

Distinguished Alumni award 2013

Mary Jo Klos

1980 Nursing, 1996 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Mary Jo Klos, '80 Nursing, is this year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. Klos first worked at Mulder Health Care Facility in West Salem, then at the Skemp-Grandview Clinic. The majority of her career was spent at Gundersen Lutheran. Beginning in 1980, Klos was a coronary care unit staff nurse, then charge nurse, and became clinical manager of the coronary critical care unit in 1996. She became the behavioral health administrative director in 1998. In 2002, she transitioned to the role of vice president where she oversaw cardiology, oncology, medical specialties, internal medicine, gastroenterology, radiology, lab, nutrition services, social services, pastoral care, and pharmacy. Her duties changed in 2008 and she oversaw pediatrics, women's health, vision services, nutrition therapy, behavioral health services, and the Gundersen regional system. She retired from that position in 2012. In May 2013, Mary Jo was recognized with the first-ever "Lifetime Achievement in Nursing" award at Gundersen Lutheran. Additionally, she and her husband owned Bangor Lanes in Bangor, Wis., for more than 30 years.



Throughout her career, Klos has embraced education. She received her LPN degree in 1970 at St. Mary's School of Nursing in Rochester, MN before earning her RN at Western. She also earned her Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certificate from Western in 1996. She holds a bachelor's degree in organizational management and a master's degree in Servant Leadership from Viterbo University. Additionally, she was a master's degree candidate at the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. She also has earned many certificates, including ethical leadership from Viterbo and healthcare management from UW-La Crosse.

Klos has maintained a strong relationship with Western throughout her career. She was a part-time EMT instructor and served on the Emergency Medical Service program's advisory committee. She was also a member of the Western Technical College Alumni Board and is its past president. In addition to Western, Klos served on several community and regional boards including Bethany Lutheran Homes, (trustee and president), St. Joseph's - Gundersen Health Care, Hillsboro, (trustee) and Palmer Lutheran Health Care, West Union, Iowa (liaison) among others. Closer to home, she was the co-founder of the Bangor First Responders, and she served on the Bangor First Responder Advisory Council and the Bangor First Responder Community Support Team. She is also a nationally-published poet and is the co-author of a booklet on discontinuing life support in critical care areas. In addition, their nursing department published the Caring Journal in 2012, a publication dedicated to Mary Jo which included one of her poems.

In her downtime, she spends time with family and friends. She also enjoys singing in the St. Paul's Lutheran Church Choir and golfing in the warmer months.