

# Board of St. Louis hospital now chaired by Springfield attorney



For Alex Rabin, legacy is important.

Like his father, Mark Rabin -- and his twin brother, Robert, and brother-in-law, John Isaacs -- the Springfield attorney with the firm Sgro, Hanrahan, Durr, Rabin & Bruce LLP is a member of the Ansar Shrine, a center or chapter in Springfield that draws from Danville to Quincy east to west and from Bloomington to Litchfield north to south. Rabin's paternal grandfather, the late Harold Saul Rabin, was a member of the Medinah Shriners in Chicago.

Earlier this month, Rabin, 42, became the first Ansar Shriner to become chairman of the Board of Governors for Shriners Hospitals for Children-St. Louis, a pediatric hospital that specializes in orthopedics, plastic surgery and cleft lip and palate.

"I think it's important to represent the local Shrine well," Rabin said. "You definitely want to leave a good legacy in place."

Rabin has spent the last four years on the board's executive committee, first as treasurer, then as vice chairman. Rabin will be responsible over the next two years for overseeing the board's various committees and meeting with donors. He also is part of the joint conference committee that is responsible for the hospital's licensing and accreditation and will liaise with the national leadership board for the 22 Shriner-run hospitals in North America.

Just as important, Rabin said, is that he gets to spend time around patients and families at the hospital that treats children up to 18 years regardless of families' ability to pay and whose service area includes Springfield. The hospital, which is staffed by physicians and surgeons from the Washington University in St. Louis

School of Medicine and St. Louis Children's Hospital, has also done cutting-edge research, including in the field of regenerative medicine, that has led to accolades for best children's hospitals from U.S. News & World Report magazine.

"It's a special family atmosphere at the hospital," said Rabin, whose own family includes wife Emily and children, Jacob, 10, and Reese, 7. "I've fallen in love with it. When a lot of other doctors turn these children away, they'll make that miracle happen, regardless of pay."

### **'Caring person'**

Rabin was first recommended to the board in 2008 by Danny Coker, now a board member emeritus and past potentate of the Ansar Shrine. Coker, who owns Battery Specialists + Golf Carts in Taylorville, recalled being at the board meeting when it was announced that Rabin would take over as chairman.

"Everyone stood up and applauded," Coker said. "All of us are very proud of Alex. It's a great thing for him. It's the best thing for the kids."

Coker knew Rabin was "a very caring person and a great father," but he also knew him as someone who was "fiscally responsible."

The hospital has an operating budget of about \$20 million.

"He'll do a great job," Coker said. "He knows his obligations because he's seen the board work."

"We're elated to have Alex's expertise," said hospital administrator John Gloss. "He's not a micro-manager, but he understands the bigger picture and holds my feet to the fire."

Gloss said that Rabin's personality resonates with the hospital's purpose and mission. He added that he had personally witnessed Rabin interacting with patients and families.

"There's a special bond between families and Shriners," Gloss said. "Shriners become an extension of the family. I've heard him talk about (Shriners Hospital) bringing the childhood back to children."

One case Rabin remembers was 11-year-old Jean Patrickson, whose leg was badly injured in the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. After removing a seven-inch part of his tibia, an American doctor in Haiti with connections to Shriners Hospitals recommended that Patrickson be airlifted out of the country for further treatment, including leg lengthening.

"He came to our board lunches and threw out the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals game," said Rabin. "In those situations, you understand you're part of something bigger and better than yourself."

### **Family connection**

A graduate of Glenwood High School and the University of Illinois Springfield, Rabin had just returned to the area after completing his J.D. degree at Valparaiso University School of Law in 2004 when his father put petitions for a Master Mason in front of him. (All Shriners must be Masons.)

"He said, 'You need to sign here and you need to sign here,'" recalled Rabin, laughing. "My initial reaction was, 'I'm busy,' but I ended up going in and never looked back."

As a kid, Rabin said he remembered Ansar Shrine fundraisers like the circus and pancake breakfast and the unique fezzes or hats, but doing Shriner activities with his father and brother has made new memories.

"It's just a positive, fun way to spend time with family," Rabin said. "In this modern age, it's less common (to see that) in these fraternal organizations. There's no doubt (that my father) was a big impetus for joining the Shriners."

As the commitments pile up, Rabin admitted he's addressing balancing time with his family, work and the hospital. But he said he's sold on Shriners Hospitals' mission now more than ever.

"Being part of a first-class institution, I've learned how it's worked," Rabin said. "I've interacted with some of the top doctors and administrators in the world. They're sharp, smart people."

"You try to emulate them or pick up something from them. That's made me a better person."

For volunteer information at Shriners Hospitals for Children-St. Louis, visit [www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/Locations/stlouis/About/Volunteer](http://www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/Locations/stlouis/About/Volunteer) or call 314-692-6413.

--Steven Spearie contact: [spearie@hotmail.com](mailto:spearie@hotmail.com) or follow on Facebook or Twitter (@StevenSpearie).

\*\*\*

### **Shriners Hospitals' central Illinois connection**

Shriners Hospitals for Children-St. Louis has a deep connection to central Illinois. The specialty hospital, which opened in its new location on Clayton Road in 2015, receives 260 to 300 referrals annually from the Ansar Shrine "catchment" area, going from Quincy to Danville west to east and from Bloomington to Litchfield north to south, said Alex Rabin, a Springfield attorney and the hospital's new board chairman.

Dr. Chris Clem, a Springfield chiropractor, is also on the board, and Rusty Petty of Springfield is an associate board member and chairs the public relations/development committee.

Tammy Dugan Robbins, a Carlinville native and MacMurray College graduate, is the senior director of public relations for the Shriners' Hospitals' central region and is based in St. Louis. Max Montgomery, the manager of the St. Louis hospital's public and community relations, is a graduate of the University of Illinois Springfield's Public Affairs Reporting program, as is Robbins.

<http://www.sj-r.com/news/20170114/board-of-st-louis-hospital-now-chaired-by-springfield-attorney>