

THE BOYCE R. WILLIAMS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE REHABILITATION OF DEAF PEOPLE

A highlight of the Fourth Biennial PRWAD Conference was the announcement and presentation of the first Boyce R. Williams Award to Mr. Craig Mills, Director, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The award, which was established in 1972 by the PRWAD and is to be given biennially to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the rehabilitation of deaf people, was named in honor of Dr. Boyce R. Williams, Director, Office for Deafness and Communicative Disorders, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in recognition of the high standard of excellence he has maintained throughout his professional career in behalf of deaf people in the vocational rehabilitation movement.

Dr. Williams presented the award to Mr. Mills at the conference banquet with the following message:

Looking backward for almost 27 years, I see some simple facts that I must share with you. The feeling of need to share relates, of course, to the wonderful honor that my peers in the complex problems of vocational rehabilitation have chosen to bestow upon me. Putting aside the obvious pride that I have in this action, we must certainly agree that it is a symbol of our significant progress in reducing the social and economic limitations that have confronted deaf people since the beginning of mankind. In the short space of a quarter century, as history is reckoned, we have moved the circumstances of deaf people from a near vacuum to the kind of dynamic, aggressive thrust for our deaf associates that PRWAD exemplifies.

It has been my good fortune to have arrived on the scene when the need for social upheaval and progress was so urgent, when deaf people themselves were so ready and responsive to the opportunities and responsibilities at hand, when many resourceful and energetic young men and women were searching for means to serve their deaf friends and peers more effectively.

In the sense of these social needs, I am proud to have had a role. Moreover, with the momentum that we so clearly have, it seems very reasonable to me to predict that the exciting progress of these recent years will be dwarfed by what we shall experience in the next few years. Our

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fondest dreams for places to provide the essential services that our most severely handicapped deaf people need are near reality. Your enthusiasm and commitment insure that our experience will be productive.

It is my great pleasure tonight to announce to you and to invite to this rostrum the person who has been selected by your Board of Directors as the first recipient of this biennial award:

MR. CRAIG MILLS

Director, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation