

Ways & Means

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WINTER 2001 *Providing the Ways & Means to a More Rewarding Life*

METHODIST REHABILITATION C



*A Legacy
of Hope*
Earl R. Wilson
1922-2000

In response to the love of God,

*Methodist Hospital and Rehabilitation Center
is dedicated to the restoration and enhancement
of the lives of those we serve.*

*We are committed to excellence and leadership
in the delivery of comprehensive rehabilitation services.*

On The Cover

Earl R. Wilson, one of the founders of Methodist Rehabilitation Center and chairman of its board of trustees for 25 years, died of a stroke on September 25, 2000. This issue of *Ways & Means* is dedicated to the lifelong commitment he made to the physically disabled.

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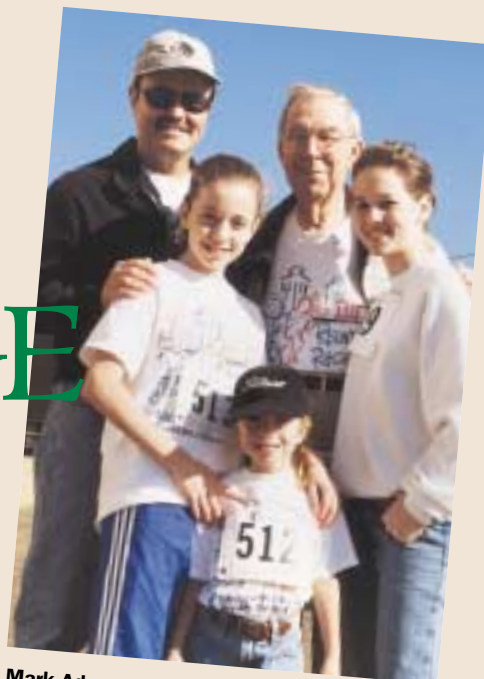
Ways & Means

WINTER 2001

The Challenge	2
America's Best Hospitals	3
Earl R. Wilson — A Legacy of Hope	4
Brain Injury Survivor	8
Wilson Research Foundation	10
Wilson Memorials	12
Volunteers Present Donation	14
A Eulogy for Earl	15
In Memory	16



THE CHALLENGE



Mark Adams and his children Brooke and Haley, left, with Earl Wilson and his granddaughter Martha Grace Holifield at Reunion Race in 1999.

I first met Earl Wilson in July of 1989. I had just started at Methodist Rehabilitation Center as the chief operating officer and was very excited about being associated with a hospital with such a great reputation.

At our first meeting, Earl explained to me that he expected me to be involved in the community. He told me how he and members of his family had served on the Goodwill board of directors and in other community service organizations around Jackson. I soon realized that Earl not only felt an obligation to serve his community, but he greatly enjoyed it as well.

In April of 1993, I was fortunate enough to be asked to serve MRC as chief executive officer. From that point on, I spent a lot of time getting to know Earl and learning from him.

Every Tuesday, we met for lunch. We talked about our families and I listened to him tell about his past and the history of MRC. He loved bragging about his children and grandchildren. He once told me about how he and Martha had introduced Tabasco hot sauce to health seekers at the Pritkin Longevity Center in California. He told me the story about how he and George W. Bush had been unsuccessful at putting together an oil deal in Britain in the '70s. It was always a joy to talk with Earl about anything because he made everything so interesting.

Our lunches usually started with small talk, but eventually turned to the business of running a hospital. While I was always concerned with specific issues we were facing, Earl always wanted to discuss the big picture and the future of MRC.

When we did talk about issues, he would give his insight and encouragement, but left the solutions and details up to others. I came to realize that was a virtue of his leadership. Earl Wilson didn't have to deal with details because he was such a great motivator. He could provide general direction and inspire you to achieve whatever you set your mind to. And there was always a sense of urgency

attached to his encouragement. "You need to move a little faster," he would say to me. "At my vintage, I don't have much time."

Two months before Earl's death, we were recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of America's best hospitals. It was one of the highlights of my career to be able to deliver the news to Earl. The day before he died, he fired the pistol to start the Reunion Race. After the race, he was carrying a mounted poster of the *U.S. News* magazine cover. Earl's wife, Martha, joked to us that we needed to get him two posters so he could wear them as a sandwich board and walk around Jackson promoting MRC for our accomplishment.

Earl Wilson inspired many people to give their time, talent and treasures back to the community. MRC is certainly his most visible accomplishment and contribution to Mississippi and to improving the lives of people with disabilities. Every year, this hospital provides care and hope to thousands of people who have suffered catastrophic injuries and illnesses. The Wilson Research Foundation continues to fund cutting edge research into ways to improve recovery from spinal cord and brain injuries. Apartments for the disabled are being built. Our services are constantly being improved. Lives are being touched.

And although Earl is no longer with us, his work and influence will be felt here in these halls always.

Mark A. Adams
President and CEO

Methodist Rehabilitation Center named One of America's Best Hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report*.

After reviewing 6,247 hospitals nationwide, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Methodist Rehabilitation Center as one of the best hospitals in the country for its rheumatology/arthritis services along with such hospitals as the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md.

The Center was the only hospital in Mississippi and one of only 173 in the nation to be named in the review of 17 medical specialties.

"From the very beginning, we pledged to make this an exceptional facility and to be first in rehabilitative research, treatment and care," said Earl R.

