



The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Spring 2015



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With another winter basically behind us, I hope that everyone has been able to enjoy at least a few of the warmer days by now.

Wisconsin has seen many changes in our 72 Coroner and Medical Examiner offices with the coming of 2015. Some counties have seen a new constitutional office holder and others have changed from an elected Coroner to an appointed Medical Examiner structure. Congratulations to all of the new leadership regardless of the individual county office structure. The changes in leadership in many counties are sure to change the face of our association.

For those who have greater death investigation experience, this is a perfect time to reach out to the counties around you that have had a change in leadership. Be a good partner, share your knowledge and experience while at the same time opening the lines of communication. Building these relationships and having access to neighboring resources can help not only your individual office, but it will also strengthen our profession statewide. This is also an opportunity to make new leaders aware of the WCMEA in general, membership benefits, training opportunities, and the legislative agenda.

The WCMEA Spring Conference is literally just days away, April 20th through the 22nd in Fond du Lac. The WCMEA Board of Directors meeting will be held on the 19th of April. See the WCMEA website for the conference location and brochure. This conference offers many different topics by great speakers, and promises to be an excellent training opportunity.

As a quick update to our legislative effort, we have had multiple meetings in Madison over the last couple months. We've met with the sponsors, Senator Van H. Wanggard (R) Racine, and Assemblyman Todd Novak (R) Dodgeville, as well as the drafters from the LRB. We also met with Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA), and some representatives from the various law enforcement associations. The latter was a meeting to re-hash the change for the constitutional officer (Coroner) requirement. It appears that the WCA will basically be satisfied if that training requirement is removed for the constitutional office holder.

This week, on the 7th, we met with the LRB to review the changes to the bill that were put forward last year, to make sure that the LRB had included all of the changes. The language requiring the elected Coroner (constitutional office holder) was removed. Other minor language adjustments were made to alleviate concerns from the Sheriff's Associations having to do with notification of the C/ME. It is still in the bill that we as the C/ME must immediately be notified, but we added language that requires immediate notification of law enforcement as well. There was an interpretation by a few in the LE community that the changes to 979 meant that we were solely responsible for the investigation of a death. We added language that makes it clear that C/ME are responsible for the investigation of the cause and manner of death. It's these small things, generally when folks don't read the bill, but just the summary, that make things difficult at times.

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President's Message Continued

We hope that we will have a clean bill back by early in the week of April 12th. I plan to have the copies of the final bill at the WCMEA Conference if we have the bill back as scheduled. I will also post the bill on the website so that any member can view it. As has been said all along, this bill is not perfect, it does; however, go a long way toward providing training requirements, funding for that training, and amending antiquated language in 979. I am guardedly optimistic about our chances to have this bill move forward in this session. We will have an update from the lobbyist during the conference and I will make sure that something is put together on the website for the members that are unable to attend the conference.

I am making another plea for updated email addresses for existing members as well as new members. With the significant amount of change that took place in January, many emails are being returned. If you are aware of changes in staffing for your office, or the change of leadership in a nearby office, please help us keep the list current.

As always, if there is something that your WCMEA Board can help with, or if you see an opportunity for improvement, please reach out to me personally, or any WCMEA Board member! The association is only as strong as the membership.

Have a safe summer, and I hope to see you all at the April Conference.

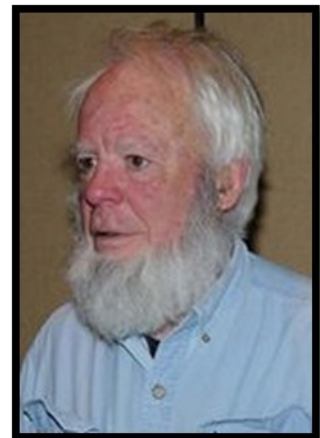
Barry Irmen, WCMEA President

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Beloved Forensic Pathologist Dies

Dr. Robert Huntington III died at the age of 77 on Sunday, February 22, 2015 at his home. To say there were heavy hearts throughout the state after learning the news of his death, would be a gross understatement. Whether it was through email, social media, or water cooler conversations, everyone had a "Dr. Huntington" story to share.

Huntington had a personality and sense of humor that was larger than life and he won over the hearts of everyone he met. He was a brilliant pathologist with a style all his own. . . a man who was respected and will be missed by all.



