

Dr. Julius Benjamin Richmond

Dr. Julius Benjamin Richmond was born in Chicago on September 26, 1916. During the Great Depression, he attended the University of Illinois at Urbana, and he earned his medical degree from the University Of Illinois College Of Medicine in Chicago in 1939. Following an internship, he completed pediatric residencies at Chicago's Municipal Contagious Disease Hospital and Cook County Hospital. In 1942, Dr. Richmond volunteered for World War II and served in the Army Air Corps until 1946. He returned to the University of Illinois and rose to the rank of Professor of Pediatrics. In 1953, he became Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and, in 1965, Dean at SUNY College of Medicine.

Dr. Richmond was trained in pediatrics and child development and was a pioneer in introducing psychosocial development into pediatric education, research, and services. His work with Dr. Bettye Caldwell on the development of young children growing up in poverty led to his appointment in 1965 as the first director of the national Head Start program. As Director of Health Affairs within the Office of Economic Opportunity, the agency responsible for administering most of President Johnson's War on Poverty, Dr. Richmond also helped create the Neighborhood Health Centers, which brought together economic development and local oversight for health delivery services. Returning to Syracuse in 1967, Dr. Richmond joined the Harvard Faculty in 1971 as Professor of Child Psychiatry and Human Development and soon became Chair of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Richmond served as President Carter's Assistant Secretary for Health and as US Surgeon General from 1977 to 1981. In 1979, he issued the report "Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention," which for the first time established quantitative health goals for the nation for the next decade—a process that has been institutionalized by the US Public Health Service. As Surgeon General, Dr. Richmond reinvigorated tobacco control efforts through the release of the 1979 Surgeon General's Report presenting overwhelming scientific evidence of the multiple harms of smoking.

In 1981, Dr. Richmond returned to Harvard as the John D. MacArthur Professor of Health Policy and Director of the Division of Health Policy Research and Education. From 1987 to 1993, he served as Chairperson of the steering committee of the Forum on the Future of Children and Families of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Richmond's many honors include the C. Anderson Aldrich Award of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Gustav O. Leinhard Award and Walsh McDermott Medal of the Institute of Medicine, the John Howland Award of the American Pediatric Society, the Ronald McDonald Award of the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities, the Sedgwick Medal and the Martha May Eliot Award from the American Public Health Association, the David E. Rogers Award of the American Association of Medical Colleges, the John Stearns Award for Lifetime Achievement from the New York Academy of Medicine, and several honorary degrees.

Although officially in retirement since 1988, Dr. Richmond maintained a vigorous pace as John D. MacArthur Professor of Health Policy Emeritus, mentoring students and colleagues, teaching, and writing. He has served as an expert witness in several historic class-action litigations against the tobacco industry and served as founding Chair of the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute (FAMRI) Medical Advisory Board. FAMRI, a not-for-profit medical research foundation, was established as a result of a class action suit brought by attorneys Stanley and Susan Rosenblatt against the tobacco industry on behalf of flight attendants exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke in airline cabins. The American Academy of Pediatrics and FAMRI joined together to dedicate the AAP Julius B. Richmond Center in recognition of Dr. Richmond's lifelong commitment to shaping policies for health promotion and disease prevention and to the health of children and families.