Wilson, chairman of the board of trustees at MRC, who died in September 2000. "Being named as one of America's best hospitals is truly an honor and is recognition of the commitment to excellence that has been interwoven throughout the hospital's 25-year history," he added.

"We were very pleased to learn that we were ranked one of America's best hospitals," said Mark A. Adams, MRC president and CEO.

"Unlike other hospitals, we are a specialty hospital dedicated to providing high quality health care for patients with neurological and musculoskeletal diseases and injuries. This allows us to focus our energies,

talents and resources on being the very best in our field. We will continue to provide excellent services to the physically disabled and look forward to the Center being annually ranked as one of America's best hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report*."

For more than 25 years MRC has treated patients with disabling rheumatoid arthritis and other neurological and orthopedic illnesses and injuries including spinal cord injury, brain injury and stroke. The Center is one of the few free-standing rehabilitation facilities in the country to offer surgical capabilities and was the fifth in the world to install a clean-air surgical suite.

"The rheumatology/arthritis services offered by Methodist Rehabilitation Center in conjunction with the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMC) are superb," said Dr. Kenneth J. Hardy, professor of medicine and chief of the division of rheumatology/molecular immunology at UMC. "Patients can receive the finest medical care available in the country right

here in Jackson. It is rewarding to know that, together, our work in rheumatology/arthritis medicine has obtained national prominence."

"From the very beginning, we pledged to make this an exceptional facility and to be first in rehabilitative research, treatment and care."

— Earl R. Wilson



Earl Raymond Wilson

A Legacy of Hope

Earl R. Wilson, one of the founders of Methodist Rehabilitation Center and chairman of its board of trustees for 25 years, died of a stroke on September 25, 2000. His visionary leadership continues to inspire those who knew him and the legacy of hope he helped create lives on.



Sgt. Earl R. Wilson, France 1944

Earl Raymond Wilson was born in California, but when he was a child his family returned to their native Mississippi. "We had a lot of personal history in California," Mr. Wilson said. "My parents went out there when they were quite young; in fact, one of our ancestors was the first mayor of Los Angeles. And Mount Wilson is named for my family. But my parents missed the Magnolia State."

Mr. Wilson spent his early years in Oxford where he worked in a grocery store on the Square and walked to the Ole Miss campus from his house when he was in school. He received both his bachelor of science degree in commerce and his law degree from the University of Mississippi. During World War II he served in an Army anti-aircraft unit in Europe.

After the war, he married Martha Lyles, whom he had met in the fourth grade. At the time of his death in September 2000, they had been married for more than 52 years. The Wilsons were brought up in the Christian tradition of helping others, and they believed firmly that "to those whom much is given, much is expected." Together they touched many lives and made significant contributions to the people of Mississippi.

Church has always been important to the Wilsons. "Right before we got married, Earl's mother told me not to worry," said Mrs. Wilson, "Earl would make a good Methodist because she'd given him such good training in the Baptist church. And he did indeed make a good Methodist."

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were active in the United Methodist Conference and they helped found Briarwood United Methodist Church, where Mr. Wilson served as chairman emeritus. In 1994, the Wilsons received the Woodrow B. Seales Laity Award from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in recognition of their dedication to the church.



Martha and Earl Wilson with daughters Virginia, Ann and Amy.

Family has also been an integral part of their lives. They have three daughters: Ann Wilson Holifield, Virginia Wilson Mounger and Amy Lyles Wilson. Ann worked with her father and is the mother of the Wilsons' grandchildren: Wilson, Lyles and Martha Grace. Ginny is an administrative law judge with the Workers' Compensation Commission of Mississippi and Amy Lyles, a writer, owns an editorial services firm in Nashville.

The tradition of "giving back" has been passed from one generation to the next, as the Wilson daughters devote their time and resources to various charitable and philanthropic endeavors, ranging from hospice to the Junior League.

"My sisters and I have good examples to follow when it comes to volunteering," said Ann Wilson Holifield.

Mr. Wilson also inspired others.

"Earl had a material impact on my life," said Steve Sansom, a member of the board of governors of the Wilson Research Foundation and a vice president in the investment management division at Goldman Sachs in Memphis. "He and I spent hours discussing Mississippi and business around the world. Our topics ranged from goat farming to the oil business and the days of raising money in New York. But the most important thing I learned from Mr. Wilson is the sheer joy of devoting one's time and resources to worthy causes. He encouraged me to step back from a busy career and focus some of that

energy on making a difference, in my community and in the world at large. Mr. Wilson had an incredible ability to lead by example and captivate very successful people. I will always view him as a lifelong mentor."

For more than 50 years, Mr. Wilson dedicated his life to helping Mississippians through his leadership in business and in his philanthropic work. In addition to his legal practice, he was also an oil and gas developer and an entrepreneur.

Throughout his career, which took him from Kansas to the North Sea, he was an ambassador for Mississippi, helping further the state's economy through his successful business ventures. As chairman of the Jackson International Airport, Mr. Wilson was instrumental in the airport's expansion into new national and international markets.