For those who have not had the opportunity to read the obituary for Dr. Huntington, please follow the link provided.

http://www.hooversonfuneralhomes.com/fh/obituaries/obituary.cfm?o_id=2988187&fh_id=11440

New Coroner Ready to Help County Residents

With a background in emergency services, Dara Hamm said she is looking forward to the opportunity to help people as Wood County's new coroner.



Hamm, 32, grew up in Wisconsin Rapids and started volunteering for the Wood County Sheriff's Rescue when she was in high school.

"I got to experience a wide variety of emergency services, law enforcement and overall response situations," Hamm said. "I think that's when my interest started in the coroner's position."

In high school, Hamm had an interest in science, the medical profession and the health field. When she got to college, she studied chemistry, biology and criminal justice before she decided to become a surgical technician, emergency technician and first responder.

Hamm worked for Aspirus and currently works for Marshfield Clinic. She continues to volunteer for the Sheriff's Rescue, having only left long enough to go to school.

"That County Sheriff's Rescue has been a passion of mine," Hamm said.

Hamm always has conducted herself in a professional manner as a member of the Sheriff's Rescue, Wood County Sheriff Thomas Reichert said.

"Here at the Sheriff's Department, we are looking forward to working with Miss Hamm," Reichert said. "We believe she's going to be an outstanding coroner."

Four years ago, Hamm ran for coroner against Garry Kronstedt. She lost the election, but it was then her interest in the position really developed. When Kronstedt, who was the Wood County coroner for 21 years, decided to retire, Hamm decided it was a chance to go for the position. Hamm said she has met with Kronstedt several times since she was elected in November. He made suggestions for her deputy coroners.

"(Kronstedt) has provided me with a lot of information on where I need to go to get started with things," Hamm said. "He definitely has a broad knowledge base and much experience."

Hamm has named two of Kronstedt's deputy coroners, Charlie Evans and Sue Anderson, as her deputies in the northern part of the county. She also has named Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department member Jason Jolling as a deputy in the southern part of the county. She said she plans to name one more deputy coroner.

Coroners and medical examiners in surrounding counties, as well as funeral home staff, also have helped Hamm get started, she said.

Like Kronstedt, Hamm said she believes the coroner's job isn't just to take care of the deceased but also to help the living they leave behind.

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New Coroner Continued

"I want to help the family; that's important to me," Hamm said.

Hamm plans to make some changes to the Wood County Coroner's Office, including actually having an office. Kronstedt worked out of his home, but Hamm wants an office where she can keep files secured, have regular office hours and talk to county residents. She also wants to centralize the coroner's records in a computer system.

Hamm will continue to work as a surgical technician, a position that helps doctors before and during surgery, and volunteer for the Sheriff's Rescue. The married mother of a 2-year-old daughter also is pregnant with her second child.

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Al Klimek, Medical Examiner for Brown, Oconto and Door Counties, Retires

December 30, 2014 marked the final day as Medical Examiner for Al Klimek. He officially retired after 27 years of service for the Brown County Medical Examiner's Office. His retirement came just days after Klimek retired from the Green Bay Fire Department.



It was March of 1987 when Klimek first began his career in medicolegal death investigation. He had been recruited by then Coroner, Genie Williams, who felt his Paramedic background made Klimek the perfect fit. He began as a deputy coroner, and as the saying goes "the rest is history."

Brown County transitioned from a coroner system to medical examiner system in 1991, and Klimek worked his way up the ranks until 2002 when he took the position of Chief Medical Examiner.

Door County had contracted with Brown County since the early 1990s, and Klimek had continued to provide medical examiner services throughout his tenure. In 2007, Oconto County transitioned from a coroner system to a medical examiner system and began contracting services from Brown County as well.

The Brown County Medical Examiner's Office had been tumultuous in the mid-1990s and early 2000s with high turnover and little stability. When Klimek became Medical Examiner, he and his staff worked as team. Together Klimek and his team recovered and stabilized services to the counties they serve. Klimek brought forth organization, professionalism, and leadership....Something he views as his greatest accomplishment as Chief Medical Examiner.

In addition to his admirable service on the fire department and as Medical Examiner, Klimek has been a fixture and incredible asset to the Wisconsin Coroner's and Medical Examiner's Association.

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Al Klimek *Continued*

March 2015 will mark his 28th year as a dedicated WCMEA member. He first joined the WCMEA Board of Directors in 2001 when he was elected to fill the remaining term of a vacated trustee position. Since that time, Klimek has held every officer position with the exception of Secretary and Treasurer. When asked about a favorite position, Klimek stated “undoubtedly....my four terms as President. Although it was very time consuming and often frustrating, the rewards of assisting others made it very much worthwhile.”

