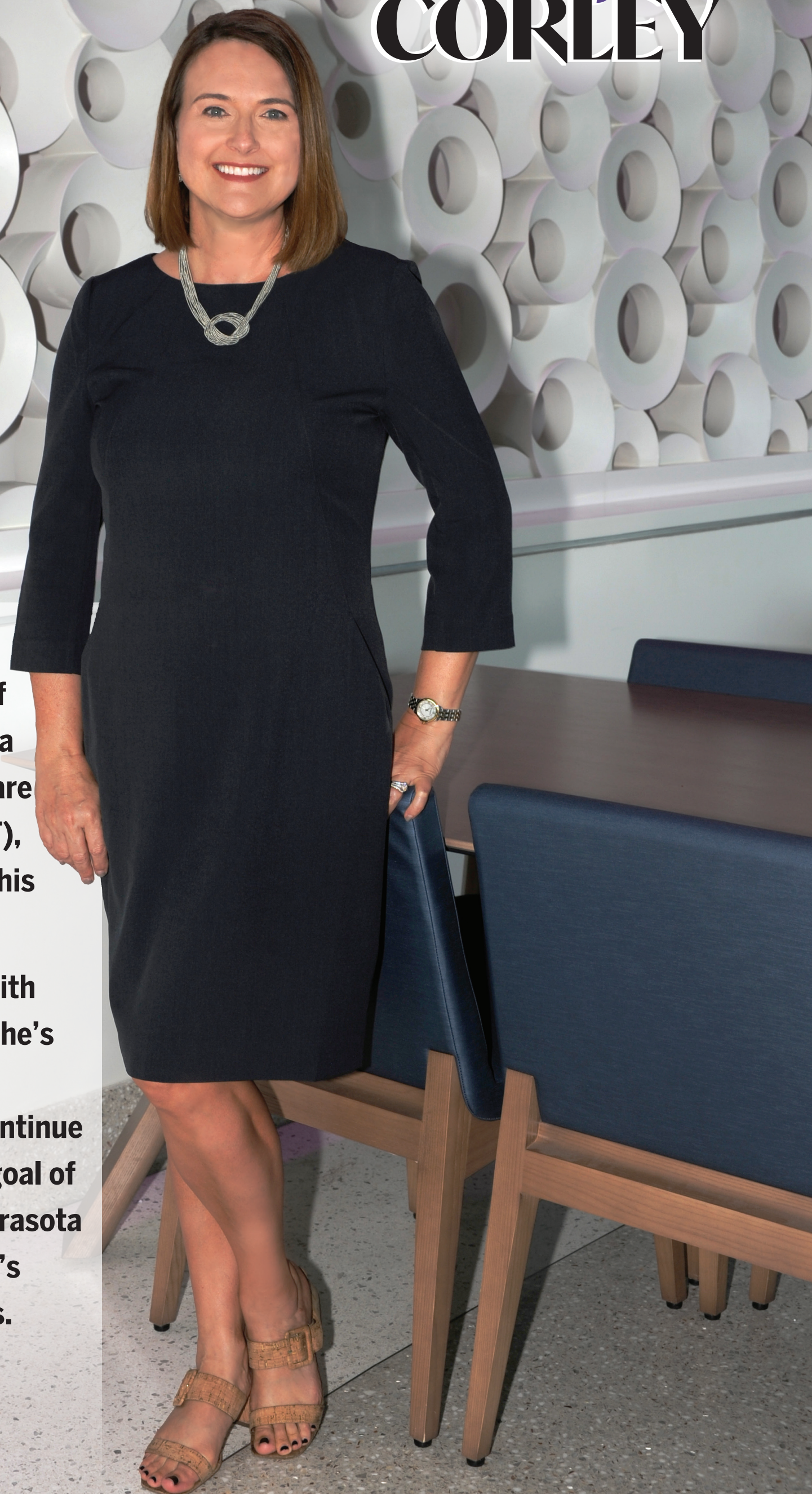


Stacey CORLEY

She's the President of the Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation (SMHF), coming on board this past September. Long associated with Ringling College, she's using her skills at philanthropy to continue the Foundation's goal of helping to fund Sarasota Memorial Hospital's many new projects.



Sarasota Memorial Hospital has undergone tremendous growth and made many progressive changes in the past few decades. The campus most of us are familiar with sits on US 41 on the same ground where it started back on Nov. 2, 1925, when the 32-bed Sarasota Hospital opened on Hawthorne Street. It now has 839 beds.

So the largest and oldest hospital in our area will be turning 100 in 2025. The Hospital, if you read its history, has always been about growing and expanding - mirroring the growth as well as expectations of the community here.

But it has also shown a steady commitment to advancing - not merely updating - its services such as openings of their Rehabilitation Pavilion (2017), a 65-acre medical campus in Venice (2021), and the 8-story inpatient and surgical Oncology Tower for The Brian D. Jellison Cancer Institute (2021).

