

Florida Public Health Heroes

| A Nurse with a
Heart for

Public Health | Making Public Health a **Community** Effort | Touching Lives for
a Lifetime | Paving the Way for Improved **Maternal and Infant Care** | A **Legend** for Leon
County and Public Health | Healthy Children are **the Future** | 31 Years
of Unwavering **Public Health Service** for Wakulla County | One Person Can
MAKE A DIFFERENCE in Public Health | **Setting the Bar** for Future Physicians
| Community-based Magazine **Inspires** Healthy Living | **Dedicated** to a Lifetime
of Excellent Care | **ROOTED** in the Community | 35 Years as a **Guiding** Force for
Environmental Health | Making a Difference through **Exceptional Service**
| Weaving a Story of Grief into a **PASSION** for Infant Health | A **Selfless** Leader
Committed to Public Health and Social Justice | Achieving Community **Vitality** through
Care | **Building** Public **public health stories that span 67 counties**
Health from All Angles | **Protecting** the Future of Environmental Health | Championed
Children's Access to Medical Care across the State and Nation | A Visionary, an
Inspiration and a **FRIEND** | A Vigor for Excellence through **Compassionate**
Care | The Woman Who Introduced Public Health to the **RESIDENTS** of
Okaloosa County | Tireless Efforts Secure Specialized **Care** | A Lifelong
DEVOTION to Public Service | An **Ambassador** of Public Health
| Enhancing the **Network** of Public Health | **EXCEPTIONAL** Service
through Dedication and Integrity | **Giving** Back to the Community | The Heart
of Public Health in Dixie County | Leader, Advocate and **Mentor** | Hamilton County's
First **Environmental** Health Director |



Florida Public Health Heroes

| Levy County's
DYNAMO |

Good Health is **More Than** Just Good Health Care | 40 Years of Public Health
Nursing in North Florida | A Secure Future through Deliberate **Parenting** | Delivering
Quality Care through Collaboration | **Builder** of Public Health | A Transition
to Public Health **Consolidation** | A Legacy of Excellence | Public Health is **More**

Than an Agency, It's a Community | A Healthy Life and Community through
NUTRITION | A Public Health **Pioneer** for St. Johns County | Weaving a
Story of Grief into a Passion for Infant Health | Humble **Beginnings** Inspire a Future

Based on Accessibility | More Than a **Lifetime** in Medicine | The Longest Standing
Health Officer | The Peoples' **Doctor** | **GIVING** Back to the
Community | The Man Who Helped **Change** the Face of Public Health in | Nutrition

Program Director **Influences** a Career in Public Health | **Remembering** Bradley
| Charlotte County's **Bicycle** Man | **public health stories that span 67 counties**

Growth through **ENCOURAGEMENT** | An Invitation to **SERVE** | 45 Years
of Dedication to **Family** Health | **Rural** Health Efforts Bring Honor to Florida
Woman of the Year | A **True** Pioneer in Health Care and Senate | A **Constant**,

Caring Presence | **Model** Public Health Service Honored by the U.S. Surgeon General
| The First **Nurse** of Hardee County | Extending an Attitude of **Gratitude** |

Grassroots Efforts Honored by the Civil Rights Hall of Fame | One
Person at a Time | Extending the **Potential** for Public Health Services

| **INNOVATIVE** Efforts Generate Advancements in Public Health |



The Florida Department of Health is pleased to recognize 125 years of Florida public health by presenting *Florida Public Health Heroes*.

In these pages, we honor those public health professionals who have tirelessly sought to improve health and quality of life for the people of Florida.

Over 125 years, Florida has grown from thousands to 19.5 million with 1.8 million visitors on any given day. Once thought uninhabitable because of heat and pestilence, the Sunshine State is the third most populous in the nation and the premier vacation destination in the world.

The State Board of Health, created by the legislature on February 20, 1889, was born in crisis: yellow fever was a recurrent nightmare, decimating whole cities and robbing life from Florida families. Yet by 1905, yellow fever had its last gasp as an epidemic. Public health efforts through disease control and environmental safety opened all of Florida to opportunity.

These stories bring to life the broad scope of the public health profession by highlighting the work of those who dedicated their lives to making a difference for the families of Florida.

John Armstrong, MD, F.A.C.S.
State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health for Florida

Rick Scott, Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS,
State Surgeon General & Secretary of Health



John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS, was appointed by Governor Rick Scott and confirmed by the Florida Senate as State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health for Florida. Previously, he was Chief Medical Officer of the University of South Florida (USF) Health Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation, Surgical Director of the USF Health American College of Surgeons Accredited Education Institute, and Associate Professor of Surgery at the USF Morsani College of Medicine. He was also Trauma Medical Director at Shands at the University of Florida Medical Center in Gainesville.

Dr. Armstrong is a graduate of Princeton University, the University of Virginia School of Medicine and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.



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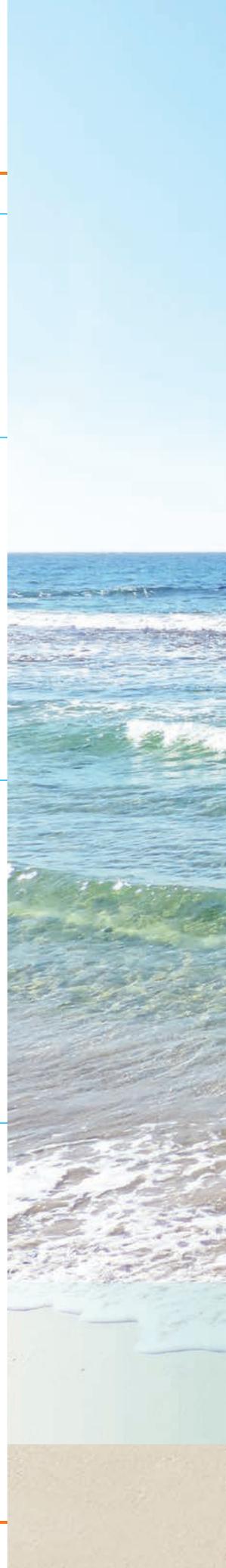
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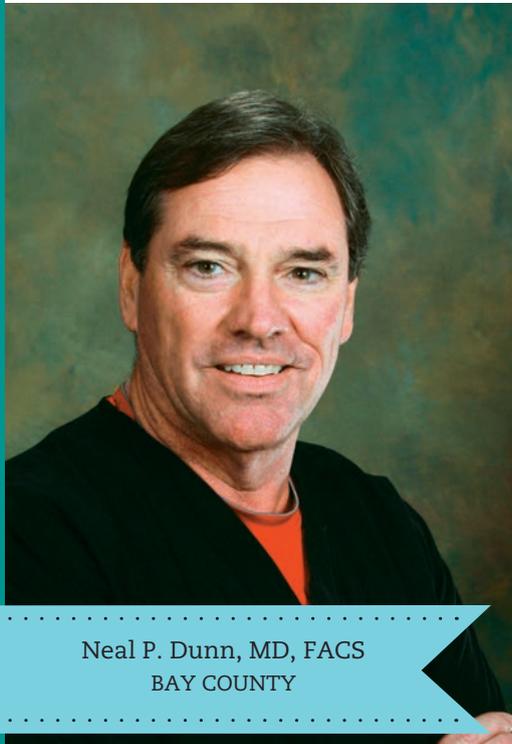
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Emerald Coast



Neal P. Dunn, MD, FACS
BAY COUNTY

“Through his practice, he has been **the champion of care treatments** for the working poor throughout his years of service.”

—Douglas M. Kent, MPH, Administrator, Florida Department of Health in Bay County

Building Public Health from All Angles

By Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CSM, Assistant Director, Bay County

Neal P. Dunn, MD, FACS, has been a urologist in Panama City for more than 20 years, serving as the president and managing partner of Panama City Urology Center and Bay Regional Cancer Center. He has been a member of the Bays Medical Society since his arrival to Panama City in 1990, and has since served in various capacities as secretary, treasurer and president. Dr. Dunn has also served as chairman of the society’s legislative committee since 2000. Most recently, he oversaw efforts to initiate a health insurance trust for the members of the society and their employees.

Dr. Dunn’s urology practice joined the BayCares’ provider list in 1992, the year it was introduced to Bay County. BayCares provides specialty medical care for uninsured patients who do not have financial resources to pay for their care. The program originally served only Bay County and in 1999, was expanded to include nine rural counties: Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla, Walton and Washington. Dr. Dunn has served on the board of BayCares since 2002 and as chair since 2008. In the last five years, his Panama City Urology Center has contributed between \$750,000 and \$910,000 annually in medical services to BayCares’ indigent patients.

Bay County Administrator Douglas M. Kent, MPH, shared his appreciation of Dr. Dunn’s efforts and

contributions to the community. “Dr. Dunn has been an exceptional partner in implementing the BayCares program and the chief over viewer. Their [Dr. Dunn’s practice] donation of services through the BayCares program for specialists and physicians is well over \$14 million. Through his practice, he has been the champion of care treatments for the working poor throughout his years of service.”

In addition to local public health involvement, Dr. Dunn has served on the Florida Medical Association’s Board of Governors since 1995—recently as chairman of the Council on Legislation. The council informs members of the legislature about health policy issues.

Dr. Dunn and his partners have worked with the Prostate Cancer Foundation and the National Prostate Cancer Foundation’s advisory board as an expert in genitourinary cancers. He is the founding president of the Bay Regional Cancer Center and since 2008, the center continues to provide virtually all of the necessary radiation therapy services to BayCares’ patients. He continues to serve or lead numerous corporate and community boards. He is also a great leader in local, state and national policies where he represents public health and general health issues. He has greatly contributed to the overall improvements for many public health issues in Bay County.

Protecting the Future of Environmental Health

By Albert C. Lathem, Environmental Health Director, Liberty County

In 1974, Dan Yoder became the environmental health director for both Calhoun and Liberty County Health Departments.

Previously working in the environmental health program for both Wakulla and Leon County as a food hygiene inspector, Yoder was instrumental in developing and establishing a septic system-permitting program. Prior to his employment with the health department, permits were issued sporadically, and the program was in need of modernization. Yoder brought the program into compliance with the current standards and set the stage for improvement.

The environmental health program as it stands today is a very comprehensive group of programs that have developed over a period of many years. Yoder was able to bring all of the environmental programs of the day into a unified and consistent structure that was equally effective and efficient. The challenges that come with a two-county environmental health program cannot be overstated. Given the regulatory nature of environmental health, it is difficult enough to build an excellent program in just one county; however, Yoder was able to bring consistency to a two-county area with a staff of just one.

In 1985, Yoder was able to create a new specialist position,

hiring an inspector to help cover the two counties under his watch. The employee was very fortunate to have such an experienced mentor to guide him through the initial training and certifications required to perform environmental health inspections. In addition, Yoder was able to help mold and shape his new team member into a health department representative that understood the current needs of the local population. In creating this position, Yoder not only improved program-staffing levels, he also provided a foundation for the future of the program by encouraging his employee to continue a career in public health.

Yoder is a fine example of what a public health leader should embody. He is always fair and kind, as well as understanding and consistent with his work and staff. As a mentor and public health servant, he demonstrates the qualities of a public health hero.

“I believe that money spent for the prevention of disease is the best use of health care dollars,” Dan Yoder says. “The county public health units provide a team of professionals working together in the areas of preventive medicine, nursing, epidemiology and environmental health to accomplish the goal of preventing the spread of communicable disease.”



Daniel E. Yoder, RS
CALHOUN COUNTY

*Yoder is a fine example of what a **public health leader** should embody.*



W. Reed Bell, MD
ESCAMBIA COUNTY

“...His role in creating CMS will preserve his legacy as the champion for children’s access to specialty care in our state.” —Dr. John Lanza, Director, Florida Department of Health in Escambia County

Championed Children’s Access to Medical Care across the State and Nation

By Marie Brady Mott, JD, MS, RDN, CSSD, LDN, Public Information Officer, Escambia County

Dr. William Reed Bell, was a Pensacola native and a U.S. Navy veteran. After his service during World War II, Dr. Bell

received a bachelor’s degree from Sewanee: The University of the South and then graduated Alpha Omega Alpha from Duke University’s College of Medicine. He completed a pediatric residency and an endocrinology fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine hospitals in 1957.

Returning to Pensacola, he practiced pediatrics privately until 1969. During this time, he enlisted area physicians and the Catholic Daughters of Charity to create the area’s first and only children’s hospital at Sacred Heart Hospital, opening on April 1, 1969. Soon after, he became the medical director for the Children’s Hospital where he spearheaded a pediatric residency program, and for 17 years, recruited pediatric specialists who developed a neonatal intensive-care unit, a pediatric intensive-care unit and surgical services. He also co-founded the Ronald McDonald House of Northwest Florida.

Dr. Bell also pursued improving Florida children’s access to quality medical care through his instrumental role in founding the Florida Department of Health Children’s Medical Services. Dr. Bell worked with Dr. John Whitcomb, Dr. Ed DeBusk and Dr. Gerold Schiebler in convincing the Florida Legislature to transform the Division of Crippled Children’s Services in the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) into a more comprehensive Division of Children’s Medical Services (CMS).

Following his private practice career, Dr. Bell served as medical director of the District I CMS Program Office, director of the Escambia County Health Department and as the deputy district administrator for health for HRS,

District 1. As the director for the Escambia County Health Department, he developed a coalition that launched one of the first WeCare programs in the state to match uninsured residents with volunteer specialty physicians.

Dr. John Lanza, the current director of the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County, who trained under Dr. Bell, said, “He was a great teacher. His enjoyment from working with the pediatric residents and their patients was inspiring. His role in creating CMS will preserve his legacy as the champion for children’s access to specialty care in our state.”

Dr. Bell was a leader on both the local and national level. He served as president of the medical staff of Sacred Heart Hospital, the Escambia County Medical Society and the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He also chaired the American Academy of Pediatrics’ (AAP) Bioethics Committee and was the founding director of the National Institute of Health’s Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. He has been recognized with various awards from the AAP.

Among Dr. Bell’s interests was end-of-life care. He assisted in implementing local hospice services, and developing the first pediatric hospice and palliative care program to be granted federal Medicaid waiver status in the U.S. The program is a partnership between Medicaid, Florida Hospice and CMS.

His other accomplishments include: member of the Chief Judges’ Task Force for Children, Escambia County; chair of the Audit Committee for Gulf Power Company; board member of the Matt Langley Bell 4-H Center; and the first medical advisor to Focus on the Family.

Dr. Bell was born on Christmas Eve, 1926, and lived to age 87, passing away on July 28, 2013.

A Visionary, an Inspiration and a Friend

By Amy Tadlock, Health Information Specialist, Holmes County

Karen Johnson, ARNP, possesses a true passion and dedication for public health in Holmes County. Known for her genuine and professional service for every client entering the clinic, she continues to create a positive impact on the lives of people she meets. Johnson's vision for positive change in her community is communicable among all Department staff. Additionally, her enthusiasm to serve individuals with courtesy and respect is seen by all.

Johnson's journey in public health began in 1988, when she served as a community health nurse. For the next three years, she provided nursing services for home health, school health and maternal health care. In 1991, Johnson became the community health nursing supervisor. In this capacity, she established individual clinics and supervised the school health program for seven schools in Holmes County. In 1994, she successfully completed obstetrical-gynecologic nurse practitioner training and began providing family planning and women's health care.

Currently, she serves as the executive community health-nursing director. Johnson effectively leads a team that aids with Healthy Start, chronic disease, school health, tobacco education, teen outreach and clinical services. Staff members view Johnson as a strong, proven leader who is both an inspiration and a friend.

Throughout her 25-year public health career, she never wavered from the belief that with determination and faith, positive change can occur for both communities and individuals.

Johnson said, "Can't never could. If we say it can't be done, change will never happen. We must be innovative and creative in producing change."

The administrator of the Department of Health in Holmes County, Rick Davis, said, "Johnson not only cares about her patients, but takes an active role in the management of all aspects of the county health department's operations. She is exceptionally bright, industrious and responsible. She has made significant contributions to the residents of Holmes County."

*"Johnson not only cares about her patients, but **takes an active role in the management of all aspects of the county health department's operations.** She is exceptionally bright, industrious and responsible. She has made significant contributions to the residents of Holmes County."*

Karen Smith Johnson, ARNP
HOLMES COUNTY



Achieving Community Vitality through Care

By T.G. Harkrider Jr., RS, Environmental Health Director, Jackson County

Sarah S. Pender, ARNP
JACKSON COUNTY

“My mother always said if you have a job to do, do it to the best of your ability. I was always timely, respectful of those in authority, and I never shunned work.”

Sarah S. Pender was born in Marianna, Florida. In 1960, she received her initial medical training at the Brewster Hospital and Nurse Training School in Duval County. In August of 1971, Pender began her more than 18-year career in public health at the Jackson County Health Department. Wearing the regulation pinstriped uniform for spring and summer, and the navy and white during fall and winter, she provided vital public health services to community school children and residents who otherwise would not have access to health care.

After receiving her advanced registered nurse practitioner certification with a specialization in obstetrics and gynecology, Pender continued her work with the Jackson County Health Department. At that time, the health department was the sole provider of prenatal, postnatal and infant care in Jackson County for patients receiving Medicaid benefits. Additionally, a majority of children were born at home and delivered by midwives. Shortly after each birth, Pender visited the newborns in their homes to provide examinations, often completing their birth certificates during the stay. As part of the Well Child Clinic program, she made follow-up appointments with mother and child to ensure that proper care continued and the necessary immunizations were received. Those who had the pleasure of working beside Pender, describe her as an inspiration to both young women and older adults. She took her job seriously and had no qualms with emphasizing a point when necessary.

“My mother always said if you have a job to do, do it to the best of your ability,” Pender said. “I was always timely, respectful of those in authority, and I never shunned work.”

Though now retired, Pender continues to provide education and support for the community of Jackson County, often presenting public speeches on health-related matters. She uses her nursing expertise by volunteering as chairperson for her church health committee and through the public health assessment initiative at the Florida Department of Health in Jackson County. Pender’s services to her hometown and surrounding communities have been, and continue to be, vital and significant.



A Vigor for Excellence through Compassionate Care

By Wendy Smith, Health Support Aid, Calhoun and Liberty Counties

Anne Lathem's 21 years of commitment and passion for the people of Liberty County stands as a testament of her devotion to promoting the growth of public health. Lathem began her career as a registered nurse and later served as director of nursing. Her leadership helped patient care in the Department of Health in Liberty County to excel and grow.

Lathem focused on school health, ensuring nurses were placed in local schools. In addition, she played an important role in developing the breast and cervical cancer outreach program to underserved rural areas. This program continues to be an important element in the early detection and prevention of breast cancers.

Her dynamic approach to excellent care resulted in respectful and compassionate interactions with patients. Lathem was always willing to go the extra mile to provide excellent care and never too busy for her clients. Her legacy continues today through her commitment to quality patient care that has become the trademark of the Liberty County Health Department.

Lathem was a mentor to those who served with her. As a result, clinic and administrative staff have continued to maintain the high standards that she instilled in them. Her example and influence lives on.

"Every patient deserves quality health care," Lathem said, "and should be treated with respect and dignity."

Lathem committed herself to addressing the health care needs of people from all walks of life and dedicated efforts to furthering public health. She believed that everyone should be treated with respect and courtesy, always making quality health care a top priority.



Ann Lathem, RN
LIBERTY COUNTY

"Every patient deserves quality health care and should be treated with respect and dignity."



Lizzie Mae (Liza) Jackson
OKALOOSA COUNTY

Jackson's work in public health did not end with the Woman's Club; she also served as a chairman for the Okaloosa Chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (now the March of Dimes) and supported the Crusade of the Double Barred Cross. . .

The Woman Who Introduced Public Health to the Residents of Okaloosa County

By Sarah White, Public Information Officer, Okaloosa County

Lizzie Mae (Liza) Jackson is widely regarded as a pioneer in Fort Walton Beach. An early resident of the fishing village known as Camp Walton, Jackson and her first husband, lumber businessman W.B. Harbeson, began spending weekends and summers there in 1915. Although she was a world traveler, Jackson said she loved Okaloosa County and became a prime figure in the area's development.

