

Tahlequah Hospital Authority Board of Trustees Chairman, Harrington, Dies with 27 Years of Service

TAHLEQUAH, Oklahoma – It is with great sadness the Tahlequah Hospital Trust Authority announces the death of Board Chairman, Gary Harrington. As a member of the Trust Authority Board of Directors for 27 years, Harrington was instrumental in the growth and development of healthcare in the community.

“I had the honor to work with Gary for many years,” said hospital President and CEO, Brian Woodliff. “He played an instrumental role in the oversight of the healthcare boom experienced in Tahlequah in the last two decades. His guidance and friendship will be greatly missed.”

Harrington joined the Tahlequah Trust Authority in 1995, serving as chairman from 2002 until his death in July of 2022. Through this position, he oversaw the growth and development of medical services offered in Cherokee county. He played a key role in bringing in new providers, obtaining new medical equipment, building new medical facilities, and ensuring quality care was provided to the patients of green country.

“Gary believed we are better healthcare providers when we partner with others to bring new services and specialties to the community. He was a masterful collaborator who played a key role in many of our partnerships with the community, physicians, and the Cherokee Nation,” continued Woodliff. “He always stressed the value of the front-line staff to the hospital and was proud to be part of NHS’s ability to bring great jobs to the communities we serve.”

Under his direction, the Tahlequah Trust Authority was recognized by the Governance Institute for their commitment to excellence in governance. He led the board through hundreds of hours of education during his tenure, making the Tahlequah Trust Authority the forerunners in promoting the practices that lead to exceptional results in healthcare.

“We realize excellence when employees feel valued, physicians feel their patients are receiving great care and patients and their families feel the service they receive is extraordinary,” Harrington once said regarding Northeastern Health System’s commitment to quality service.

Under Harrington’s leadership, Northeastern Health System experienced a transformative period of growth while maintaining a strong margin, at a time when other health providers were closing their doors.

Medical practices, providers, and services, not commonly found in rural areas, began to flourish. NHS went from a small rural hospital to a large Health System, serving multiple locations.

“Gary was passionate about offering the best care to our patients,” said NHS Hospital Administrator, Jim Berry. “Our healthcare community has lost a great ally, leader and friend. In his absence, we will continue to provide the highest quality of care to our patients, support to our community and commitment to our staff. That is what Gary would have expected.”

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