

Cheryl Lady Vines, MS

Cheryl Lady Vines was born in Lindsay, California. She grew up in northern California and graduated from high school in Fair Oaks. During her high school years, she began her lifelong mission of helping individuals with disabilities achieve their goals through her Girl Scouting experiences. She headed to Fresno State (the first semester it was California State University, Fresno) with a plan to become a physical therapist, while her goals veered a bit, she graduated in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation Administration, Therapeutic Recreation, the first woman in her family to receive a college degree. She went to work at Fresno Community Hospital and worked on the rehabilitation unit, beginning her long career working with people with spinal cord disabilities. She held several positions as a clinical Recreation Therapist before she traveled across the country to complete a Master of Science degree in Leisure Education at the Florida State University.

After graduate school, Cheryl expanded her efforts beyond clinical practice and worked in advocacy for people with disabilities, legislatively and in the community. She is a strong proponent of recreation opportunities and leisure education for people with spinal cord disabilities and has been involved in the wheelchair sports movement on the local, national, and international levels for most of her career. She became involved in adaptive sports at Fresno State and has served in leadership roles as a volunteer for the National Wheelchair Basketball Association for over 40 years. In fact, it was at a wheelchair basketball tournament that she met her husband, Harry Vines and moved to Little Rock, AR where she served as the Executive Director of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission, another advocacy and community service program. While in Arkansas, Cheryl served on the AR Independent Living Council and a cofounder of the AR Spinal Cord Injury Association and the Spina Bifida Association of AR. These efforts led her to advocacy efforts in the passing of federal legislation including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and in Arkansas the first seat belt laws and establishment of the AR Trauma system. She is a researcher, with numerous publications and presentations in the field of spinal cord injury care. First and foremost, she is an advocate for the rights and needs of people with spinal cord disabilities.

After a move back to California after losing her husband and a short stint at retirement, today, Cheryl is the Director of Research and Education at Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) in Washington, DC. In that role she oversees PVA's research initiatives, including a near \$100 million grant portfolio. She is also responsible for PVA educational initiatives including the development and dissemination of the Clinical Practice Guidelines and Consumer Guides on Spinal Cord Injury, the annual Healthcare Summit and Expo and the PVA Education Foundation. She is proud to lead PVA's Women Veterans Empowerment initiatives.

Cheryl feels lucky to live on the Central Coast of California, where she vacationed with her family as a child. She enjoys golf, bocchia, beach walking and wine tasting and is honored and amazed to be a Fresno State Top Dog!