The 1991 Society for Community Research and Action Award for Distinguished Practice in Community Psychology: Beverly B. Long

Editor's note: Invited address to the Society for Community Research and Action: The Division of Community Psychology of the American Psychological Association, Biennial Meeting in Tempe, Arizona, June 1991. The Award for Distinguished Practice in Community Psychology is a career award given by the Society.
INTRODUCTION: ACCOLADES FOR ADVOCACY – BEVERLY B. LONG

I am very pleased to introduce the recipient of the 1991 award for Distinguished Practice in Community Psychology, Beverly Long. Bev has been working on behalf of prevention in mental health for almost 30 years. Her activities have not been a part of her job, not activities that might lead to tenure or becoming director of a center. In many respects she has been a professional volunteer. I venture to say, however, that she knows more about the science, practice, and politics of prevention than anyone in this audience. As Sandra McElhaney the director of the Prevention Office at the National Mental Health Association said to me, “wherever I go, whatever I do, Bev Long is recognized as the driving force behind the prevention advocacy movement.”

Bev initially became interested in mental health issues as a result of personal experience. She completed a degree in psychology and became active in local mental health organizations. In 1968 she was elected president of the Metro Atlanta Mental Health Association. In 1973 she served as President of the Georgia Mental Health Association. She served as a commissioner on the President's Commission on Mental Health in 1977–1978. By 1979 she had been elected President of the National Mental Health Association. From 1983 to 1985 she chaired the National Commission on the Prevention of Mental and Emotional Disabilities. That commission produced a critically important report which led to the formation of both the Office of Prevention at the National Mental Health Association, and to the initiation of the National Prevention Coalition. Bev was the Founding Chair of the National Prevention Coalition in 1986, and continued in the role of chair until February 1991. Currently she is Vice-President for North America of the World Federation for Mental Health. She is also a member of the Steering committee for the NIMH National Prevention Research Conference. She has received numerous awards and citations but I will only embarrass her more if I go on about her accomplishments.

Bev has not traveled from the Atlanta Mental Health Association to a Vice-President with the World Federation for Mental Health because she is good at stuffing envelopes. For those who have had a chance to work with her, you know the breadth and depth of her skills. She combines the warmth and charm of her Southern surroundings, with unparalleled political astuteness, and the ability to articulate a prevention message to any audience at any time. I have seen her cut to the core of double talk from NIMH administrators, or scientists critical of the research base justifying prevention. She is always planting seeds on behalf of prevention. For example, she knew Rosalynn Carter through the Georgia Mental