

Adams-Friendship Academic Hall of Fame 2024

Sherry Baumgart (1978)

How long does it take to be considered a native in a rural community? For Sherry Baumgart, becoming an Adams-Friendship native began at the age of three when her father, Otto, became an eighth-grade teacher and coach at Adams-Friendship Elementary School in 1963. Later in that decade, her mother Joyce, began her 30-year career teaching K-8 in multiple Adams-Friendship Schools. Both were the first-generation college graduates in their families—an accomplishment achieved by attending classes toward their degrees during the summers and at night—all while raising their own family. As Sherry commented, *“Getting a secondary education was never a question in my household.”*

Half day kindergarten at Adams Elementary was Dr. Baumgart’s first experience at school. Though kindergarten was *“just fine,”* moving into a full day in first grade—even with her dad teaching in the building was not her cup of tea! *“I did not want to come in from recess. He (my dad) would call my mom. She came to get me to go back into the school. I see the humor now but not back then!”*

Being strong-willed and knowing what you want in life is useful as an adult, but another matter when you’re six! Dr. Baumgart never had either parent as a teacher and remarked, *“It was definitely planned that way.”*

“Both my parents were my mentors and my tutors. Oh, how I would cry turning that page in the math book to a story problem. I had to work hard for my grades and did put in a lot of late nights doing homework. I'm very grateful that my parents were there to guide me academically. They made sure I took challenging classes to prepare me for any secondary education such as Algebra and Chemistry. I so enjoyed Biology and Human Biology. Animal Science opened a world I had not known. Home Economics taught me my sewing skills. Mr. Manning's class opened my eyes to current events and public speaking. I never had a teacher that did not want to help me if I needed it. I played volleyball and basketball. Those sports taught me teamwork.

I graduated from Adams-Friendship in 1978. I attended one year at UW-LaCrosse then received my Associate Degree with honors and Respiratory Therapy at Mid-state Technical College- Marshfield in 1981.

In 1981, I moved to Illinois to work at MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn for three years. I came back to Wisconsin and worked as a Registered Respiratory Therapist at Saint Joseph’s Hospital in Marshfield. I really enjoyed working with the heart surgeons and weaning their patients off the ventilator after surgery.

In 1986, I received a call from my previous boss in Illinois telling me about a new adventure-- that MacNeal Hospital was merging with Rush Hospital and Suburban Hospital to open a groundbreaking Ventilator Care Center in Hinsdale. I moved back to Illinois to be the lead Respiratory Care Practitioner. It was a new concept in taking in long term ventilator patients from other hospitals and bringing them to this new facility with the goal of getting them off the ventilator. I got to work with the German and California companies that made the ventilators we were using. Our concept was a team approach for those unique patients. Not only did we provide nursing and respiratory care, we also provided nutritional, mental, and physical therapies. We were becoming successful in getting long-term patients off the ventilators. The Ventilator Center is now known as RML Specialty Hospital and is a national leader in ventilator weaning."

The example of life-long learning and Dr. Baumgart's strong will and determination served her well when she made the decision to return to school and pursue a degree in chiropractic. She obtained her prerequisites and entered the National College in Lombard, Illinois now known as the National University of Health Sciences. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology and Doctor of Chiropractic degrees. Dr. Baumgart received accolades in the fields of Nutritional Counseling, Dissection of the Human Body, Theoretical and Practical Clinical Laboratory Diagnosis, X-ray and Spinography, and Physiotherapy.

In 1995, there was no question, Dr. Baumgart had achieved the status of Adams-Friendship native when she returned home and opened her own chiropractic office. She is highly regarded for her professionalism and her integrated approach to health. *"It has been rewarding to be home and helping patients with their discomfort and pain. I also spend a lot of time explaining to them any concerns of health insurance and breaking down the language in their lab and imaging reports so they understand them better. We go over vitamins and nutrition which I also am licensed in. We discuss lifestyle changes as well."*

When you open the local newspaper, you may see an ad stating *Baumgart Chiropractic is where patients are treated like family*. No statement could be more accurate. In April of 2020, she received an award from the Adams County Veterans Service Commission for her help saving the life of an elderly veteran neighbor who, without her acknowledging his circumstances, would not have survived. He is now a resident of an assisted living facility, and she visits often with his favorite treats.

The importance of education instilled by her parents has not been lost in her time back home. She served on the Adams-Friendship Board of Education for 15 years. *"I really love mentoring my high school age patients on secondary education whether that be going to college, tech or trade schools or even opening a business. I am very proud that some of the Adams-Friendship students went on and got their degrees in Respiratory Therapy and Chiropractic. I hope to be a role model for Adams-Friendship for my academic achievements-especially for our young*

women. *Work hard, follow your dreams, take your education seriously, stay focused, and believe in yourself no matter the obstacles.*” Dr. Baumgart continues her community service as an Election Day inspector for the city of Adams.

When a nomination for the Academic Hall of Fame begins with the sentence “I’m asking that my friend, Sherry Baumgart, be considered for the alumnus Hall of Fame” ... when the person making the request is both a friend and employee, you know you have someone special.

A song you might remember from a situation comedy in the 1980s, ***The Golden Girls***, was actually written in 1978. The title of this pop hit by Andrew Golden summarizes the Adams-Friendship community’s feelings for this “native” daughter—Dr. Sherry Baumgart.

*...Thank you for being a friend
Traveled down the road and back again
Your heart is true, you're a pal and a confidant
I'm not ashamed to say
I hope it always will stay this way
My hat is off, won't you stand up and take a bow?
And if you threw a party
Invited everyone you knew
You would see, the biggest gift would be from me
And the card attached would say
Thank you for being a friend..."*