

WHELAN, RICHARD J. (1931 -)

Born in Emmett, Kansas, Richard J. Whelan received his B.A. (cum laude) from Washburn University in 1955 with majors in history, political science, psychology and education. By 1957, he completed all course requirements for a M.A. in history, with concentrations in American, European and Far Eastern history at the University of Kansas. In 1966 he received the Ed.D. degree from the University of Kansas with concentrations in special education (emotional and behavioral disorders), educational psychology and research, and school psychology. He is currently licensed as a social studies and psychology teacher as well as a teacher of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. He also holds licenses as a special education supervisor/coordinator, director of special education and school psychologist. The Supreme Court of the State of Kansas has approved him as a mediator and a trainer of mediators. He has served as a special education administrative hearing officer and hearing officer trainer for the Kansas State Board of Education. In addition, he was a special education hearing officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. During the Korean War, he served as an instructor of Electronics, Computers and Power Control Systems at the U.S. Army Radar and Guided Missile School where he collaborated with civilian instructors from R.C.A., Philco, and Sperry Gyroscope to teach military personnel operational principles of, for that time period, top secret radar based defense systems.

Whelan's earliest professional experiences were at Southard School of the Menninger Clinic where he served as recreational therapist, teacher and Director of Education. During his professional career at the University of Kansas and University of Kansas Medical Center,

he held an academic appointment in the Department of Psychiatry, and was a Professor of Pediatrics, Education and Special Education. His administrative posts included Chairperson of the Department of Special Education, Dean of a Graduate Division, Dean of the School of Education, and Director of Education for the University Affiliated Program at the Medical Center. Since 1968, until his retirement from the University, he held the Chair for the Ralph L. Smith Distinguished Professor of Child Development. He was a Project Director of federal grants which provided funds to support graduate student and doctoral leadership fellowships. He was a major contributor to grants that funded construction and ongoing programs for the Mental Retardation Research Centers and the University Affiliated Facilities located at Parsons, Kansas, the Lawrence Campus and the Medical Center Campus. Prior to his retirement in January, 2000 he was Principal Investigator of a multi-year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services. This grant supported several staff members and doctoral students who provided technical assistance and training to head-start programs of DHHS Region VII. From 1972-1974, he served as Director of the Division of Personnel Preparation in the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services) in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Whelan held numerous board memberships and served as a consultant to psychiatric hospitals, universities, government agencies, schools and other education related organizations. During his career, Whelan served on seven publication boards, and held offices in state and national professional organizations. He was Chairperson of the Evaluation Training Consortium, a national evaluation training project funded by the U.S. Office of Education. He was a founder and officer of the Kansas Federation of the Council for

Exceptional Children. He was a member of the Phi Kappa Phi, and was recognized by Leaders in Education, Who's Who in America and Outstanding Educators of America. He received several service awards, including the Award for Leadership in Behavior Disorders from the Midwest Symposium Organization.

Whelan has over 100 publications, including Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: a 25 Year Focus (1998); and Educating Students with Mild Disabilities: Strategies and Methods (1998). His professional preparation included extensive experiences in psychoanalysis, psychoeducational and applied behavior analysis theories and interventions. He emphasized experimental research designs and precise measurement in his own research, as well as in classes he taught for graduate students. More importantly, he continues to believe that the best teachers of professionals are the children they serve: "they will let you know if you are doing it correctly." Whelan put this belief into practice while teaching, and while directing a psychoeducational clinic for children with disabilities and their families at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Since retirement from the University of Kansas, Whelan has completed four additional publications. He has maintained an active professional role by serving as a Program Consultant for the Blue Valley School District (Overland Park, Kansas). He is a Board Appointed Hearing Officer, a consultant to programs for students with mental disorders, and consults with staff members regarding compliance requirements of federal and state special education laws and regulations. He also serves the Kansas State Department of Education/Special Education Services, as a Complaint Investigator. This role requires an

independent investigation and report of a parent's allegation that a school has not complied with laws and regulations related to the education of a student with an exceptionality.

In 2005, Whelan was recognized by the Blue Valley School District and the University of Kansas School of Education for 50 years of service in education. In 2006, he received the Service Above and Beyond Award by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In 2007, he was profiled in a Blue Valley Cover Story television program by Blue Valley Television Productions.

Richard and Carol Whelan endow a scholarship at the University of Kansas School of Education, Department of Special Education, for educators of children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders. They also endow a scholarship, the R. Joseph and Margaret Cox Whelan fund, for general education teachers at Washburn University, Topeka, KS.

REFERENCES

Whelan, R. J. (Ed.). (1998). Emotional and behavioral disorders: A 25 year focus. Denver: Love Publishing Company.

Meyen, E.L., Vergason, G.A. & Whelan, R.J. (Eds.). (1998). Educating students with mild disabilities: Strategies and methods. Denver: Love Publishing Company.