

SPOTLIGHT: *Tracy Schroepfer*

Q: What is your professional or volunteer background?

A: I have worked or taught in the field of aging since 1989. I have a Master's degree in Gerontology and one in Social Work, and at the age of 49 earned a dual doctorate in Social Work and Sociology—both with a focus on health and aging. Throughout my life, I have volunteered in nursing homes and other venues. I also worked as a hospice social worker while earning my doctorate. Since earning my doctorate, I have served as a professor teaching, mentoring and conducting research. My research focuses on improving the care provided to older adults who are terminally ill by determining the best strategies for meeting their psychosocial, cultural and spiritual needs. I also focus on reducing the health disparities faced by medically underserved communities in Wisconsin. In regard to my service, I serve on a number of national boards: Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work (AGESW) Board, Social Work and Hospice Palliative Care Network Board, National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care Committee, and the National Quality Forum Geriatrics and Palliative Care Standing Committee. I also co-chair the national AGESW/Pre-dissertation Fellows Program that seeks to train and support doctoral students whose focus is on aging.

Q: What do you like to do when you're not volunteering for Capitol Lakes?

A. I love teaching students about aging and the social justice issues that arise for older adults. Even if my students do not plan to work with older adults, I want to be certain they unlearn the stereotypes and myths that prevail in our society regarding what it means to age and to be an older adult. My heart lies with teaching and mentoring students about aging.