Jackson was an avid community organizer and actively involved in numerous civic groups. In 1921, she founded the Woman's Club, which set into motion a variety of programs that created a lasting impact on the community. Conscious of health and the welfare needs of the community, the Woman's Club enforced sanitation in all butcher shops. They also worked to control fleas, dog flies and mosquitos in the area, hiring a town constable whose primary duty was to keep flea-ridden livestock off the streets.

"For several years, the only law enforcement was administered by the women of the Woman's Club," stated Jackson in a 1959 article in *Playground Daily News*.

The women paid special attention to the health of underprivileged children, furnishing crutches and braces for those with a disability, and providing eye examinations and glasses to address any vision problems. In 1930, the women set up a temporary clinic,

bringing in a physician from Pensacola to remove the tonsils of 25 children.

Realizing the need for a permanent health clinic, in 1942, the women voted in favor of constructing a new clinic building, which Jackson helped to finance and organize. On completion of the building, the Woman's Club furnished and maintained the clinic, which was used by the Okaloosa County Health Department for the next 18 years. In 1954, the Woman's Club became aware of the need for a larger health clinic and began meeting with the County Commissioners to petition for a new building. Seven years later, the current Okaloosa County Health Clinic became a reality.

Jackson's work in public health did not end with the Woman's Club; she also served as a chairman for the Okaloosa Chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (now the March of Dimes) and supported the Crusade of the Double Barred Cross that worked to eliminate tuberculosis. Other notable accomplishments include organizing the Fort Walton Beach Public Library, founding the Fort Walton Bank and developing housing for military personnel.

It has now been more than 70 years since Jackson helped build the first county health clinic, yet her legacy lives on through the work of the employees at the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County.

Tireless Efforts Secure Specialized Care

By Deborah Stilphen, Operations Analyst II, Santa Rosa County

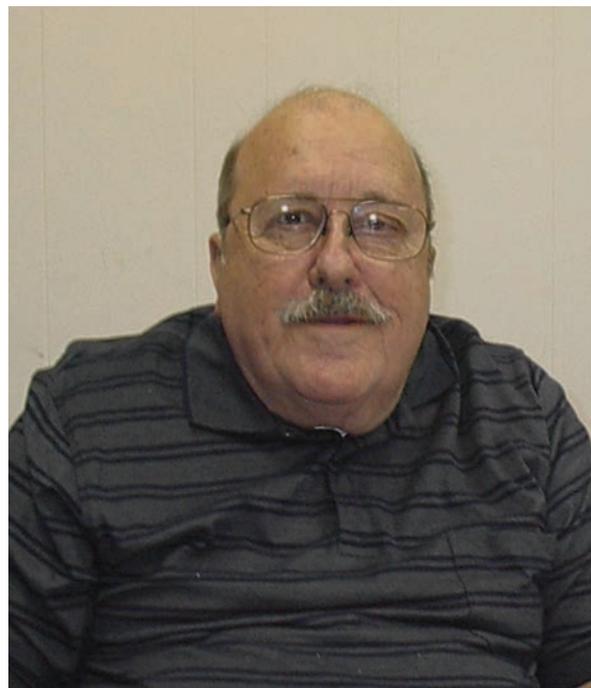
Elbert W. “Bert” Sutton, MD, grew up in Port St. Joe, Florida. Born in Tuscaloosa, he returned to his place of birth to receive a bachelor’s degree from the University of Alabama and then his medical degree from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1959, he opened a private practice in Pace, Florida where he worked for 20 years. Sutton practiced privately until 1979, when he received the appointment of director for the Santa Rosa County Health Department, a position he held for 24 years.

Although confined to a wheelchair, Dr. Sutton worked tirelessly to build strong community partnerships, leading many efforts to improve the health of the residents of Santa Rosa County. He was one of the founders of the Rehabilitation Institute at West Florida Hospital, which opened in 1978, providing specialized rehabilitative care to patients recovering from conditions such as strokes and spinal cord injuries. He served on the institute’s board of directors for several years, and in honor of his efforts, the facility’s north wing was given his name.

In 1986, he established the Medical Assistance Center (MAC). For more than 12 years, volunteer physicians, nurses and clerical staff worked after hours at the health department in Milton, providing free medical care for the uninsured and indigent residents of Santa Rosa County. In 2001, to fill the void from the closure of the MAC, Dr. Sutton played an instrumental role in establishing the Santa Rosa Community Clinic, which is now a Federally Qualified Health Center.

After 43 years of service to his community, Dr. Sutton retired in 2003 and passed away six years later in 2009.

Santa Rosa County Administrator Sandra Park-O’Hara, shared, “He [Dr. Sutton] was a kind, caring person who believed in giving back to the community. He worked hard, but he also enjoyed life. He showed interest in everything and never let his physical limitations keep him from doing the things he enjoyed.”



Elbert W. “Bert” Sutton, MD
SANTA ROSA COUNTY

*“He [Dr. Sutton] was a kind, caring person who believed in giving back to the community. He worked hard, but he also enjoyed life. **He showed interest in everything and never let his physical limitations keep him from doing the things he enjoyed.**”*

—Sandra Park-O’Hara, Administrator,
Florida Department of Health in Santa
Rosa County



Howard F. Currie, MD
WALTON COUNTY

*“But the main thing I have done has been to be a **country doctor.**”*

A Lifelong Devotion to Public Service

By Laura L. Brazell, RN, HCA, Registered Nursing Consultant, Walton County

It has been said that Dr. Howard F. Currie is “an epitome of integrity, loyalty and industriousness,” and that he dedicated his life to public service. Dr. Currie graduated from his local Walton High School in 1926. In 1930, he received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Florida and in 1934, his medical degree from Tulane University. In 1929, during his junior year at the University of Florida, Dr. Currie visited DeFuniak Springs and made house calls with his uncle, a physician. It was during these visits that he decided he wanted to be a physician.

Dr. Currie’s son, Mike Currie said, “I would often tell my dad that he was a hard act to follow, and he would always explain that he was in the right place at the right time. If there is one thing I can say about my father, it is that he spent his whole life helping people.”

A veteran of World War II, Dr. Currie served his country in the Army Air Corps and United States Air Force. With more than 30 years of service, he retired as a flight surgeon colonel. During his distinguished military career, Dr. Currie served as the attending or deputy surgeon for multiple units and divisions—he served at the U.S. Air Force Hospital, and the Air Force Bases at Eglin, Florida, and Warren, Wyoming. Additionally, Dr. Currie served as commander to the Armed Forces Medical Material Agency and the Arctic Aeromedical Laboratory. He

played an active role in the alliance with the Western Reserve Rheumatic Fever Research, and was a consultant to United Airlines on passenger safety and to the NATO surgeon general on Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Safety.

In 1960, Dr. Currie entered private practice in DeFuniak Springs and worked as an Federal Aviation Administration Aeromedical examiner. From 1968 to 1969, Dr. Currie served as health director for the Walton, Holmes and Washington County Health Departments Tri-County Unit. In addition, Dr. Currie served as consultant to District One of the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, and he was the health director for the Walton County Health Department.

An employee of Dr. Currie stated, “Dr. Currie had the highest moral character and integrity of any person I have ever known.”

Despite retiring in 1988, Dr. Currie continued to serve the people of Walton County as a volunteer physician for the public health unit for many years. “But the main thing I have done,” Dr. Currie stated in The DeFuniak Springs Herald, “has been to be a country doctor.”

An Ambassador of Public Health

By Rick Davis, Administrator, Washington County

*“I am very humbled and honored to have been afforded the opportunity to become a registered nurse. **As far back as I can remember, becoming a nurse was my goal. . . . It gives me great pleasure to serve others and make a difference in their lives.**”*



Susie W. Sewell, RN
WASHINGTON COUNTY

Susie Sewell, RN, has dedicated her professional life to promoting public health in Washington County.

A life-long resident of Washington County, she has come to know just about everyone and everyone seems to know her. Sewell is constantly helping or assisting individuals with any personal health issues and acts as an excellent ambassador for public health.

In 1991, Sewell began her service as the Washington County Health Department clinic nurse. For the next four years, Sewell worked in the public health clinic and with the county’s Home Health program, visiting and assisting residents all over the county.

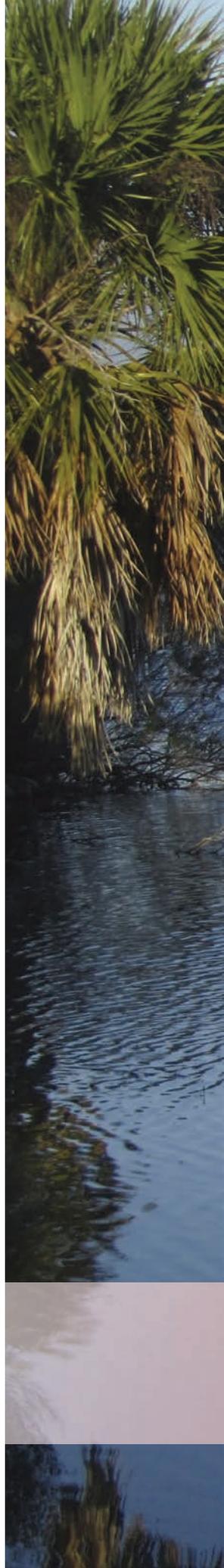
In 1995, the Washington County School District and the Washington County Health Department jointly established a formal school health program. Sewell was selected as the first school health supervisor. She built the program up from two employees—a certified nursing assistant and herself—into a program with a nurse or nursing assistant in every school.

In 2005, Sewell was selected as the Washington County Health Department’s nursing director. In this position, she supervised clinic nursing operations, school health

and epidemiology. She has also supervised numerous grant programs.

“I am very humbled and honored to have been afforded the opportunity to become a registered nurse. As far back as I can remember, becoming a nurse was my goal. I have served in many different capacities as a registered nurse for 32 years. Twenty-two of those years were spent in public health. It gives me great pleasure to serve others and make a difference in their lives.”

Washington County Health Department Administrator Rick Davis says, “It is always a pleasure to work with Susie Sewell. I am confident in her ability to do what is right for the community and the patients. She is the hardest working employee we have and we are lucky to have her.”





Capital

“Serving as the only registered nurse in Franklin County for many years, **Ruth Wade was very dedicated in her role as a public health nurse.**”

—Janice Hicks, Business Manager, Florida Department of Health in Franklin County

Ruth Wade, RN
FRANKLIN COUNTY



Janice Hicks and Ruth Wade look at the appointment book for various health care needs handled by the Franklin County Public Health Unit in Apalachicola.

A Nurse with a Heart for Public Health

By David Walker, Operations and Management Consultant Manager, Franklin County

Ruth Wade served at the Florida Department of Health in Franklin County as a registered nurse for nearly 28 years. In 1976, during the launch of her career, Wade, the only nurse on staff, an environmental health specialist, a clerk and a physician who came in weekly, operated the entire Franklin County Health Department. In her role, Wade performed numerous public health duties, including home visits to provide blood pressure checks, insulin and immunizations. She also travelled weekly to the Old City Hall location to provide these services.

Wade played an important role in securing the property for the Carrabelle Health Department building that was built in the 1990s. Wade garnered the support of local government through the

Franklin County Board of County Commissioners. She secured the property site through a donation from the Franklin County School Board and the County Commission. She was also very instrumental in the planning of the current Apalachicola County Health Department building.

Wade collaborated with the Franklin County School Board to initiate school health services in all county schools. In previous years, the school board had provided school health services to the three area schools with only one school health nurse who travelled throughout the county. With Wade’s oversight, the county was able to place a nurse in each of the school sites, five days a week.

During her many years of service in Franklin County, Wade exemplified the public health nursing profession. Because of her dedication to the field of public health, the two current facilities in Franklin County and the school health program are in existence. She retired in 2003.

“Serving as the only registered nurse in Franklin County for many years, Ruth Wade was very dedicated in her role as a public health nurse,” said Janice Hicks, business manager for the Florida Department of Health in Franklin County. “She provided a variety of services including work with immunizations, preventing sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, chronic diseases, family planning and school health.”

“I am humbled and honored to represent Gadsden County. **It is a pleasure volunteering and working to educate the community on health issues.**”



Arrie Battle
GADSDEN COUNTY

Making Public Health a Community Effort

By Aaron Kissler, Administrator, Gadsden County

Born and raised in Gadsden County to the late Rev. Louis and Lovie Mims, Arrie Battle’s roots run deep in Quincy, Florida. After graduating from Carter Parramore High School in 1959, she attended Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. After 33 years of service with the State of Florida, she retired in 2013.

Battle has served the communities of Gadsden County all of her adult life, never shying away from complicated issues. For nearly 10 years, she has served on the planning and zoning board, supporting excellent growth for Gadsden County. She was chosen by the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to serve on the board of directors for the Gadsden County Senior Citizens Center. She also regularly volunteered for the Gadsden Community Health Council, the Gadsden Community Healthy Start Coalition, Inc., and Investing In Our Youth Incorporated. Additionally, Battle also serves on the Carter Parramore Academy School Advisory Council and is currently a member of the New Direction Christian Fellowship Center located in Quincy.

Battle has been featured in the Gadsden County Times, WCTV Channel 6 News and Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare’s magazine *Healthy Living* for her commitment to public health in Gadsden County.

Her proudest moment came in 2002 when she

founded the nonprofit Mother Care Network, Inc. Its creation was based upon two primary needs of Gadsden county residents who are poor and underserved. Specifically, to have a voice in policy-making decisions that affect their lives and access to a system for residents, policy-makers and service providers to share pertinent information. Battle recruited elderly mothers from across Gadsden County’s religious communities to organize so they could help young mothers and fathers with parenting advice. This program also refers young parents to free health services.

This year, Battle continues her work through the Mother Care Network, Inc. as well as the Closing the Gap grant, which connects residents to health resources and improves health literacy in the community.

Through individual and organizational efforts, Battle has helped to influence the health of thousands of Gadsden County residents. “I am humbled and honored to represent Gadsden County. It is a pleasure volunteering and working to educate the community on health issues.”



Albert L. Ward, MD
GULF COUNTY

Touching Lives for a Lifetime

By Gwen Allen

In 1938, after graduating from Tulane Medical School and completing a residency at Pensacola’s Sacred Heart Hospital, Dr. Albert L. Ward moved to Gulf County. From the first day he stepped into town, Dr. Ward became engaged in all manner of health-related duties; performing surgeries, setting broken bones and delivering babies. He first opened a private practice office and when he could not keep pace with his rapidly growing client base, he brought in two partners, Dr.’s Joe and Wayne Hendrix.

In 1951, Dr. Ward was appointed to the State Board of Health, adding yet another facet to his career in public health. Dr. Ward was instrumental in the construction of a public health clinic in Port St. Joe. He devoted his time to treating the community’s indigent residents at the clinic’s office. In lieu of payment, some of Dr. Ward’s patients provided him with fish, vegetables or fresh game.

On March 27, 1955, he passed away at the young age of 42. He was mourned by his family, wife Monica and daughters Bobbie, Bettie and Brenda, and the community who had grown to love the doctor who touched so many of their lives.

In 1956, the new health department in Port St. Joe was renamed the Albert L. Ward Health Center in his honor and memory. “When the community thinks of public health they often remember Dr. Ward,” said Marsha Lindeman, administrator of the Florida Department of Health in Gulf County. “We honor his legacy with our mission to protect, promote and improve the health of our community.”

“When the community thinks of public health they often remember Dr. Ward.”

—Marsha Lindeman, Administrator,
Florida Department of Health in
Gulf County

Painting submitted by Brenda Ward.

Paving the Way for Improved Maternal and Infant Care

By Mark Positano, Environmental Specialist III, Jefferson & Madison County

Lynn T. Elliott, MS, RN, is known in Jefferson and Madison counties as a nurse who understands and cares for her community. With her many public health efforts around the state, her public health career spans 40 years of developing public health policy, performing programmatic quality improvement and helping to implement Medicaid cost-based payments.

Early on in her nursing career, Elliott specialized in maternal, child health care and pediatric nursing. This experience led her to serve as a public health nurse in Jefferson County in 1985. Eventually, she took on the difficult role of caring for cocaine-addicted babies and their mothers in Lee County. She also supervised and mentored other public health nurses during this time.

Her dedication to providing care continues in her current capacity as an instructor at the Florida State University College of Nursing. Elliot is inspiring the next generation of nurses in Jefferson and Madison counties to not only offer great service, but also understand the vulnerable populations living in every community.

Elliott has also been a leader in developing the Healthy Start Medicaid Waiver in Florida. This initiative decreased the rate of

infant mortality and assisted millions of women, improving health outcomes for 23 years.

Elliott worked for the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties from 2004 until 2013, developing coalition-quality improvement activities that impacted healthy start services in the area. Under her direction, the program saw improvements in systems of care for maternal and child health populations.

Additionally, Elliott has received several awards over the years for her participation in Florida's hurricane recovery efforts. In 1992, following Hurricane Andrew, she joined other public health professionals on the first plane from North Florida to Miami-Dade, staying for three months to assist the community through her many roles.

"I am honored to be a public health professional serving the most vulnerable populations in Florida," said Elliott. "It has been a passion of mine for many years and made my life truly fulfilled."

Elliott's dedication to the community and the field of nursing has positively affected the lives of many Floridians. Her energy and willingness to spearhead new initiatives in public health makes her not only a hero, but also a nurse who truly cares.



Lynn T. Elliott, MS, RN
JEFFERSON & MADISON COUNTIES

"I am honored to be a public health professional serving the most vulnerable populations in Florida. It has been a passion of mine for many years and made my life truly fulfilled."



Arthur P. Cooper, MPH
LEON COUNTY

He encourages students to consider public health as a profession because it is a rich field with numerous areas for specialization and **offers the opportunity to make a difference in many people's lives.**

A Legend for Leon County and Public Health

By Page Jolly, Public Information Officer, Leon County

Arthur P. (Art) Cooper, MPH, is a legend in Leon County. Even at a young age, he knew he wanted to help others and decided to study public health in college.

Cooper's first public health job came under Dr. Charles Prather in the State of Florida Division of Health in Jacksonville, as the representative for the immunization program. During his stint there, through delivering mass immunizations, Cooper visited every county health department, helping to stop the German measles outbreaks. Working side-by-side with staff in over half of Florida's 67 counties, he worked to stem the epidemic, and protect children and their families through vaccinations. He forged his reputation as a passionate, hands-on partner from the start and never lost that facet of his personality.

From 1985 to 2005, Cooper acted as administrator of Leon County Health Department and from 1985 to 1991, he also served as administrator for Wakulla County. He constantly looked for opportunities to improve the health of the public, and his passion for helping others found numerous outlets in public health, especially in dentistry, prenatal care and primary care. He oversaw the expansion of Leon County from one building to four, including three new clinics. One of the clinics, the Molar Express, was the largest public health dental clinic in Florida, with 12 operatories.

Cooper encouraged the dedication of another new clinic, the Richardson-Lewis Health Center to two local public health pioneers in Leon County: Dr. C.L. Richardson, the founder of Leon County's first private primary health clinic for the poor, the Bond Community Health Center; and Dr. Henry Lewis, dean for the School of Pharmacy at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.

Cooper also worked tirelessly with the Tallahassee City Commission to have the water fluoridated to

protect residents' teeth. His advocacy and education regarding its benefits provided the foundation for a successful collaboration and outcome.

Cooper envisioned the benefits of prenatal care for every woman before Healthy Start coalitions existed. By working with local physicians, he wove a net of prenatal care services that were made available for every woman in Leon County. The medical community viewed him very highly as he was the first non-physician to be invited to join the Capital Medical Society.

Cooper held several offices in the Florida Public Health Association and the Association of County Health Officials. He won the Meritorious Service Award from the Florida Public Health Association in 1999—their highest honor for his lifelong achievement in public health.

