

Author Bio
Karen Gedney MD
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Karen grew up hiking and skiing in the Catskill Mountains in New York State. Her parent's life was deeply affected by WWII. Karen's grandmother, along with her mother, and her seven siblings, tried to escape when the Russians invaded Germany. Karen's mother and her family spent years surviving starvation, lice, freezing and being held prisoners under the Russians. That trauma caused her mother to be overprotective and isolating which may have caused Karen to be painfully shy and feel socially awkward.

From the time she was 9 years old Karen dreamed about being a doctor. She read countless stories about doctors, they enthralled her because in those stories was adventure, danger, romance and methods to take care of the underdog. Part of the allure of medicine was that, as a doctor, people would need her help.

To finish medical school Karen received a scholarship. In exchange she was required to spend 4 years caring for the underserved. She was directed to Northern Nevada Correctional Center where she became the first woman doctor to serve at a men's prison. Before the 4 years were up she determined to turn her work as a prison doctor into a career. Karen saw the difference she could make in a population that needed a doctor who would stand up for them and protect them from abuses of power. Karen shares, "The most challenging experience I faced in the prison was being held hostage by an inmate on Friday the 13th October 1989. He was one of my patients. Being assaulted and raped by that inmate, and then seeing him killed by the SWAT team affected me emotionally, and made me doubt myself. I had to deal with shock, anger and then find forgiveness."

After Karen retired from the prison system, she dedicated herself to prison reform. Karen also wrote her memoir, *30 Years Behind Bars: Trials of a Prison Doctor*. Karen states, "I wanted to share my experience about being a woman working in a hyper-male environment, surviving personal trauma as well as why the US needs to approach prison reform holistically and with compassion." Karen discusses with great vulnerability such diverse topics as overcoming trauma, dealing with; racism, mental illness, HIV, executions, cancer, dying, regret, the power of redemption, education and poetry.

For years, in addition to being a prison doctor Karen and her husband Clifton, mentored children who had parents in the prison system. Since her husband suddenly passed away in February of 2019, Karen still mentors those children. Today she lives with a roommate, one of the inmates she became acquainted with while working in the prison. Her day consists of working out in the gym while listening to podcasts, and walking for an hour. She takes classes in ballroom dancing for fun. Karen sits on the boards of Ridge House and the board for the Nevada Prison Education Project, which places college courses in the prison. Karen Gedney is relentless in working on prison reform including working with the team to abolish the death penalty in Nevada. To that end she gives interviews and lectures on the Holistic prison model.

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Selby Ink

-- for immediate release --

Will Holistic Prison Reform Save Society?

Staunton, VA) Inequality is institutionalized in the prison systems. The root source of this inequality is often racial and class disparity which produces a generation of social outliers whose collective experience consists of a revolving door of recidivism often based on a lack of opportunity. Most Americans agree that there must be change if we are to achieve an effective justice system that protects and enhances public safety while respecting human dignity. Prison reform advocates that public safety is not produced by punishment alone. Robust public safety grows when people have opportunity, order and predictability in their lives. Crime is just one danger, joining unemployment, poor health, and family instability as threats to an orderly life.

Karen Gedney retired from the prison system and became an activist in the holistic prison reform movement. Karen wrote her memoir, *30 Years Behind Bars: Trials of a Prison Doctor*, so that readers could understand the incarcerated through the eyes of someone trained and oriented to heal, not judge and punish. The topics in *30 Years Behind Bars* are as diverse as surviving as a woman in a male-dominated hierarchy, overcoming personal trauma, the issues of racism, mental illness, HIV, executions, and cancer. The overriding theme of the memoir is the power of compassion, redemption, education and the arts.

Doctor Karen Gedney is an internal medicine specialist who was placed in a male medium security prison in 1987 to complete a four year work exchange for a scholarship she received for medical school. Against all odds she stayed three decades and turned it into her calling. Today Karen continues to speak to increase awareness and inspire individuals and groups to become involved in prison reform. Karen lives near Carson City, Nevada and is currently speaking out against Nevada's death penalty.

