

20 who made a difference

Whether through innovative business practices, groundbreaking research, tireless advocacy, or other means, these leaders have all left their mark on the world of long term care.



Jill Blakeslee

Untying the elderly

Jill Blakeslee was just out of nursing school when her father had a massive stroke. At his bedside, Blakeslee worked to keep him still. Finally he looked at her and said, "You should have been a cop, not a nurse." Those were the

Robert Butler

A new view of aging

Jane Shure remembers working on a research plan for the National Institute on Aging with Robert Butler, MD, shortly after Butler became the NIA's founding director in 1976. Shure, the institute's public information officer at the time, says she was rocked by the phrase Butler chose as a title for the project: Our Former Selves.

That phrase, she said, helped her think differently than she had about aging—a little-known field of study back then. "It wasn't just the idea of taking care of older people," says Shure, who now heads the NIA's public information office. "It was realizing that you would one day need these things in place for yourself. It was the idea that this was going to affect every single one of us."

Butler has spent more than four decades redefining the image of aging as a dreaded life stage wrought with low productivity and mental and physical decline. Inspired by a family doctor from his New Jersey childhood to choose a career in medicine, he went on to become a lifelong advocate for the medical and social needs and rights of the elderly.

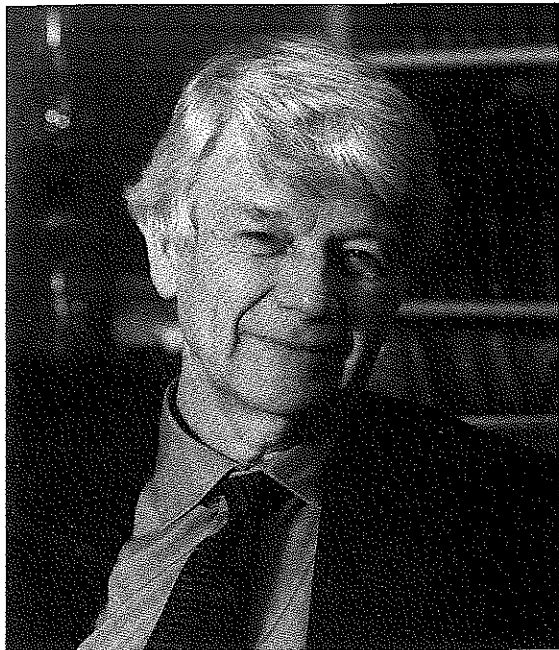
He remembers being the only practicing psychiatrist he knew of in the

last words he said to his daughter before he died. "I made up my mind right then that I would never be a cop-nurse," she says.

Blakeslee didn't stop with her own reform. In 1970, administrator Lloyd Lewis offered her the DON position at a new facility, Kendal at Longwood in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. She accepted the spot on one condition: that together they open a restraint-free facility. With that radical step—and with Lewis' support—Blakeslee began a still active battle to eliminate the use of restraints in nursing homes. In the late

1970s, at Lewis' urging, she founded what would become Untie the Elderly, an ongoing national program educating other nursing homes to operate restraint-free.

"When the Nursing Home Reform Act was passed in 1987, Blakeslee was the only guru on the subject," says Sarah Greene Burger, acting executive director of the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform. "She worked with surveyors, the Senate, with HCFA to mold the regulations. It was a very brave thing to do.



Washington, D.C., area in the 1950s who was willing to see patients in nursing homes. He was shocked by what he discovered on those visits. Even at facilities in Maryland's wealthy Montgomery County, he found residents suffering from severe dehydration, and medical charts devoid of personal history. "People were stripped of their identity," he says.

Butler later started visiting nursing

homes disguised as a son shopping for the right nursing home for his mother or father. He did this partly as research for *Why Survive? Being Old In America*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1976.

After he left the NIA in 1982, Butler went to The Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, where he established the first department of geriatrics in a U.S. medical school. Eight years later he founded the U.S. branch of the International Longevity Center at Mount Sinai, a think tank that studies the impact of longevity on society and its institutions in various countries. But his most fulfilling years, he says, were those spent at the NIA, where he identified Alzheimer's disease as a national research priority. "Maybe it was just the excitement of being in a world of continuous discovery, but those NIA days were just great," Butler says. BY DOUG BRUNK

None was talking about this then."

When Blakeslee took her ideas on the road, she was often met with derision. "We faced many audiences who felt our approach was ridiculous and impossible," says Beryl Goldman, director for health services at Kendal Corporation, and Blakeslee's assistant from 1986 to 1991, when Blakeslee, now 69, retired. "I remember one administrator standing up and saying that her ideas made no sense. She told him flat out that he had his opinion but he was wrong."

Blakeslee never confused compassion with compromise. "She was a very strong woman, completely firm in her conviction and committed to teaching others about it," says Carter Catlett Williams, a social work consultant in aging who first met Blakeslee in the late 1980s. Nor did she allow other areas of her life to suffer. She raised four children, insisted on vacations, and never worked weekends.

"She looked at long term care and the treatment of the elderly in a very different way than the norm in this country," says Goldman. "While others felt that tying people up was appropriate and best, Jill saw a whole other way of treating people. That is her major contribution."

BY DOROTHY FOLTZ-GRAY

Robert Elkins

Star performer

You know you've arrived when the comparisons to sports heroes start flying.

"Bob Elkins is the Wayne Gretzky of the industry," says Kathleen Griffin, executive director of Health Dimensions, a Cambridge, Minnesota-based consulting firm. "He doesn't go where the puck is, he goes where the puck is going to be."

The CEO of Integrated Health Services has a reputation as a tough manager who knows how to get things done. Over the past 12 years, he has engineered his company's growth from a groundbreaking subacute provider to a broad network of subacute, home health, long term care, and ancillary services, including hospice, home infusion, and respiratory and rehab therapies. The Owings Mill, Maryland-based firm now has more than 2,000 sites in 47 states. Its 1997 revenues were \$1.987 billion—a 38 percent increase over the previous year.

"Bob always seems a year or two ahead of the industry," says Griffin. "He was the first to grow subacute care as a platform for an entire company rather than as an addition or an afterthought, and the first to develop a full continu-



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