With so much success over the years, what are the future plans of the retiree? Klimek stated “They say all good things must come to an end but for me, I want to *gradually* ride off into the sunset. Retirement has offered me a new opportunity to promote something that has been a passion of mine for years....that of organ and tissue donation. It is my “hope and dream” to educate and motivate the Coroners and Medical Examiners of the State of Wisconsin to not only support donation, but to take it upon themselves to refer each and every potential donor that is out there....I would also like to be retained as a Deputy Medical Examiner....Once death investigation is in your blood, it is hard to simply walk away”.

On behalf of the WCMEA, I would like to extend my congratulations to Al Klimek on his retirement. He has been a cherished friend and mentor to many, and I wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

RTI Welcomes a Familiar Face

Typically, after someone retires, he or she takes on a new hobby, moves to the state of Florida for sunshine and relaxation or gets buried in a never-ending project. That is not the case for Al Klimek, who decided to join RTI Donor Services (RTI DS) Midwest Division as a Development Specialist after retiring from the local fire department and his title as Chief Medical Examiner for Brown, Door and Oconto counties.



Since starting his new role at RTI DS on January 5, Al has been working from the Green Bay (Madison) office and will be responsible for collaborating and implementing strategies that support coroners and medical examiners in providing donation options for all families, serving as a tissue donation liaison with partnered organizations, presenting educational seminars and special programs for coroners and medical examiners, and assisting coroners and medical examiners measure their outcomes and success in reaching their goals.

But Al is no stranger to RTI DS. In fact, Al's three counties were contracted with RTI DS since 2008 and were all strong donation advocates in working with families and asking donation questions on scene. Through his connection with RTI DS, Al worked closely with Brenda Knighton, program director for RTI DS Midwest Division, who recognized his passion for donation and offered him the opportunity to join RTI DS.

“We are excited to have Al, who brings the coroner and medical examiner expertise to our growing team,” Brenda said. “We have already received great feedback on how Al's professional background enhances the efforts of our division.”

Combining his professional history and personal passion for donation, Al has already and will continue to be a great addition to the RTI DS Midwest Division.

Submitted by Brenda Knighton, Program Director for RTI Donor Services

Jefferson County Names First Medical Examiner

The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors approved the appointment of Nichol Wayd as Jefferson County's first Medical Examiner. Wayd began her new position on January 5, 2015 when the office transitioned from a coroner to medical examiner office.



Nichol Wayd, an only child, grew up in the suburbs of Scranton, Pennsylvania where she developed a passion for forensic science. She moved around the east coast after graduating from high school, and earned her undergraduate degrees in Biotechnology, Crime Scene Investigation and Investigative Forensics with special interests in DNA and Anthropology. Wayd took her first position in medicolegal death investigation (MDI) just over five years ago in Roanoke, Virginia for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. She relocated to Wisconsin, and took an MDI position for the Rock County Coroner's Office followed by the Waukesha County Medical Examiner's Office.

Aside from her strong educational and investigative background, Wayd is a natural leader and the position of medical examiner seemed a perfect fit. She looks forward to making the Jefferson County Medical Examiner's Office a respectable, dependable office in the eyes of the public and other cooperative agencies. A major goal in accomplishing her vision includes maintaining a knowledgeable staff and training them in accordance to the standards set forth by the ABMDI. When asked about the challenges ahead, Wayd stated her "biggest challenge seems to be changing the current policies and procedures of the office in accordance to the guidelines of the ABMDI. Change is difficult on all parties involved so it will take open communication and patience."

Though 2015 has brought forth a great deal of change, Nichol Wayd maintains a great balance between work and pleasure. She resides in Dodge County and enjoys spending time with her one-year old son and family. Hobbies include playing drums, and playing disc golf as a registered amateur player.

On behalf of the WCMEA, I send congratulations to Nichol Wayd on her new position!

Training Opportunities

Spring WCMEA Conference
Holiday Inn, Fond du Lac
April 20-22, 2015

Annual WAHI Training Seminar
April 25- May 1, 2015
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells
Www.wi-homicide.com

Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course
April 20-April 24, 2015 at St. Louis, Missouri
www.medschool.slu.edu/mlidi

Free Online Forensic Training
National Institute of Justice
www.nij.gov/training

Waukesha County Establishes Intergovernmental Agreements

As of January 2015, Waukesha County Medical Examiner, Dr. Lynda Biedrzycki, will also serve as Medical Examiner for Walworth and Washington Counties.

