

History of Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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“A Brief History of the Origins of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing” is the basis from which we have added more information. I thank Dr. Robert G. Sanderson for writing this book. This made my work so much easier.

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Note

For more information about the history of Sanderson Community Center, a book titled, “A Brief History of the Origins of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing,” can be purchased at the UAD Bookstore.

This document does not intent to duplicate Dr. Robert G. Sanderson’s work. The purpose of this history is to fill in missing pieces in Dr. Sanderson’s book. Apparently, because of his status, it may not have been appropriate to include some history, such as the battles by the Utah Deaf community with the state authority’s decision-making process regarding the community center for the deaf, Dr. Grant B. Bitter’s objection to the services of the community center for the deaf and W. David Mortensen’s strong advocacy, in his book. The goal of this document is to help the readers see the big picture of how Deaf leaders overcame hurdles in forming the Sanderson Community Center.

A Gathering Place of their Own

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson wrote of his memory in his “A Brief History of the Origins of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing” book that the idea of having a meeting place for the deaf first surfaced at the Utah Association of the Deaf convention in 1946. He at this time lived in his native state, Nevada, attended his first convention and observed Deaf individuals talking about how fun it would be if they had a “Club for the Deaf” where they could establish their own rules and meet at their own time and convenience. The Utah Deaf community was aware that clubs for the deaf were located in most large cities. So they discussed “Why not Utah?” “Why not Salt Lake City?” “Why not Ogden?” (Sanderson, 2004).

He said for years, the Utah Deaf community gathered for socials, parties, athletic events, and such. While gathering, they always asked, “Why do we always have to go begging for time and space?” They had to take whatever time was available, not necessarily the time, date and place they wanted. They rented a hotel ballroom, an auditorium from a local utility, the gymnasium at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, and Murray B. Allen Center for the Blind. Strict rules were given -- “in by seven, out by nine,” and “pay the janitor overtime past nine.” The Utah Deaf community appreciated the cooperation of blind individuals and their leaders for utilizing their facility even through the Utah Deaf community envied having their own meeting place (Sanderson, 2004).



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, a board member of the Utah Association for the Deaf and lobbyist

Possible Factors that Prevented Activism

With this in mind, Dr. Sanderson shared his theory that there were four possible factors that prevented the Deaf community from getting the frequently mentioned “club for the deaf.” 1. The population of Deaf adults was not large enough to support financially an independent or freestanding facility. 2. A large majority of the Deaf adult population belonged to the dominant religion, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which actively discouraged the use of alcohol. Activists in other states would sell alcohol in order to support the club. 3. Many Deaf people had an “eight to five” production job to earn a living and support a family, which left them with no time to meet with high-level professionals in education, community agencies or the legislature. A lot of them couldn’t afford to lose pay to participate in politics. Very few professionally employed Deaf people were allowed to engage in non-job community related activities with pay. 4. There was a lack of trained Deaf leaders who were ready and able to articulate the needs of Deaf people to the hearing majority who had the power and money to make things happen (Sanderson, 2004).

Likewise, Dr. Sanderson observed that Deaf people demonstrated leadership skills as officers in various organizations of the deaf, such as Utah Association of the Deaf, local divisions of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf, and others. However, they didn’t have specific training, which would boost them up to a higher level, remove fear, and enable them to meet with and talk to leaders of the hearing power structure (Sanderson, 2004).

These underlying reasons were probably why an independent club for the deaf, a county or a state supported center for the deaf similar to the Murray B. Allen Center for the Blind in Salt Lake City, had not been developed (Sanderson, 2004).

Trained Utah Deaf Leaders

Things were about to change when Utah Deaf leaders, including Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, who moved to Utah from Nevada in 1947, observed the ability of two national Deaf leaders, graduates of Gallaudet College, Dr. Boyce Williams and Dr. Malcolm Norwood to express themselves to the hearing leaders of the power structure. Dr. Williams was the director of the Office of Deafness in the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration under the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He reached



Dr. Boyce Williams
Photo courtesy of Gallaudet University

the top level of people within the administration with a powerful message. He brought national attention to the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing that had been neglected for years when more attention was being focused on other people with disabilities in America. Dr. Norwood was the director of the Office of Captioned Films for the Deaf. He took extra steps to educate top-level administrators in the Department of Education of the need of Deaf adults for education via films with captions (Sanderson, 2004).

In the same fashion, Dr. Williams and Dr. Norwood took great effort to achieve accessibility needs that would benefit the general Deaf population, including the Deaf community in Utah. At the same time, they inspired Utah Deaf leaders in expanding their legislative leadership skills and developing communication skills to meet the needs of Deaf adult population. It has to do with the history of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing because Dr. Williams and Dr. Norwood were models for the Utah Deaf leaders. They conducted local, regional and

national workshops on the various aspects of deafness. Some Utahns attended where they learned about themselves and their own needs (Sanderson, 2004).