Despite his retirement in spring of 2005, Cooper remains at the front lines of public health. He encourages students to consider public health as a profession because it is a rich field with numerous areas for specialization and offers the opportunity to make a difference in many people's lives. He consults and gives college lectures, while serving as a board member of Turn About, Inc., a nonprofit organization in Tallahassee. Turn About, Inc. specializes in counseling and psychological testing services for elementary, middle, high school and college students. Parent support groups and community education programs provide understanding of today's tough issues for children, teenagers and young adults in the areas of drug abuse, behavioral problems or victims of violence or abuse.

Healthy Children are the Future

By Juarez Padraic, MS, Administrator, Taylor County

From 1974 to 2004, Pat Jones carried a leadership role at the Florida Department of Health in Taylor County beginning her work when the health department was in the basement of the Taylor County Courthouse in Perry.



Patricia Ann Jones, RN
TAYLOR COUNTY

Jones worked hard to ensure children were immunized, working with school officials to make it possible and essentially expanding available health services in local schools. She dedicated not only her career, but her heart as well, to the wellbeing of Taylor County's children.

Many of the current staff working at the health department remember her administering their first vaccines. Jones' passion remains focused on helping children, exemplifying the belief that if parents raise healthy children, the future will be full of healthy and productive adults.

In 1995, Jones applied for a school health grant for Taylor County. Upon receiving the grant, she moved from the main building of the health department to working in the schools, exemplifying a truly diligent school health nurse. Jones also believes children need to be both physically and emotionally healthy to achieve their best. She promoted the necessity of nurses being a friendly face to each child they encounter, taking into account the effects of home life on a child's demeanor.

Furthermore, she instilled in others the benefit that comes from an available caring and listening ear. Jones worked hard to ensure children were immunized, working with school officials to make it possible and essentially expanding available health services in local schools. She dedicated not only her career, but her heart as well, to the wellbeing of Taylor County's children.

When asked about Jones, a former client shared, "My most vivid memory comes from when I took my daughter to receive her two

month immunizations. Pat asked that I hold my daughter while she administered the shots, so my daughter wouldn't grow up and be afraid of health care professionals!"

The children of Taylor County were always close to Jones' heart. She fought long and hard to have the necessary tools for health care screenings to keep children healthy. Jones and her staff of nursing aides, social workers and registered nurses worked with the children, not only in the schools, but in their homes. Jones collaborated with administrators, teachers and parents, educating them all on the importance of safe health practices at school and in the home. Because of her diligence and commitment, our school health program flourished and many of the practices she implemented are in place today.

Jones received her nursing degree from North Florida Junior College and her master's degree from the University of Florida. She retired from the state as the director for school health after 30 years of service. Sadly, we lost Pat Jones in 2013, but her legacy lives on through all those she touched during her career and the programs she helped create. Pat Jones will always be remembered as a leader, for the amazing work she did for public health and all of the lives she touched in Taylor County.



Anita Townsend, RN
WAKULLA COUNTY

31 Years of Unwavering Public Health Service for Wakulla County

By Padraic Juarez, MS, Administrator, Taylor County

Anita Townsend will be remembered for her unyielding efforts to improve the lives of Wakulla County residents during her career as a public health nurse from 1958 to 1989.

“She was a well-trained, highly competent public health nurse,” said Alexander Wright, chairman of the Wakulla Board of County Commissioners.

After graduating from Sopchoppy High School in 1937, she “secretly married” her husband, LeRoy Townsend. At the time, married nursing students were not permitted in the nursing school Townsend was enrolled in. The couple kept their marriage quiet, carefully avoiding distraction, and in 1941, Anita Townsend earned her nursing degree from Chattahoochee State Hospital.

Townsend not only contributed to the overall health of Wakulla County, but also served in Jackson and Leon counties. In 1941, her public health career began at the Jackson County Health Department and carried on through her roles at the Leon County Health Department. On March 1, 1958, she was hired as director of nursing at the Wakulla County Health Department. Soon after, Townsend appeared before the Board of County

Commissioners and received the funding to hire a full-time sanitation officer, demonstrating that the safety and health of citizens was always a priority.

During her 31 years of service to Wakulla residents, she initiated immunization, well-baby, pre-natal, mental health, dental health, environmental health and home health programs. Playing key leadership roles in delivering these services to the community, Townsend made certain the initiatives were successful.

In 1988, a new building for Wakulla County Health Department was built and dedicated to Townsend by the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners. The community felt so strongly about her service that the new facility stands to honor her unwavering community leadership and noteworthy contributions to the public. Anita Townsend, who retired at the age of 70, laid the foundation for continuing preventive and accessible care in rural Wakulla County.

“She was a well-trained, highly competent public health nurse.”

—Alexander Wright, Chairman, Wakulla Board of County Commissioners



North Central



Thomas R. Belcuore, MS
ALACHUA COUNTY

Enhancing the Network of Public Health

By Paul Myers, Administrator, Alachua County

Thomas R. Belcuore, MS, served as Alachua County's health officer from 1984 to 2008.

During his tenure, he dedicated his time to ensuring that public health issues surrounding communicable disease, environmental health, clinical care, and emergency preparedness and response were handled proficiently to protect and promote the health of the community and state.

Shortly after arriving from Orange County in 1984, Belcuore transitioned to the Alachua County Health Department's

modest base of operations and added numerous primary care programs. He was instrumental in building a coalition of care for the emerging AIDS epidemic. Belcuore built the structure of emergency response after helping with the Hurricane Andrew disaster and developed what some call the "playbook" for assessing contaminated sites. He successfully moved the Department into its present, state-of-the-art public health facility in 2001, where an array of public health services are provided.

During his 24-year career in Alachua County, effective adaptation to change became his hallmark trait. Belcuore played a key role in developing a multi-county consortium structure in North Central Florida that became a model for statewide implementation across administrative and public health programs. The resulting leverage of resources continues to provide economies of scale and savings to the taxpayers to this day.

A staunch advocate of preventive measures, Belcuore was committed to preventing disease through vaccinations, and he was one of the primary developers of the very successful and nationally recognized Alachua County Flu Mist program. He believed in controlling and limiting communicable disease burdens in our state by acting quickly and effectively on epidemiologic surveillance signals and working closely with disease investigators, university and hospital infection control practitioners and private practice physicians.

In addition to embracing an organization of clinical care that enhanced the public health system's communicable disease, environmental health and emergency response capabilities, Belcuore's collaboration with the

Alachua County Medical Society created the first WeCare program in the state. WeCare is a physician referral network providing lifesaving specialty care to indigent residents.

Belcuore's responses to the post-9/11 anthrax threats, seasonal wildfires, droughts, floods and hurricanes such as Andrew (1991), Charlie (2004), Wilma (2005) and Katrina (2005), ensured the community's safety during manmade and natural disasters. The culture of emergency preparedness and response cultivated under his leadership continues to influence statewide efforts.

Focusing on the broad spectrum of public health issues as an opportunity to enhance the system, Belcuore leaves a legacy for those he worked with. By mentoring the next generation of public health professionals he touched the lives of his students and those they serve. It is the recipient of those core public health services that he always placed his focus on.

"Being a health officer offers the unique management position of using epidemiology, clinical, and environmental tactics and strategies to solve a community issue. These occurrences are rarely trumpeted and it is a credit to all who have done so."

"Being a health officer offers the unique management position of using epidemiology, clinical, and environmental tactics and strategies to solve a community issue."

Richard Land truly exemplifies the meaning of public health through his quiet, patient and diligent service to the citizens of Bradford and Union counties.



Richard Land
BRADFORD COUNTY

Exceptional Service through Dedication and Integrity

By Anita Griffin Thomas, Administrative Assistant, Bradford County

For 35 years, Richard Land faithfully served the citizens of Bradford and Union counties. Land began his career in environmental health in 1978 as an environmental health specialist for Columbia County. He later transferred to Union County Health Department in 1989 to serve as an environmental health specialist III.

As a registered sanitarian, Land contributed significantly to the health and well-being of Union County residents. He established procedures for expediting repair permits for failing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, and he was a local leader in establishing and enforcing standards regarding lead water pollution and disease control. Land believed in the strength of regulation and was “by the book” when he reviewed food service establishments, day care centers and foster homes. The Department’s role in protecting the health of the population was something Land took seriously.

In February of 2009, he became the environmental health director for both Bradford and Union counties. Land is a man of great integrity and knowledge. He is exceptionally dependable, dedicated and fair in all of his work. If a question arose that he could not answer, he would go the extra mile and research the topic, or determine whom to call—always willing to help anyone at any time. Land’s dependability would shine in any emergency or pressing situation; whether the issue was environmental health, nursing, communicable disease, a disgruntled client or something as simple as moving furniture, his response would be, “OK, what can I do to help?”

On a day when a bat was flying around the back door, Richard Land stepped up to humorously handle the situation, “If that bat bites you, you better grab it and hold onto it so we can send it off, or you are getting the rabies vaccine! No questions asked!”

Richard Land truly exemplifies the meaning of public health through his quiet, patient and diligent service to the citizens of Bradford and Union counties.

“Public Health is a profession that touches all walks of life and I was lucky enough to work and give back to the community where I grew up.”

Giving Back to the Community

By Mark S. Lander, Administrator, Columbia and Hamilton Counties



Earl H. (Hugh) Giebeig
COLUMBIA COUNTY

Earl H. (Hugh) Giebeig Jr. faithfully served the residents of both Columbia and Hamilton counties as a public health professional. He dedicated his career to bettering the health of both communities, focusing not only on adult health, but taking a special interest in the safety and well-being of children.

In 1975, Giebeig began his public health career as a caseworker and an investigator. During this time, he worked to promote safe environments for children within five counties of the Third Judicial Circuit of Florida. In 1991, Giebeig was selected to lead the Columbia County Health Department as administrator, and in 1994 was given the privilege of dually serving as administrator for Hamilton County. He held both positions until his retirement in 2012.

“Public Health is a profession that touches all walks of life and I was lucky enough to work and give back to the community where I grew up,” said Giebeig.

During his 37-year career, Giebeig greatly contributed to furthering public health in both Columbia and Hamilton counties.

He established the Hamilton County Steering Committee for Health that addresses medical needs in the community and still operates today. Additionally, recognizing the need for children’s dental services, Giebeig was able to establish a mobile dental unit that provides dental care for many children in both counties.

“There was a great need and we were able to work with community partners to establish this clinic. A lot of children are now receiving services that otherwise would have never happened,” Giebeig shared.

“I was very fortunate to have worked with Mr. Giebeig for over 10 years,” Mark Lander, administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Columbia and Hamilton Counties said. “His mentoring allowed me to truly understand and develop the passion for public health in a rural community. Our clients have greatly benefited by his dedication and service.”

The Heart of Public Health in Dixie County

By Elizabeth Powers, RN, Dixie County

The residents of Dixie County can thank Roger Brooks, a Dixie High School science teacher, for inspiring Linda Hatch to such an extent that she knew she wanted to become a nurse upon graduation.

In 1968, she entered nursing school at Georgia Baptist Hospital but being homesick for Dixie County, Hatch left to complete her schooling in Gainesville. In 1974, she was thrilled to be hired by Dixie County, as a public health nurse. This position transferred in 1976 to what is now the Department of Health in Dixie County, and it is there, 39 years later, that she continues her career in public health.

During her first years of working as a public health nurse, Hatch was one of three nurses (almost the entire staff) that made home visits and ran nursing-only clinics every day. Right away, she knew this was her calling, “The feeling every day, when I went home, that I really helped someone in my community was more fulfilling than any raise or promotion I ever received then or to this day.”

Over the years, public health in Dixie County has been through many changes and through these times Hatch has never lost her drive to provide health services and advocate for her community. She can remember in the early days when power outages were frequent and physical exams had to be done by flashlight. Now, years later in a new building, Hatch has started and contributed to many initiatives, such as putting together a school health room in what was once the “closet behind the auditorium,” and setting up a primary care clinic that still offers care for residents. These and other grassroots efforts garnered the attention of her peers when in 1996 she was recognized by the Florida Nurses Association with the Public Health Nurse of the Year award.

Everywhere Hatch goes in Dixie County she is greeted warmly by everyone she sees. Many ask Hatch for help with a health issue. While others just thank her for something nice Hatch has done for them or for a family member. Hatch’s care for Dixie County goes beyond 5 p.m. She is truly the heart of public health in Dixie County.



Linda Hatch, RN
DIXIE COUNTY

“The feeling every day, when I went home, that I really helped someone in my community was more fulfilling than any raise or promotion I ever received then or to this day.”

Leader, Advocate and Mentor

By Wesley Asbell, Gilchrist County

Intelligence in her field, a relentless work ethic and being a natural born leader all worked in her favor.

However, it was her passion to serve others that defined Sable Bolling as a public health hero. Her years of service to public health and Gilchrist County were filled with milestones of accomplishment that went without notice to most, but had long lasting effects for many.

Bolling came from a military family and spent most of her childhood on the move. It was perhaps her family's last move to Dixie County in the late 1960s that may have helped to define the direction that her life would take and establish her roots in the Tri-County area.

After graduating from Dixie County High School, she went on to earn a bachelor's of science in nursing from Florida State University. Bolling brought her education home to work in the Dixie County Health Department, where she worked as a public health nurse for several years. Bolling helped to train many nurses, including the current nursing director of the Florida Department of Health in Dixie County, Linda Hatch.

Bolling soon went back to Florida State to earn her Master of Science. She then put her education and training to work once again; this time, for the Veteran's Administration where she worked for almost ten years with our nation's veterans.

In the 1980s, Bolling returned to public health to serve as the nursing consultant for Region 3 of the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services working for the deputy secretary for health. The deputy secretary soon recognized her talents and sent her to Gilchrist County to supervise a remodeling project for the local health department. Bolling would spend the rest of her career as the administrator for Gilchrist and Dixie counties.

Bolling constantly assessed the needs of the community and went to work to narrow the gaps. She instituted pediatric and adult primary cares services in

“...It is only now that we can realize that we were better people because of her and our community is a better place because of her contributions.” —former employees

the county where there was an obvious need. She worked with the local school system to establish comprehensive school health programs where they did not previously exist. Bolling was also one of the first administrators in the state to recognize the need

for dental services for underserved clients and established the first dental program within the area.

A group of former employees said “Sable taught us all how to lead with confidence, with the right spirit and for the right reasons. She pushed us to our limits. It is only now that we can realize that we were better people because of her and our community is a better place because of her contributions.”



Sable Bolling
GILCHRIST COUNTY

Photo, from left to right, Brenda Brown and Sable Bolling.

Hamilton County's First Environmental Health Director

By Mark S. Lander, MS, Administrator, Columbia and Hamilton Counties

In 1952, Marvin Rodgers began his career with the Hamilton County Health Department as county sanitarian. With the creation of the environmental health section, he became the county's first environmental health director. After serving in the dual roles as environmental health director and acting administrator, in 1991 he eventually became the full-time administrator. Faithfully serving the community for 42 years, Rodgers finished his service with the Hamilton County Health Department in May of 1994.

Rodgers believes the best resource a community has are its residents. His organizational skills and ability to help shape and benefit the health of Hamilton County have brought him great recognition and respect in the community. As environmental health director, he worked hard to bring community water treatment systems to the towns of Jasper, Jennings and White Springs. He was instrumental in the formation of the Suwannee Valley Nursing Center board and the Hamilton County beautification committee. He was also an active member in the Florida Environmental Health Association, serving as president, executive director, and on the board of directors before he retired.

Back in the early 90s, even as his time in public health was wrapping up, he remained focused on the potential collective influence a small group or

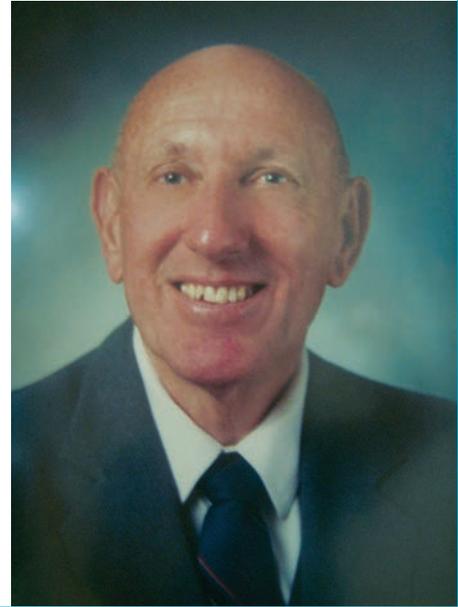
organization in rural communities had in policymaking. Rodgers was able to accomplish a lot in an area that was resource limited. Bringing the best out of everyone he worked with is the reason for his success as an advocate for public health.

Ron Taylor, environmental health director for the Department of Health in Hamilton County, shared a fond memory of working with Rodgers.

"I remember asking Marvin near his retirement, what kept him going in his more than 42 years in public health. He responded by guiding us to the lobby, pointing at the clients and the door."

Rogers said, "I don't need anything else to motivate me more than knowing every client who comes through that door is in need of our help. Once you understand that, you will never regret a career in public health."

"That was a moment I will never forget," said Taylor, "typical to Marvin's style and his ability to shape public health employees through his passion for the community."



Marvin Rodgers, RS
HAMILTON COUNTY

*"I don't need anything else to motivate me more than knowing every client who comes through that door is in need of our help. Once you understand that, **you will never regret a career in public health.**"*

*“My job is my mission. It’s not 8 to 5, go home and forget about it. It is what I was meant to do and **as long as I am able, I will give it my all.**”*

Levy County’s Dynamo

By Jeannie Norris, Levy County



Angela Frazier Phillips, RN
LEVY COUNTY

Angela “Angie” Frazier Phillips is in her second tour with the Department of Health in Levy County.

Several years ago, Phillips came to work in the Department’s clinic as a public health nurse. She quickly acclimated to public health and carved herself a special niche with local clients and the surrounding community.

Everyone knew Phillips and everyone wanted her to be their nurse. But, as it is with outstanding people, other physicians wanted her too and they offered her a deal she couldn’t refuse. Phillips accepted the offer and although she left the health department for a period of time she continued to provide health services in her community.

As fortune would have it, the health department was able to hire Phillips back as a school nurse in 2005. It could not be projected the immense impact she would have on schools, the children and the community. She was responsible for a wave of free community Zumba classes, which she faithfully continues to teach two nights a week. Phillips was instrumental in forming a partnership with the Levy County School District to form a wellness committee.

This committee helped put in place the Tobacco Free School polices and the removal of snack machines from school campuses. She also has developed, in partnership with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, a model for school nutrition education that she calls Hunger Games. This school-wide effort has dedicated a nutrition and healthiest weight activity in every subject, culminating in a pep rally based on the *Hunger Games* movie.

Phillips participates on many boards and coalitions from Tri-County Medical Society, Prevention Coalition to Toys for Tots. She never says no or seems to run out of gas. When she last had a moment to reflect about her new career path Phillips said, “My job is my mission. It’s not 8 to 5, go home and forget about it. It is what I was meant to do and as long as I am able, I will give it my all.”

Her spunky spirit and complete commitment proves that Phillips is more than able, and all of Levy County definitely benefits from her dedication and involvement.

Good Health is More Than Just Good Health Care

By Craig Ackerman, Public Information Officer, Marion County

Serving as chief physician for Marion County for the entirety of his 29-year medical career, Dr. Nathan Grossman delivered excellence in the field of public health.

Dr. Grossman became the director of the Marion County Health Department in 1984, serving a population of 100,000, out of a 1960s 11,000-square-foot block building. By the time he retired in 2013, he watched the county grow to more than 335,000 residents, and witnessed the Department evolve to accommodate the needs of the community, building a 60,000-square-foot modern facility.

With many residents lacking transportation in Florida's fifth largest county, Dr. Grossman established four additional health department sites throughout the county increasing access to care. To reach even more people, he established the Clinic on Wheels, employing fully equipped recreational vehicles built to deliver health care on a circuit to the most remote areas of the county. The outlying clinics and the Clinic on Wheels were critical elements of the Marion County Indigent Care Program, earning two national awards for its groundbreaking work.

