



Florida State University
ARF News Special Feature
February 2023



9th President of ARF (1987-88)
Janet Wells

Dr. L. Janet Wells

APRIL 16, 1921 – MARCH 2, 2021



Dr. L. Janet (Jan) Wells,
Professor Emerita died March
2, 2021, one month short of her
100th birthday.

As was her nature of being dryly articulate and precisely clear, Jan directed that her obituary state that she “died” at her home at Westminster Oaks. She did not “pass away”.

Born April 16, 1921 in Palatka, FL, Jan was the only child of Edna Marshall Wells and Randall Wells lifelong residents of Putnam County. Dr. Wells came to the Florida State College for Women in 1938 after her time as a standout basketball player and cheerleader at Putnam High School. While at FSCW Jan was member of Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Delta Phi honor societies, Mortar Board and “Even” honorary Esteren, Women’s “F” Club and Chi Omega social fraternity. She received her B.S. in 1942 and immediately went to work teaching and coaching in Leesburg, FL. Jan then answered the call of her country and joined the U.S. Naval Service in 1944. In her last months Dr. Wells was honored for her military service with a Valor Ceremony by the Big Bend Hospice Valor Team and presented with a laudatory letter, certificate, Hospice Valor pin, coin, and hand-made afghan.

At the conclusion of her military service Jan returned to Alachua, FL, establishing the children’s summer camp, Crystal Lake, and subsequently entered graduate school at the University of Florida earning a M. Ed. in 1952. After a time working as an Assistant Professor of Physical Education at North Georgia College, she matriculated in Michigan State University and received her Ed. D. in 1957. With doctorate in hand Jan came “home” to Florida State University and continued to teach, administer and influence students’ lives at FSU over the next thirty years. In addition to teaching Jan served on numerous committees including the Faculty Senate, Title IX Committee, and Athletic Committee before retiring as Head of the Department of Physical Education.

In her career Dr. Wells served numerous professional organizations, worked on multiple accreditation teams and published in her professional field. However, she always kept her focus on her individual students, student needs and the needs of girls and women in physical education and athletics. Prior to and after her retirement from FSU, Dr. Wells continually supported and mentored female athletes, coaches and scholars. Jan nurtured students up to and through the doctoral level, hosted students and student groups at her home, mentored students as the advisor of the Chi Omega sorority, served as university homecoming general chairperson, and oversaw FSU graduation ceremonies. Dr. Wells promoted philanthropy through establishing and supporting scholarships in the College of Education and in Athletics and helping to establish the “Committee of Thirty” to promote excellence in women’s athletics. In the community Jan worked for political causes, volunteered in local organizations and delivered Meals

on Wheels for years to recipients often twenty years her junior. Jan was a familiar face at most all activities, games and events for multiple women's athletic teams at FSU.

Throughout her career and into retirement Dr. Wells impressed and endeared herself to thousands of students through nurturing her students, building character, training them in leadership, instilling integrity, and teaching them to "make a difference" in their lives. No student will ever forget the Dr. Wells "look" over the top of her half glasses if ever she was not totally pleased with individual performance academically, athletically, and morally. Just the way Dr. Wells entered a room commanded immediate respect by everyone there. Jan expected all her students to aspire to and achieve the FSCW motto, "Femina Perfecta", the complete woman. The "Femina Perfecta" FSU endowed athletic scholarship stands today as a tribute to Dr. Wells funded by her former students.

After her retirement, Jan never missed a university or athletic event nor did she slow down, instead she became a world traveler climbing in Peru to the top of Machu Picchu, riding elephants in Thailand, camels in Egypt and hiking, camping, canoeing and exploring throughout the U.S. If she was home for a time Jan could usually be found at her beach house at Shell Point, entertaining friends and students. She would keep in close contact with her many students throughout her life and delighted in hearing of their activities and accomplishments. On the occasion of Jan's 90th birthday, over one hundred of her friends and former students attended a wonderful celebration in her honor which prompted Jan to comment "We need to party more often!"

Dr. Wells was predeceased by her parents and her "not nearly long enough" life partner, Dr. Billie Jones. She is survived by her six God children Margaret Starnes Adams, Joseph Furness Hull, Margaret Hammond Carr, Em Turner Chitty, Elizabeth Fuller Oliver, and Sally Anne Huffman Fitzgerald, many friends and colleagues and far too many devoted students and mentees to list. Abundant gratitude is extended to faithful caregivers "Little Jan" Starnes, Ruth Lyle and Hopewell In-Home Senior Care. A virtual Celebration of Life, which will strictly be held to one hour or less at Jan's request, will be available in the future at www.CulleysMeadowWood.com In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made in Jan's name to Big Bend Hospice Foundation, 1723 Mahan Center Blvd., Tallahassee, FL, 32308 or to the FSU Jan Wells Endowed Scholarship Fund in Pedagogy, fund number F(02046) at FSU Foundation, 325 College Avenue, Tallahassee, FL 32301 or online at <http://give.fsu.edu/janwells>

