

(This story first appeared in the The Business News – Northeast Wisconsin edition; April 16, 2007. Name change June, 12, 2007, from Monroe Prosthetics to Monroe BioTechnology.)

‘LITTLE GIRL WHO COULDN’T WALK’ WAS INSPIRATION FOR MONROE PROSTHETICS

Reader’s Digest Article led Green Bay Man to start area business

By Nancy Barthel of the Business News

David Jolly’s world has come full circle these past three decades. The Green Bay native had recently graduated with a degree in Communication Theater arts from St. Thomas University in St. Paul Minnesota, when he came across a readers digest article about “The little girl who couldn’t walk.” The article told the story of a small child who lost both legs below her knees and how prosthetics had changed her life.

After reading that article he decided to volunteer his service at Wisconsin Orthopedics in Green Bay. When a job opening came for a technician, he applied and got it. After working for three years he realized that the field of prosthetics was his calling.

Today he is COO of Monroe Prosthetics and Orthotics, which has offices at 342 S. Webster Ave. Green Bay WI, and 1818 N. Meade St. Appleton WI. He is in partnership with Ken Uebele, a physical therapist who is president of the business.

Jolly smiles with pride as he speaks of a long time patient who is his own “little girl who couldn’t walk.” Her name is Megan, and after losing part of one leg and her other foot in a train accident more than 12 years ago, she herself is a freshman at St. Thomas University, looking forward one day to being an elementary school teacher.

The work done at Monroe Prosthetics and Orthotics changes lives.

“It’s not something I grew up thinking about,” said Jolly of his career. “But,” he said “I was intrigued by the process... How do we do what we do?”

Their work is part artistry; the rest relies on computerization, hydraulics, and mechanics. Each individual’s situation is different and most of the prosthetics and orthotics they use are developed in their in house laboratory. Fourteen employees work between both clinics.

Customization is what it’s all about, says Jolly. “The first time somebody gets up to walk again is a neat moment. There are often tears.”

After his initial three years of work in Green Bay, Jolly went on for advanced study to become a certified prosthetist and recently Fellow of the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists. He returned to Green Bay to partner in the business in 1988 with Uebele. It first opened on Monroe Street in Green Bay- hence the name, Monroe Prosthetics and Orthotics.

Their business deals with two sciences, orthotics and prosthetics. “The two disciplines are pretty closely aligned,” said Jolly.

Prosthetics involves producing an artificial limb or other body part for function or cosmetic reasons – or both – and it may mean lifetime interaction with a client because of the body changes through the years. “We see such a wide variety of people and needs,” he said.

“Orthotics is a lot shorter timeline of interaction with patients,” Jolly explained.

Orthotics is a science that deals with appliances or othoses that provide external support to help in the prevention and correction of deformities that may hinder a person’s ease of movement. An example is an arch support. Orthotics can also aid in support and alignment to help improve function of a moveable part of the body. These include braces or splints.

It can also mean an orthotic helmet for an infant. MPO offers treatment for a condition known as “Plagiocephaly,” which is the asymmetrical formation of an infant’s head. It’s something that may be the result from positioning in a car seat.

After three months of age a neurologist or neurosurgeon can refer an infant to them. The treatment involves the use of a padded helmet to guide the growth of the cranium toward symmetry and, said Jolly, has proven to be effective for infants’ ages 4-12 months.

Computer scanner technology aids in the proper orthotic helmet for each infant. With each curve of the head unique to each individual patient, he describes the technology MPO uses as “cutting edge.”

Jolly said they recently used some of the most advanced technology available in prosthetics today to develop an \$80,000 prosthetic arm for Green Bay Catholic school teacher Jamie Delikowski. The St. Bernard religious education school teacher, now 34, was seven when his coat got caught in a power take-off shaft while his family was harvesting corn on his parents’ dairy farm in Galloway, WI, just south of Wittenberg.

He lost his arm and his leg was crushed as well.

Delikowski originally used a prosthetic device only briefly because of its weight and discomfort.

But with his marriage five years ago to wife Dorey and now with two children in his life, Delikowski decided to look into how prosthetics had changed.

“We don’t see this very often,” Jolly said of Delikowski’s amputation. He described it as “high level” and though he has a shoulder blade, there is no shoulder joint. “He adapted to life as a one-armed person and he did it very well. He accomplished many things in his life,” Jolly said, including becoming a state champion butterfly swimmer.

But Delikowski told Jolly there were certain tasks he wanted to be able to do more easily as a parent and a husband. “The classic thing he wanted to do was hang a picture,” said Jolly.

“There’s more capabilities in this day and age for upper extremity prosthetics,” Jolly said. For a period of six months during 2006, Delikowski and MPO teamed up to develop his personalized electronic prosthetic arm.

Jolly emphasized that an individual is a member of a team as decisions are made on what design a prosthetic will take. Often the person becomes a client while he or she is still in the hospital after the loss of the body part.

The goal always is to bring normalcy back to the person’s life, he said.

Jolly is particularly proud of the prosthetic silicone breast offered by MPO. They are available at one-tenth the cost of surgical reconstruction, said Jolly. The individualized design allows for the prosthetic to adhere securely to the client so she can live a “normal lifestyle,” said Jolly, even enjoying activities like swimming. Great care is taken to make the prosthetic look as natural as possible and this, he said is huge for women who have had mastectomies.

Clients with conditions such as diabetes who need to pay attention to their feet also use services of MPO. A line of specially-crafted footwear is available so that the pressures on the feet are distributed properly, thus preventing the formation of dangerous sores.

The field of prosthetics always sees advances when the country is in military conflict, said Jolly, and its first significant growth in America came after the Civil War, he said. “Wars have been the impetus in the growth for prosthetics,” he said. He said that technological advances are already being made during the Iraq war.

The hardest thing about their field, Jolly said, is the complexity with working with third party payers. Yet, he said, they never turn away anyone because of the inability to pay. The business has partnered with service organizations to help pay for prosthetics for clients, including a young man brought over from Africa who they provided an orthoses for. He is a teacher in Africa.

Now, years into a career that Jolly never anticipated, each day is filled with the individual stories of triumph over adversity at the clinics he cofounded. “It’s very rewarding. It’s what I thought it would be when I read the story about the little girl who couldn’t walk.”