He served on many professional, church and educational boards while contributing to the efforts of various civic and charitable organizations. He served on the board of trustees of Millsaps College and was past president of Goodwill Industries, the Capital Club and the board of trustees of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of the United Methodist Church at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

He was a member of the advisory board of the Governor's Office of Handicapped Services and was formerly on the board of directors of Citizens Bank and Trust Co., Sunburst Bank, South Mississippi Bank and Mount Olive Bank. Mr. Wilson belonged to legal and oil industry associations as well.

"...the most important thing I learned from Mr. Wilson is the sheer joy of devoting one's time and resources to worthy causes. He encouraged me to step back from a busy career and focus some of that energy on making a difference, in my community and in the world at large."

-Steve Sansom
Goldman Sachs, Memphis



Groundbreaking ceremonies for Methodist Rehabilitation Center were held on December 8, 1970.

In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson received numerous honors and awards. They were honored by Prevention of Blindness/Mississippi as “People of Vision” and Humanitarians of the Year by the Epilepsy Foundation. He was awarded the Circle of Honor by Methodist Rehabilitation Center and the Volunteer Activist Award by Goodwill Industries. He supported the Mississippi Opera, Mississippi Symphony Orchestra and the Mississippi Museum of Art.

According to his family, it was his affiliation with Methodist Rehabilitation Center and the Wilson Research Foundation that gave Mr. Wilson the most profound joy and satisfaction. He served on the board of governors of the Foundation and also was chairman of the board of trustees of Methodist Rehab for more than 25 years.

When Mr. Wilson was a young attorney working in the oil and gas industry, he traveled the back roads of

“Earl had an amazing ability to gauge the future and to think creatively about how to approach it. He has been called a dreamer and a doer, and it’s true. He could get things accomplished and he was gifted at recruiting and inspiring the right people to work with him.”

*-Rev. Jerry Mitchell
The Methodist Foundation*

Mississippi on a daily basis. “Primarily in rural areas, you’d see people with disabilities who didn’t have access to any kind of medical assistance,” he said. “There was always someone who had to care for the disabled person, so the disability was taking two people out of the workforce. Not only did we need to help the disabled person regain a sense of self-reliance and dignity, we also needed to get that caretaker back in the workplace.”

“I think the fact that our father suffered a stroke at a relatively young age also motivated Earl,” said his



In 1981, construction began on an additional four hospital floors, expanding the facility’s capacity from 60 to 124 beds.

brother, Bob Wilson, of Oxford. “He wanted to be able to help people in that situation so they wouldn’t have to deal with what we faced: a father who could no longer speak to us, a man who was not able to reach his full potential.”

Many people credit Mr. Wilson for making the dream of a rehabilitation center in Mississippi a reality and answering the question “Why not here in our state?” with a positive response.

“Earl had an amazing ability to gauge the future and to think creatively about how to approach it,” said Rev. Jerry Mitchell, executive director of the Methodist Foundation. “He has been called a dreamer and a doer, and it’s true. He could get things accomplished and he was gifted at recruiting and inspiring the right people to work with him.”

After years of planning, research and groundwork performed by Mr. Wilson and the other MRC founders—Frank Hart Sr., Hilton Ladner and Dr. Jesse Wofford—the Center took hold. Although Mr. Wilson insisted that the efforts of many people were necessary to bring the facility to fruition, it’s fair to say that he was the catalyst for making it come together.

Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation Center broke ground on December 8, 1970 and opened its doors to patients in 1975. Since then the state-of-the-art facility has provided comprehensive medical



Chairman of the Board, the late Earl R. Wilson, left; Board Member Dr. Jesse L. Wofford, right; former Vice Chairman, the late Hilton L. Ladner, seated; and the late Frank Hart, not pictured, were instrumental in developing MRC from a dream to a reality.

“Mr. Wilson was a tremendous community leader, a dynamic force. It will be a long time before we see another person of his character pass this way.”

*-Dr. Julius Cruse
University of Mississippi Medical Center*

rehabilitation programs for people with spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke and other neurological and orthopedic disorders. It is the only free-standing rehabilitation center in the state.

U.S. News & World Report named Methodist Rehab one of America’s best hospitals in 2000 after reviewing 6,247 hospitals nationwide. The Center joins such hospitals as the Mayo Clinic and Johns Hopkins on the prestigious list and is the first hospital in Mississippi to be recognized by the magazine.

One of Mr. Wilson’s most vivid dreams was for the Center to receive this honor. “Don’t wait until I’m up in heaven to make this happen,” he’d tell the Center staff. The fact that he knew about this designation before his death brings great comfort to his family.

In 1998, MRC was named by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research as a Traumatic Brain Injury Model System, one of only 17 sites in the United States. In 1999, the first Martha Lyles Wilson Brain Injury Fellowship was initiated, one of only five such programs in the United States.

Another dream, which became a reality in 1989, was the establishment of the Wilson Research Foundation through a generous contribution by the H. F. McCarty Jr. Family Foundation to honor Mr. and

Mrs. Wilson’s service to the physically disabled. The Foundation provides grants for research into spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke and other related illnesses and injuries.

The generosity of the McCarty family continues today and Marsha McCarty Wells serves on the board of trustees of the Center and the board of governors of the Wilson Foundation.

In 1998, Methodist Rehab opened the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery (CNNR) to expand the scope and intensity of related research. The CNNR is partially funded by the Wilson Research Foundation.


