



# The Examiner

<http://www.wcmea.com>

Summer 2023

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Colleagues,

We have lived the curse of extraordinary times for several years now. The most intense stress of the COVID pandemic is in our past, but the repercussions are still felt today as we struggle to regain order and function. Although we laid foundational structure for the WCMEA at last year's October conference, the upheaval of a one-conference year off season has resulted in problems with our usual 12 month election process.

We recognize that plans were made to hold overlapping elections for select offices in odd and even years to maintain continuity of knowledge within the Board of Directors. But, we must also recognize that we did not have sufficient time between the annual conferences to meet the requirements of the formal election process. We simply ended up BEHIND the process almost as soon as we started.

As such, we have not met the time restrictions outlined by the WCMEA bylaws for elections this year. On odd years, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, the Secretary and the Sergeant at Arms are up for re-election, serving for two years. The individuals currently serving in this capacity have served less than 9 months. We acknowledge that these individuals have not had the time to acclimate or contribute in a way that you elected them to, and propose to suspend the 2023 election to allow them two years of service (in addition to the time already served) until the next routine election.

We understand and recognize that this is not the usual order of things. But we must face the fact that many pieces are still being put together, and that the usual order of things must be fluid if it is to serve us in the spirit in which it was intended.

With continued stability, we hope to start anew in 2024 – using the time to reinforce the routine, return to regular two year elections, and continue to focus on providing multiple educational opportunities each year.

We thank you for your support, and your feedback, in these trying times and we look forward to seeing you at the conference in June!

*Dr. Agnieszka Rogalska*  
WCMEA President

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Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association

Registration Form Summer 2023 Conference in Wisconsin Dells, WI - Conference Dates June 26, 27 & 28

Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

!!! PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY!!!

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

FEES: Full Conference: \_\_\_\_\_ \$250.00 Member \_\_\_\_\_ \$275.00 Non-Member

Single Day: Indicate The Individual Day You Wish to Attend:

Monday: \_\_\_\_\_ \$125.00 Member \_\_\_\_\_ \$150.00 Non-Member

Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_ \$125.00 Member \_\_\_\_\_ \$150.00 Non-Member

Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_ \$50.00 Member \_\_\_\_\_ \$75.00 Non-Member

I WILL ATTEND THE BOD MEETING SUNDAY EVENING: \_\_\_\_\_

The conference is being held at: Chula Vista Resort & Water Park
PO Box 30, Hwy 13 North
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

The WCMEA has a block of rooms reserved for the conference. Please call (844) 837-3828 to reserve a room from the block at a Government rate. Use booking code j20868, Reservations need to be made NO LATER THAN June 19, 2023. After that date, the block of rooms will be released and there is no guarantee that a room will be available.

C/o Rory Groessl, Treasurer
50 Villa Heights Court, Algoma, WI 54201
Make checks payable to: WCMEA

No refunds for cancellations after June 19, 2023. For additional questions, please contact: Jennifer Schroeter at jennifer.schroeter@kenoshacounty.org (262) 653-3867

### Donate Life Wisconsin Update:

Hunt...Fish...become an Organ, Tissue & Eye Donor in Wisconsin

Did you know that in Wisconsin when you purchase your fishing license you can register to become an Organ, Tissue & Eye donor?

Under 2021 Wisconsin Act 220, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources was directed to include a question on hunting, fishing, and trapping license applications about whether the customer wishes to include their name as a donor of an anatomical gift on a donor registry. Wisconsin residents (15 years of age or older) may choose to include their name on the Wisconsin Donor Registry as an anatomical gift donor when they apply or purchase licenses on [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov). The goal is to provide an opportunity to register as a donor on a yearly basis. Currently you are asked if you would like to register as a donor when renewing your driver's license every 8 years.



As of March 2023, if you register as a donor through the DNR [Gowild.wi.gov](http://Gowild.wi.gov) website, the DNR will transmit to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation your new anatomical gift registration. The orange donor dot will not show up on your driver's license by registering at the DNR website, however, DNR license documents will include a space for the customer to indicate their wish to be a donor. If you purchase a Wisconsin conservation card, a space for you to indicate your decision to be a donor is included. The [Gowild.wi.gov](http://Gowild.wi.gov) website has a Donate Life Pocket/wallet donor card that can be printed when you register to be a donor.

