

"Janie Wilkes"

MAY 05 1995

TRC TODAY

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INSIDE

The 74th Legislature	2
The new world in Washington	3
Laying tracks for the Future	5

Outstanding customer service

TRC customer service is where it's at. And Janie Wilkes, DDS medical relations officer, proves it once again — winning the Outstanding Customer Service Award from the Outstanding Women in Texas Government. On Jan. 30, she accepted the award at the Senate Chambers from First Lady Laura Bush.

Wilkes is an excellent role model for today's career woman — blending a professional life with that of wife, mother and community volunteer. She has worked in DDS for almost 22 years and has held numerous positions in a progressive movement toward increased responsibilities. She is always mindful of her customers' need for respect and tempers her assistance with empathy and understanding. She has a flair for interacting with diverse elements and takes on special assignments with undisguised enthusiasm and motivation.

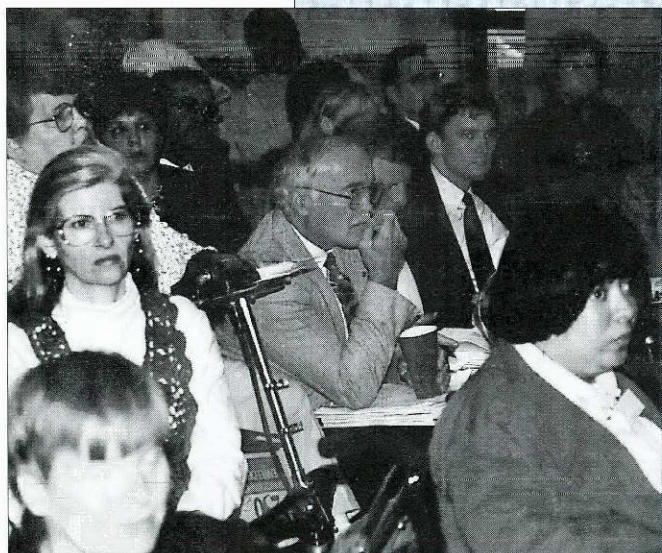
"She is a very deserving person for this award," says Tom Ross, director of Medical Relations. "Wilkes recognizes a need and tries to meet the need immediately. Her principal customers are examiners. She does an outstanding job of setting up consultative exams, even in areas where physicians are hard to find."

"She has a tremendous sense of humor and brings a lot of sunshine to the office," adds Ross. "We all admire her ability to have so many interests in her life. She gives willingly of her time and gives so much to her community." ■



Commissioner Arrell, Janie Wilkes and Laura Bush.

The 74th Legislature



Top: Rep. Robert Junell speaking to consumers; Bottom: Arrell and consumers intently listening to the LBB's report to the House subcommittee.

Expect the unexpected

The rule of thumb during state legislative sessions is to expect the unexpected. This year, we didn't wait long. Unlike the Legislative Appropriations Request TRC submitted last summer, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) recommended level funding for all state-funded programs, with the exception of funding for the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities.

To restore funding to these programs, however, the LBB fell far short — as much as \$6.5 million — in funding for the VR program. And this \$6.5 million could mean as much as \$24 million in federal funds.

"I am thrilled that the LBB restored funds to our much needed state funded programs," said Commissioner Arrell. "But at the same time, it is essential to match as much federal money as we can. A cut this size in the VR program will affect the lives of many disabled Texans."

Off to the races

By mid-January, TRC had already had its first hearing with the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and on Feb. 6, it was the same song, second verse at the House Appropriations Subcommittee.

Rain, traffic and long delays didn't stop consumers and advocates from making a strong showing at the hearings. At each hearing, over 50 advocates showed up to testify, creating traffic jams of wheelchairs and Amigo scooters.

"I have never seen a better turnout — or heard more effective testimony — than what I was privileged to witness at these hearings," says Arrell. "If legislators didn't understand the impact of our services before, they do now."

What Next?

The next step in the appropriations process is called "markup" for both the Senate and the House. Insiders expect this to happen fairly quickly this year, perhaps by the time you read this article. After that, any differences in the bills are hammered out by conference committee and then it goes to the floor for approval.

The new world in Washington

Congress is four weeks into a session which has Republican leadership for the first time in 40 years. It would not be accurate to say that Congress is in an angry mood, but they are certainly focused to scrutinize every federally funded program to cut the federal budget.

