

SPOTLIGHT

Eric & Mary Isbister

(Members since 2008 and 2010 respectively)



Mary & Eric Isbister on a Montana cattle ranch

When the late actress and comedian Lucille Ball said, “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it...,” she didn’t know the Isbisters, but they live the witticism.

Eric and Mary are active business and civic leaders and that rare couple who work together and play together. As Chief Executive Officer and President respectively of GenMet, a full-service metal fabricator headquartered in Mequon, they serve more than 100 customers and employ nearly 60 people. (FYI, they are trying to hire as many new people as they can).

Eric is the former head coach for the Cedarburg MATDOGS, a youth wrestling club. He is on the boards of Beyond Vision, Gear Box Express and the Milwaukee School of Engineering Corporation. He serves on the advisory boards of the Waukesha

County Technical College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Manufacturing Institute and the National Association of Manufacturers. Local high school STEM advisory boards have also been enriched by Eric's membership. He is a former member of the board of the Milwaukee Community Sailing Center and served on the RCM board as well.



The Isbisters' sailboat the Skelday

Eric is one of founders of the RCM Scholarship Committee and served as its chair when the Committee was developing its goals and objectives. He also is a member of RCM's World Community Service Committee.

In addition to his service on multiple boards, Eric has also been part of the Wisconsin Project Lead The Way leadership team.

Mary is equally engaged having served as chair of the Wisconsin Council for Workforce Investment, Vice Chair of the US Manufacturing Council, the NIST MEP Advisory Board, MATC District Board, Chair of the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Chair of the MMAC's Council of Small Business Executive, and Co-Chair of the M-7 Next Generation Manufacturing Council. Mary has won the Manufacturing Institute's STEP Award, the MMAC Council of Small Business Executive's P. Michael Mahoney Award and was named a Woman of Influence by the [Milwaukee Business Journal](#).

Each year, the Isbisters host MPS students to tour GenMet on Manufacturing Day. Their mission is to show students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors modern

manufacturing with the goal of pointing out challenging career paths. They have had more than 2,700 MPS students take advantage of this showcase and on October 5th hosted four MPS schools attending this year's Manufacturing Day program.

Even some of their vacations are devoted to service. Under the aegis of RCM, they have traveled to Guatemala twice bringing water to homes, and to Bangladesh. In Bangladesh they were part of the Alliance for Smiles effort and helped with more than 75 surgeries to correct clef lip and pallets.

But they do make time for real play, too. Whenever they can, you'll find them aboard Skelday, a 41-foot Tartan Sloop, sailing Lake Michigan for pleasure and competitive, but good natured, racing.

Eric and Mary live at the edge of Cedarburg in a beautifully restored farm house raising chickens (too many, says Eric), a mountain of vegetables, tending two horses and enjoying their three English Setters.

Eric has three grown daughters and four grandchildren. He and Mary also have a son, Duncan, who recently graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Engineering.

The three of them just returned from a weeklong vacation. Their vacation was spent herding cattle on horseback. This City Slicker holiday was a lifelong wish of Mary's and her "boys" gifted the trip to her last Christmas. Obviously, their idea of rest is busy!

Eric is really engaged in Rotary. "Rotary is a conduit informing members of ways to do good things. This club is doing amazing things on a giant scale. Most clubs just give a bench in a park; we build the parks. Our fingers are well spread in the neighborhood."

Mary echoes that sentiment, "Rotary is a fellowship that brings members of the community together who have a desire to serve. RCM embodies the concept of Service Above Self through philanthropic and humanitarian work. Rotary means you have brothers and sisters who share the same commitment around the world." Eric and Mary Isbister are busy people who get things done!



Editor's Note:

Next week this column will feature Christy Brown, Chief Executive Officer, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast. Rotary Spotlight is written by RCM Board Member (and its Sergeant at Arms) Barbara Velez.