sherven
Leland W. Skoglund
John F. Snowbank
Mary Staton
Samantha K. Sternweiss
Joshua Stratman
Frederick B. “Fritz” Strigel
Donna J. Stroozas
Marilyn Sward
Gregory Tasse
Jeremy Hilton Tautges
Donald Theisen
William A. Theisen
Caiden Tishim
Dorian J. Tishim
Jorge Tobar
William H. Upham III
Mariel I. Ure
Margaret Vanden Heuvel
Pat Vandenbergen
Gerald Viergutz
Edward W. Vruwink, Sr.
James Waalen
Art Weber
Michael W. Weber
Oscar Weigel, Jr.
Werner Weiss
Donald H. Wendt
Georgia Wenzel
Karen J. Werner
Robert W. Weyer
Sue & Earl White
Jerald H. Whitrock
Robert H. Wibben
Marilu Wiesman
Lester Wilson
Sue & Earl White
Vern H. Wittlinger, Sr.
Charles L. Wnukowski
George W. Wnukowski
Catherine M. Wolter
Betty Wutschel
Carol Jean Young
Robert Young
Dennis R. Zank
John & Lilly Zukowski

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In honor of
Dr. Jerome C. Andres
Kim M. Balgaard
Kyle Beining
Alfred Bortolotti
Ruth Breider
Zeke Brewer
Jan Ciołkosz
Peggy Driessen
Dr. Dean L. Emanuel
Dr. Kathleen M. Finta
Diana Friske
Dr. Jerry W. Goldberg
Jerry & Nancy Grout
Marvin & Dorothy Hahn
Reed E. Hall
Maisi Lyn Harris
Alvin & Ruby Heckel
Renee M. Hertel
Clyde & Lois Holehouse
Father James J. Jackson
Doris E. Joles
Dr. Mohammad Q. Khan
Dannie &
Lorraine LaGrander
Janet Lenz
Ron Liebergen
Halinka Luangpraseut
Clara Mae Lynn
Dr. Hope S. Maki
Gertrude A. Mancl
Rachel Mayoh
Dr. Juan E. Mesa
Amy Miller
James N. Mueller
Dr. Gerald M. Mulligan
Don Nikolai
Edmund E. Peltier
Nelvin & Marilyn Peterson
John R. Phillips, J.D.
Mike Pipp
Dr. Douglas J. Reding
Jean S. Replinger
Jim & Marlene Roberts
Janet G. Ryan
Lewis & Geraldine Schmidt
Lois Smith
Judith K. Steinke
Agnes S. Strigel
Victor & Rita Wiesman
Frank & Jenne Zor

Gene and Sally Snarski of Waukegan, Illinois, attended the dedication festivities for the Laird Center for Medical Research with their son, Andy. Sally was recognized during the dedication as the only surviving daughter of Clinic co-founder Walter G. Sexton, M.D.

Gene and Sally made a substantial contribution toward the capital campaign in remembrance of her father, and in honor of their eight children. Gene retired as an attorney, having graduated from Notre Dame and Northwestern University Law School. Sally worked at Abbot Labs in North Chicago before meeting Gene and starting their family. They have a summer home in Minocqua.

The Snarskis are permanently honored on the Laird Legacy display in the Erdman Lobby of the Laird Center for Medical Research.
Marshfield Clinic serves as home to Laird archives

When people reflect on Marshfield Clinic’s strengths, a number of descriptions might surface: outstanding health care, exemplary research, first-rate education and state-of-the-art facilities to list just a few. But how many are aware that the Clinic is also home to an extensive collection of awards and artifacts from former congressman, U.S. Secretary of Defense and Counselor to the President, Melvin R. Laird?

Laird, a health care advocate since his days in the Wisconsin State Senate, indicated that his history with Marshfield Clinic dates back to his childhood, so it is only appropriate that his special collection be housed at the Clinic.

“I started going to Marshfield Clinic 86 years ago, and I’m the only person around town who knows all six of the founders and been in all of their homes,” Laird recounted. “I’ve really been blessed with great friends at the Clinic. There are so many special people there – it’s a long, long history.”

