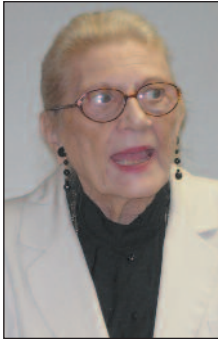


Tarheel Footprints in Health Care

Recognizing unusual and often unsung contributions of individual citizens who have made health care for North Carolinians more accessible and of higher quality

Ann B. Johnson, MSW: A Leader in Healthy Aging



Few, if any, will be able to match the energy and commitment Ann B. Johnson continues to exhibit after nearly a half century of service to older adults. Ms. Johnson, 88, remains a dynamic force in North Carolina, guiding policy for the best interests of older adults. The *Ann Johnson Institute for Senior Center Management*, named in her honor, epitomizes a career advocating for older adults and senior centers. Initiated in 2001, the Institute provides critical training to senior center personnel in management skills, upgrading credentials, and enhancing the senior center management profession.

Ann's commitment to others began long before migrating to North Carolina. During World War II, she became the first female member of the Boilermakers Union. Welding in a shipyard, she learned to read blueprints, to rivet, to run the metal lathe, and trained other women in the art of welding. After the war, Ann earned her Master's Degree in Social Work.

Ann was the executive director of the Durham Coordinating Council for Senior Citizens where she pioneered the development of senior centers and adult day care programs for 23 years. She started the first senior center in public housing in North Carolina in 1968 and the first adult day care program in the Southeastern US in 1973.

Among her numerous distinctions is being the first recipient of the George L. Maddox Award in 1990, for excellence in developing and implementing creative programs for older adults. Ms. Johnson served on the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging under 4 governors, and has been chair of the Council since 1997. Ann represented North Carolina at 4 White House Conferences on Aging. In 2004, she was honored by the North Carolina Division of Aging and Aging Services for advocacy and dedication to the field. Ann contributed actively to Orange County's first Master Aging Plan for 2000 and the 2007 Orange County Master Aging Plan. As an advisor to Duke's Leadership in an Aging Society Program, Ms. Johnson was instrumental in the creation of the Senior Leadership Enhancement Program, which encourages leadership development in older adults emerging as statewide leaders.

Ms. Johnson served on the Board of Directors of the National Council on Aging (NCOA) for 8 years. As chair of NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers, she championed standards for senior centers and the creation of the National Institute of Health Promotion. In 1997, she received the prestigious Geneva Mathiasen Award, honoring major contributions to NCOA and its programs. In 1998, she received a Founders' Award from the National Institute of Senior Centers.

Included in her many honors and awards is the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, President of the North Carolina Coalition on Aging, the North Carolina Senior Citizens Association, Friends of the Chapel Hill Senior Center, Outstanding Volunteer in Aging Award by the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and the Southern Gerontological Society's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Reflecting on healthy aging today, Ms. Johnson remarks that older adults need a voice in regards to their own healthy aging process and that decisions made should include the older adults' preferences. She believes healthy aging is a learning process in which one comes to understand dependence on others. Remaining active and engaged, Ann continues advocacy roles across the state. Thank you, Ms. Johnson, for being a leader and a voice in aging.

I would like to thank the North Carolina Institute on Aging and Ms. Sandra Crawford Leak for their contributions on Ms. Johnson.

Contributed by Janice I. Wassel, PhD

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