“Mr. Wilson was a tremendous community leader, a dynamic force,” said Dr. Julius Cruse, a professor of pathology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center



Methodist Rehabilitation Center’s east campus opened in 1992.

who received a grant from the Wilson Research Foundation to conduct spinal cord injury research. “It will be a long time before we see another person of his character pass this way.”

The stories of people who have been affected by the Center and the Foundation are ones of inspiration, fortitude and, most certainly, hope. All are qualities that Mr. Wilson tried to emulate in his daily walk.

Certainly, for his friends, family and his fellow man, it’s fortunate that Mr. Wilson’s parents came home to Mississippi from California all those years ago. 



The Atrium Mall at MRC opened in 1994.

Brain Injured Patient Reaches Goals and Rides Again

For more than 25 years Methodist Rehabilitation Center has treated people with spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke and other neurological and orthopedic disorders. They've come from all of Mississippi's 82 counties, from neighboring states and from across the country. Before the Center was built, they had to travel out-of-state to distant cities for treatment, if they sought treatment at all. The story that follows is an example of Earl Wilson's legacy of hope and the difference it made in one family's life.

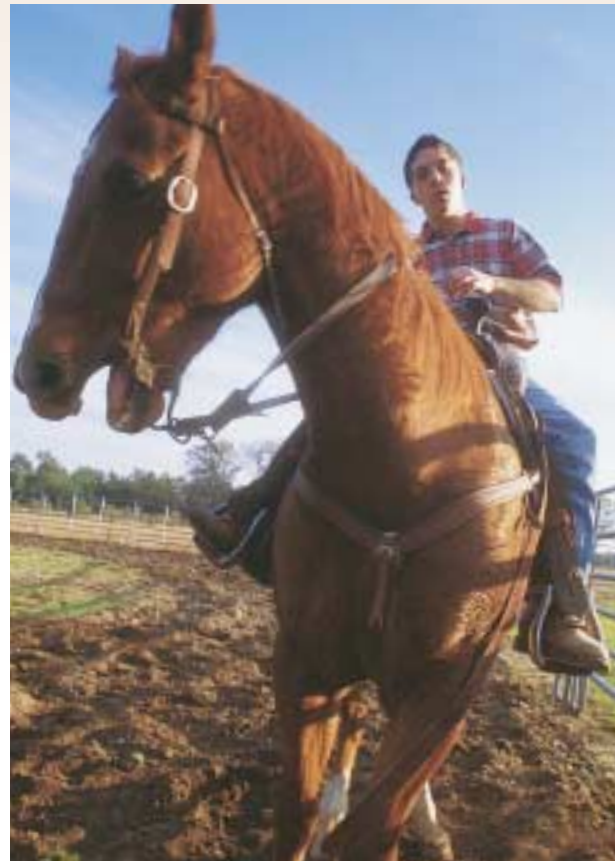
When Cory Hunter first sat in therapy two years ago, he set a goal and made up his mind nothing would stop him from achieving it. The goal was to be able to lift his head and hold it up without support for 15 minutes.

But Cory, who walked into his Petal home four months after arriving at Methodist Rehabilitation Center in Jackson and danced his way to the junior prom that next spring, underestimated his determination in a big way.

In July 1998, Cory was competing in the National High School Rodeo Championships in Gillette, Wyoming. Two days later, Cory was back home having fun canoeing with friends. The 17-year-old and his buddies were playing with a rope that swung out over the water. Cory lost his grip, fell and landed on his head on the soapstone rocks 20 feet below.

Help wasn't able to get there quickly, said Cory's mother, Ann. "The boys knew they were the last group out in the water. One of them ran through the woods and flagged a car down. It was a pretty long time before any paramedics got to him," she said.

Cory was placed in a canoe and medics had to walk him down the creek to



Two years ago Cory Hunter was given little chance of recovering from a traumatic brain injury, but four months after arriving at Methodist Rehabilitation Center, he was walking, talking and dancing at his junior prom. Today the 20-year-old is back in the saddle riding his horse, Nifty.

an exit path and rush him to Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg. His skull was fractured and an artery had been severed. On a Glasgow Coma Scale that grades patients from three being the worst and least responsive to 15 being the best and most responsive, Cory was listed a three, his mother said.

Cory was taken to MRC in August 1998. It was September before his parents, Richard and Ann, say they felt any response from him. "He couldn't blink his eyes. He couldn't move his fingers," Ann Hunter recalled.

"The surgeon that operated on Cory at Forrest General strongly recommended Methodist Rehabilitation Center and said he felt in his heart that this was the place for us to be," Cory's father, Richard, said.

Ann Hunter said MRC's reputation and close proximity convinced them. "All of the other hospitals that we were told about were out-of-state. We would have been across the country and it would have been awful. We wouldn't have had the support of our family and I don't think we would have been able to survive this ordeal without that support."

In September, when Cory wiggled his thumb the

first time, his family started to hope, she said. "You think that maybe if he can do that, then maybe he can wiggle another finger and maybe if he can do that, he can move an arm. You get optimistic."

She had reason to hope. By October, Cory was making trips home. Each time he returned to MRC's fourth floor, his therapists were more amazed. "It was great to see him. He always came back better at something and wanted us to see what he could do," said Kim Willis, a physical therapist. "Everybody knew Cory."