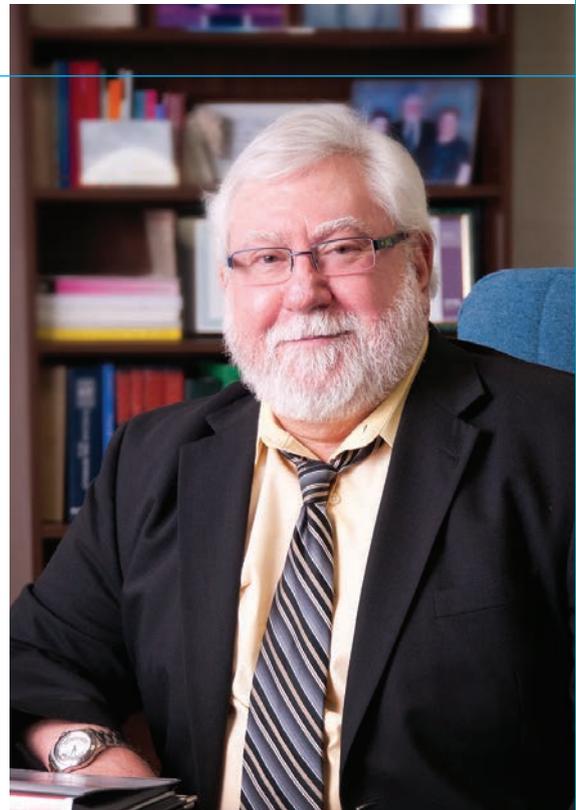
A partnership with the College of Central Florida brought expansion to the Department's overcrowded dental clinic. With the help of students, the Department extended its services reaching more of the community's underserved children with necessary dental care. As the health care industry changed, Dr.

Grossman worked to ensure the county's indigent care system remained intact. A partnership with a federally qualified health care center guaranteed that patients who could no longer receive primary care at the Department would continue to receive treatment.

By rallying leaders around the Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan, Dr. Grossman continues to improve and promote the health of residents.

Collaborating with leaders from businesses, education, health care, local government and the faith-based community, his vision is achievable. He believes realizing good health is much more than just health care—the whole community can address public health issues and begin to affect change.

"The practice of public health has provided me with a fascinating career in medicine, as it seems the entire community of Marion County has been my patient!"



Nathan Grossman, MD
MARION COUNTY

"The practice of public health has provided me with a fascinating career in medicine, as it seems the entire community of Marion County has been my patient!"



Wanda Crowe, RN, BSN
SUWANNEE & LAFAYETTE COUNTIES

40 Years of Public Health Nursing in North Florida

By Pamela Blackmon, RN, BSN, MPH, Administrator/Health Officer,
Suwannee and Lafayette Counties

Wanda Crowe, RN, BSN, is dedicated and committed to the field of public health nursing. On March 24, 1975, she began her public health career as a nurse at the Lafayette County Public Health Unit. Despite just recently graduating from the University of Florida, her nursing, public health and leadership skills quickly became evident to the administrator, John Campbell, who soon promoted Crowe to the next level of staff nurses. In 1985, Crowe became the nursing director for the Lafayette County Health Department. On October 31, 2005, Wanda transferred to the Suwannee County Health Department where she continues to serve as nursing director for the Department.

Crowe's co-workers describe her as "very fair, supportive, consistent and dedicated—friendly and kind to all clients and their family members and respectful to staff." Staff also reports that Crowe's orientation towards promoting results has fostered productivity and excellence in those around her. In June 2012, the Florida Department of Health in Suwannee County faced one of its greatest challenges when Tropical Storm Debby brought severe flooding to the area. It was necessary that the emergency preparedness planners open a Special Needs Shelter and activate the Continuity of Operations Plan. Crowe worked long hours alongside the administrator at the Emergency Operations Center for several days, despite a recent injury to her ankle.

Wanda Crowe's dedication, loyalty and consistency is hard to find and one of the things that her colleagues greatly appreciate about her. In all situations, she is fair, consistent, steady, calm and unflappable. It is a pleasure and honor to nominate Wanda Crowe as a public health hero for her nearly 40 years of dedicated service to the people of Suwannee and Lafayette counties.

Crowe's co-workers describe her as "very fair, supportive, consistent and dedicated—friendly and kind to all clients and their family members and respectful to staff."

Sally Keller, ARNP
UNION COUNTY



A Secure Future through Deliberate Parenting

By Sandra Crawford, RN, School Health Coordinator, Union County

For more than 30 years, Sally Keller, ARNP served the communities of Union County. Through her care and concern for all community residents, she truly exemplifies public health nursing.

Keller began her career with the Union County Health Department in 1979, a time when nurses making the rounds to every post-partum woman in the county wore navy blue in the winter and pin stripe in the summer. Soon after, she continued her education through Emory University receiving her family planning ARNP certification, allowing her to provide family planning and prenatal care to women living in Union county.

In 1989, Keller became the director of nursing for Union County, while still maintaining her duties as the women's health nurse practitioner. She continued in this position until 2006, when she became the director of nursing for both Bradford and Union County Health Departments.

Because of her service and unyielding compassion, many of her previous clients still ask for "Mrs. Sally," and remember her fascinating demeanor during the presentation of her planning exams at the health department. She also worked diligently to promote the benefits of mentoring one's own children, believing it to be the key to decreasing the rate of teen pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse in Florida's youth.

Sally Keller remembers her time as a public health nurse, "I sat down knee to knee and eye to eye with clients and expressed the necessity of graduating high school, and the need of good parenting for their children's sake!"

Keller retired from her career doing what she loved: providing family planning and championing women's health for the citizens of Bradford and Union counties.

"I sat down knee to knee and eye to eye with clients and expressed the necessity of graduating high school, and the need of good parenting for their children's sake!"





Northeast

Delivering Quality Care through Collaboration

By Kerry E. Dunlavy, RN, MSHA, MPH, Administrator, Baker County

For more than 25 years, the Florida Department of Health in Baker County has been providing comprehensive dental services to the underinsured and uninsured, with a particular focus on minors. Oral health plays a key role in an individual's overall physical health, self-esteem and well-being. Early childhood caries can lead to problems with communication, nutrition, mental and social well-being. Dental issues may cause permanent disabilities that affect a child's ability to grow and learn. According to a 2011 Department report, preventive and quality dental care can improve the overall health of a child.

Dental assistant and manager, Patty Lyons, and dental director, Dr. Tara Hackney, began their respective 25-year careers in public health in 1988 and 1989 with a focus on preventive, restorative and accessible dental care for children from age three to 21. "I'm grateful to have spent 24 years working with dedicated people who shared a common vision of improving the dental health—and overall health—of families," says Dr. Hackney.

The collaborative spirit and quality care that Lyons and Dr. Hackney promote has enabled the dental program to collaborate with local school boards across four counties, delivering care to vulnerable populations while maintaining accessibility during school hours. The program aims to



Patty Lyons & Dr. Tara Hackney
BAKER COUNTY

decrease school absences and diminished student performance due to untreated oral health issues and a lack of access to care. Lyons and Dr. Hackney have garnered many partners such as the Clay County Dental Society, local dentists, school boards and school health programs, resulting in a collaborative community approach in caring for the children of Baker County. Lyons reflects, "I have always thought of my job as more of a life's calling. I consider it an honor to have served the state in this capacity for 25 years."

This power team has been on numerous consultation visits to counties across the state, established a local dental consortium and played an instrumental role in Medicaid reform initiatives. Lyons and Dr. Hackney received recognition for best practice by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. They are recipients of a Davis Productivity Award, the Baker County Chamber of Commerce's Ginger Barber Community

Award and were cited in the Department's 2012–13 *Health Year in Review* highlights.

The people of Baker County take great pride in having two public health dental leaders that created Baker CARES—County Alliances Rendering Excellent Smiles—that delivers comprehensive dental care to children in rural areas.

*The people of Baker County take great pride in having **two public health dental leaders that created Baker CARES.***

Builder of Public Health

By Leigh Wisley, PPHR Coordinator, Clay County

Clay County values Edward H. Stansel as a public health hero because he endeavored to improve the accessibility and quality of health care services for its citizens. Stansel began his public health career in Jacksonville, and in 1977 became the first appointed administrator of the health department in Clay County. Stansel worked diligently to build the public health program from the ground up and continued to serve as a health officer until his retirement in 1991.

Recognizing the importance of childhood immunizations, Stansel championed a campaign to improve immunization rates in Clay County. Reports from 1978 indicated that because of his efforts, a record high number of school-aged children were fully immunized against infectious diseases. As a leader in public health, Stansel helped the Department refocus its mission to address population-based health issues. According to Winifred Holland, the health officer for Department of Health in Clay County, “He expanded public health services as the county grew from a rural to an urban county always keeping the needs of the citizens in mind.”

The 1980s brought phenomenal population growth to Clay County, along with changing needs for the developing community. Stansel worked diligently to improve the health department’s facilities for the area, and he was instrumental in opening two health clinics in Keystone Heights and Clay Hill. Although the Keystone Heights and Clay Hill clinics have closed, they proved vital in answering the demand for services during the population boom.

In 1981, the Green Cove Springs facility began major renovations and by 1985, capacity for public health services had doubled, offering additional space and accessibility for visiting patients.

The Board of County Commissioners named the newly expanded offices, the Ed Stansel Health Complex. The Ed Stansel Health Complex continues to function as the Department’s administrative offices today. Ed Stansel notably contributed to Clay County through facilitating the growth of public health from its earliest instances and aiding in the future development of the Department.

Reports from 1978 indicated that because of his efforts, **a record high number of school-aged children were fully immunized against infectious diseases.** As a leader in public health, Stansel helped the Department refocus its mission to address population-based health issues.



Lt. Col., U.S. Marine Corps, Edward H. STANSEL
CLAY COUNTY

A Transition to Public Health Consolidation

By Charles Griggs, Public Health Communications Manager, Duval County



Patricia Cowdery, MD, MPH
DUVAL COUNTY

“During her 16-year tenure, she committed herself not only to serve on many boards and community organizations, but also to serve the diverse people of her home community.”

—Kelli T. Wells, MD, Director, Florida Department of Health in Duval County

Patricia C. Cowdery, MD, MPH grew up in Jacksonville, Florida during the Great Depression. For more than three decades, she worked to protect Jacksonville’s citizens and championed the consolidation of public health services. Dr. Cowdery graduated from Temple University Medical School in 1948, and in 1961 began her career as a private physician. Shortly after leaving her private practice, she transitioned into the field of public health and worked for the Florida Board of Health. Dr. Cowdery joined the Duval County Public Health Unit in 1964.

In 1967, Jacksonville’s leaders and citizens began to examine the advantages of a consolidated form of government. Under the existing system, two health departments were providing public health services for Jacksonville and Duval County. During the debate considering the many complexities of consolidation, Dr. Cowdery’s hard work and dedication was instrumental in the transition. At the time, Duval County was the last Florida county functioning with two active health departments. Through Dr. Cowdery’s advocacy, the advantages of one, countywide public health system was determined to be the best option for citizens.

In 1968, after the consolidated city of Jacksonville emerged, Dr. Cowdery was named the assistant health officer of the new public health unit. In 1972, she was

appointed director of the Department of Health, Welfare and Bio-Environmental Services by Mayor Hans Tanzler, making her the first woman to serve as department director under the new Jacksonville-Duval County government.

Kelli T. Wells, MD, director of the Florida Department of Health in Duval County said, “Dr. Cowdery was exemplary in her role as the first woman to serve as a Department of Health director under the new consolidated Jacksonville-Duval County government. During her 16-year tenure, she committed herself not only to serve on many boards and community organizations, but also to serve the diverse people of her home community.”

In 1988, after dedicating much of her time to numerous boards and community organizations, Dr. Cowdery retired after 16 years of serving as director of the Duval County Public Health Unit. She earned many awards and recognitions for her service in public health—a reflection of Jacksonville’s immense respect for her work. Dr. Cowdery died at the age of 83 on April 16, 2003, but her legacy lives on through the positive impact she made.



*“I feel an obligation to the health department and **the patients.**”*

A Legacy of Excellence

By Patrick Johnson, Administrator, Flagler County

Morris Carter, MD
FLAGLER COUNTY

The founding member of the Flagler County Medical Society, Dr. Morris Carter, chose to enter the field of medicine simply for his desire to take care of others. Dr. Carter’s dedication to providing quality medical care stems from his belief that a career in public health is not just a job, but also a vocation. For this approach and his commitment to service, he leaves behind a legacy of excellence.

In the early 1970s when the Department was known as the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), Dr. Carter worked for the Florida Migrant Health Program. He provided medical care for migrant farm workers in Putnam, St. Johns and Flagler counties. In an effort to see all patients, Dr. Carter often kept his doors open after hours.

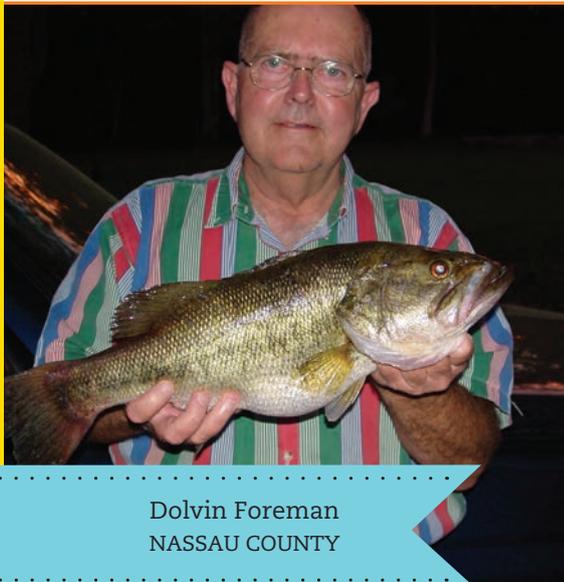
Following his work with the migrant community, Dr. Carter became the jail physician for Flagler County by request of the county sheriff. In 1976, he started to provide family medical care at the Bunnell Medical Clinic as the first African American doctor to practice

in Flagler County. During this time, Dr. Carter was also named the county medical director, a title he still holds today. In 1981, he opened his own family medical practices in Bunnell and Crescent City, and worked until 2012.

In 2001, the Flagler County Health Department initiated the Morris Carter Award of Excellence in honor and recognition of Dr. Carter’s achievements. The annual award is presented by Dr. Carter to the employee who exhibits the characteristics he embodies: professionalism, teamwork and excellence.

In celebration of his 80th birthday and for all of his contributions to Flagler County, the street where his office and the health department are located was named Dr. Carter Boulevard.

Continuing his legacy and working for the Florida Department of Health in Flagler have always been very important to him. “I feel an obligation to the health department and the patients,” Dr. Carter said.



Dolvin Foreman
NASSAU COUNTY

Public Health is More than an Agency, it's a Community

By Michael Godwin, Environmental Manager, Nassau County

The Florida Department of Health in Nassau County would like to express their appreciation for Dolvin Foreman, as he has shown outstanding accomplishments throughout his career in public health. On October 12, 1966, Foreman began his career with the Nassau County Health Department as a sanitarian trainee. Soon after, Foreman's career advanced to Nassau County health sanitarian director and by 1997, he was named environmental manager, a position he held until his retirement in June of 2003.

Department Director Dr. Eugenia Ngo-Seidel recalls how Foreman exemplified excellent public health work during his 38-year career. "By combining innovation, practicality and collaborative partnerships, he assured safe food, clean water and an environment that promoted health. His achievements include piloting sentinel chicken flocks for arbovirus surveillance and one-stop permitting, which was later recognized with a Davis Productivity Award."

Over the course of his career, Foreman forged strong relationships with local

government, the school district, and state agencies such as the departments of Environmental Protection, Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, and Business and Professional Regulation.

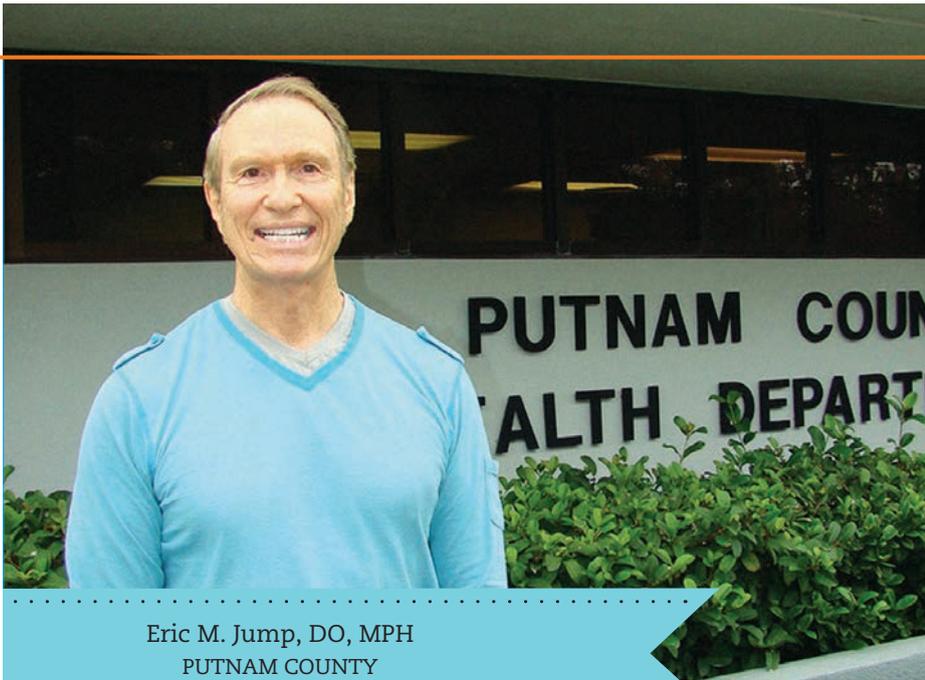
Foreman was known as a problem solver and community health advocate, and he frequently gave expert opinions and served on advisory committees. Foreman held the belief that key environmental actions went beyond regulatory permitting programs. He took on issues and challenges whether or not a funding source or program existed because he was dedicated to his work. He championed educational efforts for dog bite prevention and rabies control, and worked with public and private schools to address their concerns about lead poisoning and indoor air quality. Foreman also encouraged the environmental health staff to work hand in hand with epidemiology staff when investigating, mitigating and preventing food- and water-borne outbreaks. These actions fostered teamwork within the Department.

Anyone who had the privilege of working with Foreman would have appreciated his humor, colorful

stories and extensive knowledge of the community. His tireless support for his staff and advocacy for those he served, makes him a public health leader. Michael Godwin, the environmental manager for Nassau County, remembers Foreman for his dedication to the importance for public and environmental health. "He empowered his employees, was a tremendous role model for me and others. He became my personal friend and mentor."

Foreman once said, "Public health is about community. This community is composed of the population, the risks, and the dedicated public health employees who combat those risks. In 38 years of public health service, my lasting impression is of the professionals that I served with each day. Every day I saw these associates devote their careers to the health of Florida's citizens. This gave me solace to enter retirement knowing that public health in the future will go on as in the past and present. Public health is more than an agency. It must always be the entire community dedicated to the good of all the people."

"Public health is about community. This community is composed of the population, the risks and the dedicated public health employees who combat those risks."



Eric M. Jump, DO, MPH
PUTNAM COUNTY

A Healthy Life and Community through Nutrition

By Mary L. Garcia, Administrator,
Health Officer, Putnam County

“Practice good nutrition, get adequate rest, enjoy fun outdoor activities and stay safe.”

Dr. Eric M. Jump first became interested in public health as a young boy. Dr. Jump’s grandfather, a member of the local fire department, played a role in the fight against mosquitos and yellow fever. This inspired Dr. Jump to pursue a career in public health.

Today, Dr. Jump displays information in his waiting room on mosquito control and animal bite safety. He holds a master’s degree in public health with a focus in preventive medicine from Loma Linda University, and a medical degree from the University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine. In 1986, after completing his pediatrics residency with the University of Florida, Dr. Jump moved to Palatka.

