

OHIO PATIENT NETWORK

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Mary Jane Borden

“Measure each day by what you accomplish.”

Taking my favorite saying to heart, I have structured my life around these few wise words. With them whispering in my ear, I have:

- Earned a Bachelors Degree in Art and Psychology from Otterbein College.
- Earned an MBA from the University of Dayton.
- Earned the prestigious Accredited in Public Relations (APR) certification from the Public Relations Society of America.
- Analyzed all aspects of the pharmaceutical market for nine years as a Research Analyst for Adria Laboratories, in its day the largest marketer of cancer therapy drugs in the U.S.
- Served six years as Business Manager for DrugSense/MAP, a 501(c)(3) virtual organization dedicated to accuracy in the media concerning drug policy.
- Co-founded and served as President and Treasurer of the Ohio Patient Network (OPN), which provides networking, education, and support to patients who use cannabis therapeutically in the State of Ohio.
- Co-founded and served as Secretary of OPN’s sister Ohio Patient Action Network formed to lobby for medical cannabis legislation in Ohio.
- Served as past President and Treasurer of the Columbus Chapter of Women in Communications, as well as its sister 501(c)(3) Columbus Matrix Foundation.
- Married to Chuck Borden for over 30 years.
- Raised our son Matt, now a junior majoring in Political Science at The Ohio State University.
- Composed the comprehensive analysis of cannabis policy called “The People Have Spoken: Medical Marijuana Public Opinion Polling 1996-2002”.
(<http://www.ohiopatient.net/v2/content/view/80/89/>)
- Penned the condemnation of modern day discrimination, “Chemical Bigotry,” which was published by the Disinformation Company in the compilation *Under the Influence*.
(<http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v02/n000/a314.html>)
- Drawn/painted over 50 works of art in such mediums as pencil, pen/ink, and acrylic.



This list names just a few of my endeavors. In a nutshell, I’m a wife, a mother, a professional, and an activist. If it could be said that I have an ‘aholism’, it might be work, for I have always felt that my gifts and talents were meant for creating beauty, making things happen, and taking care of others.

I also consider myself to be a fairly conservative person, a conservative defined as one who avoids risk. Thus, I have managed to evade such obstacles as poverty, alcoholism, drug abuse, lifestyle diseases, obesity, and physical abuse, to name a few. I feel that I’ve led an honorable, productive, thoughtful, and giving life. I hope my lifetime of accomplishments speaks for itself. In all I attempted, I strove for excellence, giving my best effort and my best abilities.

Like many others, I suffer from a number of physical challenges. I was diagnosed during early childhood with a genetic bone disorder now termed Multiple Hereditary Exostosis (MHE). This disruption in the genetic code causes 'bumps' to grow at the ends of long bones. A very rare condition, MHE occurs in only 1-2 people per 100,000. Anyone with more than 20 bumps anywhere on their body is considered a severe case. I have 20 just on my right arm and hand.

In addition, I was recently diagnosed with a congenital heart defect that is believed to have caused stroke-induced brain damage. As a result, MS-like symptoms – numbness, tingling, spasticity, and pain – have become familiar sensations in my everyday life.

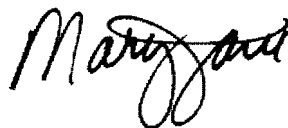
As one for whom accomplishment and excellence serve as a daily yardsticks, it may surprise you to learn that I'm a life-long cannabis consumer. At each stage – college, work, parenting, and activism – cannabis has been part of my life. When I read that scientists found cannabis to be neuroprotective – and considering that I sustained brain damage – I realized that, early on, I unconsciously made a very intelligent decision. Could it have been the neuro-regenerative properties of cannabis that allowed me to accomplish all that I have?

That may sound paradoxical to some who believe cannabis to be amotivational. But consider Irv Rosenfeld. Rosenfeld is a successful stockbroker from Boca Raton, Florida. He's also an accomplished, but disabled, sailor. More than 20 years ago, Multiple Congenital Cartilaginous Exostoses (also now called MHE) served as the basis for Rosenfeld's (no relation) admission to the FDA's Compassionate IND program, allowing him to legally use cannabis as medicine, a privilege that continues to this day.

The parallels are striking: two successful 50-somethings, both of whom have the same condition, use cannabis as a treatment for it, and have done so for more than 30 years. The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides 'equal protection under the law'. With these similarities combined with the rarity of the condition and presumed 'equal protection', when it comes to cannabis I have to ask: Why he and not me?

As you can see, I am an ambitious person. When I wanted something, I found a way to get it. When I desired beautiful artwork, I created it. When I sought to compete in the business world, I earned an MBA. When I needed to promote my design business, I led a communications group. And, when I tired of seeing therapeutic cannabis users, like me, labeled as criminals, I helped launch a non-profit and its sister lobbying organization to change perceptions of cannabis and cannabis law.

The prohibition of medicinal cannabis and the criminalization of those who use therapeutically should end. I look forward to adding this to my list of accomplishments.



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