

Valerie G. Kinney

Compiled & Written by Jodi B. Kinner
2012

Valerie G. Kinney, known as Val or “V” in the Deaf community, was born on April 27, 1941, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to hearing parents, Earl and Verna Kinney. At the age of 2½, she became Deaf from spinal meningitis (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

At age 4, Valerie started out at the Jericho School for the Deaf (JSD) and remained there for two years. She advanced so rapidly, there wasn't a class to match her learning level, so she enrolled in the first grade at a public school near her home, Bayview Elementary School. She then enrolled at Kitsilano High School for grades 7 through 12 and graduated in 1960. She never returned to JSD (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012). She attended both public schools at a time when sign language interpreters were not provided. Because she read extensively, she came to read and write very well (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).



Valerie G. Kinney, 1960 Kitsilano
High School Senior

After working for two years as a keypunch operator for Shell Corporation, Val went on to Gallaudet College. She considered attending Gallaudet because a friend of hers in California had studied there. She graduated in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a minor in psychology (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012). In her last year at Gallaudet, she joined the

Delta Epsilon sorority. Dennis Platt was a classmate of hers in college. In the spring of 1966, he accepted a job in the Weber County Recorder office in Ogden, replacing Robert G. Sanderson, who was leaving to work in Vocational Rehabilitation in Salt Lake City. Val accepted a position as an English teacher for one year at Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, MD. Val and



Source: The UAD Bulletin, Fall 1969

Dennis married in Vancouver, August 5, 1967, and settled in Ogden (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Over the years, Val has served as secretary of two organizations: Utah Association for the Deaf (UAD) for five terms and the Ned C. Wheeler Scholarship Foundation for the Deaf since 1976. She is the longest-serving member of the foundation, and recalls

that Ned Wheeler himself recruited her as

secretary. Aside from her primary duties keeping minutes, she also handles the application process for scholarship applicants. (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

In 1981, Val was presented with the Golden Hand Award for her years of volunteer work editing the UAD Bulletin (UAD Bulletin, July 1981).

In 1983, the Utah Association for the Deaf established its first formal office in the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful and hired Val as its business manager on a part-time basis. This office was probably the first in the nation of any state association of the deaf (Sanderson, 2004). When she moved to Arkansas in 1990, she resigned as business manager (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Val took over as the Utah Association for the Deaf bookstore manager in 2003 when then-manager Peter Green passed away. She then passed on the reins to Adele Sigoda in 2007 (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012). Val was UAD Announce moderator from 2001 to 2009; Donna Melander took over as the moderator in 2009. (Valerie Kinney,

personal communication, March 16, 2012). She has been co-editor of a directory for deaf Utahns, the *Utah Telecom Book* (formerly the *Utah Teleprinter Directory*), with Dave Mortensen, editor, and Ron Nelson, co-editor, since 1978. (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Val was a member of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, Ogden Division No. 127, until the Society ceased operations, joining in January 1970. She was later inducted into the Golden Circle by the NFSD. This award was given to those who had been members of the NFSD for 25 years or more and who had continued to serve their Division and the Society beyond the 34th degree. Less than 1% of all Society members had been honored with the Golden Circle award (UAD Bulletin, April 2000).

Val also worked for the USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF), formerly known as American Athletic Association of the Deaf (AAAD). Under the leadership of Shirley H. Platt, a local Utahn and executive director at the AAAD's first national office in Ogden, Utah, Val served as an administrative assistant (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, July 1992; UAD Bulletin, January 2003). She made many contributions to

the USADSF Home Office: she set up the office systems and procedures and knew where every last paper was filed. She kept the USADSF books and paid the bills, never complaining about the painstaking details she had to deal with each day. She handled a huge volume of correspondence, the membership database and subscription lists, and filled all of the many special requests the Board asked of her. Most important



Valerie (Kinney) Platt, 1968

of all, Val developed long and lasting relationships with leaders of national sports organizations as she helped them obtain approval from USADSF for national sports events, gathered information, processed paperwork, and gave good commonsense advice. She did it all with a dry sense of humor that made her correspondents laugh in nearly every email (UAD Bulletin,

January 2003). When the USADSF office was moved to the Communication Services to the Deaf (CSD) office in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 2003, she opted to stay in Ogden (UAD Bulletin, January 2003; Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012).



Valerie Kinney receives the President's Award for years of services to the Utah Association of the Deaf, 2011

In 2002, the USADSF presented Val with the President's Award for demonstrating outstanding service to the USADSF. Her dedication to the USADSF had made their lives easier and their work pleasant (UAD Bulletin, January 2003). Due to her superior business and office organization skills, she was recruited in 2005 as office administrator for the 2007 16th Winter Deaflympics and served for four years (UAD Bulletin, March 2007).

In 2011, the Utah Association for the Deaf presented Val the President's Award for her 44 years of services to the UAD, starting in 1967. She has long made contributions to the Deaf community through her work with the UAD (UAD Bulletin, July 2011). She has served as vice president, secretary, assistant treasurer, treasurer, UAD Bulletin editor, UAD Announce moderator, and on countless committees of the Utah Association for the Deaf.

In 1987, after twenty years of marriage, Val and Dennis parted ways. Val was briefly married to John G. Schroedel and lived in Arkansas, after which she returned to Utah. Val and Dennis have two



Valerie Kinney, 2014

children, Catherine A. Platt Tarbet, whose husband is Bourke Tarbet VI, and John F. Platt, whose wife is Stephanie. Their grandchildren are Marissa Tarbet, Bourke Tarbet V and Logan H. Platt (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 16, 2012). They are also the great grandparents of Bourke Tarbet VI, born June 12, 2012 and Callie Jane Tarbet, born October 31, 2013.

Note

Valerie Kinney, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, March 16, 2012.

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