In 1990, he and Dr. Laura Hoss opened Kids Care Pediatrics in Palatka. Dr. Jump prescribes four major lifestyle behaviors for achieving good health: “Practice good nutrition, get adequate rest, enjoy fun outdoor activities and stay safe.”

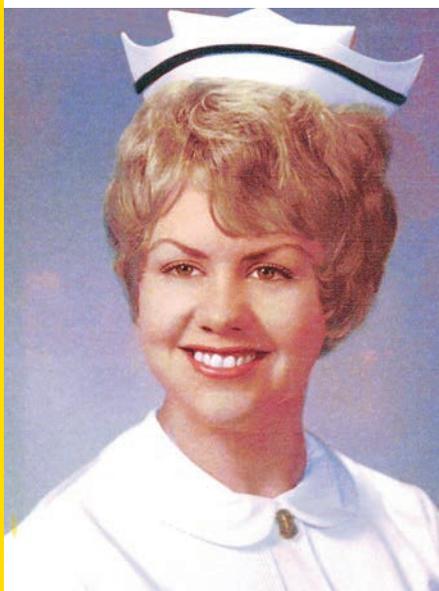
For over 20 years, Dr. Jump has been a strong advocate for promoting the significant health benefits of breastfeeding. He played an integral part in the peer counselor program in Putnam County, offering classes and training in his office long before the WIC program received the peer-counseling grant from the USDA. He encourages moms to breastfeed for the countless benefits to both mother and baby. The 2013 Benefits of Moms Milk fair, hosted by the Florida Department of Health in Putnam at the Putnam County Community Medical Center, featured Dr. Jump as their guest speaker. In recognition of World Breastfeeding Week in August 2013, Dr. Jump was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his advocacy for breastfeeding in the Putnam community.

During the 2012 pertussis outbreak, Dr. Jump collaborated with the Department’s epidemiology team in Putnam County to evaluate clients and treat contacts. Additionally, he serves as a committee member in the Tobacco Free Partnership and was instrumental in bringing the community garden concept to Putnam.

Dr. Jump is passionate about public health and the important role it plays in the vitality of a community. He is proactive, innovative and an integral community partner.

Public Health Pioneer for St. Johns County

By Paige Myers Hartwell, JD, MSA, Assistant Director, St. Johns County



Alice "Bunny" Richards, ARNP
ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Alice "Nurse Bunny" Richards, ARNP, has touched the lives of thousands of Floridians through her career as a public health nurse.

Since 1965, Richards has been a practicing nurse—nearly half a century. She is a true public health pioneer who continues to positively affect the health of her community.

When asked about her long stint in public health, Richards acknowledged, "I would be remiss in failing to recognize the public health nurses who mentored me in the 1970s, faithfully serving beside me throughout the years. In particular, the courageous Department nursing professionals who were sheltering throughout Florida during the hurricane disasters in the 90s and the more recent, 2004–2005 season. It has been an ongoing honor and privilege to have the opportunity to mentor others in public health nursing practices."

For more than 48 years, Richards has been on a quest to improve the overall health of our communities. Beginning her career as a hospital nurse, she soon answered the call to work in public health, a passion that resulted in a vocation carrying two focal points. The first identifies prevention efforts targeting children, a portion of the population with the most long-term health and wellness needs. "Nurse Bunny," as Richards is affectionately known, was the first school health advanced registered nurse practitioner in Florida.

She worked as a school health nurse in both Martin and St. Lucie counties, and she continued her

school health focus in St. Johns by taking on a leadership role and collaborating with parents, schools and the community, positively impacting children's health and wellness.

Her second focus is providing leadership to improve the quality of public health nursing practices. She has served as a community health nursing director in Tennessee and two Florida counties, Okeechobee and St. Lucie.

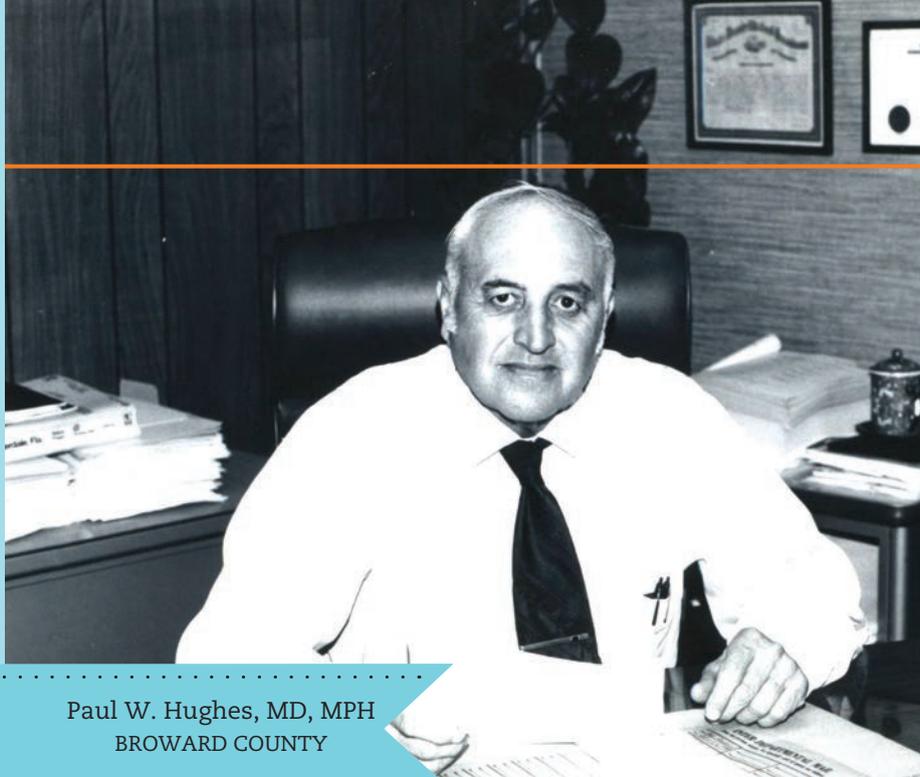
Richards' guidance as the special needs shelter manager in St. Lucie County was paramount to the health and safety of vulnerable residents during two natural disasters. While in St. Johns County, she again took on the role of special needs shelter manager and also served as the deputy health officer from 2004 to 2009. While serving in this leadership role, she launched the Public Health Nurse Mentoring Project in an effort to bring growth and development to current and future public health nurses.

Richards presently works as a mentor to staff nurses and provides pediatric services for school-age children in St. Johns County. Richards' well-rounded public health career reflects her energy, professionalism and dedication to the health of our communities and the profession of nursing. With no plans to fully retire Richards says, "No words can describe what an honor it is to represent public health nursing."

*"I would be remiss in failing to recognize the public health nurses who mentored me in the 1970s, faithfully serving beside me throughout the years. In particular, the **courageous Department nursing professionals who were sheltering throughout Florida during the hurricane disasters in the 90s and the more recent, 2004–2005 season.**"*



Southeast



Paul W. Hughes, MD, MPH
BROWARD COUNTY

The Man who Helped Change the Face of Public Health in Broward County

By Paula Thaqi, MD, MPH, Director, Broward County

*“When he saw something that needed to be done, he couldn’t understand why it wasn’t done. He was **always big on taking a stand on an issue he believed in.**”*

—Allyson Hughes, daughter of Dr. Hughes

Paul W. Hughes, MD, MPH, was first appointed director of the Broward County Health Department in 1949, a position he held for 34 years. During his career in public health, Broward County changed from a small coastal resort area of 60,000 to a large metropolitan county of more than a million people. This growth and development called for Dr. Hughes to guide Broward County to meet new demands for public health. He played an instrumental role in growing staff from 14 to 370 employees and opening four new clinics. In a 1969 news interview, Dr. Hughes expressed his commitment to public health, “I regard myself as sort of a catalyst and punching bag at the same time.”

In response to the needs of the community, Dr. Hughes oversaw the evolution of the Broward County Health Department. Over

the years, Dr. Hughes consistently promoted healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco cessation. Emphasizing the importance of epidemiology and the role of public health in the prevention of disease, he detailed the significance of healthy living through his many annual reports and messages.

Under Dr. Hughes’ leadership, rates of vaccine preventable diseases, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases decreased.

Many people in Broward County remember him as a doctor and health advocate for all people, especially for children and the elderly. The community holds fond memories of him sitting with residents on their porches discussing the importance of childhood immunizations and health care for the elderly.

Dr. Hughes grew up during the Great Depression and worked two jobs to pay for medical school, obtaining his degree from the Yale School of Medicine in 1943. He received the Meritorious Service Award from the Florida Public Health Association in 1970.

Dr. Hughes died at the age of 71 in 1989. In his obituary, his daughter Allyson Hughes was quoted as saying, “He was very goal oriented. . . . When he saw something that needed to be done, he couldn’t understand why it wasn’t done. He was always big on taking a stand on an issue he believed in. And he didn’t mind stepping on toes to do it.”

The legacy of Dr. Hughes lives on through the Paul W. Hughes Health Center in Pompano Beach and in the hearts of the many people he touched with his knowledge and care.

Nutrition Program Director Influences a Career in Public Health

By Olga Connor, Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs, Miami-Dade County

For Miami-Dade County's retired nutrition program director, Denise West, her earliest and most inspirational memories of the Department came from her hometown of Miami, as nurses administered the polio vaccine at her elementary school.

While searching for a career path as an undergraduate, West reached out to the county health department's nutrition program director Levina Philips, RD. Philips' influence led West to attend the University of California, Berkeley, where she earned a Master of Science in Public Health Nutrition.

These interactions ultimately led West into a career as a registered dietitian, 35 years of which included service with her public health department in Miami-Dade.

In 1979, as the public health nutrition program director, West expanded the WIC monthly caseload from 11,000 to more than 70,000 claims, gaining a national reputation for innovations in Miami-Dade County. Moving into a senior leadership position, she amassed WIC services with public and private partners, while introducing a WIC centralized information and appointment call center. She initiated the expansion of the call center to include a breastfeeding promotion program with a help line that lengthened WIC services to include Saturdays, and activated the WIC Hurricane Andrew response.

Denise West expressed the impact the Department had on her, "Public health has stretched me professionally to work creatively across disciplines with

many partners to accomplish goals and share resources." This stretching involved developing systematic methods to improve clinic operations, customer service and business-forward results, as well as performing a large role in preparedness planning for executing two major immunization campaigns.

In response to West's work with opening and supervising three new health centers, Miami-Dade County Administrator Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD, said, "Denise West fully embraced the Sterling management principles and is a mentor to our emerging leaders. Her passion, determination and vision have made a positive impact in the community."



Denise Duvall West, RD, LD/N, FADA, MPH
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

“Public health has stretched me professionally to work creatively across disciplines with many partners to accomplish goals and share resources.”



Joan Higgs, RN
MONROE COUNTY

Remembering Bradley

By Christopher Tittel, Public Information Officer, Monroe County

In the mid-1980s after serving as nursing director for the Lower Keys Medical Center and the administrator for Bayshore Manor assisted living in Key West, Joan Higgs took on the position of nursing director at Monroe County Health Department. Higgs carried the leading role in establishing the Roosevelt Sands Center, a clinic located in the Bahama Village neighborhood of Key West that currently offers a wide range of public health services to underserved populations. Higgs also played a guiding role in growing Monroe County's clinical and prevention programs targeting HIV/AIDS, especially during her many years as director of the Health Care Center.

Stronger, the 40-page book celebrating some of the local heroes in the fight against HIV/AIDS, features Higgs' story where she describes the strong

*“My career took me to the Monroe County Health Department as the Health Care Center director after Bradley died. In my work there, I feel like **I’m doing something for Bradley**, like I’m maintaining a stronger connection with Bradley because I miss him every single day.”*

bond she had with her brother Bradley who succumbed to HIV/AIDS just years before. When asked about her motivation for making a difference, Higgs shares, “My career took me to the Monroe County Health Department as the Health Care Center director after Bradley died. In my work there, I feel like I’m doing something for Bradley, like I’m maintaining a stronger connection with Bradley because I miss him every single day.”

Gathering inspiration from the memories of the public health nurses who administered her immunizations in Key West as a young child, Higgs reminisces, “Those same nurses did routine school visits, as well, back in the day.”

In the remaining months before Higgs retires, her focus has shifted to an innovative project to vaccinate family members of newborns against pertussis and an aggressive campaign to promote HPV vaccination among the youth living in the Keys.

The People's Doctor

By Timothy O' Connor, Public Health
Communication Manager, Palm Beach County

Clarence (Carl) L. Brumback, MD, MPH
PALM BEACH COUNTY

Clarence (Carl) L. Brumback, MD, MPH, Palm Beach County's first public health doctor is better known as the "People's Doctor" for his lifetime of work dedicated to bettering the health of all people not only in Palm Beach County but throughout Florida and the nation.

In 1950, Dr. Brumback became director of the Palm Beach County Health Department. His modest beginning of a small, one-room headquarters led to the conception of a mobile office, his own station wagon. In 1956, he began the public health residency program in Palm Beach County that has trained hundreds of physicians in public health and preventive medicine. At the time, Dr. Brumback said, "I felt the best way to attract quality public health physicians was through an accredited residency program that was unique in the country."

Another initiative that led to the creation of the environmental health program was curbing pollution. Under Dr. Brumback, this program stopped the dumping into Lake Worth lagoon and, through deliberate efforts, led to the clean up of Lake Okeechobee.

During his 60-year public health career, Dr. Brumback never wavered from his focus. He used his ability to sit and talk with anyone to administer polio vaccines and bring tuberculosis under control. Playing an influential role in the passage of the Migrant Care Act, Dr. Brumback spoke with Presidents



When President Nixon offered for him to serve as U.S. Secretary of Health, Dr. Brumback humbly declined saying, "Thank you, but I need to stay where I am needed most."

Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. When President Nixon offered him the opportunity to serve as U.S. Secretary of Health, Dr. Brumback humbly declined saying, "Thank you, but I need to stay where I am needed most."

Focused on preventive and accessible care, Dr. Brumback opened the first primary care clinic in Belle Glade. Today, Palm Beach County operates seven centers with the Belle Glade location dedicated in Dr. Brumback's name.

Always a doctor on the move, Dr. Brumback's foresight and

dedication to preventive medicine, environmental health issues and accessible care for the migrant community has helped shape public health into what it is today. Palm Beach County Health Director Alina Alonso, MD, said, "I am honored to have learned from truly one of the best. Dr. Brumback was not only my teacher—he has been my mentor throughout my career in public health. . .He is truly the people's doctor."





Central

One Person Can Make a Difference in Public Health

By Heidar Heshmati, MD, MPH, PhD, Director, Brevard County

Steve Bunker is proof one person can make a difference in public health. It is no accident that he is being honored as we celebrate 125 years in public health. There is so much to celebrate in the professional and personal life of Steve Bunker.

His devotion to the causes of women and children is unparalleled in Brevard County. Bunker has demonstrated extraordinary vision and leadership, making a positive impact on the patient's outcome regardless of the health care setting. He began his career at Holmes Regional Medical, Melbourne, Florida in 1981, as a respiratory therapist and later moved into a leadership role as president and CEO from 1995 to 2001.



Steve Bunker
BREVARD COUNTY

Bunker was fundamental in many public health care programs in Brevard County. He was responsible for bringing the air ambulance First Flight to Brevard, and he was instrumental in the creation and management of the Hope Center (Health, Outreach, Prevention and Education) partnership, which was a collaborative effort among the hospital, health department, school board and medical society. This program began as a vision and a common goal to provide family support, education, preventive care and free medical care. The Hope Center worked to immunize children, provide breastfeeding education to African American and Hispanic women, and ensure prenatal education classes for at-risk pregnant women. The center also offers cancer screening for high-risk populations, provides breast self-examination education for at-risk women and offers primary care services to the uninsured.

Bunker worked in partnership with the health department for the Colposcopy Clinic by providing funding for equipment and financial aid to hire an OB/GYN physician. This program became a model practice and tremendously reduced the incidence of advanced cervical cancer in Brevard.

The nationwide school health model practice program was created through his leadership in partnership with the school board, health department and the financial support of the hospital. Bunker was instrumental in providing prenatal care for every pregnant woman in Brevard County—another nationwide model practice maternity program.

Bruce Pierce, director of community health states, “We believe Steve Bunker is our public health hero because his dedication and passion contributed to the health of Brevard County. The programs he started are still successful today.”

*“We believe Steve Bunker is our public health hero because his dedication and passion contributed to the health of Brevard County. **The programs he started are still successful today.**”*

—Bruce Pierce, Director of Community Health, Florida Department of Health in Brevard County

*“He has been a pragmatist, reaching workable solutions in times of discord, and **not only a team player, but a team builder.**”*

—Dr. Dennis Saver, We Care Committee Chair and Indian River County Medical Society Foundation President

Setting the Bar for Future Physicians

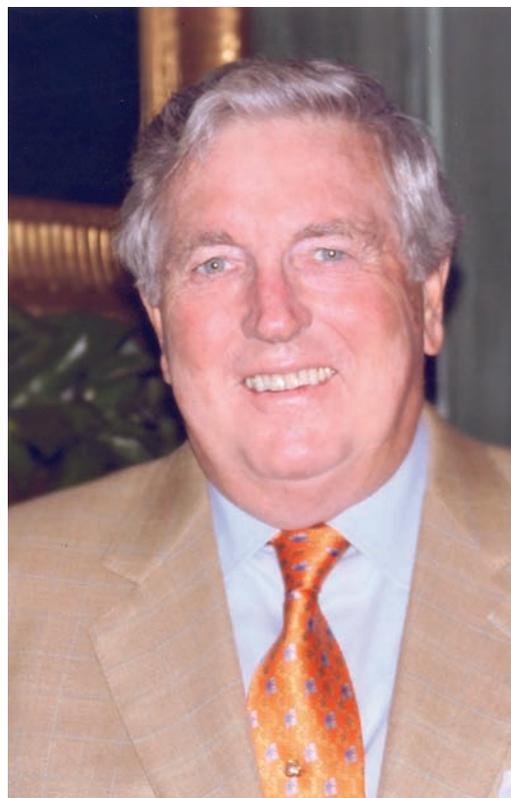
By Miranda Hawker, MPH, Administrator, Indian River County

For decades, Hugh K. McCrystal, MD, has been a tireless advocate for patient care in Indian River County. Dr. McCrystal is passionate about providing a continuous health care system for the people most in need and advocating for quality patient care. For more than 30 years, Dr. McCrystal has been a leader in the Indian River medical community. Serving 25 years as a trustee for the Indian River County hospital taxing district and chief of staff for Indian River Medical Center (IRMC) for 24 years, Dr. McCrystal’s dedication to help the underserved extends beyond his office.

As a physician volunteer for WeCare for the duration of his practice, he provided the impetus for the Indian River County Hospital District to fund the Partners in Women’s Health group practice. His support came at a crucial time when many indigent women were unable to receive prenatal care. The lack of prenatal care led to high numbers of walk-in deliveries and numerous high-risk births with poor outcomes. Under Dr. McCrystal’s guidance, the district committed more than \$600,000, ensuring access to care for women unable to afford the services. Since the opening of the clinic, the percentage of walk-in patients’ deliveries without prenatal care has decreased from nearly 10 percent to less than one percent. Today, the Partners in Women’s Health program delivers approximately 80 percent of all newborns born in Indian River.

“Dr. McCrystal has provided enduring leadership, for both IRMC and for the hospital tax district’s mission of care for the indigent. It is truly astonishing that his commitment has spanned not just years, but decades,” said Dr. Dennis Saver, WeCare committee chair and president of the Indian River County Medical Society Foundation. “He has been a pragmatist, reaching workable solutions in times of discord, and not only a team player, but a team builder. Our hospital, the ethics of physician responsibility and the public health of our community have all benefited from his dedicated example. This award is very well deserved. He has set the bar for Indian River County physicians of the future.”

Dr. McCrystal has passionately sought to improve health for his patients and has had a tremendous impact on public health through his many years of service to the Indian River County hospital taxing district, the Indian River Medical Center and the WeCare program.



