

From Overland Park South 435 Website



The world truly is a stage for Overland Park resident John Vandewalle, M.D., M.B.A., B.Sc. (Hons). Vandewalle, a native of South Africa, grew up in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), was schooled in Johannesburg and performed his medical internship in Soweto. He has lived in Switzerland and spent significant time as a pharmaceutical executive in South America, Southeast Asia and Israel. Vandewalle came to Kansas City 20 years ago via Cincinnati with his wife, Jane, and their two daughters; he worked for the former Marion Merrell Dow where he had myriad titles including vice president of international business; he was the founder and CEO of Teva Marion Partners, now Teva Neuroscience; and he was president of clinical services in North America for Quintiles. Ten years ago Vandewalle left the corporate cocoon to explore a life-long desire to add “entrepreneur” to his brilliant professional curriculum vitae.

Never one to approach a life challenge with less than a full complement of goals and objectives, Vandewalle launched an eclectic group of businesses, including iNtouch Consulting, iNtouch Genomics, iNtouch Solutions and Ascend Books.

The hallmark of Vandewalle’s global résumé has always been significant involvement in the management of non-profit organizations and helping other entrepreneurs and students. Currently Vandewalle, a member and past president of the Rotary Club of Overland Park South, is the incoming District Governor for Eastern Kansas for the world’s first service club whose motto, “Service Above Self,” applies to a man who has spent tireless hours engaging the community to do work at home and abroad.

ON DISPELLING THE ROTARY MYTH: “The perception is that Rotary is full of graying old men. The whole face of Rotary has changed to a strong movement full of young people forming new-generation clubs. Rotary also reflects community diversity.”

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: “Rotary’s major focus worldwide is humanitarian-based. We’re comprised of more than 33,000 clubs across the globe totaling 1.2 million service-minded business and professional leaders—we promote goodwill and peace and encourage high ethical standards in all vocations. Currently our major initiative is to eradicate polio internationally.”

WHY THE ROTARY MATTERS TO JOHNSON COUNTY: “We have put on Kansas City’s largest free music festival for 21 years, Jazz in the Woods, where we raise more than \$100,000 annually for youth-centric charities such as Marillac, Lee Ann Britain Infant Development Center and the FOX 4 Love Fund. We work with other organizations throughout the year to support their efforts, such as Operation Breakthrough, and distribute dictionaries to schools to promote literacy.”

LEADERSHIP DEFINED: “During my tenure as District Governor I will concentrate on leadership and putting forth a strong push for workplace ethics. It’s vital that ethics become a part of the culture and decision-making process. I will also emphasize Rotary’s modern approach to world problems. Finally, I will highlight the absolute importance of bringing professional people together to network and the effect that has on helping improve the quality of life for millions of individuals—some of them right here in our community.”

words: Kimberly Winter Stern

photos: Paul Versluis