



Yellowjacket Heroes – Kathleen Stone – class of 1974

What does a long-time OB-GYN physician do when it is time to retire? If you are Dr. Kathleen Stone (CHS Class of '74) you reinvent yourself and become a volunteer physician specializing in disaster response for Heart to Heart International! That is precisely what Dr. Stone did in mid-2019.

Kathleen attended Boone Elementary, Center South Junior High, and Center High School. Kathleen's love of outdoor living was nurtured early on as a Girl Scout, going on campouts and other adventures with Troop 956. Highlights of her outdoor experiences have included climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro and many medical mission trips to remote locations.

Her plan to work in health services was also formed early in life. When Kathleen told her 8th grade science teacher, Mr. Spies, that she wanted to heal sick people in the hospital as a nurse, his response was, "Why not be a doctor?". Thus was born the career of a physician and surgeon. Kathleen did her medical training at the UMKC in a groundbreaking six-year program that included both undergraduate and medical school. She is convinced that it was only the solid grounding in science that she received at Center High School from Ken Angell that allowed her to successfully complete the intensive program.

As Dr. Stone approached retirement in mid-2019, she knew that she wanted to continue to serve and that she wanted to continue her active involvement with outdoor living. In Heart-to-Heart International, she found an organization that fulfilled both needs. Kathleen took a wilderness medicine course and became part of a Disaster Response Team. In fall of 2019 she responded to the Abaco Island in the Bahamas for the relief efforts following Hurricane Dorian. Kathleen and her team spent two weeks living in austere conditions, providing a wide variety of medical and non-medical support to the people on the island.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Heart-to-Heart has provided medical support for at Hope Faith Mission, a community based service in Kansas City, MO, filling the gaps for other agencies that had to close or reduce service because of the virus. Kathleen works with homeless individuals who lack basic resources, helping them to survive in these difficult days of worldwide pandemic. Services are provided largely outdoors in tents due to a lack of other facilities. In addition to medical support, Hope Faith Missions provides much needed food and clothing.

Even in the midst of the crisis, Kathleen enjoys working with some very bright and energetic young medical professionals, giving her hope for a wonderful future for our community. And, she notes, there is a definite improvement in hand washing habits that will pay tremendous health benefits if we all continue that practice post-pandemic!

Thanks to Dr. Kathleen Stone and all our Yellowjacket Heroes for their service and caring for our communities.