Hugh Kearns McCrystal, MD
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY



Kendra Akers
LAKE COUNTY

“Being healthy means living your life in balance. With that in mind, each month *Healthy Living* magazine encourages over 100,000 of its readers to live healthy by providing articles that are focused on a healthy mind, body, spirit and finance. Each article is carefully planned with our community in mind.”

Community-Based Magazine Inspires Healthy Living

By Paul Butler, Interim Public Information Officer, Lake County

Kendra Akers is a lifelong resident of Lake County, president of Akers Media group and the publisher of three regional community magazines: *Healthy Living*, *Lake & Sumter Style* and *Villages Style*. *Healthy Living* has received recognition by the Florida Magazine Association as the best new magazine in 2009, and the best overall magazine in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Akers and her husband, Doug, have five children, two adult sons and three teenaged girls. She has been in publishing since 1999, beginning her career as a marketing representative for a local newspaper. Since then, Akers has worked at various publications and was able to fulfill her lifelong dream of becoming a magazine publisher with her launch of *Healthy Living* Magazine in 2008. Akers is extremely passionate about the community in which she lives and works. She has volunteered countless hours to help local civic organizations by creating successful branding campaigns and awareness efforts. She has been recognized as an outstanding citizen by the Leesburg Chamber of Commerce, Lifestream Behavioral Centers and the Leesburg Partnership.

Healthy Living shares the stories of local residents who have changed the lives of others within the Lake County community and abroad. The monthly publication provides readers an opportunity to learn more about health-related topics and offers insight for leading a healthier lifestyle.

In January 2013, *Healthy Living* covered local doctors, nurses, aides and laypersons whose mission is to take health care wherever and whenever needed, at whatever the cost.

The March feature, “Triumph of the Human Spirit”

told the story of a Holocaust survivor who lives in our community. Before that time, she had not found a way to share her past with her children until *Healthy Living* published the historical account.

In April, *Healthy Living* opened its pages to a high school student who spent countless laboratory hours hoping to find a cure for bacterial infections that affected residents of third world countries. Also featured in that issue was “Reggae Doc” Dr. John T. Williams, an orthopedic surgeon in Leesburg whose band plays several times a year to raise funds for Lake County organizations, and a 3-year-old child named Gordon “Creed” Pettit. Pettit had a rare eye disease and the featured article played a part in helping him become one of 24 kids from the U.S. selected to undergo a Phase 3 clinical trial involving gene therapy.

In the heat of July, *Healthy Living* spotlighted Olympic hopefuls who train in our community, and the magazine additionally featured former NBA player, Pat Burke who is now living in Lake County. Burke opened a youth training facility to encourage kids to participate in sports and healthy activities.

Akers and *Healthy Living* magazine have continued to provide information on topics related to health and wellness. The magazine inspires thousands each month to be well and live well.

For 35 Years: A Guiding Force for Environmental Health

By Renay Rouse, Public Information Officer, Martin County

Growing up in Martin County, Robert Washam developed a deep appreciation for the natural environment because of places like Blowing Rocks Preserve on Jupiter Island. As environmental health director for the Department, Washam worked with his team to coordinate programs and services to promote, protect and improve the health of the community. Throughout the years, Washam remained focused on initiatives to improve well-being and educate the community.

In 1978, after receiving an environmental technology degree from the Florida Institute of Technology, Washam began his career in public health. He later furthered his studies and earned a Master of Public Health from the University of Miami. During the 1980s, Washam led a team aimed at improving living conditions in the Booker Park area of Indiantown. The field initiative provided important data used to secure grants that led to exceptional improvements in the area. The revisions

included many repairs to homes, replacement of septic systems with public utilities and elimination of rodent harborage.

In 1986, his personal strength of character was revealed when he saved the life of a teenager whose car careened off a bridge and plunged into 12 feet of water in the Indian River lagoon. Washam swam out 100 feet to the car and after several dives, rescued the teen, earning the prestigious Carnegie medal for his heroic efforts.

As a leader in the field of environmental health, Washam served as president of the Florida Environmental Health Association, chaired the Florida Environmental Health Registration Board for many years and attended the Florida Public Health Leadership Institute and the National Environmental Health Leadership Institute. In 2003, the Centers for Disease Control recognized Washam as an emerging leader in environmental health.

In 2011, Washam coordinated a unique study of the mercury

“He has the respect of everyone who has ever worked with him, because we can always count on him to do what is right.”

—Karlette J. Peck, Health Officer, Florida Department of Health in Martin County

levels present in young women living in Martin County. Over 400 women were tested and educated on how to reduce their mercury levels. In addition, he helped design an informational booklet outlining the results of the study along with detailed recipes for low-mercury seafood.

During the summer of 2013, St. Lucie River in Martin County experienced high bacteria levels and toxic algae, as well as an outbreak of dengue fever in the Rio and Jensen Beach area. Washam’s professionalism and depth of experience was a guiding force in handling the crisis. He participated in every opportunity to inform and educate the community about the issues, locally and nationally.

“Washam is well known as a trusted environmental health professional,” said Martin County health officer, Karlette J. Peck. “He has the respect of everyone who has ever worked with him, because we can always count on him to do what is right.”



Robert Washam, RS, MPH
MARTIN COUNTY



Polly J. Cummings, RN
ORANGE COUNTY

Dedicated to a Lifetime of Excellent Care

By Dain R. Weister, Public Information Officer, Orange County

Polly J. Cummings, RN, the tuberculosis nurse case manager for Orange County, is a true public health hero. She has worked diligently for the State of Florida for 43 years—Cummings, the embodiment of dedication and commitment to excellence, chose to delay her retirement by many years so she could continue managing the care of her patients with TB.

During her more than 40 years as a nurse in Orange County, Cummings has worked in various programs delivering a variety of services to

residents. She started working at the county health department at the age of 18 in the 1970s as a nursing assistant. Shortly after, Cummings moved on to become a licensed practical nurse and then an RN, which enabled her to work in all integrated clinics.

Currently, Cummings is a nurse case manager in the pulmonary program where she coordinates care and manages patients with active TB through the duration of their therapy. Cummings attributes much of her success as a nurse to the supervisors who provided honest assessments of her performance that allowed her to enhance the quality of service she has delivered over the years. Cummings states that some of the individuals that have been instrumental in mentoring and

inspiring her in the past and present include: Claudine Langford, RN; Shirley Williams, RN; Maggie Mitchner, RN; Saadia Stephan, RN; Dr. Van Nguyen; Michael Dey; and Kathy Walker. They always encouraged her to strive for excellence while delivering care to patients.

What most people notice about Cummings is that she treats all of her patients with respect, equality and dignity; this has allowed her to build positive working relationships with patients. Cummings summed up her nursing career with the Department by saying, “I’ve had good days, some hills to climb, but all of my good days outweigh my bad days, and I won’t complain.”

Cummings’ tireless dedication and years of service illustrate the true meaning of public health.

“I’ve had good days, some hills to climb, but all of my good days outweigh my bad days, and I won’t complain.”

Rooted in the Community

By Georgianne Cherry, Emergency Operations Coordinator, Osceola County



Beverly Hougland
OSCEOLA COUNTY

Osceola County is fortunate to have Hougland's love for the community shine bright through her continued commitment and support.

As a much-respected resident of Osceola County and a tireless advocate for seniors, Beverly Hougland has provided leadership to the largest nonprofit agency in Osceola County for more than 30 years and remains hugely instrumental in the success of the agency. In 1990, after working at the Council on Aging as program director, she received the appointment of CEO.

During her time in Osceola County, Hougland has been the recipient of numerous honors and recognitions including the Osceola County Distinguished Leader Award. She has also served on the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service, the Osceola County Council On Aging's Disability Inclusion Committee, and the board of directors for the Florida Association of Service Providers.

The well-known leadership that Hougland provides to the Osceola Council on Aging's 30 multi-service programs is indispensable. Within the community, she is actively involved in local coalitions bringing stakeholders together to achieve an equitable quality of life for the citizens of Osceola County. Her creative collaborations with other community providers have garnered millions of dollars to address community needs. Hougland is always searching for better ways to meet the multidimensional needs of the growing population. She promoted the concept of senior service agencies acting as housing providers—developing another means of assisting seniors of all backgrounds to live independently.

In partnership with the Florida Department of Health in Osceola County, Hougland helped forge a pathway for those with limited access to community health care programs. This collaboration includes access to care at the Council on Aging, as well as the six Department offices located in the county. Additionally, Houghland has worked tirelessly with emergency response partners to include the Department with assisting seniors in disaster education and preparation. She played a vital role in the partnership with the city of St. Cloud, bringing into fruition the first building in Florida built for use as a senior center. The building is a storm-hardened facility designed to specifically accommodate seniors.

Together with the Council on Aging, Osceola County Emergency Management, county hospitals, law enforcement, fire and rescue, and other agencies, the Department has built a strong foundation for health and medical operations' response to emergencies. With Hougland at the helm, the Council on Aging has been invaluable in sheltering operations for those with disabilities. The council provides their building as a primary special needs shelter and in collaboration with the Department, provides staffing for the shelter.

Osceola County is fortunate to have Hougland's love for the community shine bright through her continued commitment and support.

Weaving a Story of Grief into a Passion for Infant Health

By Arlease Hall, Public Information Officer,
Community Relations Director, St. Lucie County

Sylvie Kramer Marceau was born just outside Paris, France. She was raised in Paris and personified all the well-known qualities of French culture: class, style, confidence and joie de vivre (joy of living). She came to the United States as the wife of an American serviceman. In 1968, Marceau lost her second son to sudden infant death syndrome, then known as crib death, when he was only six months old. This event changed her life forever. Marceau turned grief and tragedy into a source of unstoppable energy. She worked tirelessly because she did not want any woman to suffer the tragic loss of a child. Marceau felt that every child deserved a healthy start and every mother the joy of having a healthy baby.

In 1991, as a faculty member at the University of South Florida, College of Public Health, Marceau examined the delivery of health services to pregnant women and infants. She did not like what she saw—poor outcomes, poor access to care and high rates of infant morbidity and mortality. In 1992, Marceau moved to St. Lucie County from Clearwater to develop and implement a program establishing a more efficient and effective obstetrics delivery system. The new program increased the level and quality of care for moms and



Sylvie Kramer Marceau
ST. LUCIE COUNTY

“I had numerous conversations with Sylvie and her passion was to stop the babies from dying Yes, she left a legacy!”

—Rufus “Butch” Alexander, Fort Pierce City Commissioner

babies, saving the county millions of dollars.

In 2000, Marceau founded the Healthy Start Coalition of St. Lucie County and Kids Connected by Design (KCBD), an umbrella organization that tied together three organizations involved with the care of women, babies and children: the Healthy Start Coalition, Healthy Families and Healthy Kids. Through these programs, Marceau transformed the county’s maternal and child health system of care. Access to pre-natal care increased, teen births dropped significantly and mother-to-baby transmission of HIV dropped from 30 percent to zero. Infant mortality rates dropped from a high of 11.7 percent in 1993 to 4.7 percent in 2011.

Marceau passed away in 2011, but her legacy lives on through the work of 15 programs operating under the KCBD umbrella. These programs serve over 16,500 children and families a year.

“I had numerous conversations with Sylvie and her passion was to stop the babies from dying,” Fort Pierce City Commissioner Rufus “Butch” Alexander, a third-generation funeral home director said. “It was not until she put a quality system of care in place that I stopped burying the babies. Yes, she left a legacy!”

Making a Difference through Exceptional Service

By Mirna Chamorro, Public Information Officer, Seminole County

Iris Quinn is one special individual—in fact, she truly exemplifies public health in Seminole County. Quinn has been involved in public health for most of her life. Even before she began her journey as a Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS), Quinn was repeatedly exposed to health issues within her own community. Quinn’s mother was a public health nurse who spent her entire nursing career in Duval County, and Quinn often accompanied her mother on home visits during the summer months. When reminiscing on vacations spent with her mother, Iris Quinn joked, “My mom forced me to volunteer.”

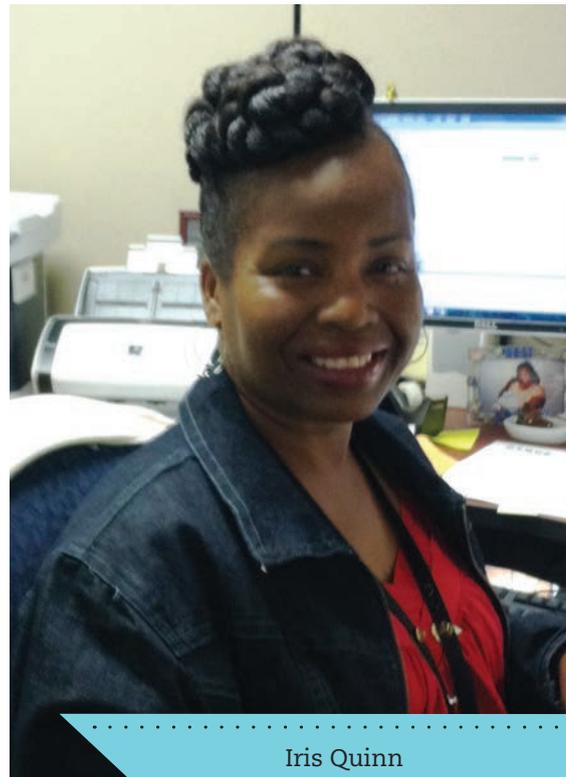
During college, though Quinn had an internship with the Duval County Health Department offering health education to teenagers and the community through presentations and demonstrations, she discovered health education was not her calling.

Instead, after graduating college she became a health services representative for the Jacksonville area tuberculosis program. As the only DIS for the two TB clinics in Central Florida, her caseload for Seminole County alone was high enough to warrant a justification for a TB nurse. Consequently, Quinn collected data and tracked her activities to present a report to the health officer. Because she was so convincing, the first full-time TB nurse for Seminole County was hired.

Quinn recently celebrated 30 years of exceptional service with the Department. She has made a significant difference in the community because of the manner in which she approaches public health. As an active resident and member of the community, Quinn’s contacts have proven to be invaluable, including partnerships with local churches, shelters, schools and businesses. Quinn also provides directly observed therapy for clients who are without a home, meeting them in the center of town at the clock tower for therapy. Quinn is always eager to volunteer to learn new computer systems and clinical applications—a conquered skill-set that is evident in her work with laboratory results.

Quinn interfaces with the TB Physician’s Consultation Network and local hospitals to ensure all diagnostic radiology is acquired and made available. She has completed the intensive cross training with STD-DIS and every year she arranges the activities for World TB Day.

Quinn is a remarkably kind and compassionate woman who manages to be both quiet and unassuming but firm and unflappable when necessary. She continuously wins the respect of her clients and staff by treating their needs as priorities. Iris Quinn is the face of the TB program in Seminole County.



Iris Quinn
SEMINOLE COUNTY

Quinn often accompanied her mother on home visits during the summer months. When reminiscing on vacations spent with her mother, Iris Quinn joked, “My mom forced me to volunteer.”



T. Wayne Bailey, Ph.D.
VOLUSIA COUNTY

A Selfless Leader Committed to Public Health and Social Justice

By Tyler Browning, Public Information Intern, Volusia County, Communication and Media Studies major at Stetson University

“It is my mission to help others, especially young people who need some encouragement to reach their full potential.”

Dr. T. Wayne Bailey has been honored numerous times for his outstanding contributions to the community. Well known in Volusia County for his leadership and commitment to social justice and public health, Dr. Bailey has been a political science professor at Stetson University since 1963. In 2011, Dr. Bailey’s selfless service to the community was recognized with the appointment of Person of the Year for Volusia County.

In 2004, the American Lung Association (ALA) presented Dr. Bailey with the Will Ross Medal in honor of his contributing more than 40 years of service. He also earned an honorary membership in the Florida Thoracic Society. Dr. Bailey was nationally recognized as one of the country’s top innovative and influential leaders in the health care community during the Inaugural Discovery Health Channel Medical Honors. Dr. Bailey was the only political scientist, among medical doctors and scientists, recognized for his tireless efforts toward enacting the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act. Now a law and constitutional amendment, Florida’s indoor public areas have become officially smoke-free.

“My contribution to the health care agenda has been to bring

advocacy to the table. Advocating for change has become the most important aspect of policy and law development. As a political scientist, I am pleased I played a role in creating a smoke-free Florida. It was the culmination of what I started working on in 1985. I’m also pleased that Stetson University will enact a Breathe Free policy prohibiting smoking and tobacco-related products beginning this fall semester, 2014.”

Many of Dr. Bailey’s former students have gone on to serve in Congress and the Florida Legislature, including former U.S. Senator Max Cleland, a 1964 Stetson graduate, and several alumni who currently serve in the Florida Legislature.

Dr. Bailey is well known for volunteering his expertise to local, state and national groups. He has done extensive work with local governments by helping cities and counties upgrade their charters and reform their governments.

“It is my mission to help others, especially young people who need some encouragement to reach their full potential,” said Dr. Bailey.

Since Dr. Bailey has dedicated his life to the enrichment of others, whether for public health, politics or education, the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County honors T. Wayne Bailey for being a selfless leader committed to public health and social justice.



West

More than a Lifetime in Medicine

By Rita Johnson, Staff Writer, Special to the *Citrus County Chronicle*

Carlos F. Gonzalez, MD
CITRUS COUNTY



His wife, Helen, explained that despite the struggles, he always had a light over him and good things continuously happened for him.

The Florida Department of Health in Citrus County honors a leader who has left behind a legacy of delivering quality health care. Dr. Carlos F. Gonzalez was born in Puerto Rico and passed away on his 83rd birthday, May 26, 2013, in Crystal River.

In October of 2010, Dr. Gonzalez sold his practice Suncoast Primary Care, in Homosassa, but continued treating his patients until March of 2013, less than 10 weeks prior to his death. “Dr. G,” as he was affectionately known, was truly an old-fashioned family doctor and considered his career a calling—a life vocation. He was a dedicated physician and often stated, “If I didn’t work, I would die.”

At the age of three, Gonzalez contracted polio, and his family moved to the mountains for his health. He remembers his father taking him to a swift moving stream to sit on a rock and let the cool running water massage his legs. Although Gonzalez wore leg braces until his first year of college, he developed a strong upper body and strengthened his legs enough to remove the braces.

After three years of marriage to his wife, Helen, he left Connecticut, where he was working as an occupational therapist, and returned to Puerto Rico for medical school. After graduating as president of his class, the family moved to St. Clair, Michigan, where he began his private medical practice and founded the River District Hospital in 1961–62. Dr. Gonzalez often received payment in the form of vegetables, eggs and chickens, whatever the families could offer. Before Medicare, he accepted all “payments” graciously and continued his visits, including house calls in rural areas.

However, the effects of polio haunted him, and he had to give up administering surgery. Walking proved difficult in the cold Michigan winters causing the family to seek a warmer climate. Fortunately, for Citrus County, he chose to move to Crystal River in 1971 and start a general practice. At that time, the only hospital was Citrus Memorial in Inverness, and Dr. Gonzalez would often spend the night on-call, as there were no other emergency room physicians at the time. Certified as a multi-plane pilot, he often flew his plane from Crystal River to Inverness to check on his patients. In 1978, to answer public health demands, Dr. Gonzalez helped found his second hospital, Seven Rivers Regional Medical Center in Crystal River with his friend, Pete DeRosa.

Dr. Gonzalez contracted malaria five times, carried the effects of polio his whole life and endured a severe case of adult chicken pox. Experiencing these things allowed him to have immense empathy for the sick. His wife, Helen, explained that despite the struggles, he always had a light over him and good things continuously happened for him. “You were a true legacy, Dr. G, and the world is a better place because you were here,” said Helen Gonzalez.



Helene Conner Mancini, RN
HARDEE COUNTY

“I loved nursing and educating the children on good health. When I drove up to the schools and the children saw my car they would scatter, they called me the shot lady.”

The First Nurse of Hardee County

By Norma J. Christmas, Special Projects Manager, Hardee County

On September 1, 1947, Hardee County Health Department opened its doors with Helene Mancini serving as the first nurse.

