

# David B. Schowalter, MD, PhD

## March 25, 1960 - August 11, 2007

*Philip F. Giampietro, MD, PhD; Christina Zaleski, MS; Steve F. Wagner, MD; Noralane M. Lindor; MD, Dusica Babovic-Vuksanovic, MD*

**W**e mourn the passing of our friend, David B. Schowalter, MD, PhD, clinical geneticist and assistant professor of Medical Sciences at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn. and former director of Medical Genetic Services at Marshfield Clinic, Marshfield, Wis.

Dave received a Bachelor of Arts degree in chemistry and religion from St. Olaf College in 1982, and an MD/PhD degree from Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in 1991, where he completed his internal medicine residency. He completed a fellowship in medical genetics at the University of Washington in 1998 and was board certified in internal medicine and clinical genetics.

After his fellowship training, Dave worked in the Department of Internal Medicine and then became director of Medical Genetic Services at Marshfield Clinic. He expanded genetic services by reaching out to many other departments.

He served as a committee member of the (Internal Review Board) IRB and Research Committees. Dave also served as a committee member on Wisconsin's Birth Defects Council. Sensitive to the need for genetic services reimbursement, Dave reached out to Marshfield Clinic and state officials to discuss mechanisms by which genetic professionals can be fiscally accountable for the services they provide.

Dave was a co-investigator on Marshfield Clinic Research Grant for Personalized Medicine and began to develop community education for the Personalized Medicine Research Project.

From 2002 to his passing, Dave worked at Mayo Clinic as a consultant in the Department of Medical Genetics. He was also the chair of the Mayo Genomics Education Steering Committee, reflecting his deep dedication to providing education on genetics to health care professionals at all levels of training, both within and beyond Mayo Clinic. He chaired Mayo Genomics courses and taught medical and graduate school courses. Dave chaired the Mayo Biospecimens Committee, and was a leader in the development of the Mayo Genomics Biorepository project, which reflected his long-standing dedication to the vision

that if one could carefully correlate clinical medical history with genomic data, that progress could be made much more rapidly in understanding and treating a variety of medical disorders.

Dave headed a lab devoted to gene therapy research and received funding from the American Heart Association and the National Hemophilia Foundation. Dave pushed hard for integration of genetic principles in daily medical practice, especially incorporation of family history as a standard of medical care. He is quoted in *Family History—More Important Than Ever* as saying: “We must begin now to prepare for the future; we cannot wait until the details are known or fully understood.”

We will miss Dave's personal attributes including his friendliness, spontaneity and fellowship to all. His ability to strike up meaningful conversations with perfect strangers and provide good advice was an art. He was a mentor and role model to many, and beloved by his patients and his colleagues alike. We are sure those who came in contact with Dave including medical students, residents, genetic counselors, teachers, fellow scientists, laboratory personnel, friends and family would agree that our lives are so much richer for having known Dave.

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Philip F. Giampietro, MD, PhD, Christina Zaleski, MS, are with the Department of Medical Genetic Services, Marshfield Clinic; Steve F. Wagner, MD, Emeritus Physician, is with Marshfield Clinic, and Noralane M. Lindor, MD, and Dusica Babovic-Vuksanovic, MD, Medical Genetics, are with the Mayo Clinic.

# Wisconsin Medical Journal

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