The Clinic received the collection as part of the Melvin R. Laird Center dedication in 1997 at the urging of Clinic administration and Robert Froehlke, former Secretary of the Army and manager of Laird’s congressional campaigns. The archives include numerous photos, commemorative stamps, gifts from foreign dignitaries, and mementoes from Laird’s career in the House and Department of Defense. While the complete archives are closed to the public, various items are on display on the first floor of the Laird Center.

“The Ford Center at the University of Michigan has asked for them, too, because of my close association with (former U.S. President) Jerry Ford, and they have made room for them if the situation arises,” Laird said.

According to Ann Waisbrot, Laird collection specialist, “It’s a huge honor because this is the only building that Melvin Laird ever lent his name to, and Marshfield is where he grew up. The items in the Laird collection are important pieces of our American heritage, as well as important to the Clinic.”

Waisbrot said it is important for people to have a sense of who this person is and what he did as a legislator. “Nothing we ever do is an isolated thing, and you need to have legislators like Mel Laird passing the laws for us to do the work that we need to do. I don’t know that people always make that connection in their mind.”

Laird-related items arrive throughout the year. “We give special care to preserving them, using a climate-controlled building, acid-free archival materials and UV glass on both the frames and the windows,” Waisbrot added. All of the Laird items are also catalogued, stored on a database and printed on hard copy.

“I had the privilege of going through all of those pictures with Mr. Laird at one time,” Waisbrot said. “I think it’s very important because 10 years from now if we need those pictures for a specific occasion or as a resource for historic research, this information will be well-documented. We’re working hard to make sure that is the case.”

In addition to supporting the preservation of the Laird Collection, the George E. Magnin Medical Library also coordinates the Clinic’s history archives. That’s another collection of countless treasures.

“Managing such an extraordinary collection was something I never imagined I’d be doing in my library career,” said Alana Ziaya, Medical Library manager. “It’s been exciting and challenging to discover how Marshfield Clinic’s history has been intertwined with the life of Melvin Laird.

“My respect for Mr. Laird and his dedication to improving health care has only deepened over time, and I consider it a true honor that such a legacy has been entrusted to my care,” she added.
When Mary Alice Kettrick, Ph.D., started working in Marshfield Laboratories in 1973, there were no computers. All reports were hand written and taken daily, at 3 p.m., to medical units for placement on patient charts.

Dr. Kettrick has gone from managing a single department – Microbiology – to directing the reference side of the laboratory with its 350 full-time-equivalent employees. It’s a huge operation that she calls one of Marshfield Clinic’s best-kept secrets.

“Our lab people have a strong desire to help provide the best health care to people who need it, but they take satisfaction from helping behind the scenes,” she said. “They work directly or indirectly with physicians, providing clinical information for them to use in developing treatment plans for their patients.”

The lab is now a technological marvel, with systems in place that automatically report normal test results directly to physicians, allowing technologists to focus on results outside of normal ranges. Built-in safeguards eliminate identification errors, and a robot picks up and delivers specimens.

A Pennsylvania native, Dr. Kettrick originally moved to Marshfield after her fiancé, Jim Marx, Ph.D., was hired as a researcher by Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation. Together, they have raised three sons. Her interests outside the lab include three pets, playing piano, quilting and gardening.

“I try not to walk past my piano without stopping and playing at least one piece, and one piece can lead to another,” she said. Of her gardening, she said, “It is therapeutic to pull weeds after a long day in the lab. I would recommend it to anyone.”

Over the years she and her husband have contributed to Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation at various levels and times. “One thing I have learned from the Lab is that if we all work together, we can accomplish great things,” she said. “The same philosophy holds true for donating too; if we all contribute a little or more depending on our means, great things can be accomplished.”
The 2008 Auction of Champions, benefiting Marshfield Clinic’s National Farm Medicine Center, was another success. Despite poor economic news on the national scope, Auction supporters were eager to contribute. About $190,000 was generated for the National Farm Medicine Center at the annual black-tie event at Clearwaters Hotel and Convention Center in Marshfield, Wisconsin.