While the offices were being prepared, she operated the health department from her home, facing health concerns such as venereal diseases, smallpox, whooping cough, chicken pox and hookworm from outdoor privies. Conner Mancini served as an advocate for public health for 39 years. With her retirement in 1979, Mancini shared some of her adventures as a Hardee County nurse in an article with *The Herald Advocate*.

While working at Limestone School, a tornado swept through the community, “We saw it coming and ran for a ditch to hide,” Mancini said. She also reminisced on the time she had to deliver a baby. “I wasn’t supposed to, but I was caught. I remember thinking the first thing you do is boil water. After putting the water on to boil, I scrubbed up. Then I wondered what do you use the water for? Then I threw a pair of scissors and a piece of string to be used on the navel cord in the boiling water.”

During a recent visit with 92-year-old Helene Mancini and her

husband Frank, she said, “I loved nursing and educating the children on good health. When I drove up to the schools and the children saw my car they would scatter, they called me the shot lady.”

Frank Mancini expressed the gratitude he feels toward the Hardee County Health Department for bringing them together, “The best thing is that she met the love of her life (me) while working at the health department,” Mancini said. “It happened when Helene came out to my business to certify the health of employees at the packing plant.”



Barbara Sweinberg
HERNANDO COUNTY

Extending an Attitude of Gratitude

By Ann-Gayl Ellis, Health Education Program Manager, Hernando County

*“I am honored to be selected as a Department of Health public health hero. **I am only one of a number of generous volunteers in my community** who work to ensure everyone has access to quality health care.”*

With a concern for serving those greatest in need, Barbara Sweinberg has volunteered 40 hours a week in Hernando County since 2010. Whether it is in the field of physical, mental, or oral health, Sweinberg has offered her service in assisting these individuals. Acting as director of clinic services for the Crescent Community Clinic in Spring Hill, she has helped recruit over 95 volunteers and secured more than \$150,000 in grant funding. Her routine clinic oversight has contributed to 7,100 services donated annually, an estimated value of \$4,000,000 to the communities of Hernando County.

Beyond her commitment to the clinic, Sweinberg volunteers her grant writing and nonprofit expertise to many other organizations, including the Hernando Youth Initiative, Service Corps of Retired Executives and the Hernando County Community Health Improvement Plan Partnership. She frequently offers free grant writing classes to the public in an effort to promote the expansion of services to improve the physical, economic, academic, and emotional health of the community.

At the grass roots level, Sweinberg demonstrates selfless service in helping the Department achieve its mission. “I am honored to be selected as a Department of Health public health hero,” says Barbara Sweinberg. “I am only one of a number of generous volunteers in my community who work to ensure everyone has access to quality health care.”

Victoria "Joyce" Ely, RN
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Her commitment to excellence
dramatically improved health outcomes for women and children in Florida.

1944, Midwife institutes. Left to right, seated: Joyce Sogaard, Joyce Ely and Julie Graves. All other individuals are unidentified. From the Florida State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory Project, floridamemory.com.

A Special Tribute to a Florida Midwife

By Steve Huard, Public Information Officer, Hillsborough County
and Courtney L. Gager, Online Marketing Strategist, Office of Communications

The legacy of Victoria "Joyce" Ely, RN, Florida's first licensed midwife, continues to inspire excellence in public health today. Ely, a nurse working with the American Red Cross in New York City, first came to Florida in 1923 at the special request of prominent cypress mill companies in Perry, Florida. The cypress mill companies had contacted the American Red Cross for assistance because many of the mill workers and their families were falling ill to a variety of diseases including hookworm. The increase in disease was attributed to the Florida climate, soil disturbed by the cypress mills and limited access to health care services. When Ely arrived in Perry in 1923, the whole town turned out to welcome her. The cypress mill companies even presented her with her very first car. Ely did not know how to drive, but she was grateful for the gift and quickly learned on the heavily rutted timber roads.

Though public health in Florida was still in its early stages, Ely was able to provide quality patient care and health education to the people of Perry. She taught families basic hygiene, how to avoid hookworms, disease prevention and patient care. Her work in Perry brought to light the growing need for full-time health education and organized health care in Florida.

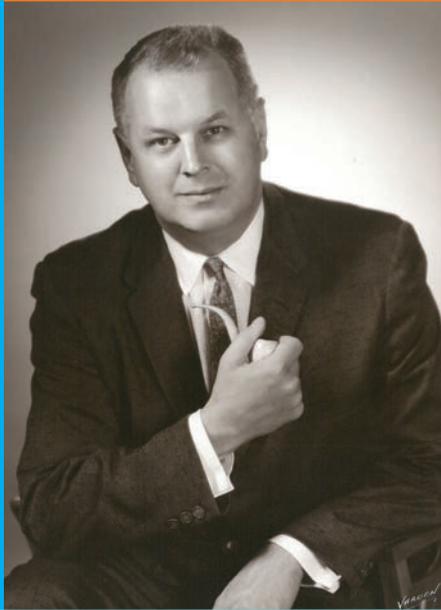
Dr. Joseph Y. Porter, Florida's first public health officer, heard about Ely's work in Perry and asked her

to work with the State Board of Health to create and promote a standard quality of care for infant and maternal health practices throughout Florida. Ely accepted Dr. Porter's offer and became Florida's first licensed nurse midwife.

Ely devoted herself to improving infant and maternal health by establishing the state's first midwifery program. Ely trained and equipped midwives through training seminars and founded model practice institutes. Her commitment to excellence dramatically improved health outcomes for women and children in Florida. Her legacy continues to this day.

Ely later left the midwifery program at the State Board of Health in 1944 to continue to promote quality health services in Ruskin, Florida, until her retirement in 1957. The Hillsborough County Health Department recognized Ely's commitment to establishing excellence in community health services with the dedication of their first health center in Ruskin, the Joyce Ely Health Center, in 1954. Ely was also posthumously inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame in 2002 for her unwavering dedication to health in Florida.

The Florida Department of Health also honors Ely for her invaluable service to Florida and for her outstanding and lifelong contributions to public health.



John Ambrusko, MD
MANATEE COUNTY

Humble Beginnings Inspire a Future Based on Accessibility

By Megan Jourdan, Health Educator Consultant, Manatee County

Dr. John Ambrusko, the youngest of nine children born to Hungarian immigrants, experienced an impoverished childhood.

While attending the University of Buffalo School of Medicine, Dr. Ambrusko often had to study by candlelight because his family could not afford electricity. Despite the obstacles he encountered, Dr. Ambrusko graduated in 1937 and went on to become one of New York's most recognized and well-respected surgeons. While living in New York, he helped found Kenmore Mercy Hospital, held his own private practice in Buffalo and worked at the Mayo Clinic, only pausing his practice to serve as a physician during World War II.

"I know what it's like to be poor and to be embarrassed about it," Dr. John Ambrusko said. "I wanted the health department to be a place where people who were sick could go to get help and be treated with dignity and kindness."

According to his daughter Joni Tokars, Dr. Ambrusko's popularity as a surgeon was based on his belief that everyone deserved equal treatment, regardless of their prognosis or ability to pay.

"Whether taking care of a soldier in the South Pacific, Nelson Rockefeller at the Mayo Clinic or a farmer who couldn't pay any medical bills, my father always

treated everyone with the same dignity and respect," Tokars says. "He offered the reassurance that he would do anything and everything in his means to help them."

Dr. Ambrusko's tenure as director of the Manatee County Health Department was from 1977 to 1988. He led the health department toward a future based on accessibility. Dr. Ambrusko's grandson, Mike Tokars, shared that his grandfather, "...knew what it was to be poor and so he had a total devotion to helping."

Recognizing a gap in medical care for the uninsured, Dr. Ambrusko worked to develop partnerships with doctors, nurses and nonprofits in Manatee County. These not-for-profit partnerships paved the way for how health fairs deliver comprehensive health screenings, free transportation and referrals for those who could not afford follow-up treatment. He was also instrumental in the creation of the Manatee County Rural Health clinic that remains the county's service center for indigent health care.

"Dr. Ambrusko's legacy continues in Manatee County today," Manatee County Administrator Dr. Jennifer Bencie states. "He was a visionary and the impact of his work is still present. He was a very well-respected man."

"I wanted the health department to be a place where people who were sick could go to get help and be treated with dignity and kindness."

Grassroots Efforts Honored by the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame

By Deanna Krautner, MEd, CHES, Health Education Program Manager and Christine Abarca, MPH, MCHES, Assistant Director, Pasco County

Margarita Romo established Farmworkers Self-Help Inc. in 1982, to assist seasonal and migrant farm workers in everything from immigration and food assistance to improving their overall quality of life. Under Romo's leadership, the organization has evolved from initially providing immigration assistance to addressing many of the social determinants of health. Farmworkers Self-Help Inc. offers job training, a free medical clinic, after-school programs for teens, food assistance and operates the Norma Learning Center for children 12 and under. Originally planned as a grassroots effort by immigrant Mexican, Mexican-American migrant farmworkers and former farmworkers to find solutions to the problems of the

farmworker population, Farmworkers Self-Help Inc. has continuously evolved to meet current needs.

Romo is well-known for her advocacy for improvements to Tommytown, a poor farm worker community on the north end of Dade City. Rough dirt roads, substandard housing, sanitary nuisances, and crime and safety issues plagued Tommytown before Romo's involvement. In recent years, Pasco County has invested more than \$20 million in infrastructure improvements by paving roads, adding sidewalks, improving drainage and building new homes.

Romo is an action-oriented innovator. She collaborates with community organizations, faith-based groups, government agencies

"Awards are great. But I don't need awards. My reward is the work I do."

and local universities to bring health and social services to the agricultural community and any individuals seeking assistance through Farmworkers Self-Help Inc.

In 2013, Governor Scott appointed Margarita Romo to the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame for her outstanding efforts. A few years prior, Romo was named the Tampa Hispanic Heritage's Hispanic Woman of the Year for 2010. "Awards are great," Romo said in a recent interview. "But I don't need awards. My reward is in the work I do."

Romo's work to affect systems and environmental change in Tommytown and the surrounding area has positively affected the growth of public health in Florida. For her contributions and commitment to the community, we recognize her as Pasco County's public health hero.



Margarita Romo
Pasco County



Lisa Cohen, PHSM
PINELLAS COUNTY

One Person at a Time

By Maggie Hall, Public Information Officer, Pinellas County

Lisa Cohen, PHSM, Pinellas County's HIV/AIDS program manager's public health career has spanned the last 36 years. It began before some of the first AIDS diagnoses and has continued to the current status of people living longer due to HIV-testing and treatments for individuals with HIV.

In 1979, Cohen became an STD educator at Pinellas County Health Department. Freshly graduated from the University of Florida, Cohen chose health education over her previously considered teaching career. In a 2-year span as an educator, focused on supplying quality community resources to assess incoming patients with HIV, Cohen helped write Florida's module for reporting HIV cases. The Department in Pinellas County was named one of the first HIV/AIDS testing sites in the state.

Cohen is credited with playing a creative role in the formation of the Pinellas County jail linkage program, the first of its kind within a county jail. The program continues to integrate HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis and tuberculosis screenings for inmates. It has served as a model for the state of Florida and across the nation.

Pinellas County has also led the way in perinatal screenings that test and, if needed, treat pregnant women for HIV/AIDS. These screenings have helped reduce the number of babies born testing positive from 30 to 2 percent. Under Cohen's leadership and foundational effort, Pinellas now has 27 HIV/AIDS testing sites and serves as the Ryan White Part B lead agency for eight counties in Florida.

Thinking back over her three decade career in public health, Cohen finds her job and life's passion very rewarding. "Being able to make a difference was what I enjoyed most. I was so eager to learn when I first arrived in Pinellas County. Everything came out of finding a way to make things better, even if it was for one person at a time."

*"Being able to make a difference was what I enjoyed most. I was so eager to learn when I first arrived in Pinellas County. **Everything came out of finding a way to make things better, even if it was for one person at a time.**"*



Extending the Potential for Public Health Services

By Pam Crain, Public Information Specialist
and Dr. Choe, Director, Polk County

William F. Hill, Jr, MD
POLK COUNTY

“No one individual deserves recognition of this kind, it’s all about teamwork. Our line of work is accomplished effectively through a team effort.”

Serving as director from January 1967 until June 1985, William F. Hill, Jr., MD, holds the title of the longest-standing health officer in Polk County. In recognition of his dedication, the Florida Public Health Association honored Dr. Hill with the Meritorious Service Award in 1977.

Dr. Hill began his career in public health immediately after graduating from the University of Tennessee in Memphis. He subsequently received his Master of Public Health from the University of California in Berkeley in 1961.

During his tenure, Dr. Hill contracted with the Polk Correctional Institute to provide medical care to inmates and also expanded monitoring for wells and toxic spills. He additionally championed the work of staff and initiated several programs that were ahead of their time. Bringing migrant care clinics to those in need, Dr. Hill remembers joining his nurses in picking tomatoes from nearby fields for lunch while on site.

Dr. Hill often went beyond his role, handling client calls while working at his desk and assisting in packing medications whenever clinics were short-handed. His unique gift of foreseeing potential problems and marshalling community resources highlights Dr. Hill’s aim in working for the benefit of others.

“No one individual deserves recognition of this kind, it’s all about teamwork. Our line of work is accomplished effectively through a team effort,” says Dr. Hill. “Staff should be treated how leadership wants to be treated, including the encouragement to use any skills and resources in serving the public as best as humanly possible.”

Innovative Efforts Generate Advancements in Public Health

By Louis Derosie, MPH, CPH,
Environmental Epidemiologist, Sumter
County

Ann R. Fields
SUMTER COUNTY

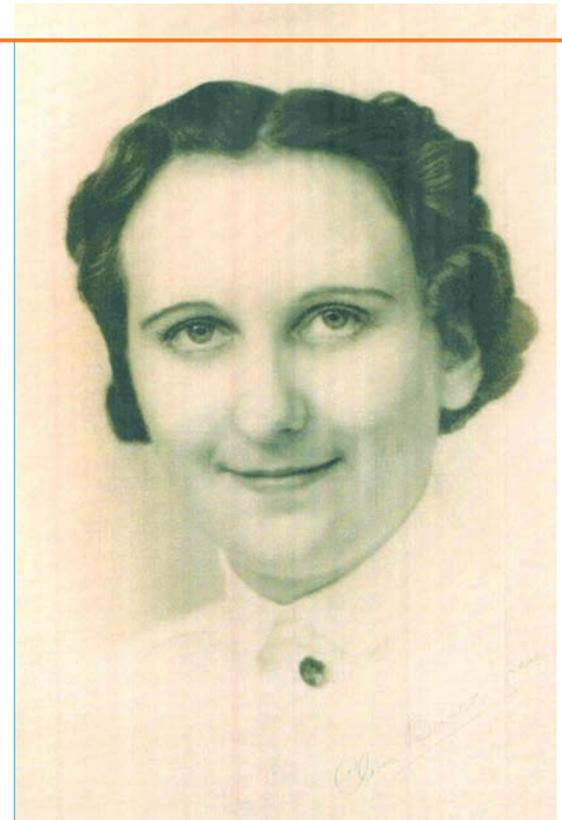
*“She was a wonderful woman who always looked out for the community. **She loved the community and she wanted to help everyone that came into clinic.**”*

—Brenda Shrewsbury, former Business Manager, Florida Department of Health in Sumter County

On February 20, 1916, Ann Fields was born in Defiance, Ohio. One winter, while passing through Bushnell, Florida, escaping the cold, her holiday retreat turned into relocation and she stayed in Sumter County for 36 years. Fields served the people of Sumter County from 1945 until 1981 as their first public health nurse. She passed away on December 6, 2005 in Bushnell, Florida, at the age of 88. Ann Fields worked toward conquering disease in Sumter County.

On Fields’ arrival in Bushnell, the health issues in Sumter County were overwhelming. She immediately began a vaccination program and was the impetus for improving the community’s general sanitation, promoting the ideal of “One Health.” The improved sanitation and vaccination programs put in place were instrumental in the eradication of hookworm, typhoid fever, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough and tuberculosis.

During Fields’ tenure, a majority of the babies born in Sumter County were delivered at home. In response to the needs of the community, Fields began a training program for midwives. Her methods emphasized the importance of using sterile techniques and methods, greatly improving the life expectancy of newborns and their mothers. Fields also improvised an incubator for premature babies—a box with screened ends which allowed air to enter, and



strategically-placed whiskey bottles filled with hot water set around the outside of the box. This innovative incubator saved the lives of at least 19 babies and eventually led to the Department obtaining an electric incubator. Her profound empathy for the less fortunate was passed on to her two sons, who both have become educators continuing the tradition of giving back to society by conducting agricultural and medical research.

While many individuals contribute to public health every day, few establish their legacy as a public health hero for an entire county. When in Sumter County, ask the locals about Ann Fields and they will all tell the same story. She was compassionate, caring and always dedicated more time to the sick than to herself. She provided a framework for public health in Sumter County that will carry on for generations to come.



Southwest

Charlotte County's Bicycle Man

By Adam DuBois, Planning Manager, Charlotte County

Eric Stockley, also known as “The Bicycle Man,” grew up in the Leeds area of England, and in 1971 began his public health career as a State Enrolled Nurse with a specialty in mental health. He worked for the National Health Services at the Stanley Royd Mental Hospital in Wakefield, England until 1983. In 1993, Stockley became a naturalized U.S. citizen and in 1994 following his dreams, passion for physical activity and the desire to explore, he took a nine month, 9,999 mile bicycling journey around the circumference of Australia. In 1995, he began his career with the Charlotte County Health Department where he held many titles during his tenure and focused on improving the health of the community.

Stockley's passion for health, knowledge and living life to the fullest have afforded him the opportunity to operate his own health studio, qualify on two occasions for the Mr. Universe competition, and bike six continents where he learned about other cultures and shared his own.

In response to his nomination for Charlotte County public health hero,

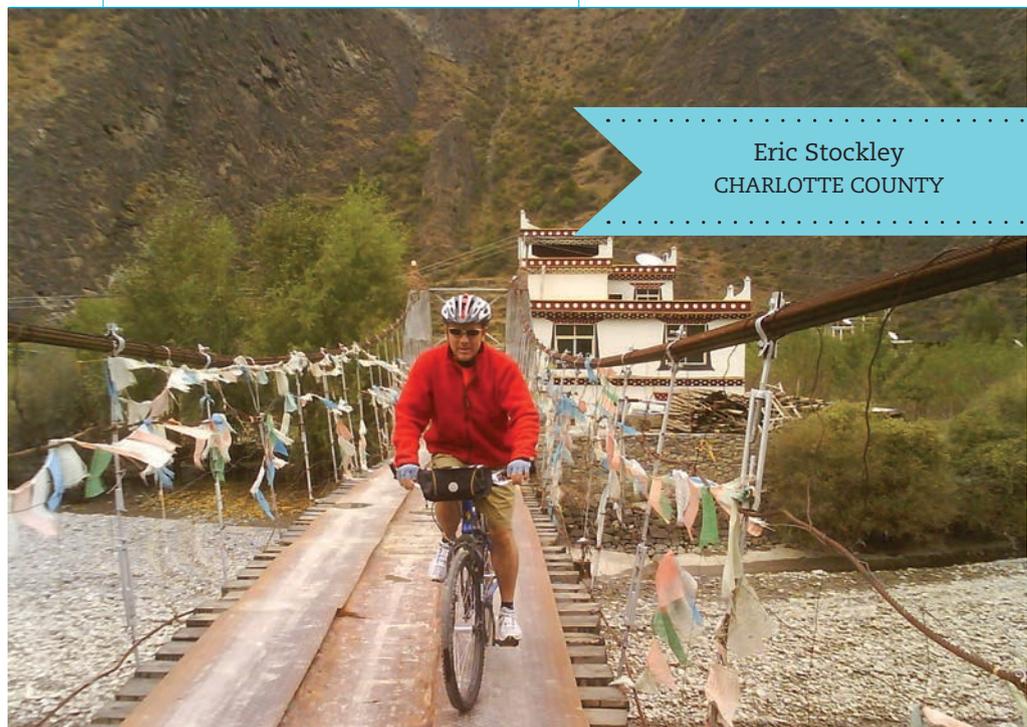
Stockley expressed, “Enjoying a healthy lifestyle has always come naturally to me, but encouraging others to enjoy a similar lifestyle has been truly rewarding.”