"What happened in four months is miraculous," said therapy manager Patricia Oyarce. Physical therapists worked together with occupational therapists and speech therapists to bring Cory back. "It was a combined effort of different disciplines. And his family was very supportive. His mother was here almost all the time," she said.

Once Cory showed some progress, he started working even harder at getting well. "He had an excellent attitude," Oyarce added. "He was willing to try anything."

Early into his treatment, Cory made goal-setting and hard work his priorities. "You're not gonna get well by feeling sorry for yourself and not trying," a now 20-year-old Cory said from his home in Petal. "When I got to where I could talk I told my dad 'I can't move my leg,' and he said 'I don't ever want to hear that word come out of your mouth.' I never used it again," he said.

Cory and his family praise the physicians and therapists who worked with him. "They are saints," Ann Hunter said of the MRC staff. "The whole time, we just felt like they were family to us. Kim was an angel. She took a special interest

"The surgeon that operated on Cory at Forrest General strongly recommended Methodist Rehabilitation Center and said he felt in his heart that this was the place for us to be."

*Richard Hunter
Cory's father*

in us because she knew Cory was interested in rodeo and she was taking horse riding lessons."

First, Oyarce had Ann bring Cory's cowboy hat to the hospital. "We did anything we could think of to get a response from him," she said.

Soon, they had him sitting tall in a homemade saddle working on his coordination and his smile.

By Thanksgiving, Cory was riding a real horse with help. "That was a dream come true," Cory said of his horse ride. Today, he can saddle his own horse and ride without assistance. "It's just been a blessing from God," he said. "Methodist Rehabilitation Center is the greatest hospital in the world."

"Besides the incredible speed of his recovery, the



Cory Hunter danced at his prom and graduated from Petal High School. Now, he's studying welding at Jones Community College. He has crafted an assortment of items from his rodeo days—lamps from horseshoes and tables out of wagon wheels.



Cory Hunter plays with his dog, Belle, at his Petal home.

other part of Cory's miracle is what happened after he went home," Oyarce said. "He was able to reintegrate with the community. And that's one of the most important things to us."

Cory danced at his prom and graduated from Petal High in May. Now, he's studying welding at Jones

Community College. He has crafted an assortment of items from his rodeo days—which he says he hasn't forgotten. Cory said he plans to resume cutting horses as soon as possible.

He makes lamps from horseshoes and tables out of wagon wheels. He's had several requests for an outdoor grill he's been working on. "When I'm home, I'm usually out in the shop welding. I've got a lot of people wanting things that I'm working on now," he said.

"He loves it. He makes wonderful things," his mother said. "He can run. He can dance. He's doing extremely well." ❧

"All of the other hospitals that we were told about were out-of-state. We would have been across the country and it would have been awful."

*Ann Hunter
Cory's mother*

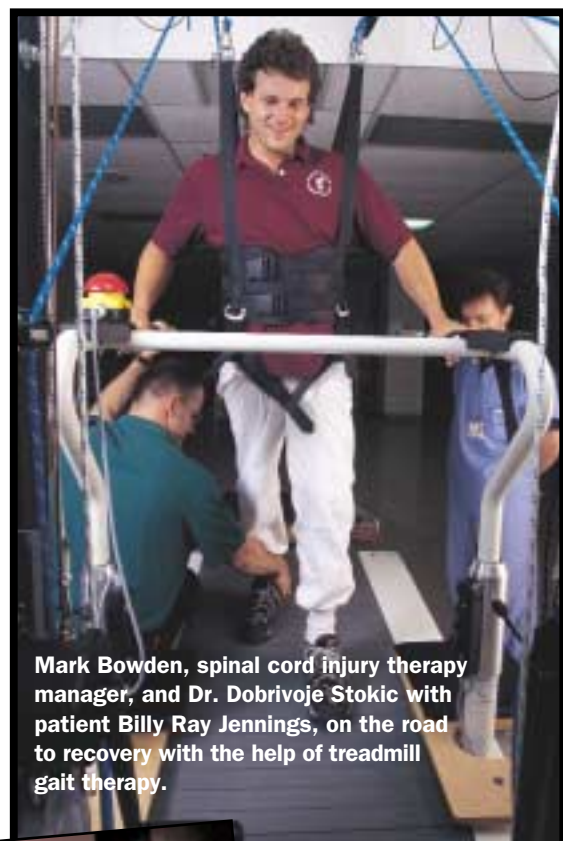
Foundation Scientists Take Research from the Laboratory to the Bedside

The Wilson Research Foundation was formed in 1989 after the H.F. McCarty Jr. Family Foundation and McCarty Farms donated \$500,000 to honor the contributions Earl and Martha Wilson have made to the physically disabled in Mississippi.

Established to improve the lives of the physically disabled through research, education and clinical applications, the Foundation complements the mission of Methodist Rehabilitation Center, which is dedicated to the restoration and enhancement of the physically disabled and committed to excellence and leadership in the delivery of comprehensive rehabilitation services.

The Foundation offers grants to research faculty at MRC and at the University of Mississippi Medical Center who are working to improve treatment options for patients who have suffered a stroke, brain or spinal cord injury.

The Foundation, which has funded more than \$800,000 in grants for rehabilitation research, supports applied research that can be taken from the laboratory to the patient's bedside or outpatient setting. Since the formation of the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery at



Mark Bowden, spinal cord injury therapy manager, and Dr. Dobrivoje Stokic with patient Billy Ray Jennings, on the road to recovery with the help of treadmill gait therapy.



