

Lee County Mosquito Control District is saddened by the passing of T. Wainwright Miller, Jr., who was the first Director of the Lee County Mosquito Control District (LCMCD), on January 3, 2016. As a young engineer, Mr. Miller was employed on December 1, 1956 to direct a county-wide permanent control program funded by the Florida State Board of Health. Mr. Miller was working with four Mosquito Control Districts within Lee County. Due to the broad range of habitats and long flight range of the predominant mosquitoes in Lee County, Mr. Miller determined Lee County could have a more efficient and effective control program of mosquitoes, if the programs consolidated to form a county wide program.

Once three of the four the Districts consolidated, Mr. Miller was appointed Director of the LCMCD. His vision and passion for mosquito control led to cutting edge control techniques, research, and education programs which propelled LCMCD to becoming one of the leading mosquito control programs in the world.

These are just a few of the accomplishments of Mr. Miller for mosquito and hyacinth control in Lee County:

- Source reduction: Mr. Miller studied the water flow and topography of Lee County to create ditches that would bring fish, a natural predator of mosquito larvae, to areas prone to larval production and reduce areas for mosquito development. These ditches, which are over 30 years old, are still functioning and reducing the need for other mosquito control methods.
- J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge: The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Lee County Mosquito Control District constructed a dike to control water levels for mosquito control in the wilderness area of the Refuge. The dike is called Wildlife Drive. The dike keeps areas flooded preventing the abundant, salt marsh mosquitoes from laying their eggs on the soil. These flooded areas attract many species of wading birds.
- Aerial Operations: Mr. Miller recognized the need for large scale mosquito control operations, which could only be achieved through the use of aircraft. Mr. Miller acquired C-47s (known as DC-3s in civilian operation) and helicopters from military surplus at a tremendous savings for local residents.
- Control of exotic aquatic vegetation: Water hyacinths were infesting the Caloosahatchee River heavily impacting boat transportation in 1960. Recognizing that something must be done to combat this nonindigenous aquatic plant species, the Lee County Hyacinth Control District (LCHCD) was formed by an act of Florida Legislation on June 12, 1961. The LCHCD was joined to the LCMCD. Although two separate Districts, Mr. Miller was the Director for both and the LCMCD Board of Commissioners served as the Board of Commissioners for the LCHCD as well.
- Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS): The same year LCHCD was formed, water managers from across the state convened in Lee County and formed the Hyacinth Control Society, now APMS, to share control strategies and develop a comprehensive management approach to Florida's most prolific aquatic plant. Mr. Miller served as the Society's President for the first two years and Lee County has been a supporting member of APMS since its inception.

- Integrated control: Just as Mr. Miller brought an integrated approach to mosquito control, he brought it to aquatic plant management. In addition to harvesting plants and herbicide treatments, Mr. Miller added a biological control method to aquatic plant management. He started the sterile grass carp program for Lee County.
- Future needs: Mr. Miller was forward thinking in planning the future needs of LCMCD. Helicopter larvicide operations were originally conducted using vacant land and roads as a staging area. To be sure future development would not force LCMCD to move further away from key treatment areas, Mr. Miller bought property for heliports. Heliports are used to provide a safe location to refuel and reload materials for aerial larvicide activities. Heliports are located in areas close to active mosquito breeding habitat to help reduce costs of helicopter operation by minimizing ferrying time. LCMCD has 7 heliports that allow aerial larvicide activity to continue where development would have hindered it without a designated heliport today.
- Education: Mr. Miller believed Lee County needed residents educated in mosquitoes, their diseases and control. Mr. Miller started one of the first education programs teaching mosquito information through certified teachers in the public and private schools.
- Research and development: Mr. Miller wanted LCMCD and LCHCD to be leaders in mosquito control and aquatic plant management. Research to evaluate new products and new application techniques for control of adult and immature mosquitos and nuisance aquatic plants, has always been an integral part of the Districts' operational programs. Since LCMCD and LCHCD onset, the Districts have participated in cooperative research and development projects with universities, other districts, pesticide and herbicide manufacturers, and state, federal, and international research laboratories affiliated with the USDA, CDC, DOD, WHO, UNDP, and USAID. The Districts' goal has been to stay abreast of all the latest mosquito and aquatic plant control technologies, and continually update the operational programs with the safest and most cost-effective products and application techniques.
- Mr. Miller served as Secretary and President of the Florida Mosquito Control Association (FMCA) and Secretary of the American Mosquito Control Association. Mr. Miller was honored by the FMCA by naming a scholarship the T. Wainwright Miller, Jr. Florida Mosquito Control Association Scholarship. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage and assist students having a major in Biological, Ecological and/or Entomological studies who are seeking degrees relevant to arthropod control, with particular emphasis on Public Health fields.
- Mr. Miller served as Secretary and President of the Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS). Mr. Miller was honored by the APMS with the T. Wayne Miller Distinguished Service Award. The award was named for Mr. Miller as a founding Member and first and only two-term President of APMS. The award is presented to an individual to recognize "Service to the Society and the Profession." Considerations for the award include completion of a relatively short-term project taking considerable effort resulting in advancement of aquatic plant management; performance beyond the call of duty as an APMS officer, chair, or representative; or non-member achievement leading to the advancement of APMS goals and objectives.