



Meet Journey Board Member **Howard Gesbeck**



Education:

- B.B.A. in Accounting from University of Wisconsin - 1967
- J.D. (Juris Doctor) from University of Wisconsin Law School - 1970

Experience:

- Certified Public Accountant 1972 to 2011
- Partner - Williams, Young & Associates CPAs, LLP 1975 to 2004 (WYA merged with Wipfli in 2004)
- Partner - Wipfli, LLP 2004 to 2011 (Retired)
- Member of JMHC Finance Committee 2017 to Present



What other organizations have you been involved with?

During my accounting career, I worked almost exclusively with Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) and Governmental Agencies (states, counties, cities, and other local units of government) throughout the United States.

Clients included small local NPOs, statewide and national organizations, including the US Department of Labor. I was the senior partner of the lead CPA firm auditing the \$30 Billion US Department of Labor (this was the first ever audit of a Federal cabinet level department). I provided accounting, consulting, auditing and training services to hundreds of organizations. Training sessions focused on finance, governmental regulations and management of NPOs. I worked closely with representatives of various Federal agencies, including the Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy. In addition, I provided services to state agencies in over 20 states. Services included developing financial policies and procedures, accounting systems, audit guides, and monitoring protocols. Training was provided to government personnel, management of NPOs, members of governing boards, as well as finance, accounting and other staff. I was a member of various professional accounting committees at both the Federal and state level.



What are your strengths and skills?

I think that my most important skill is working with NPOs, which I have done for over 40 years. I have found that many NPOs were very good at providing services but frequently did not have management and finance capabilities in place to succeed over the long run. In fact, financial issues were the number one reason that most NPOs failed. During my career, I felt that it was important to identify problems, but that the focus should be on correcting the problems and developing systems that would prevent similar problems from occurring in the future. I also found that the board of directors of many NPOs were not adequately trained in financial areas and were not fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities to the organizations that they governed. It is very important that financial reports and information provided to a board of directors does not overwhelm them, but at the same time provides the information that the board needs to fulfill its obligations. Boards must be trained to understand financial information and given the confidence to ask the hard questions, that will lead to timely and meaningful decisions. During my career, I provided training in these areas to over 30,000 individuals representing hundreds and possibly thousands of different organizations.

Why Journey?

What is your connection to mental health and/or what do you want others to know about Journey? When I retired in 2011, I wanted to spend time with my family and develop some new hobbies, however, many friends and relatives were encouraging me to use my background to help local NPOs. In 2017, a friend who was a member of the board of directors of Journey Mental Health Centers asked if I would like to join JMHC's board. Although I lived in Madison since 1965, I had very little knowledge of this large organization. At first, I was hesitant, but as I learned more about the organization, I felt that I might be able to help them. The mission of JMHC was the deciding factor for me. All my life, I have personally dealt with issues involving depression and anxiety. I knew how important it was that there be an organization that could provide mental health services to those in need. If there was a way for me to help this organization, then I wanted to be a part of that.