

Utah Deaf Genealogical Association

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2012

In the early fall of 1999, the first Deaf Genealogy Workshop was arranged by Elder Rex and Sister Sue Hatch, Family History Library Deaf Zone missionaries and Dulane Woodhouse, who acted as chairperson. Sister Hatch was most involved from the start to end. The first workshop was held on June 26-28, 2000, at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building and the Family History Library (FHL). The workshop and classes started with 30 Deaf patrons, and attendance grew the following year and the next. In 2004, the workshop changed its name to the Family History Deaf Workshop.

The Family History Deaf Workshop became even more popular, serving a steadily increasing number of Deaf patrons. The workshop in 2004 reached capacity at 130 and the 2006 workshop had 190 patrons. The FHL, impressed with the large annual turnouts, granted the Family History Deaf Workshop permission to form its own organization. In order to complete the process, by-laws, licenses, tax numbers, and rules and regulations were put in place, and all other necessary requirements were met. The Utah Deaf Genealogical Association (UDGA) became official in 2007. This new status would allow the organization access to updated resources in equal measure to mainstream (hearing) organizations around the nation.



David Samuelson

At the time, David Samuelson was interim president of UDGA, along with Dulane Woodhouse as chairperson, Patty Kitchen as treasurer, and Susan Stokes as secretary. Elder Roy and Sister Darlene Cochran, full-time Deaf missionaries at the Family History Library, joined them for their meetings.

In June 18 – 21, 2008, the UDGA held its first conference at the Radisson Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah, one block west of the Family History Library. Over 230 patrons were in attendance. Its mission and purposes are to:

1. Provide the Family History Deaf Workshop at the Family History Library for Deaf patrons,
2. Offer classes with deaf teachers,
3. Provide computers,
4. Refer patrons to tutoring from part-time Deaf Family History Library missionaries, and
5. Assist patrons in their genealogy research.

The UDGA's ultimate goal is to provide Deaf patrons equal access to advanced genealogical research tools on the Internet. Today it is thriving, with several hundred enthusiastic and appreciative patrons.

Notes

Dulane Woodhouse, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, November 11, 2008.

David Samuelson, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, November 5, 2012.