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BIOGRAPHY

Robert was an Alachua City Commissioner between 2010 and 2022 with budgets exceeding \$50 million. He fulfilled the role as Vice Mayor on three separate occasions during his tenure. Alachua experienced tremendous economic growth under his “can do” foresightedness and visionary guidance to include the construction of an \$11 million multipurpose arts and recreation complex and a \$5 million operations center. In addition to his prowess as a “servant leader,” Robert was the Chief Executive Officer for four organizations for a period of twenty-seven years. One of these organizations was a substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment agency, while the other three were community action agencies devoted to implementing economic sustainability programs for low-income families.

He is a United States Navy Vietnam-era Veteran who completed a distinguished twenty-year career in 1983. In recognition of his outstanding leadership abilities and exemplary performance, Robert received the Secretary of the Navy Commendation Medal, two Secretary of the Navy Achievement Medals, and the Commander Naval Security Group Command Meritorious Service Award as well as many other letters of accommodation and appreciation. He was a naval cryptologist for the first sixteen years of his military career and spent the last four years on active duty researching, designing, and writing training manuals for a newly established Religious Program Specialist enlisted rating in support of the Navy’s Chaplain Corps. In addition to being a current member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Marine Corps League, Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association, and U.S. Navy Fleet Reserve Association, Robert holds the distinction as a Paul Harris Fellow with Rotary International in recognition of his selfless philanthropic efforts. He was also the former President of the Turkey Creek Lions Club and was a founding member of the Alachua Optimist Club.

During his illustrious career as a CEO in managing budgets in excess of \$17 million and staffs as large as 400, Robert routinely demonstrated innovative and “best practices” managerial ability in engaging public, private, nonprofit, education, and faith-based groups in various social service advocacy and economic development activities. Attesting to his incomparable managerial expertise and “can do” attitude, Tri-County Community Council, which is located in Bonifay, Florida, was recognized as the state’s “Rural Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year” in 1997, received Florida’s “Innovation of the Year” transportation award in 1999, and was nominated by the Florida Department of Transportation as the national “Community Transportation System of the Year” in 1997 and again in 2000. He also led the establishment of “Hope for Life” which was a volunteer group devoted to combatting domestic violence.

While serving as the CEO of Crowley’s Ridge Development Council, in Jonesboro, Arkansas, between 2000 and 2006, Robert’s capital improvement foresightedness resulted in physical plant enhancements exceeding \$8 million including the construction/renovation of four Head Start centers, the construction of a state-of-the-art administrative and training complex using Community Reinvestment Act low interest bank financing, the construction of a 10-unit apartment complex which provided instant equity of \$100 thousand, the construction of a 50-bed residential substance abuse treatment facility for men and women, and the construction/renovation of seven senior centers.

Because of his many accomplishments at CRDC, Robert received a number of prestigious awards for his community service and philanthropic endeavors. He was declared an “Honorary Citizen and an Ambassador of Fellowship and Goodwill” by the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and received a proclamation from the Mayor of this city designating May 24, 2005, as “Robert Wilford Day,” received a “Capitol Citation” on November 11, 2006, from Secretary of State Charlie Daniels for his distinguished accomplishments, services and deeds, and was designated by Governor Mike Huckabee as an official “Arkansas Traveler and Ambassador of Goodwill” on November 17, 2006, for distinguished performance as an outstanding leader and for his selfless volunteerism efforts in the State of Arkansas.

While serving as the CEO of Central Florida Community Action Agency between 2006 and 2013, CFCAA was recognized in 2010 as a “best practices” leader in community action by completing the highly demanding National Community Action Partnership “Pathways to Excellence” self-study process becoming the first such agency in Florida to achieve this impressive accomplishment. Additionally, CFCAA received the 2010 Florida Association for Community Action “Exemplary Support” award, 2009 FACA “Volunteer of the Year” award, 2008 Southeastern Association of Community Action Agencies “Agency of the Year and Self-Sufficiency Participant of the Year” awards, and 2008 FACA “Agency of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and Self-Sufficiency Participant of the Year” awards. Receipt of these three awards in the same year of 2008 was unprecedented in FACA’s history. Robert also received recognition in November 2013 from the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and the Alachua City Commission by having two separate days proclaimed as “Robert Wilford Day” in Alachua County and in the City of Alachua for his distinguished service for a career spanning five decades in the U.S. Navy, healthcare management, and in four nonprofit agencies.

A consummate activist, Robert was acclaimed as the 2008 “Advocate of the Year” by the East Gainesville Development Corporation which is a minority-led organization committed to neighborhood revitalization in a low-income area of Gainesville. He also volunteered with Kairos Prison Ministry International and an Incarcerated Veterans group at two Florida state prisons and is a current member of the Alachua Chamber of Commerce and former member of the Florida Regional Councils Association which represents the state’s ten regional councils. Robert was also the former Chair of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council which represents twelve North Central Florida counties and was First Vice President of the statewide Florida Regional Councils Association. He is also a former member of numerous Boards of Directors including two neighborhood associations, Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association, Florida Association for Community Action, Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, and Community Action Association of Region VI which represents community action agencies/associations in five Southwestern States.

Robert’s educational achievements are impressive. He completed an undergraduate degree in Political Science with a Minor in Management at the University of West Florida and graduate degrees in Public Administration, Human Resource Management, and Counseling and Human Development at Troy University. Robert is credentialed as both a Certified Prevention Professional under the auspices of the Florida Certification Board and Certified Community Action Manager under the auspices of the Southeastern Association of Community Action Agencies. He was the first person in Arkansas to achieve the highly regarded “Community Action Manager” designation. In addition, Robert is an exceptional writer who published an intriguing book in 2015 regarding the worldwide crime of pedophilia and he has also authored numerous eclectic articles which have appeared in a college publication and in various newspapers, agency newsletters, and on several worldwide websites including the [National Catholic Reporter](#), [bishop-accountability.org](#), [catholic-blogs.com](#), [communityactionpartnership.com](#), [ManchesterSalon.com](#) (England), and [CathNewsNewZealand.com](#).

Additionally, Robert is a gifted motivational speaker who has facilitated numerous workshops around the country. He has been a plenary speaker and panel participant at state, regional, and national conferences. Presentation venues included the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association, Florida Association for Community Action, Florida Association of DUI Programs, Florida Association Against Domestic Violence, Florida Community Mental Health Association, Florida Community Development Association, Florida Parks and Recreation Association, Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, Arkansas Cooperative Extension Services Association, Arkansas Substance Abuse Certification Board, Arkansas Transit Association, Region VI Community Action Association, Region VI Head Start Association, National Community Action Partnership, National Community Action Foundation, Alachua County School Board Head Start Policy Council (Gainesville, FL), Jackson County Development Council (Marianna, FL), Marion County Homeless Coalition and Habitat for Humanity of Marion County and Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Center (Ocala, FL), Muscogee County Head Start Program (Columbus, GA), Chemical Addictions Recovery Effort (Panama City, FL), Tri-County Community Council (Bonifay, FL), Crowley’s Ridge Development Council (Jonesboro, AR), and Central Florida Community Action Agency (Gainesville, FL).

Robert is a native Floridian, hailing from Jacksonville. He has been married to Diane for fifty-one years and has a son, Scott, and two beautiful granddaughters, Natalie and Caroline. Robert spent the majority of his early childhood and teen years being reared in Birmingham, Alabama, and is a diehard Alabama football fan.