

People Inc. President and CEO James M. Boles Receives Award from American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



People Inc. is pleased to announce that its president and chief executive officer James M. Boles, Ed.D. was recently honored by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities with the 2011 Hervey B. Wilburn Historic Preservation Award. He was recognized for his achievements and many contributions to the field of developmental disabilities.

A resident of Snyder, NY, Dr. Boles has been the president and chief executive officer of People Inc. since 1981, Western New York State's largest health and human service agency supporting people with developmental disabilities and seniors. He received masters' degrees in clinical psychology and education and a Doctorate of Education in family and community relations from Columbia University. Although he began his career providing direct counseling services, he quickly moved into behavioral health administration where he advocated for greater community inclusion and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. In addition to having membership in many professional organizations, Dr. Boles provided the impetus for the creation of the Human Service Alliance of Western New York. He has served on the New York State Commissioner's Advisory Council on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and served on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities for two terms since 2006.

In 1998, while teaching as an adjunct professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Dr. Boles found that he could not direct his students to a single source for conducting research on disability history. The information available was scattered and scarce. Dr. Boles was astonished at the lack of educational resources available to increase society's understanding, acceptance and awareness of disability issues. To address this need, he set forth the work of collecting and preserving materials and artifacts documenting the history of people with disabilities.

In 1998, Dr. Boles established the Museum of disABILITY History, a project of People Inc. It is the nation's first and only "bricks and-mortar" museum dedicated to ensuring that the struggles, triumphs and contributions that people with disabilities have made to our nation's identity and culture would not be overlooked. Currently,

the museum's collection consists of 4,760 rare and unique items which have become a premier resource nationally and internationally for scholars and students; government agencies; organizations and associations; health care workers, researchers and film-makers. Dr. Boles' vision, leadership and energy has also guided the development of: permanent and travelling exhibits to raise awareness on disability issues; a virtual museum (www.museumofdisability.org) that enables access to exhibits, timelines, collections, bibliographies and teacher resources; a disability history curriculum adaptable for

grades K-12; an annual disABILITIES Film Festival and Speaker Series; and the formation of People Ink Press to publish books distributing the Museum's research and broadening its impact.



Michael L. Wehmeyer, PhD., president of AAIDD 2010-2011 and James M. Boles, Ed.D., president and chief executive officer of People Inc.

The mission of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is to promote progressive policies, sound research, effective practices and universal human rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

People Inc. is a not-for-profit health and human services agency providing programs and services to more than 10,000 people with special needs, their families, and seniors throughout Western New York. Since 1971, People Inc. has assisted individuals to achieve greater degrees of independence and productivity.