This year’s theme, “Shades of Elegance,” captivated guests. They were treated to “red hot raffles” in the Red Room, featuring a ruby necklace and a Nintendo Wii as the top prizes. Guests enjoyed a lavish cheese display, sponsored by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, in the Gold Room. The Green Room offered a breath of fresh air between each of the auction rooms, complete with cascading vines and a peaceful fountain. In the Blue Room, while bids were heating up in the live auction, guests remained cool and comfortable next to an ice sculpture.

The live auction generated nearly $114,000, a $6,000 increase over last year. The top packages of the evening were a trip to New York City, hosted by Super Bowl Champion and Marshfield native Rich Seubert, and a beautiful wooden-gear grandfather clock, handcrafted by Dan Poehnelt.

“All of the auction packages were distinctive,” said Jill Kurszewski, Auction of Champions event coordinator. “The chance to throw out a pitch at a Brewers game or play a round of golf with (Wisconsin Basketball) Coach Bo Ryan – where else can you get those opportunities?”

The evening’s finale provided one guest, Joellen Heiman of Weber’s Farm Store and Nasonville Dairy, the opportunity to play “Deal or No Deal.” The audience cheered as she bargained with a banker, trying her luck for the top prize of $10,000. Heiman took home $5,000.

Featured speakers, Josh and Sheri Meissner of Norm-E-Lane Farms in Chili, reinforced the importance of the National Farm Medicine Center by sharing their personal story. Josh injured his hand in a farming accident several years ago. They support the National Farm Medicine Center because, with farming such a family business, they know their children will benefit from continued research into farm safety.

Auction supporters were generous, helping to bring together incredible packages. The Auction is possible because of the support of area businesses and a committee of 50 community members. Many volunteers, and Marshfield Clinic’s Development Department and National Farm Medicine Center staffs, contribute to the auction’s success.

With the leadership of 2007-09 Auction Chairman Al Nystrom, president of M&I Bank, the Auction of Champions will continue to be Marshfield’s premier event. Next year’s auction is set for Thursday, September 24, 2009.

* Check out photos from this year’s event online at marshfieldclinic.org/auction.
I make annual charitable gifts. What impact does the unstable stock market have on my giving plans?

This is difficult to answer without more detail about your circumstances. Several factors could impact not only your ability to make charitable gifts in an economic downturn, but also the nature of the assets that are best used to make charitable gifts.

Equities that have declined in value below your cost basis may not be as attractive to donate to charity. Rather, you could sell the stock and gift the proceeds to charity to be able to claim the loss on your tax return. If equities have appreciated in value, you could donate low cost basis stock to a charitable organization and avoid paying the capital gains tax you would incur if you sold the stock. You will be able to claim the full value as a charitable contribution.

If you are over age 70½ and have not yet taken your required minimum distribution for 2008 from your IRA, you can direct the IRA custodian to send your IRA donation directly to the charitable organizations you typically support. You will avoid having to report the income from the IRA distribution on your federal return, although you will not be able to claim the charitable contribution.

Many charitable organizations offer gift annuities that will not only provide you with a tax deduction, but also an income stream for your lifetime.

Consult with your tax and estate planning professionals to determine the most appropriate use for charitable components in your financial and estate plan.

For additional information on making a planned gift to Marshfield Clinic, please contact Karen Piel, J.D., C.P.A., planned giving officer, at 1-800-858-5220 or e-mail piel.karen@marshfieldclinic.org.
Make a gift from your IRA... and avoid taxes, too.

You can support the mission of Marshfield Clinic by making a gift from your IRA.
Contact your tax or financial advisor, or call Marshfield Clinic Development at 1-800-858-5220 for more information.

How it works:
• You must be at least age 70½
• The gift must go directly to Marshfield Clinic
• The gift must be made in 2008 or 2009
• The gift cannot exceed $100,000 annually
• Greatest benefit to those who cannot itemize and those with high income

Floyd and Pat Hamus
Marshfield

“In 2007, we made a gift to the Laird Center for Medical Research from Floyd’s IRA. It was a win-win for us, since we did not have to report the distribution as income, and now we have a beautiful permanent plaque on the Laird Legacy Display.”

Russell F. Lewis, M.D.
Emeritus physician

“I already planned to make a gift to Marshfield Clinic in my estate, but this new law allowed me to give my IRA account to Marshfield Clinic now. I encourage others to make a gift through their IRA or other assets.”