Through a grant in 1962, the Rehabilitation Services Administration established the National Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf at San Fernando Valley State College (later renamed California State University at Northridge) in California. This college became the first in the nation to employ sign language interpreters on a full time basis in a graduate school. Many Deaf and hearing people applied. There were five Deaf and ten hearing persons. Dr. Robert G. Sanderson of Utah was one of the Deaf applicants to become a member of the LTP Class of 1965 (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964; Sanderson, 2004).

Observation of the National Deaf Clubs

In the meantime, other Deaf people were still actively trying to find a way to establish a club for the Deaf. There was much talk, but little action. There was a lack of “know how” among leaders. They thought of developing a club for the Deaf and a service agency to meet the needs of social, educational and economic problems the Deaf people faced. Deaf club would be patterned after existing clubs in large metropolitan cities (Sanderson, 2004).

While Dr. Sanderson served as president of the National Association of the Deaf, he visited clubs that focused on serving social interaction needs, such as cards, captioned movies, sports, chatting, parties and so forth. The clubs were mostly funded by liquor and food sales. Some of these clubs



Dr. Malcolm Norwood

purchased their own buildings and some of them were in bad shape. Dr. Sanderson noticed that many of the people in these clubs complained about the lack of jobs for Deaf people, lack of mental health services and other needs. It was apparent to him that club leaders lacked the training to directly address the needs of the deaf population they served, other than simply furnishing a meeting place. Furthermore, he noticed that newsletters and magazines produced by Deaf people around the country did not define the need nor push for comprehensive centers for Deaf people. There were, however, frequent articles in professional journals expressing the need for psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers who could communicate effectively with Deaf people who used sign language. Dr. Boyce Williams, whom Dr. Sanderson became very close friends, through the Rehabilitation Services Administration, set up and funded a number of workshops to explore these problems (Sanderson, 2004; Stewart, *DHSHH*, April 2012). The plan was to set up a national rehabilitation program for the deaf in every state (Stewart, *DHSHH*, April 2012).

UAD Officers Becomes Activists

While all things going on at the national level, Deaf Utahns did not want to be left behind, so they organized a lobbying effort to get rehabilitation services for Deaf Utahns.



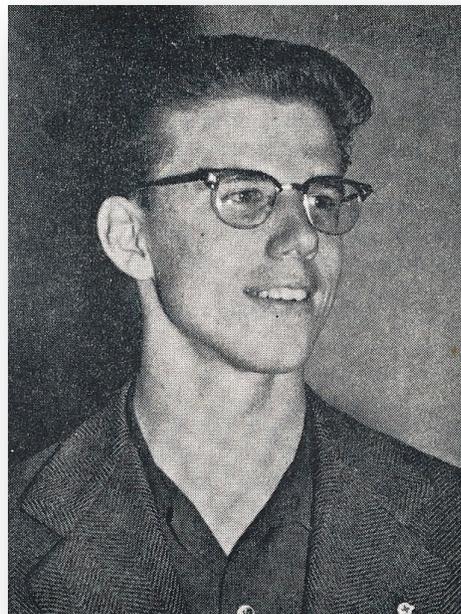
**Eugene W. Petersen,
a board member of the Utah
Association for the Deaf and
lobbyist *The Utah Eagle*, April
1955**

Several Deaf Utahns, encouraged by national developments and obvious local needs, became activists. Among the activists at that time were officers of the Utah Association of the Deaf, Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, Eugene W. Petersen, and G. Leon Curtis (Sanderson, 2004).

The proposal for the Services to the Deaf Adults came from Utah Association of the Deaf officers and its members. In 1962, tentative efforts were begun by the three officers, Dr. Sanderson, Mr. Peterson and Mr. Curtis, to establish an office that would

serve Deaf people of the state on a full-time basis. They were concerned about inaccessibility of services to Deaf adults. Their goal was for the State of Utah to provide more adequate social services for them. It was nearly impossible for Deaf adults to access necessary and available services because of communication barriers (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1965).

Deaf leaders proposed that Services to the Adult Deaf for the State of Utah be formed under the direction of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and suggested that the personnel divide its time between vocational rehabilitation and straight social services designed to meet the needs of Deaf adults. Their vision of social services included counseling, interpreting as well as adjustment services such as areas as legal, personal, social, emotional, marriage and family, financial, and educational areas where communication barriers had left Deaf adults at a serious disadvantage. Additionally, it was proposed that the accessible services be staffed by qualified personnel who thoroughly understood Deaf adults and could communicate effectively with them in order to prevent or untangle serious problems and deprivations suffered by the Deaf population. The leaders also emphasized that the proposed agency would not involve itself in personal problems until approached by the individuals concerned and then only when the problems were obviously beyond their capacity to solve alone. Deaf leaders would not attempt to replace, duplicate or influence the activities of existing organizations in the Deaf community (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).