Last spring, Walworth County board members voted to eliminate the position of county coroner. Following the death of John Griebel, Governor Walker had appointed Ronald Person as coroner to serve out the remainder of Griebel's term.

At the October 2014 meeting, Walworth County board members voted to approve an agreement with Waukesha County to provide medical examiner services. Under the agreement, Waukesha County will provide services for a base fee for 2015 and 2016. After the second year of the agreement, the cost will be adjusted to reflect actual costs.



Waukesha County had been providing forensic autopsy services for Washington County for the past seven years. In December 2014, The Washington County Board approved an expansive contract allowing Dr. Biedrzycki to also serve as Medical Examiner. Under the agreement, Waukesha County will be provided a base fee for 2015 with a 2.5 % escalator clause over the next four years. The current staff for the Washington County Medical Examiner's Office will remain on board to perform the day-to-day operations; however, will be supported and trained by Biedrzycki and her associate, both forensic pathologists.

With the established agreements, Waukesha County will be able to add a third forensic pathologist to its staff.

Interesting Deaths in Wisconsin.....

- In **Racine County**- A 45-year old man was killed in a hit-and-run crash. The man was found lying in the roadway and was taken to a local hospital where he later died from his injuries. A 31-year old man has since been arrested and charged with homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle.
- In **Rock County**- A 23-year old man died at a local hospital following a shooting two days prior. A Beloit officer was in the area of Porter Avenue and Randall Street at approximately 1400 hours when he heard six shots fired. When the officer came to the intersection he found three wounded subjects in the roadway and an abandoned vehicle. There were multiple bullet casings and articles of clothing strewn along Porter Avenue. The three wounded were taken to local hospitals. The 23-year man old died from his injuries, a 17-year old male remains in the hospital, and the 20-year old man was treated and released. Though no arrests have been made, police suspect only one shooter.
- In **Milwaukee County**- A 21-year old man fell more than 18 feet from a second-floor staircase at the Bay-shore Town Center. He was transported to Froedtert Hospital where he later died. Witnesses reported that the man had been drinking beer and possibly four Long Island ice teas during a party. The man was in the rotunda area at the mall when he tried to slide down the top rail of a banister and accidentally fell.
- In **Brown County**- A 34-year old man died after crashing his pickup truck into a house in Green Bay. Police reported that the crash happened about 0100 hours and two people in a lower unit of the duplex were forced to leave and were being assisted by the Red Cross.

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Patrice Hall & Jennifer Schroeter
Kenosha ME's Office
8600 Sheridan Road
Kenosha, WI 53143
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Interesting Deaths Continued

- In **Barron County**- A 60-year old woman was killed by her husband and in a farm accident. The sheriff's department stated that the woman was run over by a skid steer loader at a farm near Dallas. The woman slipped on some ice as she approached the machine and her husband did not see her on the ground. First responders were not able to revive the woman and she was pronounced at the scene.
- In **Clark County**- A 56-year old man was killed in a plane crash. The plane was carrying three men. The plane was flying to Alaska from Indiana when icing on the wings forced an emergency landing. The crash happened near a field in the Town of Hoard. The pilot's father was killed in the crash. The 27-year old pilot was taken to a Marshfield hospital and was in stable condition. The 41-year old passenger was treated and released.
- In **Winnebago County**- A 40-year old man and his 8-yr old son died after their vehicle broke through the ice on Lake Winnebago. The sheriff's department reported that an ATV rider called in early Sunday morning. The caller reported seeing a Jeep go through the ice about two miles east of a boat landing, but did not see anyone exit the vehicle. Rescue and dive teams were called to an area about 2.5 miles from shore. The teams searched and were able to pull two occupants from the vehicle. Both the man and his son were transported to the hospital. The man was transported to Aurora Medical Center where he died. The young boy was taken to Mercy Medical Center where he died hours later.
- In **Waukesha County**- A 65-year old gas station clerk was fatally shot during a robbery. The wounded clerk called Waukesha Police, but was unable to speak due to his injuries. When officers arrived at the gas station, they found the man seriously wounded and began resuscitative efforts until paramedics arrived. The man was transported to an area hospital where he died. Surveillance video revealed two masked men coming into the convenience store together, one of them armed with a handgun. The video showed the clerk confronting the armed man who then shot him.