



20 QUESTIONS

April

Celebrating 20 Years of ACS

ACS is 20 years old! We're celebrating this milestone with a game of "20 Questions," featuring some of the people who've inspired us the most during our two decades in the field. Each month, we'll highlight a few answers from each of our featured guests.

Judy Van Ginkel, Ph.D., Retired President, Every Child Succeeds and Professor Emeritus, University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

Dr. Judy Van Ginkel combines intelligence and compassion in powerful ways. In addition to serving for nearly 20 years as professor of pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, she created and led a groundbreaking home visiting program, Every Child Succeeds, in 1999, which served more than 57,000 people before she retired from the helm in 2021. Her new book, [*Chasing Success: The Challenge for Nonprofits*](#) (CLIPS, 2023) was listed on [LinkedIn for Nonprofits](#) as one of the top 8 "must reads."

1 What's your philosophy for life?

Strong relationships, founded on trust and truthfulness, are key to happiness.

2 Best book you've read lately?

Necessary Trouble: Growing Up at Midcentury, by Drew Gilpin Faust, first woman president of Harvard (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2023). I liked it because she's about my age and articulated perfectly what life was like growing up in the 50s and 60s. She's brave and smart, and has a lot to say about equity.

3 Something you've done in your work that you're most proud of?

Providing high-quality home visiting to at least 57,000 people through Every Child Succeeds

4 Favorite watering hole?

Any place that is exotic and overseas.

5 One public policy you'd change?

I'd like to see policies that put stronger emphasis on the health of children 0 to 3, because research has shown us that the first three years of life are more important than any 3 that follow. If we can give all children a better start, it will alleviate many of the problems that come later.

6 What made you choose your career path?

I'd always been interested in things related to good health and medicine. After undergrad studying literature and history, I became interested in healthcare (it's a family thing). In grad school, I realized that I wanted to help improve the healthcare system and services available for children.



- 7 A favorite mentor?**
John Pepper, former president of Proctor & Gamble. He's both a friend and a colleague, and one of the wisest people I've ever encountered.
- 8 Rock, rap, or country?**
I'm from West Virginia—it's always country!
- 9 Dogs vs. cats: who rules and who drools?**
Always dogs! I think they're special people.
- 10 Favorite thing about working with ACS?**
They have a strong commitment to their work, do what they say they're going to do, and bring both insight and wisdom to engagements.
- 11 A skill that might surprise us?**
I'm able to connect with NEARLY anyone, regardless of where they fall on any of the scales by which we rate each other.
- 12 Biggest "win" or "lesson learned" of your career so far?**
Never give up!
- 13 Favorite vacation spot?**
I can't name just one, because I like to visit places that are new and different to experience different culture and different landscapes.
- 14 Ideal weekend activities?**
Once you retire, it's hard to tell weekend from weekday, but I always love activities with friends and family.
- 15 Pet peeve?**
Dishonesty.
- 16 Advice for rising leaders in your field?**
You have to be tenacious, well-organized and understand how to work with people. Know that compromise doesn't mean that others do it your way.
- 17 If you could magically become an expert in anything, what would it be?**
Psychiatry, because I would like to be able to understand people better.
- 18 Favorite holiday?**
Thanksgiving. It's family time and hasn't been unduly commercialized—and I love the food!
- 19 Country you'd live in if not this one?**
Probably England, but I've traveled to most countries in my 85 years and every time I come back and the Customs Agent says "welcome home," I get tears in my eyes.
- 20 Most recent thing that made you smile?**
Boomer, the Labrador Retriever next door. He always sits outside my kitchen door waiting to come in for a visit.