

## **COA Mourns Passing of Former Surgeon General Julius B. Richmond**

Dr. Julius B. Richmond, USPHS, (Ret.), 91, and COA Life Member died July 27 of cancer. Dr. Richmond served as President Carter's Assistant Secretary for Health and as U.S. Surgeon General from 1977 to 1981 and promoted anti-smoking, preventive health-care and public health policy campaigns. In 1979, Dr. Richmond released a 1,200-page Surgeon General's Report on the multiple harmful effects of smoking, which included lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema and other illnesses. He also issued the first surgeon general's report on health promotion and disease prevention, urging Americans to cut their consumption of alcohol, salt, sugar and fats, get moderate exercise, obey speeding laws, use seat belts and see a doctor regularly.

Dr. Richmond was born September 25, 1916, in Chicago and graduated from the University of Illinois receiving bachelor's and master's degrees. In 1939, he received a medical degree from what is not the University of Illinois, College of Medicine in Chicago.

After two years at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, he served in the U.S. Army Air Forces as a flight surgeon during World War II.

In 1965, Dr. Richmond was one of the original founders and the first director of Head Start, the federal effort to improve education and health of poor and at-risk children. He also organized and ran a program that opened federally funded neighborhood health-care centers during the 1960s.

According to a 1981 oral history, Dr. Richmond said he and SUNY colleague Bettye Caldwell noticed that all children seemed to develop at the same pace in their first year of life, but poor children's advancement lagged as they started using language and exploring their surroundings.

With early intervention in a stimulating environment, Dr. Richmond and Caldwell found the decline could be prevented.

Dr. Richmond's work caught the eye of Sargent Shriver, who was appointed to lead the new Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964. Recruited to the OEO, DR. Richmond used demonstration grants to launch Head Start in 1965 and enrolled 500,000 children in 2,700 communities within six months.

In 1967, Dr. Richmond returned to SUNY to become dean of its medical faculty in Syracuse. In 1971, he moved to Harvard Medical School, where he held professorships in child psychiatry and human development, and in preventive and social medicine.

In 1977, Dr. Richmond became the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Assistant Secretary for Health and U.S. Surgeon General, the chief spokesman on the nation's health. It was the first time the two jobs were combined.

Four years later he went back to Harvard as the John D. MacArthur professor of health policy, teaching at the medical school and the School of Public Health, retiring in 1988. As recently as May 2008, he was still spending a few hours each day in his office at Harvard.

After he left office, in the 1990s, he was the lead-off witness in a class-action lawsuit brought by flight attendants who believed their health was compromised by secondhand smoke. Also, in 2004 he joined three other surgeons general to unveil a national plan to curb smoking, calling for a \$2 tax on every pack of cigarettes.

His first wife, Rhee Richmond, died in 1985. A son from that marriage, Dale Richmond, died in 1972.

Survivors include his wife of 21 years, Jean Richmond of Brookline; two sons from his first marriage, Dr. Barry Richmond of Bethesda, MD and Charles Richmond of Indianapolis, IN; two stepsons, Michael Berger of Detroit, MI and Dr. Steven Berger of West Lafayette, IN; nine grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Rosalynn Carter said in a statement issued July 29, “Jimmy and I are saddened to learn of the loss of our dear friend and colleague, Dr. Julius Richmond. Julie was a wonderful and compassionate champion in the fight to improve health, mental health, and educational opportunities for our nation’s children. All Americans have benefited from his decades of leadership in advancing the healthcare needs of our country.”