

Honorary Degree Recipient: John W. Colloton



John W. Colloton is director emeritus of the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC), an appointment he received in 2001. While serving as UIHC's Chief Executive Officer for 22 years, he conceived and led its transformation into one of the nation's premier teaching hospitals. Throughout his distinguished career, Colloton garnered multiple state and national honors of the highest order. Please see listing which follows.

JOHN W. COLLOTON Director & CEO Emeritus University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics

- **Born:** February 20, 1931
- **Birthplace:** Mason City, IA
- **Deceased Spouse:** Married Mary Ann Hagglund in Iowa City, IA on October 8, 1960
- **Children:** Steven Michael; Laura Jane; and Ann Elizabeth
- **Higher Education:** B.A. (Magna Cum Laude) from Loras College in Dubuque, IA, 1953; and M.A. from the University of Iowa, 1957
- **Military Service:** U.S. Army, 1953-1955

Select Career Accomplishments and National & State of Iowa Professional Honors of John W. Colloton – 2016

- John W. Colloton has served the U. of I. in a distinguished fashion for more than a half century, after earning a graduate degree in 1957.
- His multiple and impressive contributions to the University have been recognized in many diverse and profound ways by the U. of I. This includes the honorary naming in 1982 of the \$100 million John W. Colloton Pavilion at the UIHC, upon recommendation of the then U. of I. President, James O. Freedman, and unanimous approval of the Iowa State Board of Regents.
- In 1999 and 2007, two Endowed Academic Chairs, one in Cardiology and one in Public Health, were named in his honor by the U. of I.
- He conceived and led a \$500 million capital replacement program, completed without any state appropriation support, to transform the UIHC from an indigent care institution into a state-of-the-art premiere private patient-oriented teaching hospital operating in support of the University's Health Science Colleges. In that accomplishment, the physical mass of the UIHC was quadrupled while its staff complement increased threefold from 2,500 to 7,500 FTEs. Additionally, a host of new specialty clinical services were established. In this capital program, he was instrumental in securing major capital gifts from the late Roy J. Carver, Sr., John Pappajohn and the late Marvin A. Pomerantz, all of whom became warm lifetime friends, as well as prolific donors to the U. of I., at large, in subsequent years.
- In 1987, John was elected to membership in the prestigious Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences—only the third non-doctoral nominee elected in the history of the Institute.
- In 1988, he was elected Chairman of the Association of American Medical College's as only the second non-physician to hold this top leadership position in the then 112-year history of the Association.
- In 1990, John was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the American Hospital Association, the highest award of the AHA.
- In 1996, he received a Distinguished Alumnus Award from his undergraduate alma mater, Loras College. This was followed in 1999 by the College's conferral of an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree, *Honoris Causa*, on him.
- In 1998, he received a University of Iowa Distinguished Alumni Award in Achievement.
- From 1970 through 1998, his counsel was highly sought on the national scene, leading to longstanding service on policy and advisory boards at the Universities of Pennsylvania, Duke, Yale, Johns Hopkins and Michigan.
- In 2002, he received the Horatio Alger Award for "Distinguished Americans" from the Horatio Alger Association in Washington, DC.
- In 2003, he was inducted into the Healthcare Hall of Fame based in Chicago & at the nation's first hospital, the Pennsylvania Hospital.
- Beyond meeting his responsibilities on the U. of I. campus, from 1974 to 2012, he carried the "U. of I. flag" while serving on 32 commissions of the U.S. government, national foundations, corporate boards of directors and other governing bodies in rendering 209 years of Board service to these entities. Included in this service was 14 years on the Board of Baxter International, Inc. and 35 years on the Board of Wellmark, Inc.
- During his U. of I. career, he was a keynoter and participant in health educational conferences in the countries of Japan, China, South Korea, Egypt, Australia and New Zealand, among others.
- Early in his career (1979), he was the recipient of the John F. Sanford Award of the Iowa State Medical Society for "leadership in development of innovative programs at UIHC and strengthening relations between the UIHC and the physicians of Iowa."
- In 1979, he was also elected Chairman of the National Council of Teaching Hospitals – an organization of the nation's 400 largest and most prestigious teaching hospitals.
- In 1994, he received the Iowa Hospital Association's F.P.G. Lattner's Award "in recognition of his vision, foresight and contributions to Iowa by his leadership in health care education, research, patient care and public policy through four decades of service."
- In 1995, he received the American College of Health Care Executive's Senior-Level Healthcare Executive Regents Award.
- In appreciation to the U. of I. and Loras College for the instrumental role that each played in the lives of the Colloton family, John and his spouse, Mary Ann, contributed more than \$1.5 million to the U. of I. for use by the U. of I. Library; the School of Religion in the College of Liberal Arts; Hancher Auditorium; the Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Program; the College of Public Health; the Capital Campaign for the Medical Education and Research Facility of the College of Medicine; the emerging Children's Hospital of Iowa at the UIHC; the Men's Intercollegiate Football Program; the Men's and Women's Intercollegiate Basketball Programs; the Intercollegiate Wrestling Program; and the Helen K. Rossi Volunteer Guest House at the UIHC, among others. They also contributed \$500,000 to Loras College, John's undergraduate alma mater.
- In 2008, the Board of Directors of Wellmark, Inc. established "The John W. Colloton Board Room" in the Company's new \$300 million headquarters building in Des Moines. JWC had served on the Board for 35 years, including time as Chairman & as Lead Director.
- In 2010, he was elected to membership in Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health for having "attained meritorious national distinction in the field of public health."
- In 2013, the University of Iowa conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters Degree on Colloton as "testimony to your distinguished career and significant contributions to the UIHC and the College of Public Health and steadfast professional and personal support of the University."
- In 2016, he was selected to receive the Hancher-Finkbine Alumni Medallion, one of the U. of I.'s highest honors. It is awarded to those who "exemplify learning, leadership and loyalty."
- The above listing does not cover the influential efforts of John in providing Iowa health system counsel to several Iowa Governors and other state officials and the seminal work he did in preserving full state appropriation support for the UIHC upon the inception of Medicare and Medicaid; in formulating the Iowa Certificate of Need legislation to protect the education and research missions of the U. of I.; and in conceiving and securing legislative and court-approved bonding authority for the UIHC.
- Finally, during his twenty-three year tenure as Director of the UIHC, he recruited an outstanding executive staff of some 21 members who had an average tenure of 24 years at the UIHC. Each was expert in his/her sector of hospital management and each was a key player on the Colloton Team and in its collective accomplishments.
- The late Dr. Robert G. Petersdorf, one of the giants of American academic medicine, in 1996 crystallized John W. Colloton's career accomplishments with the following words:
"Colloton was arguably the most effective hospital chief executive of his era. A brilliant administrator, he said grace over a phased building project (none of it at state expense), which left the UIHC with one of the best physical plants in the country. He was also a superb organizer, fundraiser, and politician, and an articulate spokesman for academic medicine."
Dr. Petersdorf, who served as Professor and Head of Internal Medicine at the University of Washington, as Dean of Medicine at UC San Diego, and President of the Association of American Medical Colleges, made his statement as the leader of our nation's 400 teaching hospitals and 134 medical schools.