We are excited that this option will start a conversation about donation and reach a new demographic on a more frequent basis.

Over 57.5% of 5 million Wisconsin residents that have a driver's license or ID are registered organ, tissue, and eye donors. Donation Specialists for Recovery Organizations are happy to access the donor registry to check registration status.

If you have any questions, please go to [www.donatelifewisconsin.org](http://www.donatelifewisconsin.org)

**Submitted by: Joyce Kratz, American Tissue Services Foundation and Al Klimek, Versiti Organ & Tissue**

### Remembering Paul Mattlin

Paul Mattlin was a long time member of the WCMEA and of the Portage County Coroner's Office. He died on April 22, 2023 surrounded by family. Paul was 51 years old at the time of his death.

Paul, a firefighter/paramedic, started at the Stevens Point Fire Department. He served for over 20 years, ultimately earning the rank of Captain. He began his journey with the Portage County Coroner's Office in 2004, and eventually held the position of Chief Deputy Coroner. He attended many of the WCMEA training conferences, and became a welcomed, familiar face to many. He had an amazing sense of humor, and a smile that lit up the room.



In 2021, Paul was diagnosed with colon cancer. He ended up retiring in August 2022. He ultimately lost his battle with cancer this April. He leaves behind a wife and two sons.

On behalf of the WCMEA, our deepest sympathies to the family, friends, and colleagues who loved and cherished Paul Mattlin.

Welcome Dr. Elizabeth Douglas to Brown County,

Dr. Douglas started as the Chief Medical Examiner in Brown County In August of 2022 so we would like to properly introduce and welcome her. Following is a bio regarding her time prior to joining us:

Elizabeth Douglas is a medical doctor with board certifications in anatomic and forensic pathology and is licensed to practice medicine in the states of Wisconsin and Michigan. She has completed over three thousand postmortem examinations and testified as an expert witness in forensic pathology more than sixty times between thirteen counties in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. She completed her undergraduate education in Kalamazoo, Michigan at Western Michigan University where she double majored in Spanish and biomedical sciences with a minor in chemistry, graduating magna cum laude in 2001 through Lee Honors College. She received her medical education from Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine in East Lansing, Michigan graduating in 2006. This was followed by a four-year residency program in anatomic and clinical Pathology through Cleveland Clinic and an additional year of subspecialty training in forensic pathology with the Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office in Cleveland, Ohio. Following completion of her formal education, she went on to serve as a deputy coroner in Franklin County Ohio, where she also oversaw visiting medical learners in elective rotations with the office. Additionally, she participated in numerous review teams with community partners, such as Trauma Morbidity and Mortality conferences and Child Death Review. Before leaving Franklin County to return to Kalamazoo, she rose to the rank of Deputy Chief Coroner.



The bulk of Dr. Douglas' professional career was spent with the Department of Pathology in Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine (WMed) where she served numerous roles as an Assistant Professor in Pathology in addition to providing Medical Examiner services to thirteen surrounding counties in West Michigan and contract forensic autopsy services to thirteen counties in mid-Michigan and two counties in Northern Indiana. These roles included creating and delivering didactic lectures and direct laboratory training to first- and second-year medical students, creating curricular goals and objectives for visiting learners, and supervising all visiting learners during their rotations. When an unexpected departure of a faculty member left the newly created forensic pathology fellowship without a program director, she stepped in to fill the role, successfully guiding the team through their first program inspection from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. Dr. Douglas also participated in scholarly activities during her time with WMed, including several publications in partnership with other colleagues and medical students on topics such as fracture healing in pediatric patient populations and emerging trends in drug-related fatalities. She delivered educational talks as an invited speaker to community partners including law enforcement, medical training programs, and emergency medical services teams.

*Continued . . . Page 5*



I also asked her a couple of follow up questions:

What is something she finds challenging about her work:

“The things that challenged me as a forensic pathology trainee continue to challenge me as a seasoned attending. That said, through years of experience I have come to realize that processing and releasing the accumulated indirect trauma of bearing witness to the worst of what people are capable of doing to themselves and to each other is the greatest challenge of the profession. Doing that while remaining present with the bereaved requires constant, vigilant attention to your own well-being, so you can continue to hold space for the families without being overcome by the weight of the tragedy and their grief.”

