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Message to All IHS Employees On the passing of the 2nd Director of the IHS

from

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Over the holiday we received word that the second director of the Indian Health Service, Dr. Carruth John Wagner, passed away on November 25, 2002, at the age of 86 in Carmichael, California.

His friends and colleagues speak highly of him and his career with the Public Health Service as an orthopedic surgeon with the Division of Hospitals and later as the Director for the Division of Health Mobilization, the Indian Health Service, and the Bureau of Medical Services.

Dr. Wagner, born September 4, 1916, in Omaha, Nebraska, was the Director of the IHS from 1962 until 1965, assuming the leadership of the agency from Dr. Shaw who also passed away last year. Dr. Wagner's contributions to the IHS are highlighted in his biography on the IHS website.

He retired from the Public Health Service in 1968 with 30 years of service. Following his retirement he continued his career in medicine retiring again at the age of 84 as the Chief, Medical Policy Evaluation Branch, Department of Health and Human Services, State of California.

Dr. Wagner funded as many as 18 scholarships a year for medical and nursing students. Dr. Wagner had no relatives and upon his death he directed that his estate be used to establish the Carruth J. Wagner, M.D., Foundation, which is committed to assist young professionals in the health professions. Contributions may be made to the Foundation at 5234 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California, 95608.

A memorial gathering for Dr. Wagner is being arranged by his friends and will take place on January 29, 2003, at 2pm at East Lawn Mortuary, 5757 Greenback Lane, Sacramento, California.

Dr. Wagner was a dedicated health professional who, as described by those who knew him well, "touched all he met and selflessly credited all others for his successes. He was one of those special people who never cared to be remembered by what he accomplished but rather by the people he developed."

Dr. Wagner is part of the fabric of the Indian Health Service and will be remembered for helping the agency through its early years meet the health needs of American Indian and Alaska Native people.