

Mary McCormick

Executive Director, Rotary Club of Milwaukee

(Member since 2008)



Mary, her grandson Eddie, and daughter Colleen (right) on the Rogue River

When Mary McCormick accepted the position to be the Rotary Club of Milwaukee (RCM) Executive Director she thought it would be a fun experience for a few years. Now nearly 20 years later, the Rotary Club of Milwaukee is considered one of the best managed large clubs in the country generally because of Mary's leadership.

RCM's leadership is recognized because of the membership's commitment to Milwaukee and because of Mary's tireless efforts to place RCM at the forefront of the city's decision making, whether public or private. In 2001 when Mary was hired, Julie Pedretti was President. Julie thought it important for the Club to consider supporting a signature project that would help transform the city and benefit to all its residents. Membership agreed

wholeheartedly with Julie's vision and the Rotary Club of Milwaukee's Amphitheater at Discovery World at Pier Wisconsin was chosen as the lead project for this initiative. The Amphitheater is an integral part of the cityscape and is used regularly, including the venue for the RCM Maritime Committee-sponsored LIVE @ The Lakefront concert series that just completed its 12th season.

While the Rotary Club of Milwaukee is member-driven, many of our great ideas would not come to fruition without Mary's attention. RCM has accomplished much under Mary's watch. Thus far 23 students have earned degrees with the assistance of a scholarship from RCM. The Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum at the Urban Ecology Center was completed. Brown Street Academy's playground was upgraded. Support of Alice's Garden helps this urban oasis thrive, and with the late John Walker's energy Johnson's Park saw new birth.

Mary was born and raised in Connecticut and has three brothers still living near their hometown. She attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., earning her undergraduate degree in economics. She holds a master's degree in Finance and Accounting with an emphasis on Transportation Management from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Before attending graduate school, Mary worked for the D.C. city government when their Metro system was being developed. That experience gave her strong roots in public transportation. In 1978 when she was a graduate student she reconnected with, Tim Hawks, and the couple was married in 1980. They moved to Milwaukee as Tim, a labor lawyer, accepted a position with a local law firm and Mary was hired by First Wisconsin Bank. First Wisconsin valued Mary's leadership skills and after her first child was born Mary became the first part-time officer in the bank's history. (Tim now has his own law firm

Hawks & Quindel known for their labor law expertise, the firm also handles a myriad of other legal matters.)

Mary and Tim have four children. Daughter Colleen is a Wildlife Biologist for the Bureau of Land Management in Coos Bay, OR. Laura is a physician who is earning a master's degree in public health from Harvard. ([The Journal of the American Medical Association \[JAMA\]](#) recently published [her study centering on sexual assault](#) and a woman's first sexual encounter). Son Tyler lives with his physician wife in New York City and is finishing his degree in applied mathematics. Youngest child Charlie is the family's vagabond and an aspiring baker. He and two friends recently finished The Mongol Rally, a 10,000-mile trip across Europe and Asia in a "modest" car. Mary and Tim have one grandson and Tyler and his wife are expecting their first child in December.

As RCM's executive director Mary spends a great deal of time networking in the community and is committed to her own interests as well. She currently serves as chair of the board of SaintA, a Milwaukee-based organization with the mission to facilitate equity learning, healing and wellness by restoring the connections that help children and families thrive. SaintA is a leader in trauma informed care and started Capital West Charter School, one of the first trauma sensitive schools in our community.

Since its beginning nearly 15 years ago, Mary has served on the board of directors of Milwaukee Women, Inc., dedicated to changing the face of leadership and the upper echelon of organizations.

She is a member of Tempo and Professional Dimensions.

With less free time than she deserves, Mary enjoys walking, hiking, reading, listening to music and is increasingly enjoying going to the movies. She and Tim recently enjoyed whitewater rafting on the Rogue River in southwest Oregon.

When Mary started working for RCM, there was a feeling service clubs like ours were about to become history. It seemed clubs centered around building friendships and making a difference in the community were fading away. However, because RCM is committed to professionalism and continuous improvement it remains healthy and membership is stable. Mary attributes RCM's success in part to our amazing Marketing and Communications Committee. *"They help to remind the community that RCM is a relevant place where people come together to learn and that this is a group of civic minded people who care about our community."*

Mary says, *"I absolutely love the people of Rotary and the deepening connection I feel to the community. I especially appreciate the opportunity to be with people who represent diverse points of view. In this time when we tend to talk and interact with people who think like us, Rotary is a group of people who share a common love of community and a desire to make the world a better place but approach those interests and goals from different points of view."*



Editor's Note: We feature the popular Rotary People of Action series bi-monthly. The October 18th edition will profile David Baum. Rotary People of Action is written by RCM Board Member (and its Sargent at Arms) Barbara Velez.