



Date: March 28, 2008

Letter to the Editor:

After J. Malcom Randall's passing on Wednesday, March 26, staff at WellFlorida Council flipped through our old newsletters from the 70s and 80s and one voice was clearly apparent. Mr. Randall's imprint on health planning in North Central Florida has been felt for decades.

Mr. Randall was one of the founding members of your local health planning council, then referred to as North Central Florida Health Planning Council (updated to WellFlorida Council in 2004).

In 1969, a group of physicians, hospital administrators and interested citizens organized WellFlorida Council in response to a federal mandate that called for community input in the planning of healthcare facilities. Randall spearheaded the effort and advocated for responsible health planning so that residents would have access to needed health services. Given the size and scope of the region WellFlorida Council serves, this was no small feat. WellFlorida Council serves 16 counties in North Central Florida – many of them rural – that spans over 11,054 square miles and serves over 1.4 million residents.

The role of health councils has evolved since its origins in 1969. WellFlorida shapes solutions to some of the most pressing healthcare issues through research, program development, and obtaining grants for community based programs, including Community Health Centers. We also are an umbrella for other nonprofits, including Healthy Start of North Central Florida, Central Healthy Start, North Central Florida Ryan White CARE Program, and the Rural Health Partnership of North Central Florida. For over 35 years, Mr. Randall played a major part in the evolving role of WellFlorida Council.

We'd like to share a fact about Mr. Randall that is perhaps not that well known. In 2003, Alachua County Commissioners declared June 2nd J. Malcom Randall Day. That same year, at a ceremony at WellFlorida Council, Randall was presented a resolution from the state of Florida honoring his many years of outstanding services and contributions to the citizens and veterans of Florida. Among those contributions: being a nationally respected and renown pioneer and leader in the field of health planning, initiating the creation of WellFlorida, and serving Florida's veterans with distinction.

As a fellow veteran, I would like to personally thank Mr. Randall for his service. I encourage readers to make contributions to the Malcom Randall Fellowship in Health Care Administration at the University of Florida, P.O. Box 100185, Gainesville, 32610 or to Haven Hospice, 4200 NW 90th Blvd., Gainesville, 32606.

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