



*In honor of*  
**Mary G. Leary**  
President and CEO, Mather

A visionary who is always looking to what's next, Mary is changing the image and narrative of aging and senior living communities. Mary became involved in senior living nearly 40 years ago and has had a marked influence on the industry, achieving significant national recognition. She is an inspirational leader who has transformed Mather from a little known not-for-profit to a highly regarded, internationally known organization. Her drive to support older adults in living well is exemplified by her commitment to give back—building research and programs that are Nextraordinary™!

## Mary G. Leary

Mary grew up in the Finger Lakes Region of New York. Her dad served as a significant role model, having served as an officer in the army during WWII. He was seriously injured during the war, and despite being considered 100 percent disabled, lived life to the fullest, never taking himself too seriously. His zest for life, tenacity, resilience, and compassion for others was imprinted on Mary, becoming part of her DNA. Her dad emphasized the importance of a strong education. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business/Health Services Administration with honors from Cornell University and a master's degree in Health Policy and Management from Harvard University.



Upon graduation from Harvard, Mary moved to Washington, D.C. where she led strategic planning for hospitals and then joined Oxford Development Corporation where she oversaw development of senior living communities. She subsequently joined the senior living affiliate of Hyatt Corporation, rising to become COO of the company, where she oversaw 18 senior living communities, comprised of more than 6,000 residents. She also led technical assistance services and sales/marketing oversight for communities under development, valued at more than \$1 billion.



Mary joined Mather in 2002 as President/CEO, transforming Mather from a little-known not-for-profit to a highly regarded international leader with a reputation for innovation and successful business models. Mary is passionate about creating forward-thinking ideas through analysis of trends (insights) and critical thinking (foresights) that fuel “next” practices, providing better experiences for older adults and those who serve them. Her drive to support older adults in living well is exemplified by her commitment to give back – building research and programs that serve Mather and the industry. She inspires others to take organizations to new heights and supports current and upcoming generations embrace healthy living through wellness.

Mary oversees Mather Institute which identifies trends, conducts research, and shares education and information with senior living/senior services providers.

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Mather Institute has implemented research-based educational programs in all 50 states; provided wellness programs to employees of Fortune 100 companies in 14 countries; and assisted nearly 50 organizations in replicating Mather's Café Plus concept.

Mather's Community Initiatives create opportunities for older adults to age well wherever they live, providing offerings that spark creativity and meaningful connections, and create a sense of community. Mary's focus on creating Ways to Age Well<sup>SM</sup> has resulted in Mather growing from serving 8,400 older adults in 2001, to more than 200,000 served directly and indirectly (virtual touches). Under Mary's watch, Mather's endowment has grown from \$255 million to nearly \$700 million, enabling Mather to "punch above its weight."

Mary's determination has led to exceptional results, with Mather earning more than 350 awards for quality, innovation, research, and more. She is an inspirational leader who has sought to change the image and narrative regarding senior living communities and the people who live within them, helping people recognize that senior living offers one of the best options for living/aging well. In 2015, Mather led a national effort to rename CCRCs as "Life Plan Communities."

Mary is a visionary who is always looking to what's next. From publishing Mather's National Wellness Trends Report in 2002 to completing a landmark longitudinal Age Well Study in 2022, Mary seeks to serve those within Mather, and give back to the industry through research, tools and next practices. Initiating pilot projects within Mather and creating tools to share with other organizations, Mary and Mather have collaborated with hundreds of organizations to enhance the aging services field.

Through Mary's leadership, growth in funds supporting mission has enabled Mather to implement innovative wellness programs that have led to national recognition, including a community-at-large program that earned an ICAA Pinnacle Award



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(2006), the Erickson Foundation Award for Excellence in Positive Aging (2010), recognition as Illinois' Healthiest Midsize Employer (2013) and a Top 100 Workplace in Chicago (2010-2013), being named one of the 10 Best Small and Medium Workplaces in Aging Services by Fortune (2021), and recipient of an ICAA Pinnacle Award for top wellness community (2022).

Mather has also been recognized with the top "Quality Honor" in *McKnight's* inaugural Excellence in Technology Award Program (2012); Pathways to Greatness Award by CLA/LeadingAge for leadership, superior performance, distinctive impact, best practices and innovation, and the ability to inspire public trust and confidence (2012); American Seniors Housing Association recognition of Mather's national study of Adult Children of Residents Living in Life Plan Communities as a landmark study, bestowing the Prudential Real Estate Investors Award for Best Research Paper (2012); LeadingAge/AIA Citation Award for innovative design features and approaches for The Mather, Evanston (2011); U.S. Administration on Aging recognition of Mather's – More Than a Café as one of four national models (2009); LeadingAge Excellence in the Workplace Award (2007); California Wellness Foundation recognition of Mather's Café Plus model as one of the top 10 national examples in taking creative action to serve older adults (2006); and LeadingAge Excellence in Practice Award (2004).

Mary received the Agent of Change Pinnacle Award from *McKnight's* in 2023 which honors top industry veterans who set new standards, drive change, and inspire others. In 2022, Mary was recognized as one of the Top 5 Wellness CEOs in North America, receiving an ICAA Pinnacle Award for her outstanding

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dedication to fostering a thriving wellness culture, and was presented with the 2021 Honoring Excellence Leadership in Action by LeadingAge Illinois for her outstanding commitment and dedication to Mather's staff and residents. In 2020, Mary was recognized as an Industry Changemaker by *Senior Housing News* for driving the future of senior living. Additionally, Mary was named a Hall of Honor recipient in the inaugural *McKnight's* Women of Distinction program in 2019. She was the first CEO profiled in *Senior Housing News* Leadership Series in 2016 and one of three women CEOs profiled in 2013. Mary was featured in an in-depth profile by American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) in 2021 and will be featured in ASHA/Senior Care Investor publication: *The Entrepreneurial Spirit of Seniors Housing in 2023, Thoughts, Stories and Lessons on Leadership*.

Mary is a member of the executive board of the American Seniors Housing Association; the operator advisory board of the National Investment Center; the advisory board of Cornell Institute for Healthy Futures; and the Institute for Innovation, Strategy & Leadership, a national CEO think tank. Previously, she served on the board of Caring Communities Insurance Company, a Reciprocal Risk Retention Group, chairing its risk committee.

Mary is the founder of Novare, a "next generation" model of affiliation among high-quality, not-for-profit senior living providers in non-competing markets across the country. Novare is equivalent in size to the nation's third largest not-for-profit organization. Mary chaired Novare during its first 10 years. Mary's focus on wellness led Mather Institute to develop a new model of wellness that *Senior Housing News* said, "is a game-changing wellness model that brings a person-centric approach to a 40-year-old industry standard."

Mary has been happily married to Dr. Richard Lin, Jr. for 37 years and is grateful for his constant support. For Mary, this Hall of Fame recognition reflects the meaningful work of team members and industry colleagues who create Ways to Age Well.

