

Don Reynolds, J.D.



From mortgage banker to advocate for the disabled. That's not a career path many take. For Don Reynolds, it's a path that has led to his designation as a Fellow at the Center for Practical Bioethics.

Reynolds joined the Center as a member in the summer of 1985. You could argue that he didn't have much choice – his sister, Mary Beth Blake, is a co-founder of the organization. “Mary Beth was central to my initial involvement with the Center,” Reynolds says, “and joining was my symbolic support of her effort.”

Fortunately, his contributions over the past two decades have been much more than symbolic.

Reynolds' initial endeavor with the Center was a joint project with the Jackson County Public Administrator to solicit expressions of healthcare preferences from people who the Public Administrator served as guardian. “The project was intended to address the limitations that the Missouri Supreme Court's decision in the Nancy Cruzan case placed on a guardian's authority to make end-of-life healthcare decisions for wards,” says Reynolds.

The project established a relationship with the University of Missouri – Kansas City's Institute for Human Development to address healthcare decision-making by people with developmental disabilities. The thread of this work led to Reynold's involvement in *Last Passages* - a national project that addressed end-of-life healthcare decision-making by and for people with disabilities.

Since that beginning, Reynolds has been a committed advocate of long-term care ethics and to others that he refers to as “lesser situated.”

Reynolds is credited with developing a person-centered methodology for involving people with disabilities in their healthcare, developing a mediation model for long-term care ethics case consultations, and using tele-ethics technology to conduct such case consultations.

He also wrote the first draft of what became one of the Center's signature tools for individuals and their families to make practical preparations for end-of-life decisions – the *Caring Conversations* workbook.

As a Center Fellow, Reynolds plans to maintain his ties to the Center. Not surprisingly, he also plans to serve as a resource for the Center to continue addressing the ethics issues that confront people with disabilities.