

## Call Me By My Name



On November 26, 2003, Ollie May Webb died at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She died peacefully after a long struggle with pneumonia and complications of a lung disorder. With her was her daughter, Nancy, her nephew and his wife from Topeka, and many, many, many friends. Ollie was the type of person who "never met a stranger." She will be greatly missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

Born in Oklahoma, Ollie spent the greatest part of her life living in Omaha, Nebraska. She was an outstanding spokesperson for people with disabilities. She spoke publicly about the rights, responsibilities and freedom of those who were disabled. If you listened to Ollie, you would hear about

"her people...and how she loved them." She was a beloved friend to all who knew her.

Recently the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) published **Out of the Darkness and Into the Light: Nebraska's Experience With Mental Retardation**. Ollie's chapter in this book is entitled, "Call Me By My Name." In the opening of that chapter she is described:

Ollie May Webb was an original member and later president of Project II, and served as president of the board of People First of Nebraska. She has spoken at state, national, and international conferences for People First. She was also an employee of the Field Club of Omaha for 17 years and was a forerunner in home ownership for people with disabilities. The Ollie Webb Center (the new name for the Greater Omaha Association for Retarded Citizens) was named in her honor in 1998.

Ollie survived many years of living at the Beatrice State Developmental Center. After leaving BSDC she was placed in various nursing homes, used as an indentured servant. Only after she was rescued out of this horrible situation did she rise to become a leader and spokesperson for the downtrodden. She worked to try and stop the institutionalization of her peers. It was her life's work to see that people were given a chance to live in freedom without being put away or out of sight!

She was honored for her many accomplishments. Her greatest honor was to have a great and respected ARC named for her. The Ollie Webb Center bore her name. This was to recognize her contributions to the organization that she had volunteered in for so many years. The renaming of the Greater Omaha Association for Retarded Citizens (GOARC) was fitting tribute to a self advocate who had demonstrated such an ability to lead her people. It was a fine way to show the power and impact of self advocate's struggle to "Free My People!"

Ollie May Webb was set free to guide us from above and bless us with her strength and love.

**We will miss you Ollie!!!**