



Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development

Clinical Supplement #2

CHOOSING A WHEELCHAIR SYSTEM

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Services and Research Administration
Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Prosthetics Research and Development Center—Office of Technology Transfer**

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Margaret J. Giannini, M.D.

Deputy ACMD for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics
Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Veterans Health Services and Research Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs

Seldon P. Todd, Jr., *Editor*
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The cover

Design: Holly Jellison
Illustrations: Samuel R. McFarland
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Address correspondence to: Editor, *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*,
Office of Technology Transfer (110A1), VA Prosthetics R&D Center, 103 South Gay
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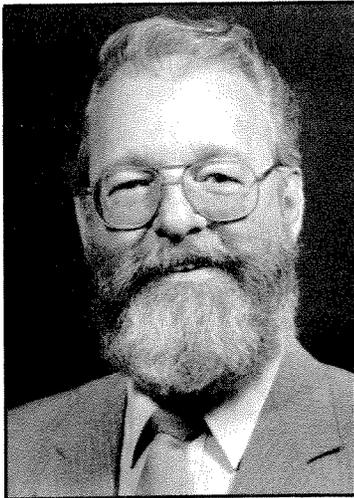
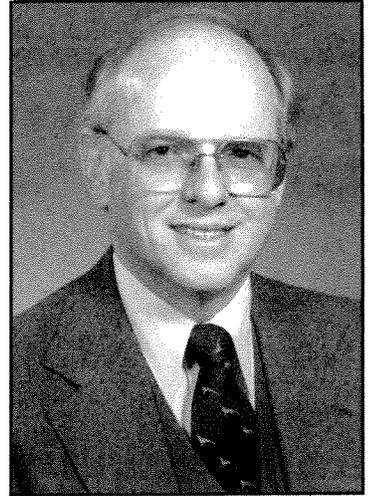
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EDITORIALS

“The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proud of the continuing efforts of the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service to provide better wheelchairs to veterans. Lighter, stronger and more adaptable wheelchairs have been developed which can greatly improve the mobility of the physically impaired. This publication provides information to the clinician about wheelchair prescription. It will be a valuable tool for enhancing the quality of life for the disabled.”

John A. Gronvall, MD
Chief Medical Director



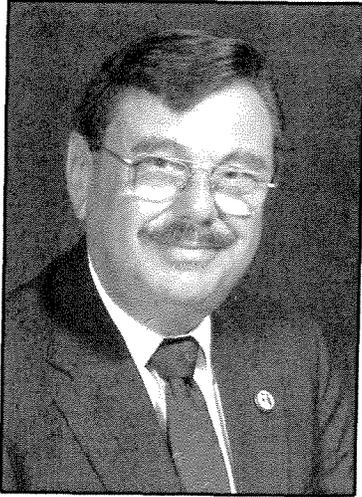
“The significant number of advances in wheelchair technology in recent years pose a challenge to clinicians in keeping abreast of the latest developments in wheelchair prescription. This Clinical Supplement to the *VA Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, prepared by the Office of Technology Transfer, provides the clinician with a valuable aid to assist in providing disabled veterans with mobility aids which best meet their individual needs.”

David H. Law
ACMD for Clinical Services (Acting)

“The VA is deeply committed to making the best possible wheelchairs available to veterans who have served their country. Aggressive investment in research and development along with the initiative of veterans service organizations have resulted in development of chairs which are far superior to those available only a few years ago. Now we face the challenge of evaluating chairs and seeing that appropriate chairs are properly fitted to veterans in need. I pledge that a major commitment of my offices will be to see modern wheelchair standards adopted by the VA and an aggressive VA program of wheelchair evaluation implemented.”

Margaret J. Giannini, MD
*Deputy ACMD for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics
Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development
Service*



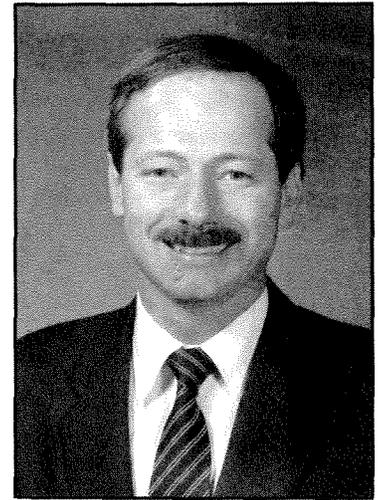


“Of approximately 25,000 veterans with spinal cord injury, about 18,000 are treated in the VA’s 20 spinal cord injury centers and other facilities of the VA medical care system. It is critical that VA clinical practitioners have the most comprehensive knowledge in the wheelchair selection process in order to make the best prescription. This clinical supplement will assist the physician and his team in making the most appropriate wheelchair prescription.”

