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New research firm CEO never stops learning *by Kevin James Shay* Staff writer

When she was young, Anne Lindblad was interested in medicine, even becoming a physician, until she came face-to-face with the inevitable frog to dissect in high school biology class.

"I mutilated that frog," recalled Lindblad, who recently was promoted to CEO and president of The Emmes Corp., a Rockville research company that conducts studies for clinicians and biomedical scientists. "That dashed my hopes of becoming a physician."

But math was another of her likes, and after growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, she enrolled at Hollins University in Roanoke, Va. "It was one of the few colleges in the area that offered a degree in statistics back then," Lindblad said.



Bill Ryan/The Gazette Anne Lindblad, PhD, president of the EMMES Corporation in Rockville, on Friday August 16, 2013.

After earning a statistics degree there, she went to the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond and obtained a master's in biostatistics. She started teaching at the all-girls Foxcroft School in Middleburg, Va., where she began a statistics course.

While in graduate school, Lindblad met Donald Stablein, who earned a doctorate in biostatistics from the Medical College of Virginia and started working for Emmes as a staff statistician in 1980, some three years after the company formed. Stablein eventually became president of Emmes.

"We kept in contact, and he asked me if I wanted a job," said Lindblad, who earned a doctorate herself in statistics from George Washington University.

She joined Emmes in 1982 and worked her way to vice president in 1992 and executive vice president in 2006. She has led major projects in ophthalmology, oncology, transplantation, neurology, stroke, traumatic brain injury and more.

"I'm in a field where you never stop learning," Lindblad said.

Emmes is in good shape, said Stablein, whom Lindblad succeeds.

"Anne and I have been partners for more than 30 years," he said. "I'm leaving the company in excellent hands. We have an outstanding leadership team, a talented and energetic employee base, and a 35-year history with long-term client relationships."

Steady growth

When she started at Emmes, the research firm had about 15 employees and now numbers 370, most in the company's headquarters in downtown Rockville. The company has small offices in Canada and India that help further its research.

"We've added people at a steady pace," Lindblad said. "We haven't had to lay off anyone, even during the recession."

She attributed that to having strong, long-term relationships with the federal government and private clients. About 80 percent of Emmes' work comes from the government, such as Bethesda-based National Institutes of Health, and 20 percent from industry. She hopes to expand in some areas, such as the company's genomic and bioinformatics expertise and platforms.

Emmes hasn't lost any contracts due to federal sequestration budget cuts, but agencies have delayed some work, she said.

"We try to make sure we are operating in as lean a fashion as we can," Lindblad said.

The company recently signed a 10-year lease at its headquarters on North Washington Street, expanding the space to almost 100,000 square feet. "Our new lease signals the next chapter of success," Lindblad said.

kshay@gazette.net