**G. Leon Curtis, a board member of the Utah Association for the Deaf and lobbyist
The Utah Eagle, April 1955**

For this reason, UAD favored a study of problems faced by Deaf adults in the social service system and underlined the request for documenting the need for services to the Deaf adults and carefully evaluating the manner in which needed services might be provided effectively and economically (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963).

Without delay, Dr. Sanderson, Mr. Petersen and Mr. Curtis came up with the idea of approaching the Salt Lake Area United Fund for assistance in establishing Services for Deaf. Dr. Sanderson was soon to leave Utah to join the National Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf in California. Mr. Petersen and Mr. Curtis were left to carry the ball (Sanderson, 2004).

Did You Know?

In 1963, most deaf adults had usually been exposed to hearing aids, lip reading, and speech training for many years. Those were seldom the kinds of vocational rehabilitation services to which they responded. Rather, they had pressing need for other personal adjustment services, vocational training, counseling, and placement. Speech and hearing centers had little value for them. Many professionals mistakenly include the deaf with million of hard of hearing consumers. The latter received communication chiefly with their ears. They are not a distinct population group. Their loss of hearing was gradual. Their speech and language had been established in the usual way and were near normal. They seek mostly 'speech and hearing' services: auditory training, hearing aids, lip reading, and speech correction (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963, p. 3).

The Community Services Council Forms

In this case, the United Fund people were highly interested in the problems described by the Deaf leaders, so they referred the matter to its coordinating agency, the Community Services Council, for further study. The referral was adopted as a project by the Community Services Council in March, 1963. A committee of the Community Services Council was assigned to study all the community agencies to see whether any of them could provide the needed services (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963).

The Community Services Council appointed a representative committee of fourteen Deaf and hearing people, representing a wide range of community interests, to



Ray G. Wenger, a member of the Community Services Council committee

make a study of problems of the Deaf adults that could wrap them into an existing agency. Larry W. Blake was the chairman of the committee. The members of the committee were: G. Harold Bradley; Philip R. Clinger; Marguerite Davis; Clarence O. Fingerle; Vera Gee; Madeleine Helfrey; C. Russell Neale; R. Elwood Pace; Eugene W. Petersen (Deaf), Eula Pusey (interpreter), Brigham E. Roberts; Ray G. Wenger (Deaf), and Jerry Westberg (Deaf) (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963; UAD Bulletin, Spring 1964; Sanderson, 2004).

The committee met throughout the year of 1963, often weekly. They spent many hours of their time studying problems of the Deaf adults. The findings of the committee were incorporated in a report, "Services to Adult Deaf, Salt Lake Area." The report of this committee received national attention and in fact, about 100 copies were requested for a national workshop for social workers being held in Berkeley, California on November 18-22, 1963 (Sanderson, 2004).

The Community Services Council reported the problems in serving the deaf adults, as follows:

1. It is difficult for the deaf person to communicate with family, friends, and professional persons.
2. The deaf person cannot understand details regarding arrangements and plans of action.
3. It is difficult to train the deaf person because of the communication barrier.
4. Counseling services are essentially a verbal understanding. The success of which is contingent upon freedom of communication. This is impaired in work with the deaf.

5. Absence of free, spontaneous communication present a problem. None of the several adult deaf consumers known to agencies over the past years has remained in counseling for an effective period of time. This may be due to limited skills in work with the deaf, or what has been noted as the deaf person's unwillingness to be introspective or to become involved in a casework relationship.
6. The communication barrier limits the social activities in which the deaf may participate.
7. Training the deaf in lipreading is difficult.
8. It is difficult to obtain family health information in the case finding conducted by public health nurses.
9. Deaf parents have difficulty in training their hearing children in speech. Discipline problems arise because of the breakdown in communication between parent and child.
10. The communication barrier makes it difficult to administer hearing evaluations.
11. Deaf persons do not know how to use community resources through which health and welfare services are available (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963, p. 4).

While communication barriers were identified, most of the 27 agencies responded indicated that the full range of services offered were available to the Deaf population. However, the communication barriers limited the kind and quality of services, which can be provided (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963).