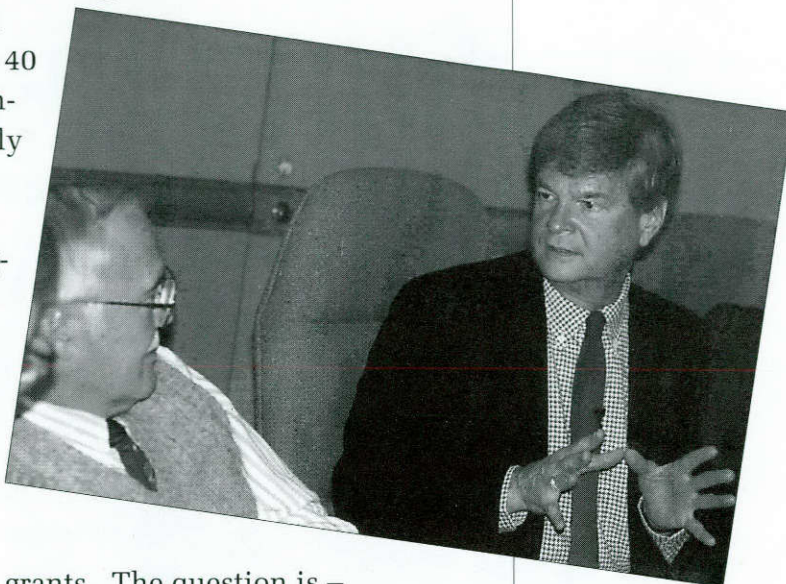
In a recent satellite broadcast from Washington, CSAVR Executive Director Joe Owens, General Counsel Jack Duncan, and Fred Schroeder, commissioner, RSA outlined the major issues affecting the public program of vocational rehabilitation in this congressional climate.

Here are the major issues:

■ *Unfunded federal mandates* - Title I of the Rehabilitation Act is an unfunded federal mandate and needs to survive the close scrutiny of congressional appropriation subcommittees that have the authority to "zero out" funding.

■ *Appropriations* - Even though President Clinton released budget recommendations calling for a 3.15 percent increase in funding for rehabilitation programs, congressional intent to cut federal spending places this recommendation in jeopardy. Many observers feel Congress is more likely to cut spending to meet the much published deadline for balancing the federal budget by 2002, even in cost effective programs like VR.

■ *Block grants* - One theme runs through most congressional activity at this point - Decentralize the federal authority and push money back to the states through block



grants. The question is – Where will the VR program fit? Welfare reform is in full swing, but the out come of employment clearly distinguishes VR from welfare. The proposal for consolidation of manpower programs, which share employment as an outcome, has the potential to disrupt the integrity of the VR programs for people with disabilities. These, and other issues will be hotly debated in coming months.

■ *Advocacy* - One thing is sure, congressional leaders are more interested in what state governors and local constituents have to say than lobbyist and federal rehab workers. Advocacy by rehabilitation workers, across the country, with their local congressman has never been needed more. If the program is lost, it will be lost for lack of support at the grassroots level – especially from rehabilitation workers and those they serve.

Days before the telecast, Owens was in Central Office speaking to RSA Region VI directors regarding the great need to reengineer the VR process to survive the changing political times.

Standing Tall

at Carnegie Hall



Decked out in the traditional tux, Robin Best stands in front of the Carnegie Hall marquee.

It is a long way from Tyler to New York's Carnegie Hall. But, with a booming voice, grit and perseverance, the trip can be made. Just ask Robin Best, counselor in the Tyler Field Office.

Best has two great passions in life – to help people and the lure of the stage. He has used them both to his advantage. He changed his college major from music to psychology with the feeling that talent rather, than a degree, would mark his success in music. He was right. Besides, he didn't want to teach music for a living.

His reputation grew with audiences on the college campus and community theater, church weddings, performing music from classical to country to gospel to rock – anyone who would listen. Meanwhile, to pay a few bills, he got his masters degree in psychology and started to work as a TRC counselor.

Finally, his chance for the big time arrived. He was invited to sing with the all-star vocalists of the past 25 years at East Texas State University at a special Thanksgiving program with the Manhattan Philharmonic Orchestra – the Big Apple's finest.