If she could only eat one meal for the rest of her life what would it be?

“I would happily eat nothing but breakfast cereal for the rest of my life.”

Another interesting article regarding Dr. Douglas for further reading:

[https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2010/12/choosing\\_pathology\\_gives\\_two\\_d.html](https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2010/12/choosing_pathology_gives_two_d.html)

Shown in photos: Dr. Douglas testifying at the trial of a fatal shooting in September of 2016.



Source for bio photo:

<https://wmualumni.org/stories/alumni-news/alumna-wmed>

Sources for trial photos:

<https://www.sturgisjournal.com/story/news/courts/2016/09/03/murder-trial-day-5-autopsy/25525996007/>



## October 2022 Conference Highlights

After the long COVID hiatus, the 2022 WCMEA Conference was held in Wisconsin Dells at the Chula Vista Resort October 17th through October 19th. There were approximately 70 registered attendees who enjoyed presentations on topics ranging from child fatality investigations and the use of doll re-enactments, to double homicide and cold case investigations.



This conference was the first in person training opportunity for the WCMEA since the start of COVID. It was wonderful to see such great attendance and the amazing networking. There were several case presentations from coroners/medical examiners and their investigating law enforcement agencies around the state including Dane, Barron, and Racine. There were a total of 17.5 ABMDI credits available!

The WCMEA elections and annual meeting were held on Tuesday, October 18th. Congratulations to all of the officers! The newly elected Board of Directors is as follows:

President: Dr. Rogalska (Dane County)  
1<sup>st</sup> VP: Crystal Schaub (Oneida County)  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Brooke Kaat (Dodge County)  
Treasurer: Rory Groessl (Kewaunee County)  
Secretary: Jen Schroeter (Kenosha County)  
Sergeant @ Arms: Joe Morovits (Crawford County)  
3-year Trustee: PJ Schoebel (Dodge County)

The WCMEA would like to thank Dr. Cristina Figueroa Soto, Dane County Medical Examiner's Office, for all of her hard work and commitment in putting together an amazing seminar. Additional thanks to the staff at the Chula Vista Resort, as well as the many presenters and exhibitors for their time, knowledge, and generosity.

The association would also like to acknowledge our generous sponsors: American Tissue Services Foundation, UW Organ and Tissue Donation, and Versiti Organ and Tissue. Without their continued support, the WCMEA would not be able to continue providing training opportunities for its members.

Looking ahead, the next conference is set for June 26th through the 28th at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Starting in 2024, the WCMEA will be returning to the two conference format with the first conference in winter, and second conference and annual meeting in the summer. Dates and venues for 2024 to be determined. Stay tuned for more information!

## LEAP INTO ACTION WCMEA!

*The Examiner* is in search of interesting case investigations, as well as WCMEA members to highlight in future publications.

Please submit your case reports or personal entries to any of the newsletter committee members below:



Lynn Johnson: [ljohnson@co.dunn.wi.us](mailto:ljohnson@co.dunn.wi.us)  
Kathryn Luedtke: [Luedtke.Kathryn@countyofdane.com](mailto:Luedtke.Kathryn@countyofdane.com)  
Jennifer Schroeter: [jennifer.schroeter@kenoshacounty.org](mailto:jennifer.schroeter@kenoshacounty.org)



### Barry Tomaras Retires

After 25 years of dedicated service as the Waupaca County Coroner/Medical Examiner, Barry Tomaras, retired in 2020.

In 1994 then Governor, Tommy Thompson, appointed Barry as Waupaca County Coroner when the elected Coroner Dr. Lloyd Maasch gave his resignation midterm. Barry served on the Wisconsin Coroner's and Medical Examiner's Association over the years. While on the WCMEA Board he served as the Treasurer, then as the Vice President and as President. The most noticeable change made to Waupaca County was the change from Coroner, being an elected position, to Medical Examiner. Now the Medical Examiner is appointed by the County Board. He was always there to help answer questions and give his professional insight to the most difficult of cases. Barry has a wealth of knowledge of death investigating from his years of service.

