



The Mississippi Health Care Association (MHCA) is pleased to present a series of profiles of residents across Mississippi titled, "An Enriched Life" to highlight to the impact of their lives.

Willetta Cahill – age 103, Bedford Care Center of Mendenhall

It's not every day you meet someone who has lived more than 100 years. Willetta Cahill, who has been a resident of Bedford Care Center of Mendenhall for the past four years, celebrated an incredible milestone on her 103rd birthday last November. She grew up on her family's farm near Pinola, Mississippi, and after completing high school and nursing school at Willis Walley School of Nursing, Ms. Cahill worked at the Tuberculosis Hospital in Beaumont, Texas from 1937-1938 for \$50 a month with room and board.

She later worked as an RN in a small hospital in Rayne, Louisiana and then back to Beaumont to work at St. Therese Hospital. It was then she met Charles Cahill and they were married on January 7, 1939. The Cahills had their first child in Jackson, Mississippi in 1940, and their second child in Houston, Texas in July, 1944. Charles Cahill's job in construction meant the family moved often but the family settled in Houston in 1944.



Eventually moving back to Mississippi and working for the Health Department, Ms. Cahill went back to school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center for her BSN. After graduation, she taught for a year at the School of Nursing as well as being a clinical nurse specialist on the maternity and pediatric floor. She also completed a Master's program at the School of Nursing. She worked as a clinical nurse specialist until 1974, and at that time, she became the Director of the Maternal Child Health Program for the State Board of Health and continued in that position until she retired in 1979.

While working in the field of nursing, Ms. Cahill accepted a position with the Bureau of Public Health Nursing to focus on their expanding maternal and child health programs. In that role, she coordinated or provided workshops for the staff public health nurses to update their knowledge and skills in patient assessment. Ms. Cahill was also involved in the development of audio/visual tools and health promotional materials to support the teaching components of public health nursing, and she was very involved in the federal WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program in its early stages. Shortly after retiring from nursing, Ms. Cahill built a home in Pinola where she lived prior to moving to Bedford Care Center of Mendenhall in April, 2014. Undoubtedly, countless people have been helped by the work, influence and enriched life of Ms. Willetta Cahill.

Thank you to Christal East of Bedford Care Center of Mendenhall for your nomination of Willetta Cahill for MHCA's "An Enriched Life" profile.