Despite experiencing setbacks and challenges with his own health, Stockley's desire to cycle continues. Creating a cycling club for cardiac patients to encourage physical, heart-healthy activity and education, he was instrumental in helping Charlotte County Health Department become the first in the country to receive the League of Amstockleyan Bicyclist's Bicycle Friendly designation.

Currently serving as the HIV prevention and education consultant, Stockley continues to promote, protect and improve the health of Floridians through coordinated community efforts.

“Enjoying a healthy lifestyle has always come naturally to me, but encouraging others to enjoy a similar lifestyle has been truly rewarding.”

Department of Health in Charlotte County Director Henry Kurban, MD, MBA, MPH says, “Eric Stockley exemplifies the qualities of a true public health hero—continually striving to improve the health of his community and leading by example.”



Eric Stockley
CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Growth through Encouragement

By Deb Millsap, MEd, RD, LD/N, Director of Nutrition and Health Education, Public Information Officer, Collier County

Jane Polkowski, MD, MPH
COLLIER COUNTY

Jane Polkowski (Levy), MD, MPH, served the state of Florida as a county health department director for 17 years (1983–2000)—13 years in Collier County, followed by four years in Seminole County. “Collier County is recognizing Dr. Polkowski as our public health hero for her forward thinking and the long lasting positive impact she has had on the health of our community,” says Joan Colfer, MD, MPH, director of the Florida Department of Health in Collier County.

After earning her MD from Wayne State and Master of Public Health from the University of Michigan, Dr. Polkowski worked at the Wayne County Health Department in Michigan for 10 years as acting medical director and director of the Division of Communicable Disease. In the early 1990s, Dr. Polkowski was compelled to promote and educate employees on the importance of quality improvement long before accreditation was a consideration. Proactively, she involved all levels of staff in ongoing long-range planning and development, with a focus on delivering quality customer service. She empowered her workforce to identify problems and develop solutions.

Dr. Polkowski also understood the significance of including community stakeholders in the process of developing a shared vision that all parties could embrace.

She facilitated a number of public-private community collaborations that helped effectively deliver services the county health department could not do alone. In 1987, she established the Collier County AIDS task force, the county’s first AIDS clinic and encouraged participation in drug trials to assist clients living with AIDS. Dr. Polkowski was also a driving force behind multiple partnerships promoting immunizations and efforts to end infant mortality.

Dr. Polkowski fondly remembers, “What a terrific group of dedicated and hardworking people to work with! We had a lot of challenging times, both in terms of public health issues that needed addressing, as well as financial and political changes that would regularly cycle. Together, we faced those challenging times and successfully overcame them. We had many fun times as well!”

Dr. Polkowski’s passion for empowering staff continues today through the Department’s Leadership Institute, formerly the Public Health Leadership Institute that Dr. Polkowski helped shape. She was also a member of the former institute’s initial advisory board. Many staff members recall Dr. Polkowski’s encouraging leadership and genuinely compassionate nature for employees, clients and the community.



“What a terrific group of dedicated and hardworking people to work with! We had a lot of challenging times, both in terms of public health issues that needed addressing, as well as financial and political changes that would regularly cycle. Together, we faced those challenging times and successfully overcame them. We had many fun times as well!”



Felix E. Perez, MD
DESOTO COUNTY

An Invitation to Serve

By Ioannis Gountas, Planning Consultant, Safety Coordinator and Public Information Officer, DeSoto County

“DeSoto County is grateful to Dr. Perez for providing the local community with the privilege of maintaining such excellent medical care standards for so many years.”

—Mary Kay Burns, Administrator, Florida Department of Health in DeSoto County

Felix E. Perez, MD, the son of a farmer, was born in San Jose de los Ramos, Matanzas, Cuba, the tenth of 14 children. The concept of medicine appealed to the young Perez since he thought it to be beneficial to women who raise multiple children, like his own mother.

In 1954, Dr. Perez received a Bachelor of Science in pre-med from the Institute of Matanzas and completed his MD at the University of Havana in 1961. Driven by the constant desire to help others, he spent several years undergoing post-graduate training. This included practicing in the fields of obstetrics and gynecology in Cuba and Oklahoma, until his move to Hardee County, Florida in 1975.

In 1987, Dr. Perez began his work in public health as a consultant for the DeSoto County Health Department. Dr. Perez

quickly became the main primary health care provider in DeSoto County and never refused care. When his children left home for college, he decided to close his private practice and spend time helping others until his retirement from medicine in 2003. In 2005, Dr. Perez received an invitation to come out of retirement. He accepted and continued to provide primary care for six additional years until he suffered a stroke that forced him to retire.

Dr. Perez possessed the extraordinary ability to diagnose patients accurately without the application of medical advances, often by just observing clients. On one such occasion, during a routine visit in 2006 for patient Chad Kurtz, Dr. Perez was able to detect a physiological anomaly that led to the discovery of a tumoral growth. This early diagnosis led to a subsequent and speedy recovery. “To put it simply, Dr. Perez saved my life,” said Kurtz.

For more than 20 years, Dr. Perez averaged 30 to 40 patient visits each day. He remains an inspiration to Department employees. His well-mannered approach and personal devotion to clients will not be forgotten.

“DeSoto County is grateful to Dr. Perez for providing the local community with the privilege of maintaining such excellent medical care standards for so many years,” says DeSoto County Administrator and Health Officer Mary Kay Burns, RN, BSN, MBA.

45 Years of Dedication to Family Health

By Brenda Barnes, Planning Consultant and Public Information Officer, Hendry and Glades Counties

Joanne Vorhees began her career in public health in 1968. For the last 45 years, Vorhees has worked as an advanced registered nurse practitioner for Hendry and Glades County Health Departments. Specializing in women's health, her efforts include promoting clinic schedules for adolescents receiving family planning services and providing family planning education to the rural areas of Hendry and Glades counties.

Early in her nursing career, she worked at the Baylor University Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Her family decided to move to Florida in the 1960s and settled in Clewiston. Vorhees became an operating room and emergency room supervisor at the Hendry General Hospital in Clewiston and also assisted with labor and delivery.

After making the transition into public health, she promoted educational videos for women about health and family planning choices, taught parenting classes at local high schools and assisted with prenatal and primary care in the clinical setting. She continues to be a patient advocate and believes in preventive health and education. Vorhees is a former board member of the Harlem Academy Daycare and an active member of the local chapters of the American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society.

Over the years, Vorhees has witnessed significant change in public health, most notably the adjustments of immunization requirements for school entry. Vorhees says, "I love being a part of the rural community. I see the grandchildren of people that I remember giving school immunizations to. It's nice getting to know the whole family."

Vorhees is not ready to enter retirement just yet. Due to the love for her work and the communities she serves, Vorhees anticipates several more years of committed service.

"It's amazing and inspiring to know that Joanne has dedicated 45 years of her life to public health. We are so happy that she chose to spend many years of service with us at the Florida Department of Health in Hendry and Glades Counties. It truly is a remarkable accomplishment," says Pat Dobbins, administrator, Florida Department of Health in Hendry and Glades Counties.



Joanne Vorhees, ARNP
HENDRY & GLADES COUNTIES

"I love being a part of the rural community. I see the grandchildren of people that I remember giving school immunizations to. It's nice getting to know the whole family."



Martha E. Valiant, MD, MPH
HENDRY & GLADES COUNTIES

Rural Health Efforts Bring Honor to Florida Woman of the Year

By Brenda Barnes, Planning Consultant
and Public Information Officer, Hendry and
Glades Counties

*“I hope that I am remembered as a doctor who made a difference in the lives of children and their **families in rural communities.**”*

The people living in her community commonly call Martha E. Valiant, MD, MPH, the “Baby Doctor,” but colleagues know her as the “Voice of Rural Counties.” Over the past 40 years, Dr. Valiant has been a tireless advocate for the rural health challenges of communities not only in Hendry and Glades counties, but throughout the Southwest Florida region.

Since graduating from Duke University School of Medicine in 1972 with a specialty in pediatrics, Dr. Valiant has spent most of her medical career in the public sector. Her public health roots began in Palm Beach County working alongside Dr. Carl Brumback, the county’s first public health doctor.

“He helped to feed my passion for rural health,” Dr. Valiant said.

In 1991, she became director of the health departments in Hendry and Glades counties. By the late 1990s, Dr. Valiant had laid the groundwork for building additional health departments in Clewiston and LaBelle, which were dedicated in her honor. Now retired, she continues to follow her passion for rural health by serving on several boards such as Children’s Advocacy, The Children’s Hospital, Health Planning Council and Hendry-Glades Behavioral Health.

Dr. Valiant said, “I absolutely loved the years I spent at the Hendry and Glades County Health Departments. They enabled me to fulfill my goals of tackling rural health issues.”

When asked how she would like to be remembered, she humbly stated, “I hope that I am remembered as a doctor who made a difference in the lives of children and their families in rural communities.”

Over the years, Dr. Valiant has received many honors for her public health imprint on the world. In 1997, she received the Outstanding Woman in Public Health Award from the College of Public Health, University of South Florida. From 1997 to 2014, she received the Florida Rural Health Association’s Wendell Rollason Award, the Sidney S. Chipman Award, the Healthy Start Lifetime Achievement Award and the Greater LaBelle Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year Award. Most recently, she was named by PBS-affiliated television station WGCU, to its list of 21 Southwest Florida Women Who Have Made a Difference.

Pat Dobbins, administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Hendry and Glades Counties shares, “Dr. Valiant continues to be an inspiration to me—she is one of my personal heroes. This is a person who definitely encompasses every aspect of a public health hero.”

A True Pioneer in Health Care and the Florida Legislature

By Thomas J. Moran, Emergency Preparedness Planning Consultant, Safety Coordinator and Public Information Officer, Highlands County

Over the years, Denise Grimsley has been described as steady under pressure. A member of the Florida Senate and administrator at Florida Hospital Wauchula, her passion to innovate and raise quality and performance standards are evident whether she is observing a bustling emergency room, participating in a tense Florida Legislative committee meeting or navigating the challenges of rural health care delivery.

“I wouldn’t characterize myself as a trendsetter,” Grimsley says. “I believe in leaving no stones unturned—a lesson my parents taught me early in life, which continues to ring true today.”

A fifth-generation Floridian, Denise Grimsley was born and raised in the Florida heartland. She graduated from South Florida Community College, Polk Community College and Warner Southern College with degrees in nursing and organizational management. She later earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Miami.

When her father became ill, she left the health care field and her work as a nurse, to help run his Wauchula-based company for several years. Reflecting on those times, Grimsley remains positive.

“That was a challenging time for my family,” she said, “yet I understood that the skills individuals develop in health care delivery don’t occur in a vacuum. Organization and management are essential in delivering quality health care systems, so

transitioning into the world of retail was not a big stretch. In turn, what I learned at Grimsley Oil has helped make me a better health professional and hospital administrator. Customer satisfaction and assisting employees in reaching their full potential are still the basics, regardless of the venue.”

After taking an initial interest in public policy as a new nurse, Grimsley ran for the Florida House in 2002. She served eight years, two as the first female chair of the House Committee on Appropriations.

“A doctor I was working with at the time challenged me to learn more about the role of public policymakers in the decisions that regulate our health care systems,” she said. “I was curious but intimidated. A few years later after a bad interaction with a stubborn regulator, I decided to stop complaining and become part of the solution. Rural health policy was on the backburner, and I hope we’ve elevated the discourse and raised awareness about how critical delivery systems are.”

Grimsley was elected to the Florida Senate in 2012 and recognized for her work in health policy. She was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Nova Southeastern University.

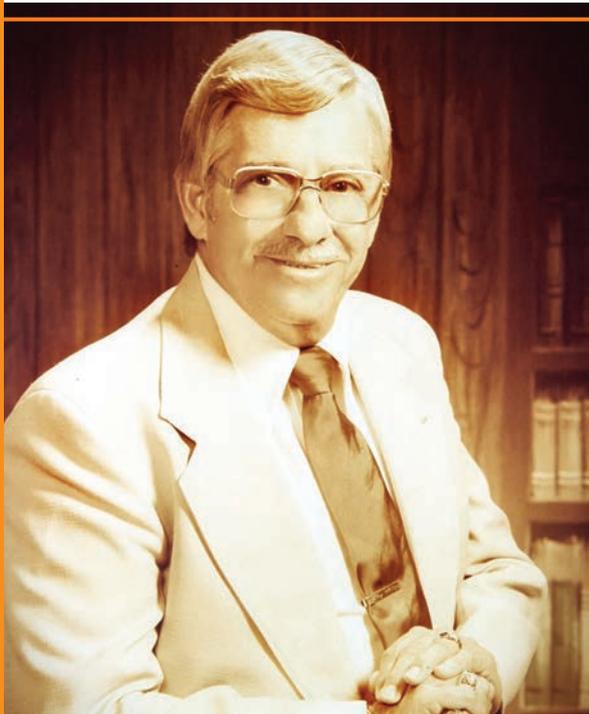
“If we’re committed to modernizing Florida’s health care policies,” she says, “we’ve got to be ready to run the marathon, not just sprint. It takes patience, full hearts and clear eyes.”



Denise Grimsley
HIGHLANDS COUNTY

“If we’re committed to modernizing Florida’s health care policies, we’ve got to be ready to run the marathon. . . It takes patience, full hearts and clear eyes.”

The administrator of the Florida Department of Health in Highlands County, Mary Kay Burns, summed it up well when she said, “We believe that Senator Denise Grimsley is the epitome of what a public health hero is for our community and a true pioneer for health care advocacy.”



*“He was my hero and such a good boss. Dr. Lawrence was one of a kind and is very deserving of this nomination. He treated all his employees as equals—everybody really. **The way he did his job, everybody admired him.**”*

—Maggie Zuroski, former employee

The Longest Standing Health Officer in Lee County

By Diane Holm, Public Information Officer, Healthy Communities
Healthy People Coordinator, Lee County

Joseph Lawrence, MD
LEE COUNTY

Joseph Lawrence, MD, holds the honor of being the longest standing health officer in Lee County. Dr. Lawrence guided the evolution of public health with a focus on disease prevention in order to lower instances of treatment.

On June 3, 1957, in what was a rural Lee County where cattle grazed on the river alongside people swimming and bathing, he began his work in public health.

Dr. Lawrence obtained community interest through education about maintaining good health in the fast-growing population. He led community collaborations between public and private entities to establish three health institutions that still serve Lee County today: Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida, Lee County Mosquito Control and the Visiting Nurse Association (now part of Hope Hospice).

The Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida began as a federally funded migrant clinic during Dr. Lawrence’s 10th year as Lee County’s health officer. The initial grant provided for a nurse, a sanitarian and a part-time clerk. Lee County’s original migrant clinic provided immunizations and education on the importance of improving environmental health conditions in migrant housing.

Dr. Lawrence was a supporter of Lee County Mosquito Control in its work to diminish mosquito-borne disease transmission, and his efforts improved the quality of life in the community. He encouraged the

presence of the Visiting Nurse Association to increase care for seasonal and terminally ill patients. Dr. Lawrence also oversaw the operations of mass immunization clinics to promote the prevention of polio and measles outbreaks.

He facilitated the transformation of the community from an age where pit privies dominated, to a time when municipal sewage became the norm. He helped eradicate hookworm and established the importance of childhood immunizations. His warm and friendly demeanor gave health maintenance and disease prevention a firm foundation.

Dr. Lawrence is best remembered for his unique personality and genuine sense of humor that stirred community leaders and the public to prioritize disease prevention and health promotion.

“He was my hero and such a good boss. Dr. Lawrence was one of a kind and is very deserving of this nomination,” said Maggie Zuroski who served as the business manager under Dr. Lawrence. “He treated all his employees as equals—everybody really. The way he did his job, everybody admired him.”

A Constant, Caring Presence

By Vickie Elkins, RN, Community Health Nursing Director, Okeechobee County

“It was my great joy to help bring two generations of healthy children into the world. Nothing can replace such pleasure.”

Karen Cooper has devoted 24 years of service to the Florida Department of Health, launching her career as a registered nurse in Okeechobee County in 1990. Two years later, Cooper earned her degree as an advanced registered nurse practitioner from Emory University School of Medicine.

During her career with the Department, Cooper’s role has been vital to many successes and instrumental in the grant writing that brought clinics to every school in Okeechobee County.

As a provider of public health services, she saw patients for family planning services and played a critical role in overseeing the obstetrics program from 1992 until it closed in June of 2012. Cooper’s knowledge, dedication and caring attitude are evident in the two generations she assisted in birthing healthy children. “It was my great joy to help bring two generations of healthy children into the world,” Cooper says. “Nothing can replace such pleasure.”

Working in a small health department has made Cooper an integral part of day-to-day operations. She is a constant presence in daily activities such as family planning education, women’s health care and consultation with patients who have tested positive for sexually transmitted diseases.

Cooper’s care and devotion to the community were especially evident during several emergency preparedness responses. She was instrumental in operating the 2004 Special Needs Shelter at Okeechobee High School and the 2009 H1N1 drive-through flu immunization clinics at the Agri-Civic Center and Fairgrounds.

Cooper is certified in adoption training, holds Florida medication certification and has served on the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review board. In this capacity, she was tasked with reviewing infant death causes and intervening to reduce death rates in the community.

Cooper’s service to the Department and to the women and families of Okeechobee County cannot merely be measured by the 24 years she has devoted to her community. It must also include the professional commitment and personal care she gives to every client she meets.



Karen Cooper, ARNP
OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Model Public Health Service Honored by the U.S. Surgeon General

By Jeanette Robinson, Program Manager, Sarasota County



Mark Joseph Magenheim,
MD, MPH
SARASOTA COUNTY

*“As we celebrate advances in health technology and services over the past 125 years, we hope to remember **most advances in human health over the past century and a quarter have resulted primarily from activities related to public health.**”*

Mark J. Magenheim, MD, MPH, is known as a leader among Sarasota County’s health officials for his dedicated service, enriching the health and well-being of individuals in the community and throughout Florida.

In 1984, Dr. Magenheim became the director of the Sarasota County Health Department serving in this role until 1995. During his tenure, he was instrumental in counteracting the AIDS stigma in the region, and served as chair of the Sarasota County Interagency AIDS Council. As a result, on April 9, 1989, Dr. Magenheim was presented with the U.S. Surgeon General’s Medallion of Excellence and a U.S. Public Health Service Certificate of Appreciation “for his service as a model for the Nation’s Health Officers” by U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop. Dr. Magenheim continued his fight against AIDS through his seat as chair of the CDC Advisory

Committee on HIV and STD Prevention from 1996 to 2000.

In 2000, he received the Roy M. Baker MD Award from the Florida Medical Association, “for outstanding community physician service.” Dr. Magenheim has continued to serve as a leader for public health through various positions, including Florida assistant state health officer, medical director of the Hospice of Southwest Florida and as medical director of Suncoast Communities Blood Bank.

When asked to reflect on Florida’s 125 years of public health, Dr. Magenheim said, “As we celebrate advances in health technology and services over the past 125 years, we hope to remember most advances in human health over the past century and a quarter have resulted primarily from activities related to public health. A large portion of the improvements in global health have resulted directly

from access to safe water and food sources, better air quality, immunizations and preventive medicine, reduction of tobacco use, advances in sanitation, accident prevention, enhanced nutrition, prenatal and infant care, wellness promotion, and efforts to alleviate ill-health and health disparities as a result of impoverished conditions. Let us celebrate the many substantial advances that have been achieved through public health over the past 125 years and rededicate ourselves to achieve the mission of better living for all through public health.”

Dr. Magenheim paved the way with his compassion for the underserved population. He represented his community, state and nation as a voice for change and improved healthy living for those he encountered.

