

Pioneer Award Recipients

The Pioneer Award was established in 2016 by the NC Coalition on Aging to recognize individuals who have made long-time outstanding contributions to the field of aging in North Carolina. We are pleased to recognize three recipients of the Award this year. All three have been long time passionate aging advocates in varied careers.



Robert N. "Bob" Jackson, Ed. D., had a 40 year career in aging, most of which was spent working in North Carolina. His early career included serving as the Director of Programs and Senior Centers for United Services for Older Adults in Greensboro and working with the NC Department of Insurance where he helped start and served as trainer for the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) which educates and counsels Medicare beneficiaries and their families about health insurance options. This experience led to his employment with the AARP National Office in Washington, D.C. where he worked from 1989 to 1994 as a Senior Program Specialist with AARP's Health Advocacy Services

where he coordinated its Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program. In late 1994, he was tapped as the first Director for the new AARP North Carolina State Office. As State Director, he managed the staff and was responsible for AARP's educational, legislative advocacy, and community service programs for the 1.1 million AARP members in the state. The breadth and depth of issues and projects undertaken by AARP NC during his tenure was vast. He promoted the development of volunteer-based legislative advocacy teams, advocated for expanded access to health care insurance and prescription drugs, and brought resources and energy to voter education efforts throughout the state. He supported state-specific research on important issues and then used the results to advocate for legislation and services. He forged a strong partnership between AARP and state agencies that have a consumer protection role and was a leader in the development of the NC Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force. He retired from AARP NC in July of 2011 after which he served on the Board of Carolina Meadows, a CCRC.



Lou Wilson is a legend in the adult care home industry in North Carolina. She is a Licensed Practical Nurse and has been an Adult Care Home Administrator for almost 50 years. She served as the Executive Director of the NC Association of Long Term Care Facilities (currently called the NC Senior Living Association) for 22 years and as a lobbyist for the industry for over 26 years. She is the long-time President of Therapeutic Alternatives, Inc., a health care agency that provides services for people with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and/or substance abuse problems. It has been a family-owned and operated service provider since its inception in 1958 as the county home in Randolph County. With a strong interest in services for older adults in her area, she played a leadership role in the formation of the senior services program in Randolph County. Lou is known as someone who can be counted on to go above and beyond the call of duty to help others, even in crisis

situations. For example, on March 29, 2009 when a gunman entered a nursing home in Carthage, NC and murdered eight people and wounded nine others, Therapeutic Alternatives sent a mobile crisis team to the facility to help out. Lou was the liaison to the NC Department of Health and Human Services for the Association of Long Term Care Facilities for over 32 years. She was a tough negotiator for the industry and for looking out for the interest of adult care homes and the residents they serve. As the leader of the Association, Lou kept a constant vigil at the NC General Assembly and always knew what was going on in the health policy and legislative arenas. If someone wanted to know the real scoop on "things," Lou was the go to person for information.

Pioneer Award Recipients Cont.



Bill Lamb is a long-time aging advocate who does not know the meaning of retirement. He has retired several times from positions in the aging field where he had distinguished tenures. With each retirement, he has taken up a new challenge. He worked for 30 years for the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) where he was in planning and administrative positions with the NC Division of Social Services and served as Chief of Planning for the NC Division of Aging. In this role, one of his responsibilities was to develop the first Aging Services Plan for the State. Following his retirement from DHHS, he embarked on an eleven year career as Associate Director for Public

Service at the UNC Institute on Aging. Among other things, in this job he was responsible for the State Aging Conference and the Senior Leadership Initiative. He retired from this position in November of 2012. Bill has been involved with Friends of Residents in Long Term Care, an independent non-profit organization that is committed to advancing the quality of life for the 100,000 individuals who receive long-term care in North Carolina, since the early 1990's. He served as the Board Chair for Friends twice and currently serves as Executive Director of the organization. Due in large measure to his advocacy work, he was tapped to serve a term as President of the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care. Bill is also a long-time leader in the field of Social Work in the state. He was the 2004 NASW-NC Social Worker of the Year, has mentored many social work students, been an adjunct professor for Social Work at NC State University for 18 years, and is past chair of the NC State Social Work Advisory Board. He is the immediate Past-President of the Coalition on Aging where he is credited with expanding the scope and mission of the organization and is a Meals on Wheels volunteer.