In May 2013, the University of Iowa awarded John W. Colloton an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in recognition of his 44 years of service to the UI Hospitals and Clinics, leadership in medicine and public health, and ongoing commitment to the university and its work.

Colloton, who earned a master's degree in hospital and health administration from the UI in 1957, took time in the fall of 2013 to answer a few questions about his career, leadership, and the future of health care. The following Q&A was originally published in the Fall 2013 edition of InSight, the College of Public Health magazine for alumni and friends of the college.

Congratulations on your award. What did receiving this honorary doctorate mean to you?

It means a great deal to me personally, primarily because it emanated from the UI College of Public Health, which provided me the life-changing opportunity to become involved in the rewarding field of health care back in the mid-1950s. Because the college has so many illustrious alums who are meritorious of such an honor, I was greatly flattered to have been selected to receive the college's very first Honorary Doctorate.

It was most pleasing also to accept the degree as a representative of the broad array of distinguished CPH alums who preceded and succeeded me in securing their graduate education in our College of Public Health. Needless to say, I shall be forever grateful to Dean Sue Curry, the college faculty, President Sally Mason, EVP/Provost Barry Butler, and the Board of Regents for this magnificent honor. It will serve as a treasured capstone to my gratifying 50+ year association with the University of Iowa.

From your perspective as an executive who helped transform the University of Iowa's academic health center into a national leader in research, teaching, and service, what were the key ingredients in this success?