Researchers at the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery conduct research to better understand and treat brain and spinal cord injuries.

MRC in 1998, a nucleus of talented research faculty has been formed to apply cutting edge research findings to those patients who can benefit the most from this work.

It is estimated that each year in Mississippi there are 2,000 strokes, 3,000 brain injuries and 141 spinal cord injuries that require some type of rehabilitation.

Advances are being made nationwide in three major areas of research—recovery of sensory function, regeneration of nerve cells and nerve cell replacement. Currently, MRC is engaged in spinal cord injury research through its treadmill gait therapy program, which is helping some patients with spinal cord injuries regain the ability to walk.

In the field of brain injury research, MRC was named a Traumatic Brain Injury Model System, one of only 17 sites in the nation. Through collaboration and research with other model systems, improved treatments for traumatic brain injury will be achieved. The model system's lead researchers are internationally recognized for their work and have presented and published their research findings.

Close Friends Work Together to Give Back to the Community

By Marsha McCarty Wells

My father, H. F. "Mac" McCarty Jr., became friends with Earl Wilson when they were at the University of Mississippi School of Law in the 1940s. They were both involved in YMCA and campus activities. Later they served together on various committees related to the Methodist church. Through the years, my father and Mr. Wilson strengthened their friendship and forged similar philosophies about helping others.



H. F. and Mary Ann McCarty and Martha and Earl Wilson

Dean Guess told Daddy when he left Ole Miss Law School that he had a debt to repay society in general and Mississippi in particular. So my father, like Mr. Wilson, spent his life repaying that debt not only with leadership and civic responsibility, but also with philanthropy.

After visiting with Mr. Wilson about improving the lives of people with disabilities, my parents moved to establish the Wilson Research Foundation in honor of their close friends Earl and Martha Wilson. It was my father's privilege to serve on the boards of the Foundation and the Center, acts that he felt allowed him to give back to the community. I'm happy to say that my family is carrying on those legacies of outreach and friendship today.

Marsha McCarty Wells, daughter of Mary Ann and the late H. F. McCarty Jr., is on the board of trustees of Methodist Rehabilitation Center and the board of governors of the Wilson Research Foundation.

Remembering Isabelle White

Isabelle Williamson White, the former vice president of marketing and public relations at Methodist Rehabilitation Center and the first executive director of the Wilson Research Foundation, died of cancer at her home in Dunwoody, Ga., on November 15. She was 74.

"Isabelle was a wonderful woman who cared deeply about the Center, its patients and the hope that the Wilson Research Foundation offers," said Mark Adams, MRC president and CEO. "She will be deeply missed."

Mrs. White was the widow of Robert White. A native of Atlanta, she moved to Jackson in 1971 where she served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations and donated



Isabelle Williamson White

her time and energy to many charitable events.

Survivors include: daughter, Susan Farnham of Woodstock, Ga.; son, Robert White Jr. of Decatur, Ga.; brother, James Williamson Jr. of Tiger, Ga.; and three grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Wilson Research Foundation, c/o Methodist Rehabilitation Center, 1350 East Woodrow Wilson, Jackson, MS 39216.



The Wilson Research Foundation

“Mr. Wilson was a man of great vision and benevolence. By supporting the Wilson Research Foundation, we can continue in his honor, to keep his dreams alive.”

Derek Crownover
Nashville Attorney

Memorials for Earl R. Wilson

Earl Wilson dedicated much of his life to helping the physically disabled. It was this commitment that inspired the creation of the Wilson Research Foundation. Listed below are the names of those who have made donations in his memory (as of December 1, 2000) to support research that will improve the lives of those with brain or spinal cord injuries or other physical disabilities.

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Adams
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Alker
 Mr. Wallace Allred
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Anderson
 BankPlus
 Mrs. James A. Barnett
 Dr. Blair E. Batson
 Dr. and Mrs. G. F. Beissel
 Mrs. Thomas A. Bell
 Mr. Thomas Bell Jr.
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 Mr. and Mrs. Billy Blain
 Ms. Beverly Bolton
 Ms. Mable Boyanton
 Mr. and Mrs. Russell Bradshaw
 Mr. and Mrs. John Brewer
 Mr. and Mrs. William Chester Brewer
 Briarwood Methodist Church Friends
 Briarwood Methodist Church UMW
 Briarwood Methodist Wesley Bible Class
 Mrs. J. Armistead Brown
 Mr. Ben Brown
 Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Bryant
 Mrs. Maralyn B. Bullion
 Mrs. Thomas D. Burrow Jr.
 Ms. Wanda Burt
 Mr. and Mrs. Fred M. Bush Jr.
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Butler
 Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Cade

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Cagle
 Mr. and Mrs. C. Wesley Caldwell
 Calliope Club
 Mr. and Mrs. Billy S. Campbell
 Mr. and Mrs. Billy Wayne Campbell
 Mr. William C. Campbell
 Canizaro, Cawthon and Davis
 Ms. Margaret A. Cardwell
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Carmichael
 Mr. and Mrs. Billy C. Carpenter
 Ms. Barbara K. Castleberry
 Ms. Lillian Eva Cheatham
 Judge and Mrs. Charles Clark
 Ms. Ethel Clark
 Mr. and Mrs. Eugene T. Clark
 Mr. Ron J. Cockayne Jr.
 Mrs. Sam Coggin
 Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Conly Jr.
 Mr. and Mrs. Andrew M. Costikyan
 Mrs. P. W. Cowser
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This list includes memorials made for Mr. Earl R. Wilson as of December 1, 2000. An inclusive listing of all contributions made in the year 2000 will appear in the Spring 2001 issue of *Ways & Means*. If you would like to make a memorial to Earl Wilson or to someone else or if you note an error or omission, please contact Bettye Y. Sullivan, executive director of the Wilson Research Foundation at (601) 364-3598.

