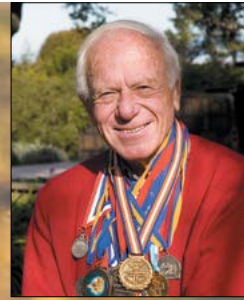


Aging in Place



Walter M. Bortz, II, MD



I take this opportunity of the housing topic of this issue to offer a personal perspective. I recognize that my views are entirely mine and may not apply to you.

However, I feel so earnestly about this that I share my feelings.

My wife of 63 years died last year of Alzheimer's disease. She died at home.

It was very tough but it was right. She died in our bedroom after a fall. But she was on no major medicines, had no pain, had no tubes.

It is sometimes observed that old age is a time of life spent among strangers.

I do not want to die that way nor did I want my wife to be estranged from what held her together.

I remember someone saying to me "for better or for worse." I will live the rest of my life proud of how I managed my wife's exit. She died at home.

As a geriatrician, I have overseen the lives of thousands of older people.

Many of them have been institutionalized but I always reckoned that an institution is a solution of last resort.

I identify the many conflicting elements of this perspective but I felt it was important for me to offer these remarks.

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