

Gary Robb

Professor of Recreation, Park and Tourism Studies

Gary Robb is retiring June 1 after a distinguished career at Indiana University. He was appointed the executive director of Bradford Woods Outdoor Education Center in April 1979. In 2004 he was appointed to his present position as director of the National Center on Accessibility (NCA). Under his leadership, Bradford Woods and the NCA have obtained national and international prominence.

Gary Robb received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Utah. He completed additional graduate studies at the University of Illinois. In addition to his administrative duties he taught numerous academic classes and conducted research. He helped design and test accessibility equipment, established programs, and obtained funding that provided all segments of the population an opportunity to participate in outdoor activities. He established outdoor programs for children with limited mobility, chronic diseases, mental illnesses, and serious deformities. His work has significantly advanced the inclusive nature of outdoor recreation. He helped develop and test specialized equipment that allowed people who would not otherwise be able to do so to enjoy golf, sandy beaches, and swimming. Gary worked extensively with Indianapolis-based Riley Children's Hospital to make Camp Riley, an outdoor field camp, an example of progressive outdoor programs for children with severe handicaps.

Under his leadership Bradford Woods provided an outstanding resident experience in outdoor education for thousands of Indiana fifth graders. The outdoor programs for school children have nurtured in many people in Indiana a love of the outdoors. Any number of Indiana residents remember their experiences at Bradford Woods with fondness and think of them as an important milepost in their lives. The 24,000-acre complex at Bradford Woods serves literally hundreds of individuals and scores of groups that include all ages and abilities. Gary Robb has accomplished a great deal in working with all types of diverse groups to provide meaningful programs. When he became director, there was a deficit and a small budget. By the time he moved from the position, Bradford Woods had become, thanks to him, a major and highly successful component of the department, the school, and the university.

Gary Robb led in the development of a concept that could make all outdoor facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. He has significantly influenced access for all people to the nation's national parks. Thus, the National Center on Accessibility was organized, and its creation had a major impact on recreation and parks throughout the United States and other parts of the world. He remained as its director until retirement.

He has served on numerous professional boards and was elected president of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. He has served on the President's Committee on

Employment of the Handicapped. His dossier highlights numerous professional involvements at the state, national, and international levels.

Gary Robb has edited and authored 20 books and manuals. Many of his publications have enhanced his service contribution as well as his teaching and research efforts. He has obtained many grants from both private and governmental sources to continue and enhance his research and service activities. He has traveled many miles across the nation to train organizations on accessibility.

Gary Robb has made a significant contribution to Indiana University, the state of Indiana, and the nation. That contribution may be best expressed whenever a handicapped child independently navigates a remote trail, a school child discovers the mystery and excitement of the outdoors, or a paraplegic plays a round of golf.