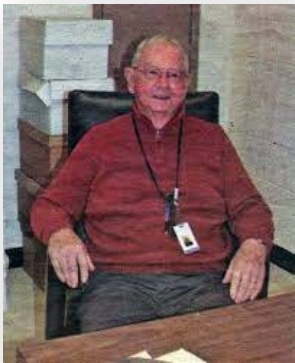


I am so fortunate to have learned so much from Barry. Thank you - Barry. Please enjoy your Retirement - Golfing - Warm Days in Arizona - Golfing - Relaxing Days with Mary Jo, Mesa and Reno - Golfing - Visiting the Frozen Tundra - Golfing - Motorcycle Riding - oh yeah, did I mention Golfing?? Well, enjoy and THANK YOU!!!

*Submitted by Cathi Wegener, Chief Medical Examiner for Waupaca County*

### Richard Schleifer Retires

After 22 years as elected Coroner, and 21 years as Deputy Coroner, Richard Schleifer retired from Clark County In January 2023.



Prior to taking office in 1998, Schleifer worked as an EMT and had been the director of the ambulance service in Neillsville for more than 20 years. During his tenure as Coroner, Schleifer was involved with the WCMEA and had served on the board of directors for four years. He began as Member-at-Large in 2009, and was then elected Sergeant-at-Arms from 2010-2012.

Please see the message from Richard below:

“I have enjoyed my work and enjoyed being involved with the association the past 22 years.

I learned a lot by attending these conferences. I also enjoyed my four years on the Board of Directors and meeting a lot of nice people around the state.

Serving on the Board and getting my D-ABMDI were heart warming and missing all the people I have come to meet.

On a happier note, my Daughter Clarissa Rochester did write in and won by over 800 votes. She has worked as a Deputy for eight plus years so does know the ropes and had great support from Law Enforcement and EMS.”

Congratulations Richard on your well-deserved retirement! You will be missed.

**Interesting Deaths in Wisconsin.....**



- **In Sauk County-** A middle school student died after being hit by a pickup truck while trying to board a school bus. The full-size pickup sideswiped the bus before going over a driveway and striking the student. The truck driver suffered minor injuries.
- **In Portage County-** A 40-year old employee of the Mativ Inc. Paper Mill in Whiting became stuck in a paper machine at the mill. Sherriff's deputies and EMS personnel provided life saving measures with no success and the man was pronounced dead at the scene.
- **In Milwaukee County-** A 1-year old girl was shot inside a car during an argument between adults outside of the Atkinson library in Milwaukee. The victim was taken to Station 36 and then to Children's Wisconsin Hospital where she died.
- **In Milwaukee County-** There have been 4 deaths in the Milwaukee County Jail in 9 months. A 21-year old and 20-year old both died from alleged suicides in June and December. A 49-year old died of unknown causes in January and a 37-year old was found unresponsive in March. All deaths have sparked activists to picket outside the jail in hopes of determining a reason for the deaths.
- **In Wood County-** Wood County Dispatch received a report of a person in the Wisconsin River in the Township of Saratoga. The caller had brought the 58-year old female to shore and she was pronounced dead on arrival. No suspicious circumstances exist. Reports remind everyone to wear a life jacket and always swim with a buddy.
- **In Barron County-** A severe crash left two people dead and 12 others injured. A van carrying 10 people was struck head on by a car with 4 occupants. All victims were taken by four medical helicopters and nine ambulances to nearby hospitals. A 54-year old man and a 13-year old boy died in the crash.
- **In Oneida County-** Two teens, 17-years old and 16-years old, who had gone missing from Lincoln County were recently found and identified in Oneida County Forest. Authorities believe that the two had gone to the area in search for a lost phone from a party and became lost in the woods. A search party was sent out to assist in the search for the two teens. Authorities believe that the weekend's cold weather played a role in the deaths.
- **In Sheboygan County-** A 4-year old girl was out for a walk on the sidewalk with her family when a pickup truck crashed into a van which in turn pushed the van into the family. Three others were taken to the hospital for treatment of minor injuries. The driver of the truck had prior issues with driving including a license suspension, inattentive driving, and fines. He now faces a maximum of 6 years in prison and a 6-month suspension from driving.
- **In Barron County-** 2 police officers were gunned down in broad daylight on a highway outside of Cameron. The two officers stopped the vehicle because of "concerning behavior". A shootout ensued leaving the officers dead at the scene. Most people in the towns knew the officers personally and have shown an outpouring of support. Meanwhile, these two well-known officers are the second and third killed in the line of duty this year.

