

Rotary



Club of Dalton, Georgia

January 24th, 2023

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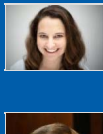
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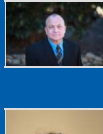
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This Week: Mercer President William D. Underwood

This week's speaker is William D. Underwood, the president of Mercer University. Since he took office as Mercer's 18th president in 2006, the university has experienced a dynamic period of growth with enrollment increasing by more than 25 percent to more than 9,000 students. Mercer has launched second and third medical school campuses in Savannah and Columbus, and it has launched a master's-level physician assistant program and a doctoral-level physical therapy program. The school has also added Ph. D. programs in clinical psychology, nursing, counseling, community medicine, educational leadership, and curriculum and instruction.

U.S. News and World Report ranks Mercer today among the top tier of national research universities. In the past decade, the number of Ph. D. candidates at Mercer has increased sevenfold from fewer than 35 to more than 250. The school has seen increased levels of funding for research from nationally respected groups and it has been named among the 35 leading institutions nationally for undergraduate research. In 2015, Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society, awarded Mercer a chapter which places the university in a cohort of the nation's most respected academic institutions.

Under Underwood's leadership, Mercer has also intensified its longstanding commitment to service based learning and community engagement. The school's College Hill Corridor initiative is revitalizing a two mile area between Mercer's campus and downtown Macon. It is supported by more than \$7 million in funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and has won international awards for community redevelopment while leveraging more than \$200 million in public-private investment. The school's Mercer on Mission program, launched in 2007, has been recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative. Mercer earned placement on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal recognition for community engagement. Mercer is the first university in Georgia to receive the Carnegie Foundation's designation for "curricular engagement and outreach partnerships."

During Underwood's tenure as president, Mercer students have reached new levels of achievement. In the 2020-21 academic year, five students won prestigious Fulbright Scholarships, three engineering students were named Goldwater Scholars, and 12 students received appointments to the Peace Corps. 36 students were admitted to Phi Beta Kappa. One student was a finalist to be named a Rhodes Scholar, and another was a finalist for the Truman Scholarship. Nearly 75 percent of students entering in 2014 remained to graduate, one of the highest graduation retention rates in the southeast.

Meeting Recap: The Rising Cost Of Healthcare

Our second meeting of the year was an informative one on an issue that impacts us all. Alan Greensmith joined us for the afternoon. Alan has an extensive background in healthcare and pharmaceutical sales. He is currently the managing director of Engedi, RX. Alan has worked with companies abroad and in the U.S. including companies such as Pfizer and Veracity RX. Alan spoke to us about the rising cost of medications and how the healthcare world has changed.



Alan started his career in 1988 and recalls that the average person in America could usually afford any medication out of pocket on a monthly basis. The most expensive medication at that time was around \$70 a month. Medication prices today total up to 35 million a year. Alan focused on four points in his presentation, to give a deeper understanding of drug companies, strategies that can be implemented to manage the cost, highlight key players, and answer any questions. The price of healthcare in America is a concern that most of us share, and for good reason. Alan shared that the U.S. pays double what the rest of the world pays for healthcare, but the average household income is not much

different. Big Pharma is one of the wealthiest and most successful industry because of that statistic. Alan pointed out that in the evening when most of us are sitting down to watch tv, we can usually count on seeing a commercial for a medication. The goal of this advertisement is to entice consumers to ask their doctor. This certain medication is usually an expensive drug, whose cost is hidden with a copay card. That "hidden cost" is what is picked up usually by your employer, driving their spend up. Statistics show that a third of employer's report healthcare costs as one of their biggest concerns. Alan gave his opinion on what can be done from an employer's perspective, including looking into being self-insured, implement a generics first policy to keep cost under control, and have a do not cover list. From a consumer standpoint, Good RX is an app that lets you enter your zip code, and it will search local pharmacies for the lowest cost of your prescription. Alan's goal in the presentation was to simply educate us on the importance of being aware and making conscious steps to controlling our healthcare costs, for us as individuals and employers.

Alan gave an excellent presentation on a topic that we should all be aware of.

January 24th Birthdays and Anniversaries

Member Birthdays

	Birthday
Blevins, Sheri H. (SHERI)	24-Jan
Griffin, Ronald L (RON)	27-Jan
Hartline, Amy R (AMY)	26-Jan
Shults, Stephen D (DOUG)	25-Jan

Partner Birthdays

Member Name	Member Name	Birthday
Chappell, Bennieta	Chappell, William J.	29-Jan

Member Anniversaries

Member Name	Start Date	Years
Hawkins, Jim R. (JIM)	1/27/2009	14

Wedding Anniversaries

No anniversaries this period.

The Four Way Test