For more information contact Mari Selby 540-851-0864

30 Years Behind Bars: Trials of a Prison Doctor
Karen Gedney MD

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Available through Amazon and <https://www.discoverdrg.com/>

Karen Gedney MD
CV <https://www.discoverdrg.com/>

EDUCATION

2017 - Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine, ABAARM I 1990 - Internal Medicine, American Board of Internal Medicine
1984 - Doctor of Medicine, University of Cincinnati Medical School
1979 - BA, Clark University, MA

AWARDS

2019 - Service to Society Award, Clark University
2002 - Best in the Business, American Correctional Association 2000 - Heroes for Humanity Award, State of Nevada
1991 - Director's Award, National Health Service Corps
1990 - Director's Award, Nevada Department of Corrections

SELECT SPEECHES

2021 - Indivisible Nevada, non-partisan political group - 'The need to abolish the death penalty'
2021 - United Methodist Women's Group of NV, Calif - 'Social Action needed to reduce racial and social injustice'

2020 - Sheriff's office, Carson City, NV - 'Prison Reform'
2020 - Speaker at Annual Nevada's Primary Care conference - 'Racial and Social Injustice Issues and Health Disparities'
2019 - Ollie Redfield Campus, Reno - 'The Aging Prison Population'
2019 - Sierra College, Truckee, NV - 'Racial and Social Injustice in Prisons'
2019 - Keynote Speaker for WACHSA, Western American Correctional Health Services Association, Sacramento, CA - '30 Years Behind Bars'
2019 - Distinguished Speaker, Truckee Meadows College - 'Holistic Prison Reform'
2018 - Key note speaker for Annual Fundraiser for Big Brother Big Sister Event 'Big Heart, Big Impact'
2018 - AAUW American Association of University Women - 'Prison Reform'

SELECT MEDIA INTERVIEWS

(for a more detailed list visit <https://www.discoverdrg.com/>)

2021 Women's Radio with Pat Lynch "Trials of a Prison Doctor" 2020 Podcast with Dr. Mark Goulston on being a prison doctor 2019 Radio interview with Noah Glick at KUNR
2019 Radio show with Gina Hill, Carson radio

2019 Podcast with Mark Hernandez at University of NV, Reno
2019 Radio interview with Peter Padilla at Sage International, Reno, NV

Interview Questions for 30 Years Behind Bars: Trials of a Prison Doctor and Karen Gedney MD

1. Why did you end up in a male prison as a doctor?
 2. What was your first day like in prison?
 3. How did the male inmates treat you? How did custody officers treat you?
 4. You started your career in 1987. Can you give us some examples of how you dealt with the AIDS crisis in the prison?
 5. What was a key thing that helped you stay behind bars for 30 years?
 6. What did your husband think of your work at the prison? Did he get involved?
 7. You graphically describe the experience of being taken hostage. How did that happen and what happened when you were taken hostage?
 8. You were back at work three days later after the hostage situation. Why did you do that? What was the response from inmates, from the staff?
 9. What can you say to the women in our audience who have experienced a horrific situation like yours?
10. You refer to yourself as a survivor of a “man’s world”. What does that mean to you? What can you say to women who are in similar situations?
11. Prisons are usually run by a male dominated hierarchy. What if any benefit do you see in changing that paradigm?
12. According to the report [Drugs in Prison](#) published by The Centre for Social Justice, “social justice and criminal justice go hand in hand. What are your thoughts on the inequities of the prison system?
13. We understand that you are an activist involved in abolishing the death penalty. Can you tell us about the initiative and your teams efforts?
14. Why did you decide to write a book and position yourself as a prison reform activist when you retired?
15. Where will you be speaking next?
16. What will people learn by going to your website <https://www.discoverdrg.com/>