Methodist Rehabilitation Center Volunteers Donate \$17,500 to Wilson Research Foundation

Whenever a visitor makes a purchase at the Methodist Rehabilitation Center gift shop in the Atrium Mall, that person is contributing to the Wilson Research Foundation and Earl R. Wilson's legacy of hope.

In 2000, the volunteer-led gift shop turned a profit of more than \$17,500. All of it is being donated to the Wilson Research Foundation to help fund research into ways to improve recovery from spinal cord injury, brain injury and stroke.

"It's one of the many ways MRC benefits from the hard work of volunteers," said Sandra Walker, director of volunteer services. "Of the nearly 100 volunteers that help around the hospital, about 20 work in the gift shop," she said.

Gift shop customers come from MRC and the University of Mississippi Medical Center. "In business since October 1995, it's been a place where patients, visitors and employees can feel like they're not in a hospital for a little while," said the store manager, Terri McKie.

While McKie is a paid staff member, all of her "employees" are unpaid volunteers who run the cash register, stock shelves, fix displays and assist customers with their purchases.

"They're the greatest people in the world," Walker said of the volunteers. "They're here because they want to be and they have the time and the desire to do it.

"Volunteers range from former patients to homemakers to people

who balance volunteering with careers," Walker said. "We have CPAs, a former bomber pilot, former CEOs, you name it," she said. "We have a lot of good people."

Grace Houston has volunteered in the MRC gift shop for about three years. When she was preparing for retirement, she knew she wanted to be involved in the community, she said. "I kept thinking, 'What am I going to do when I retire?'"

Mary Ann Magruder, a friend who was already volunteering, suggested MRC to her. "She said I would love it here and she was right," Houston said. "I came down one rainy morning and met with Terri. Everyone was so nice to me."

Houston said she didn't feel she would be good working directly with patients themselves, so the gift shop became a great opportunity for her to contribute. "Since the gift shop proceeds

go towards research, the work I'm doing here does benefit the patients," she said.

"The donation and the hard work are both greatly appreciated," said Bettye Sullivan, executive director of the Wilson Research Foundation. "Volunteers are a vital part of the work that goes on here at MRC. A

donation like this proves what a huge role they have in contributing to the research foundation. Every dollar helps."

"The good cause makes the gift shop an even more attractive place for guests of the hospital to spend their money," McKie said. "I think people want to shop here because they know the proceeds go to the Wilson Research Foundation.

People know how important research is and that it can't be stressed enough."



MRC gift shop volunteer Mary Ann Magruder assists Kristi Sessions with a purchase.



Jim Malloy, left, chairman of the Wilson Research Foundation board of governors, and Bettye Sullivan, WRF executive director, accept a \$17,500 check from MRC gift shop volunteer Mary Ann Magruder, gift shop manager Terri McKie, volunteers Billie Jaeger and Jim Terry, and volunteer coordinator Sandra Walker.

A Eulogy for Earl

By Amy Lyles Wilson

As a writer, I wanted to weave an eloquent and evocative eulogy for my father, peppered with literary references to "crossing the bar" and "do not go gentle" and such. As a daughter, though, it did not come easily.

The week that Daddy died someone commented to me, "Your Earl was a class act." That says it all, I thought to myself. For even if I had been given a month to prepare farewell remarks for Earl, it would not have been enough time to find the words to do him justice, the brilliant and precious man who was my father for 39 years.

If my family *could* articulate his impact on us, my mother would speak of their "blessed union of souls," of her loving a man who said, "Just give me 50 years with you, Martha," and got 52. My father's younger brother, Bob, might describe what Earl meant to him growing up in Oxford, as they lost their own father at a young age. Surely my sister Ann would say what a good friend Earl had been to her husband, Henry, and what a positive influence he had been for her children, Wilson, Lyles and Martha Grace. Ginny would thank Daddy for tolerance during her Grateful Dead period—a time we're all still trying to forget—and for inspiring her to be a caring person first and a productive lawyer second, which she and her husband, Harbour, will strive to continue being in Earl's honor.

As for me, I would tell you of a mentor who taught me to stand my ground while finding my way. A friend who convinced me that orange was really not my best color. An intellect who knew the value of soliciting varied opinions. A confidante who told me not to worry, that he didn't hit his stride in business until his forties and fifties. A connoisseur who could create fabulous meals out of whatever was left in the kitchen, when all I saw was mushrooms and crackers. A pilgrim who embodied the true meaning of the word compassion.

I could go on.

George Harmon, president emeritus of Millsaps College, said this about Earl upon hearing of his death: "Earl Wilson's life cast a long shadow. He personified visionary leadership combined with concern for his fellow man in everything he undertook. I was blessed to have known him as a colleague, as a mentor and as a friend."