It almost didn't happen. A serious auto accident in 1993 left him with a series of major surgeries, pain and the inability to walk without stooping for six months. Support from fellow employees in the Tyler office and donated sick leave helped him get through this difficult period. And, when the call came, he was ready to stand tall and give the performance of his life.

"Standing on the stage of America's finest performing arts theater will bring a lump to anyone's throat," says Best of the experience. "I was very lucky to have the opportunity to rise up and give my performance."

The sweet smell of appreciation

You deserve the best because you are the best — were the final words spoken to a room full of DDS support staff and they precisely summed up the event. DDS Support Staff Appreciation Day took place not just once — but three times in three days to accommodate and appreciate over 300 clerical staff in the division.

Each day started with a continental breakfast and included a series of motivational and informational speakers. Funds were raised among exam-

iners, managers and others to cover the cost of the event. A committee consisting of 18 people should be commended for spending a lot of time and effort in designing the program, collecting donations and preparing over 40 posters that carried notes of appreciation to support staff.

“Most of the support staff have been with us for many years and have hung in there with us through some very difficult times,” says Esther Diaz, director of DDS



Staff Development and event coordinator. “All I can say is, it’s about time for an event like this.”

At the end of the day, managers gave support staff flowers. Left to right: Kathy Pennick, Unit 11; Carolyn Stone, Unit 50, Julia Dobbins, Unit 24; and Kathleen Jones, Policy Administration.

LAYING TRACKS for the Future

In the late 1800s, railroad tracks criss-crossed the nation and united a country as never before. The tracks of the 1990s are the Wide Area Network (WAN) connections that will unite over 150 TRC offices in common information sharing that will drastically change the way TRC does business.

These WAN tracks have been referred to as the infrastructure or the support system for reengineering. Call it what you may, but the bottom line is — if it’s not laid, the new reengineered system won’t happen. When the redesigns of the VR process and procurement system are ready, it will be delivered on the “tracks” of the WAN connections to computers used by more than 2,000 employees to serve more than 100,000 clients per year.

And, that is why Automated Services teams are scurrying around the state to bring offices on-line and introduce field staff to the new Windows

interface and cc:Mail.

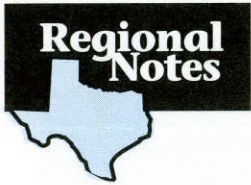
At the very heart of these new WAN tracks in each office is a little black box which will direct traffic to and between computers.

Information which has required hours and even days to be sent and received will be transmitted in a matter of seconds.

Just as fax machines have injected speed into any business

practice, WANs hold the promise of being the turbocharger next step in rapid information sharing.





**February 1995
State Service
Awards**

Region I
15 years
Nila Jackson
20 years
Knobby Sanchez

Region II
10 years
Sandra Smith
Loretta Zimbleman
15 years
Debbie Webb
Deloris Packer
20 years
Freddie Glenn
25 years
Barbara Graves

Region III
10 years
David Stevenson
Tina Hutchinson

Region V
15 years
Odell Lee

DDS
10 years
Christene Blackman
Gloria Quintana
15 years
Dottie Savage
Sarah Burns
Celia James
Ronald Brown
Jasna Bolerjack
25 years
Sandra McKinley

Region I

Sara Schwiening, former area manager, passed away Jan. 27 in San Angelo. Schwiening retired from the Odessa Field Office Central Jan. 31, 1988 with nearly 22 years of TRC service.

Region II

Ellie Lambert was selected to fill the RST position in the Arlington Field Office.

Kerem Fay is the new administrative support technician at the Fort Worth Central Field Office.

Sally Sargent joined the Plano Field Office as the RST for David Jasper.

Nadine Jones, former DDS Unit 26 employee, is working in the Employment Resource Department for the Metroplex Regional Office.

Jo Duckworth, MSS Odessa, said farewell to Region I employees and transferred to the Weatherford Field Office effective Feb. 1.

Region III

George W. Moore, senior counselor in the Lufkin Field Office, retired in Feb. 1995 after 25 years of TRC service.

William "Bill" Edwards, retired TRC counselor, passed away Jan. 26. Edwards retired from the Marshall Field Office.

Paul Pietrzyk is the new counselor at the South Austin Field Office.

The Bryan Field Office's newest counselor is Greg Mason. Mason will be working with clients on the Caseload #121.