As in all transformative undertakings, it was leadership, leadership, leadership! The inception of Medicare and Medicaid in the mid-1960s permitted members of our statewide indigent patient base to purchase health services in their local communities or at regional medical centers closer to their homes, thereby jeopardizing the traditional flow of patients to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Fortunately, we had the appropriate combination of clinical and organizational leadership to develop and implement the essential strategic and organizational imperatives to gradually transform the physical, operational, social, and philosophical infrastructure of the University Hospitals into a private patient-oriented teaching hospital serving patients from all economic walks of life. This averted a major crisis for our health science center.

We were also blessed to have generous financial supporters in the persons of the late Roy Carver and Marvin Pomerantz and ever-generous John Pappajohn to help advance our strategic vision. In addition, then-UI President Sandy Boyd gave us the management "tools," organizational latitude, and support to effectively manage through those turbulent times.

Looking to the future, what do you see as the foremost challenges and opportunities in health policy and health care delivery in the coming years?

Without question, the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. ObamaCare), as enacted, portends the most sweeping change in the U.S. health system of this generation. It is generally anticipated that the massive expansion in numbers of patients accessing the health system will expose substantial shortages in physicians, nursing, and other health care specialties. Concomitantly, federal and state dollars to support the education of essential physicians and other health professionals, as well as medical research, will be under increasing duress.

To meet these formidable challenges, health care leaders will strive to form new coalitions to improve the overall efficiency as well as the quality and accountability of the health care system. Innovative cost reduction and reimbursement programs, focused on population health and the prevention and management of chronic disease, will be deployed. Without success in these and other related areas, the U.S. health system could very well gravitate toward a national single-payor system.

Finally, our national and state health systems are in dire need of restructuring the present maldistribution of patient care manpower—both geographically and by specialty type. With the growing aging of our population, the present shortage of gerontologists, palliative care physicians, and nurses will become increasingly acute and will further challenge the goal of providing high-quality care for all Americans. To address these concerns, the need for sophisticated capabilities in health services research and policy formulation will become ever more apparent. Fortunately, the UI College of Public Health has already expanded its effort in this area and is poised, with the support of other UI faculty groups, to assume a much needed leadership role for the state of Iowa.

Despite its deep roots at the University of Iowa, the College of Public Health is still relatively young as a collegiate unit. What are your thoughts on its first 14 years and your hopes for its future development?

The college has been blessed with exceptionally talented leadership in its first two deans, Jim Merchant and, currently, Sue Curry. While still relatively young on our campus, the college has assembled an impressive cadre of faculty and staff and achieved significant progress on a number of fronts to garner a top 20 ranking among the nation's best public health graduate programs by U.S. News and World Report. And, of course, the construction of a beautiful new collegiate home on our campus serves as a fitting testimonial to the college's rising national stature. In addition, the college has created remarkable growth in its faculty complement, research funding, and student enrollment since its inception in 1999. Indeed, external research funding topped \$51 million in 2012, drawing in more research funding, on a per faculty basis, than any other collegiate unit on the UI campus.

I am particularly delighted that, under the leadership of Health Management and Policy Department Head Keith Mueller, the college has engaged in an expanded health services research initiative which can fill an important unmet need in our health science center. I am also confident that the college will continue to build upon its solid record of success in serving the citizens of Iowa and beyond to become more broadly recognized as the impressive state and national resource that it has clearly become.

What advice would you offer to help the college achieve at these levels?

First, in my view, the college should honor and strive to maintain the high-quality leadership with which it is currently blessed. Second, I am hopeful that the college and university will continue to make strategic investments in additional faculty and programs that address emerging state and national challenges in public health, including such priorities as community health and wellness, the aging population, agricultural health and safety, bioterrorism, and rising levels of obesity. Building multidisciplinary collaborations and coalitions on our campus, with local and state governments, and with industry and other academic centers will be increasingly important to effectively address these very complex issues and to translate relevant research findings into health policy and practice.

In order to support the infrastructure necessary to advance the college's vital mission, strong efforts to strengthen legislative, corporate philanthropic, and alumni support in these times of stressed tax resources will be imperative. Fortunately, the college has developed a remarkable record of achievement and goodwill which will facilitate these and other worthy pursuits of essential resources for continuing development of the college in the years ahead.