You think you were blessed, I wanted to say. We got to be his girls.

My father's guiding principles centered around his beliefs that "to those whom much is given, much is expected," and, that on the pathway of life, we are all pilgrims who should look out for one another. It is my family's hope that Earl's work with the Methodist Rehabilitation Center and the Wilson Research Foundation brings both those philosophies to bear, and supplies his legacy.

From the minute Earl fell ill on September 24, 2000, my family has been comforted by the kindness of friends and the steadfastness of our God. My father was not a "doubting Thomas," but a questioning one. He took nothing for granted, and often said that he was having so much fun in life he didn't see how Heaven could be much better. But for those of us who are believers, it must be. So even though my family misses Earl "something fierce," we cannot view his death as a tragedy. He was an amazing man who led an extraordinary life. In short, our Earl was a class act.

"Sorrow fully accepted brings its own gifts."

-Pearl S. Buck, Author

Sharon Woodfield, the mother of a young man who was treated at the Rehab Center, wrote eloquently in an earlier edition of the *Ways & Means* about the changes her family underwent after her son's accident. I quote her here, because her phrasing, stuck to my refrigerator since its publication, reminded me of Earl:

"Don't allow yourself to give up or give in. Become part of the solution. Learn and grow in spirit and in knowledge. Allow God's grace to permeate your life and give you the strength to stand and to cope with whatever life holds in store for you. Look forward to each new day as an opportunity. Time spent wisely leaves us with such satisfaction. If you give your time to sadness and extended grief, remember you have traded a day of your life for it. Why not spend our days in search of purpose and direction?"

I gave Earl a card once, years ago, for Father's Day. The verse expressed appreciation for the two greatest gifts a parent can provide a child: "The first is roots, the other is wings."

That says it all.

Amy Lyles Wilson is a writer based in Nashville. A version of this essay served as her eulogy for her father at his funeral on September 28, 2000.



Earl R. Wilson with daughter Amy Lyles Wilson in 1979



*In Memory
Earl R. Wilson
1922-2000*

In 1998, Earl R. Wilson, chairman of Methodist Rehabilitation Center's board of trustees for more than 25 years and one of its founders, wrote the following epilogue to *The First Twenty-Five Years: Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation Center*, celebrating the Center's 25th anniversary. In the aftermath of his death, it seems fitting to read these words again, in appreciation of their timelessness.



The pages of this book have attempted to do the impossible—to record the warmth, the devotion to the cause, the success, the failure, the talent, the professionalism, the vision and the reality of the mission of the first twenty-five years of this great institution.

The team approach has always been our motto at MRC. It took a team to create the concept, a team to build this one-of-a-kind facility, a team to deliver rehabilitation services to the severely disabled and it will take a dedicated, talented team to continue the dream and keep us one-of-kind. That's the reward you get. I can't think of anything more satisfying than being a part of this team.

As we pause to savor the joy of participation in those years, let us also move forward toward the next twenty-five years with the same vision, mission, enthusiasm and compassion that have brought us this far.

There are no limits.

One Of “America’s Best Hospitals” Is Here In Mississippi.



Methodist Rehabilitation Center Named
“One of America’s Best Hospitals.”
— U.S. News & World Report, July 17, 2000

After reviewing 6,247 hospitals nationwide, Methodist Rehabilitation Center was ranked among the best hospitals in the country for its rheumatology/arthritis services—along with such hospitals as the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland.

In fact, among the many fine hospitals in Mississippi, Methodist Rehabilitation Center was the only hospital in the state to be named in the review of 17 medical specialties nationwide. Only 173 hospitals nationally were named to the list.

Now the nation knows what we’ve known for years—one of the best hospitals in America is here in Mississippi.

In the Next Issue of *Ways & Means*

New technology aids in spinal cord injured patient's recovery

A Petal teenager who suffered a spinal cord injury in a bicycle accident is walking short distances with crutches and a cane, thanks in part to Methodist Rehabilitation Center's treadmill gait training program. After a thorough evaluation, physicians on the treadmill team began working with the teen and have seen steady improvement in his gait cycle. Researchers at the Center for Neuroscience and Neurological Recovery at MRC believe he stands a good chance of walking without assistance when his therapy ends.



Former brain injury patient earns degree from Mississippi College

After a car accident on a rainy night two years ago, the outlook for 21-year-old Mandy McGehee seemed pretty bleak. The Brandon resident and Mississippi College student sustained a severe brain injury and was admitted to MRC's brain injury floor two weeks later. She couldn't talk or sit up by herself, but with therapy, determination and prayers, she made an unbelievably fast recovery. In December 2000, the dean's list student donned cap and gown to receive her degree in public relations from MC.



MRC's quad rugby team prepares to host number-one team in nation

Quad rugby, the fastest growing sport on two wheels, is taking hold in Jackson as Mississippi's only quad rugby team, the Jackson Jags, prepares to host the nation's number-one team, Birmingham's Lakeshore Demolition. The Jags, sponsored by Methodist Rehabilitation Center, consist of seven players with quadriplegia. In the game, which is played with a volleyball on a basketball court, four players pass, throw, bat, roll, dribble or carry the ball in any direction. Points are scored by crossing the opponent's goal line while maintaining possession of the ball.



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