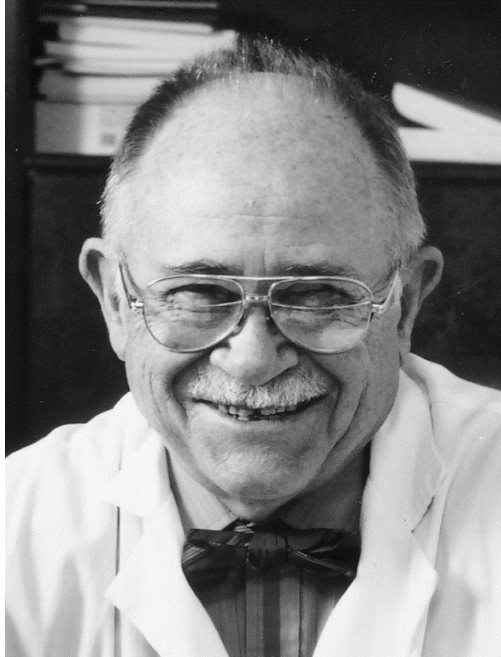


The R. A. 'Jiggs' Nelson Quality of Life Award.



Russell 'Jiggs' Nelson, MD

The Quality of Life Award was established in November 1978 by the WMREF Board of Directors to create an annual award to be given to a deserving individual, who had served as a health care provider or in a volunteer capacity, and who by their actions impacted the Wichita health care community by a single event, circumstance, or service over a period of time. The award would be presented at the annual meeting of the organization each spring.

In 2002 the WMREF Board of Directors voted to permanently change the name of the award to the 'R.A. 'Jiggs' Nelson Quality of Life Award' in honor of the award's first recipient, R.A. 'Jiggs' Nelson, a life long Wichita resident and pioneering pediatrician. Dr. Nelson was a fifty year member of Wichita Medical Research and Education Foundation serving in a number of offices and capacities. The same year the Board voted to open the award to organizations and community groups who were making a difference in the community through events or programs by improving the 'quality of life' for others.

Dr. Nelson was raised by his widowed mother and his poor background formed a need in Dr. Nelson to always 'look after those who couldn't look after themselves'. After graduating from Wichita University (WSU) and receiving his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine he returned to his hometown to begin his medical practice, but he also became the champion of many causes which still provide significant service today. Dr. Nelson brought the Head Start Program, a national pre-school based effort aimed at low income preschoolers to Wichita; instigated the drive to found Wesley Medical Center's neonatal care unit; and was a co-founder of the LifeWATCH system. Dr. Nelson was named Citizen of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers in 1982 and in 1988 was presented the WSU Alumni Achievement Award by the Alumni Association.

Dr. Nelson's impact on the city of Wichita, the care of our youngest citizens along with other programs continues to serve others and improve their 'quality of life' today.