

Annette Thorup Tull

Compiled & Written by Jodi B. Kinner
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Annette Thorup Tull was born on May 12, 1948, in Salt Lake City, Utah to deaf parents, Verl Walter and Cleo Brown (Smith) Thorup. Verl graduated from USD in 1940. The following fall of 1940, he enrolled at Gallaudet College and remained there for one year and half. At the time, he lived in the most desirable real estate on Yale Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah (Gallaudet University Alumni Cards).

She was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and had served in many positions in all of the auxiliary organizations (Obit).

She married Fred Michael Tull on May 4, 1967. They later solemnized their marriage in the Salt Lake Temple (Obit). Together, they had five children: Kimberly Ann, Karlus Pulley, Michelle Lynne, Omar Munoz, and Jason Michael.

As a “Child of Deaf Adults” (CODAs), Annette grew up loving and cherishing the deaf community. Over the years, she served as an interpreter, taught American Sign Language (ASL), and trained interpreters at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC). She was so dedicated to the deaf community through her work.



Annette Tull
Photo by Robert L. Bonnell

In the late 1980s, Annette visited Colorado to attend a summer workshop provided by Front Range Community College (FRCC). This college had various grants from the Department of Rehabilitation beginning in 1982 for the states in Region VIII. In those early years, the grant presented about three workshops a year in six states to encourage people to become interpreters and to provide workshops for interpreters so they could improve their skills. Annette helped teach some of those workshops. She became RID certified at a time in Utah when only a few people had RID certification. While Utah had a state certification system, Annette realized it was important to have national certification in addition to her state certification. She became a proctor for the RID written tests when she became certified (Ann Topliff, personal communication, October 27, 2012).

In the 1980s, Annette taught ASL classes at Kearns High School. She also taught ASL classes at Jordan High School in the 1990s.

As an interpreter in Jordan School District, she also interpreted for several deaf students such as Dan Mathis, Pam Mower, Reid Hunt and Camille Call-Garcia in public schools who later become successful in their education and career. Dan Mathis stated that Annette had made a positive impact on those she interpreted for in school. He also remembers her as being always an advocate of ASL and they would sometime discuss Deaf Culture (Dan Mathis, personal communication, September 5, 2012).

Beginning in 1990, FRCC received a new grant. Ann Topliff who was the director of the grant stated that one of the goals of this new grant was to help Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) in Salt Lake City, Utah establish an interpreting program. Annette taught some of those classes early on at SLCC before the college officially began their college credit interpreting program. Annette was very supportive of FRCC's efforts to establish an interpreting program. In addition, she had been working with Linda Adams, who had an administrative position at SLCC. Linda was instrumental in establishing the program as she worked long and hard on doing all the paperwork required to begin a new program. Annette was able to see the program begin because of the efforts of Linda Adams. Ann remembered Annette “as a happy person who laughed often” (Ann Topliff, personal communication, October 27, 2012).

In the fall of 1990, Annette set up the first interpreting training program at SLCC where there were six students in the first ever interpreter class. Lee Ellen Stevens, one of the first ever students remembers “Annette as a kind, very knowledgeable and very encouraging instructor. She took us to watch her interpret and made sure we knew about a variety of situations we could be faced with. I learned so much from her and enjoyed being in her classes” (Lee Ellen Stevens, personal communication, September 24, 2012).

While Annette was employed as an interpreter and SLCC instructor, she expressed to her friend, Jean Thomas, CODA, interpreter and ASL teacher at Ogden School District, her interest in also teaching ASL at Jordan High School. One year later, with the help of Jean, the Jordan High School’s ASL classes got approved through state authority channels. In 1994, the Jordan High School’s ASL classes began and Annette got her wish teaching those classes there (Jean Thomas, personal communication, October 24, 2012).

While Annette served in multiple roles working as a Sign Language Interpreter, Interpreter Instructor and ASL teacher, she felt it was important for the state of Utah to recognize their interpreter state certification through a formal interpreter training program and recognize ASL as a foreign language in school settings. Besides, the SLCC Interpreter Training Program’s soft money funding was ending from FRCC, she probably realized that continued funding was needed (Jean Thomas, personal communication, October 24, 2012). Hence, during the 1994 Utah Legislative session, she, then instructor of the Interpreter Training Program at SLCC, actively participated in the political process to support the Senate Bill 41, to certify interpreters and the Senate Bill 42, to give American Sign Language the same status as a foreign language (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, February 1994). As a result, both bills were enacted. This however impacted Annette’s teaching job at SLCC, as she could no longer teach due to lack of college education. Jennifer Storrer, one of the interpreters recalls, “She was a wonderful interpreter and teacher. I remember her working so diligently to have the ITP established at SLCC even though it meant her no longer being able to be involved. She truly worked for the greater good of the community!” (Storrer, personal communication, September 27, 2012).

After those bills were enacted, Annette continued to teach ASL classes at Jordan High School until her death on December 13, 1997, at age 49, after a long battle with diabetes.

After she passed away, Marilyn T. Call, a hard of hearing individual who has a long history of service to the deaf community through the Utah legislative advocacy, wrote her article entitled, "Legacy of Annette Tull" for the spring 1998 issue of DSDHH News, as follows:

"Among the bills that were passed in the 1998 legislative session was House Bill 392 regarding training in American Sign Language [American Sign Language] sponsored by Representative Dave Hogue. This Bill extended the teaching of ASL as a foreign language credit down to the middle school or junior high school level.

The background of this Bill was very interesting. Representative Dave Hogue was called to substitute for Annette Tull's sign language classes at Jordan High School when she began to have problems with her legs in late November of 1997. Hogue's hearing daughter, Julie, was a best friend with Camille Call during her elementary school years and her family knew some sign language. While Hogue was substituted teaching, he asked Annette Tull's students about some of their needs. The students expressed their wish that they could have taken ASL in Junior High so they could have been very proficient signers by High School. Hogue told them he would sponsor a Bill at the Legislature if they would help lobby.

When Hogue called the school and asked to talk to Annette Tull and her students in January, he was stunned to learn Annette had passed away. This made him feel ever more urgency to pass this Bill.

When the Bill came up for a vote in the House of Representatives, a special ceremony and moment of silence was held to honor Annette Tull and to dedicate the Bill to her. Her family was invited to stand on the floor of the House of Representatives to receive the special written tribute," as follows:

Whereas, Annette, working on conjunction with her students, proposed the idea of American Sign

Language being taught in the public schools. House Bill 293, "Training in ASL" was prepared for introduction during the 52nd Legislative General session. Annette is considered by many as the educator who did more than any other educator to promote the teaching of ASL in the public schools and was the driving force behind introducing ASL in the Jordan High School and Jordan School District" (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, May 1998, p. 6).

After she passed away, the Annette Tull Lifetime Achievement Award was created and named after her.

To conclude, Annette was a fighter in her days for ASL, Deaf Culture, interpreting, and CODA awareness. Annette is credited for advocating the deaf community in expanding the interpreting programs and recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language.

Notes

Ann Topliff, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner. October 27, 2012.

Dan Mathis, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, October 5, 2012.

Jean Thomas, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner. October 24, 2012.

Jennifer Storrer, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, September 27, 2012.

Bibliography

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Call, Marilyn. "Legacy of Annette Tull" *DSDHH* (Spring 1998).

Death: Annette May Thorup Tull. Dec. 15 1997.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/600980/Death--Annette-May-Thorup-Tull.html?pg=all>

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"Verl Walker Thorup: 1940." *Gallaudet University Alumni Cards, 1866-1957*.

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