*Continued . . . . Page 9*



***Interesting Deaths Continued . . . .***

- **In Richland County-** Authorities are investigating the death of a man who was found unresponsive at a campground. The investigation determined that there were suspicious circumstances involving the death, so the Sherriff's Office requested help from the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation, The Wisconsin State Crime Lab, The Wisconsin State Patrol, and Richland Center Police Department. Recently, a suspect has been charged with the shooting, but claims he "doesn't remember shooting the victim".
- **In Milwaukee County-** Five people died after a crash near 60<sup>th</sup> street and Fond du Lac Avenue. Four victims died at the scene and the fifth died later at the hospital. The 20- year old driver of a Kia was going 80 mph, 30 mph over the speed limit, without a license when she ran a red light and slammed into a Dodge. The driver of the Dodge was a 32-year old woman who was arrested on suspicion of OWI. The victims were passengers of the Kia; a 32-year old man, a 17-year old boy, two 15- year old girls, and a 1-year old, and a 17-year old girl who survived with injuries and was taken to the hospital as well.
- **In St. Croix County-** A St. Croix County Sheriff's Deputy was shot and killed while responding to a driver in a ditch. The deputy had ordered the driver to participate in field sobriety tests before returning to his vehicle. The driver was evasive and eventually drew a handgun and shot her. The deputy pulled her weapon and shot 3 times, but she missed, and the driver fled to nearby wooded area. Occupants of another vehicle began lifesaving measures on the deputy to no avail. The driver ended up shooting himself after officers found him in the woods.
- **In Milwaukee County-** A 17-year old was found dead in the backseat of a vehicle at the Milwaukee tow lot days after a crash. The SUV was stolen and a teen boy at the scene was injured and taken to the hospital. The deceased boy's mother tried to file a missing person's report shortly after the crash but was told her son wasn't gone long enough, his body was found 4 days after. The family knew he had been with the other boy at the time of the crash.
- **In Fond Du Lac County-** A resident doing yard work discovers a dead body. Officers are investigating due to suspicious circumstances surrounding the death. The body was determined to be a 41- year old male found in a wooded area behind the resident's home. Cause and manner of death are still pending autopsy results.
- **In Sauk County-** A 19-year old woman was killed due to smoke inhalation sustained in a house fire. The victim was trapped on the second floor of the house but could not get through the smoke to safety and firefighters smashed through a window to reach her. She was supposed to get married that day. Three other people were home at the time of the fire but managed to escape before firefighters arrived at the scene around 4 am.
- **In Dodge County-** A 73-year old pilot and his 8-year old grandson were killed in a plane crash near Brandt Quirk Park. The plane had just taken off from the Municipal Airport about 3 miles from the accident site.
- **In Grant County-** A Southwest Wisconsin man died in a boating accident. The boat was seen without a driver in the backwaters of the Mississippi River and a canoer saw the driver swimming after it without a personal floatation device. He was brought to shore by the canoer and given CPR then taken to a hospital where he was later pronounced dead.
- **In Jefferson County-** A 61- year old man was found dead in Rome pond after deputies were called to do a welfare check. Preliminary findings are pointing towards a medical event occurring before the decedent entered the water.

Jennifer Schroeter  
Kenosha County Medical Examiner's Office  
1000 55th Street  
Kenosha, WI 53140

## Training Opportunities

Summer WCMEA Conference  
Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells  
June 26-28, 2023  
<http://wcmea.com/>

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University of North Dakota Online  
Death Investigation Training  
<https://und.edu/academics/development/death-investigation-training/>

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2023 IACME Training Symposium  
July 16-20, 2023  
Las Vegas, NV  
<https://cdn.ymaws.com/theiacme.com/resource/resmgr/>

Death Investigation Academy  
Online Training  
[Death Investigation Academy  
\(ditacademyonline.org\)](http://ditacademyonline.org)

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Advanced Medicolegal Forensic Series  
October 2-6, 2023  
Cleveland, OH  
<https://www.cuyahogacounty.us/medical-examiner/resources/medicolegal-death-investigation-basic-training-course>

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Medicolegal Death Investigators Training  
St. Louis, Missouri  
August 21-24, 2023  
<https://www.slu.edu/medicine/pathology/medicolegal-death-investigators-training/index.php>