Joseph E. Binard, MD, FRCS (C)
Director, Spinal Cord Injury Service

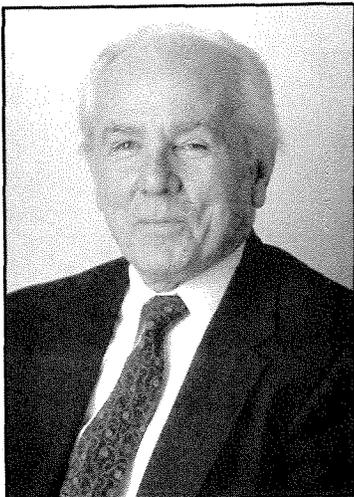
“The Department of Veterans Affairs is the largest procurer of wheelchairs in the United States. As the director of the service responsible for the issuance of these devices, it is my concern that every veteran is evaluated to assess his/her individual needs. It is critical that each person receive the right wheelchair from the onset. I believe that this supplement will improve the quality of the wheelchair selection process.”

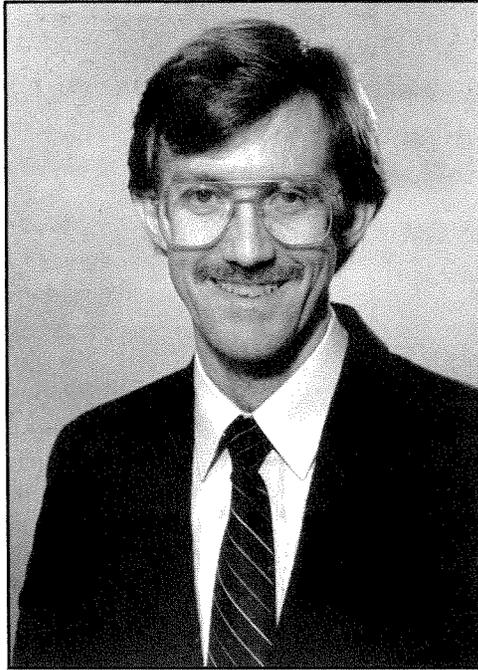
Frederick Downs, Jr.
Director, Prosthetics & Sensory Aids Service



“Consumers have been a major force in the development of improved wheelchairs. Sports chairs, *Sports 'N Spokes*, wheelchair games, etc., have been dramatic forces in the improvement of wheelchair mobility. The Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) has also been a leader in the development of wheelchair standards. PVA, along with the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, and other organizations, has sponsored significant research on wheelchairs. Now it imperative that VA clinical practice make the best possible wheelchairs available to veterans in accordance with their unique individual needs. I endorse this publication as a step towards this goal.”

Victor McCoy
*Associate Executive Director,
Paralyzed Veterans of America*





Samuel Robert McFarland
1941 – 1989

We take pride in dedicating *Clinical Supplement No. 2* to Samuel McFarland, who served as Director of the Rehabilitation Engineering Program at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, DC, and Director of the Rehabilitation Engineering Center on Evaluation of Rehabilitation Technology, funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Mr. McFarland began his career at Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas in 1969. His work focused on the design of innovative new products for disabling conditions such as deaf-blindness, quadriplegia, and mental retardation. His work involved the transfer of engineering and scientific technology to the medical and rehabilitation field, as it related to the home, vehicle, and worksite. He participated in the development of performance standards for automobile adaptive devices and wheelchairs, and played a role in the development of the Unistick vehicle controller.

A founding member of the Association for the Advancement of Rehabilitation Technology (RESNA), Mr. McFarland was also a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American National Standards Institute, and the Society of Automotive Engineers. In April, 1989, he was selected as one of 20 rehabilitation technology experts from across the country to be a Switzer Scholar.

We commend his achievements in the field of rehabilitation technology. We also appreciate his extensive contributions to this publication. He authored one of the articles, he provided technical assistance for the entire text, and his illustrations appear throughout.

Samuel McFarland was a highly respected, knowledgeable, and devoted professional. He will be missed.

The Editors

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