The latter project is being done in phases and started with the Radiation Oncology Center on University Parkway (2020). Coming up is the Outpatient Cancer Pavilion (where Cape Surgery Center stands) and later the Cancer Center at SMH-Venice.

In 2022, SMH broke ground on the Cornell Family Behavioral Health Pavilion, a \$71 million, 95,000-square-foot facility for those with mental health challenges which will be built on the SMH-Sarasota Campus at the corner of Osprey Avenue and Hawthorne Street.

Note: this is an edited down list since there are so many new buildings, additional services and new physicians, not to mention the many awards SMH has won for patient care, safety, its billing and many other things under the leadership of president and CEO, David Verinder, who has been on board since 2014.

A key partner in the hospital's continuing push to provide state-of-the-art care and services is the Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation (SMHF) which welcomed a new president this past September.

Her name is Stacey Corley who was long associated with Ringling College. Why the move away from the education to healthcare? Healthcare, she explains, was her first "professional role" when she worked for Bristol-Myers Squibb. Stacey explains that she "loves getting back into healthcare," adding as well, "it's a great time to be here" due to all the many projects going on and coming up.

The bulk of her career has involved philanthropy which not everyone quite understands. "On a plane you say, 'I'm a fundraiser' and people say, 'I hate asking for money,'" she notes. But Stacey's extensive experience and enthusiasm means she not only enjoys it, but is also really good at it.

The slightest of southern accents comes out in her speech that harkens back to her Mississippi roots. She grew up there and earned a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Bachelor of Professional Accountancy degree from Mississippi State University.

She then worked 10 years for Bristol-Myers Squibb in various roles including Senior Hospital Business Manager in Nashville and later Sarasota—the latter a place she knew very little about. She also spent time as a "stay at home" mom, raising two children with her husband, Michael, a consultant.

His job change brought them to Sarasota and Stacey began volunteering which led to her reentry into the workforce as Associate Director for Development at Florida State University Foundation/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

She then spent ten years at Ringling College of Art+Design, going from Senior Development Officer to Vice President for Advancement. There she led capital campaigns and worked with the College's President, Dr. Larry Thompson, raising the most money ever in

the school's history ("It was a team effort," she hastens to add, decidedly not wanting to take all the credit).

So Stacey was no stranger to hurricanes when Ian came alarmingly close to Sarasota just as she was starting at Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation. When SMH's Venice Hospital called SMHF asking for assistance it was initially a food-water-basics type of request.

The Foundation decided "to do something more impactful" and ended up helping over 1,000 SMH employees—160 who had been displaced by the hurricane, while others had serious or moderate damage to their homes. They were then able to apply for grants and receive assistance. Nearly \$1 million was raised for the Foundation's SMH Employee Hurricane Relief Fund aided by a \$250,000 gift from Eliza and Hugh Culverhouse.

"It was a team effort," she explains and donors were from the community as well as fellow hospital employees "who wanted to donate to help their coworkers. It speaks to the culture here," Stacey notes.

In November, SMHF's Rock the Roof event (delayed four times due to weather and Covid) took place also early in Stacey's tenure. The event raised funds for women's and children's services, including funds to purchase NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) beds that last only 7-10 years and cost \$45,000 each, she explains.

The latest fiscal year for the SMHF shows it to be its most successful ever with \$46 million raised. It's been "great to come to a place with such great successes," she notes, as Stacey will now be at the helm for the next fiscal year. And her calendar is full: the hospital gala is in January and the Women in Medicine event is in March. Supporting Stacey and the Foundation is a staff of 12.

The Foundation is in the unique position in that it can grant money. Since 1976, grants from the Healthcare Foundation, funded by many donors, have assisted SMH in "raising the bar for healthcare in our community," according to their website.

The Foundation's areas of focus are "patient care, technology, facilities, clinical education, and medical research," according to their website. Stacey is on the hospital's President's Council which keeps her informed of SMH's strategic plans.

Recently, the Healthcare Foundation awarded over \$18 million in grants (which is also a record) to support facilities, staff education, technology and patient care at SMH. For example, a grant of \$3.9 million will add six new inpatient rehabilitation rooms.

"The joy of giving is contagious," Stacey believes and adds, "I'm energized by it. I've always had a passion for helping people."

That energy and passion will go towards future projects such as SMH's planned new hospital in North Port, to be constructed on a 32-acre site near I-75. Why so much expansion you may ask? SMH manages more than one million patient visits a year.

And one of those "visits" was by Stacey herself who was in SMH for Covid-related dehydration. During the pandemic, "staff sacrificed their lives," she notes. And again, the community responded with over \$2 million raised "immediately," she notes, for critical needs such as PPE, masks, oxygen, rapid testing and more, before government funding came in.

The generosity of people like the Jellison and the Cornell families, the SMH staff and donors in the community all add up to a community taking pride in itself as reflected in its community hospital. "It's significant work. I am making a difference with this team and Sarasota Memorial Hospital staff and donors." ❧

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