Region IV

In December, RST Theresa Caldwell transferred from the San Antonio West Field Office to the Houston West Field Office.

Carol Young, area manager in the Houston Southwest Field Office announced the following selections:

Linda Robinson, counselor, and Elizabeth Price, RST, for the Katy Field Office.

The new counselor for the Baytown Field Office is Dolly Jenkins.

Jim Dickey is the new regional administrative support technician for the Region IV HRD Department.

Ms. Ronnie Jordan was selected as the AST for the Conroe Field Unit.

Region V

Sylvia Garza was selected as the new program support secretary and Tania Solis as the human resources technician in the San Antonio Regional Office. Dianna Barrera transferred to the Programs section to work with Benny Garcia and Lauren Begam-Brannen.

Robinette Lott was selected for the RST position in the San Antonio Return to Work Program.

The Corpus Christi Field Office welcomed their new ERS/RST Marsha Green-Ziegler who started Jan. 2.

Diana Gonzales moved from the San Antonio Field Office Northeast to the San Antonio Field Office West to be working with Counselor Sherry Haglund.

After 26 years of TRC service, Jeanette Holland, MSS, retired Feb. 1995 from the San Antonio Field Office South. Josie Contreras has been selected as the new MSS for the Unit.

San Antonio South and Central welcomed Charles "Chuck" Brady as new counselor.

DDS

Peggy Nutt was selected as the MRT area supervisor. She will office at John Peter Smith Hospital.

Evelyn Hasson, data entry operator, retired in Dec. 1994 after nearly 16 years of service.

Henry Daniel, disability examiner, retired in Dec. 1994.

Central Office

Debbie Orear will assume the duties of the information technician in the Rehab Tech Program. Orear replaces Lydia Main who accepted a position with the Texas Department of Human Services.

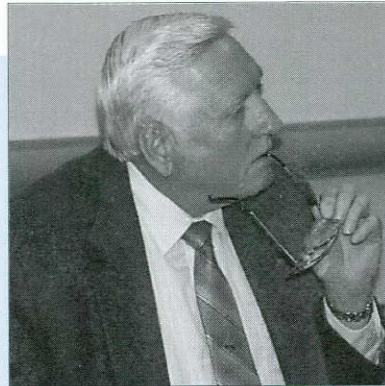
Deborah Murray was selected as the project coordinator to work with the Supported Employment: Systems Change Grant Project.

Holly Hollan, ad tech, in Programs accepted a position with the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Conde Jerome, administrative coordinator in HRD, retired Jan. 31, 1995.

Lina Castellanos replaced Anne Marie Lagesse as the legal assistant in the Office of the General Counsel. Lagesse left to complete her undergraduate education and to apply for admission to law school.

TRC's Grants and Contracts Manual received an award of Achievement in a competition conducted by the Lone Star (Dallas) Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. TRC employees contributing include: David Henderson, Randy Scott and Joyce Leidy of the Grants and Contracts unit; Watt Pye, Nick Constant, Rita Dominguez and Carol Farris in the Technical Writing Unit; and Susan Antoniewicz in Graphic Arts.



Bob Rankin

In Central Office these days, you'll find most of the meeting rooms filled with the faces of counselors and managers from the field — serving as subject matter experts in reengineering lab chunks. Phase One of the chunks is completed and at the time of this writing, we are in the middle of Phase Two.



Bill Mosley and Marilyn Padgett.



Left to right: John Weeks, Sid Womack, Keith Stanford and Ken Bowen.

**Here
a chunk,
There
a chunk,**

**Every-
where
a chunk,
chunk**

Spreading the word



Recently, RSA Region VI directors met in Austin to learn about TRC's reengineering efforts. It was the first time for all directors in the Region to come together. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the feasibility of

undertaking a regional reengineering effort, as has been done in RSA Region X. For two days, the directors familiarized themselves with the basics of reengineering, what Texas has done and how it can be applied on a regional basis.

"We don't need to reinvent what has been done in Texas," said May Nelson, director of Rehabilitation Services in Louisiana. "Rather, we can take many ideas and apply them back home."

"It's a tremendous challenge but we must do it if we are to survive," added Bobby Simpson, commissioner of the Arkansas Vocational and Technical Education Division, "At TRC, I've always come to expect the best and what I see here is a process I feel is going to work. It's going to set the standard for the future in what reengineering is all about." ■

TRC
today

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