

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL BUSINESS JOURNAL

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WOMEN *in* BUSINESS HEALTH CARE & EDUCATION

KATHLEEN SKARVAN *Electromed Inc.*

PRESIDENT AND CEO, ELECTROMED INC.

Tenure: Over five years

Age: 61

Education: Bachelor of Arts, St. Cloud State University

Board memberships: Electromed Inc., St. Cloud State University Foundation, The CEO Roundtable of Minnesota

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Kathleen Skarvan leads a team charged with making people breathe easier. The president and CEO of New Prague-based Electromed Inc., best known for its SmartVest Airway Clearance System, is one of only a handful of women to serve as CEO of a publicly traded Minnesota-based company. Skarvan has been with Electromed, which generated about \$26 million in annual revenue during its most recent fiscal year, since 2012. She previously served as vice president of operations at OEM Fabricators in Woodville, Wis., and president of Hutchinson Technologies' disk drive components division. Skarvan attended St. Cloud State University and is a graduate of the Carlson School of Management Minnesota Executive Program. She is a member of the national and Minnesota chapters of WomenCorporateDirectors and Women Business Leaders in Healthcare and sits on boards for the St. Cloud State University Foundation and The CEO Roundtable of Minnesota. Last holiday season, Skarvan led Electromed in a partnership with a local food distribution center in New Prague to collect more than a half ton of food to serve area families.

– Mollee Francisco, contributing writer



MORE FROM SKARVAN ...

What are you known for? Courageous, straightforward and nimble leadership style; putting the right people together to form high-performing teams that accomplish goals that seem unachievable.

What do you work toward in your free time? Recharging my emotional and physical “batteries” with regular exercise; spending time with my husband, daughters, grandchildren, friends; and learning something new every day.

What was a turning point in your career? It was very early in my career, actually my first full-time job, working in an entry-level role at a high-tech manufacturing company. I met and observed these really smart and creative people all striving to be successful as a team, developing and manufacturing a product that added value to society. And, I said to myself, “I want to aspire to be like them,” and it was truly life changing, propelling me in a direction I had never imagined.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? A flight attendant: The role seemed so glamorous and I had ruled out being a nurse or a teacher, which were the careers most available to women at the time.

Who is a woman you admire and why? This is an easy one, my mother. She provided expectations and opportunities for education and a career for her four daughters (and one son) that she didn't have. Her love, drive and sacrifice were an inspiration to me and all of my siblings. And at 88, she is still inspiring us!

What's the biggest challenge facing women in the workplace today? Ourselves. Don't let society and the media form your views on our role in the workplace and with our families. We are not victims. Women have more choice, more opportunity than ever and we must grab what we want without apology.