Utah Association for the Deaf clarified that "the handicap of deafness lies in the communication barrier it imposes, and involves more than speech and lip reading lessons. The great handicap of deafness is not to so much the ability to speak and hear, but the mental starvation inherent in a language deficiency. In the education of the deaf, every step waits on the necessity of building a working vocabulary which requires long hours spent in the development of oral speech and lip reading. As a



Jerry Westberg, a member of the Community Services Council committee

result, the deaf are generally three to four years behind their hearing peers, regardless of methods used in their education.” UAD further elaborated, “This language deficiency is carried over into adult life and accentuated by the deprivation of the normal auditory stimuli of radio, televisions, forums, theater, screen, conversation, etc. As a consequence, the average deaf adult is below the norm in his grasp of the social, economic and political facts of life, and in his appreciation of the cultural and humanitarian facets of modern society” (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963, p. 3).

After the study, it became clear that effective services for deaf people could best be established within the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. This division offered the



Larry W. Blake, left, accepts the first UAD Award from Pres. G. Leon Curtis at the 21st Biennial Convention of the Utah Association for the Deaf. Miss Dixie Lee Nasfell was interpreter for the ceremony. The award, a beautifully engraved silver tray, was presented to Mr. Blake in appreciation for his efforts in behalf of the adult deaf people in Utah.

UAD Bulletin, Fall 1965

advantage of statewide services through local district offices, and availability of a wide range of specialized professionals accustomed to dealing with people with disabilities (UAD Bulletin, Winter, 1965).

The Community Services Council, after considering this matter for two months, presented its study to the State Board of Education. The request for a supplemental budget was approved of this

modest but extended program of services to the deaf adults of Utah. The administration of the Division of Rehabilitation recognized the lack of accessible services for deaf adults and strongly supported this proposal (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).

Did You Know?

In 1963, the Utah Association for the Deaf was not included in the agency services listing designated for the deaf because it was a membership organization rather than an agency incorporated to serve a designated clientele through the provision of professional services. Through its activities as a membership organization, it met many of the social and recreational needs of deaf adults and conducted a public information program aimed at developing a better understanding of deafness (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1963, p. 4).

Lobbying the 1965 Utah State Legislature for Services to the Deaf Adults

At this time, it became apparent to some local Deaf leaders that a desirable “club for the deaf” was not really financially feasible (Sanderson, 2004). The Community Services Council Committee focused on working with the Utah legislature to secure funding for the services to be provided under Office of Rehabilitation Services. During the 1965 Utah State Legislature session, several UAD officers and some members sacrificed several days’ pay to go with UAD president, G. Leon Curtis, to the Capitol for talks with Governor Calvin L. Rampton, to secure his support for funding, and to lobby the 1965 legislature. Active in this effort were Eugene W. Petersen, Joseph B. Burnett, Ned C. Wheeler, and Eula Pusey, an interpreter and a strong advocate of deaf people (Curtis, *UAD Bulletin*, Spring 1965; Sanderson, 2004).



Joseph B. Burnett, a board member of the Utah Association for the Deaf and lobbyist

However, the Legislative Budget Committee had excess funding requests, which affected the inability for the state to finance all requests. The committee had to make

some cuts and the appropriation for services for the deaf was eliminated (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).

UAD did not give up. They did intensive campaigning to persuade the legislature that these funds should be reinstated. To do this, the Deaf leaders met with members of the State Legislature. A bill was drafted and introduced by Representatives Della L. Loveridge (D-Salt Lake), Nathaniel D. Clark (D-Ogden) and Earl H. Whittaker (R-



Ned C. Wheeler, a board member of the Utah Association for the Deaf and lobbyist

Circleville). Meetings were held with Governor Rampton and various representatives and senators. Many deaf people wrote letters to their local legislators (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).

The bill itself never came up to vote, but the strategy succeeded when the powerful Joint Appropriations Committee took another look at the matter and found a way to squeeze in a portion of the requested funds (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).

The legislature recognized the unique problems faced by deaf and hard of hearing adults in an increasingly complex society. They obliged by appropriating \$10,000 to the Department of Public Instruction for the “straight” social services to deaf and hard of hearing adults (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965; Sanderson, 2004). It was a large sum at the time, which would bring in matching funds that totaled an amount of \$26,713 from the federal government to the Office of Rehabilitation Services for a new office (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1966).

Ultimately, UAD pushed hard for more adequate services for the deaf adults. It was a long, hard pull that led to the United Fund, the Community Services Council and

finally to the State Legislature. Along the way, UAD made friends in the hearing community.

With this in mind, UAD clarified that they did not want special consideration for the deaf. What they wanted was equal consideration in return for equal contributions. In a complex and competitive world, deaf people would face comparatively greater disadvantage and would need assistance (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson Appointed as the First State Coordinator of Services to Deaf People in the United States

When funds became available on July 30, 1965, the Utah Merit System Council announced the opening of a new position: Coordinator, Services to the Adult Deaf, in the Department of Public Instruction. Dr. Vaughn Hall was the State Administrator of the Division of Rehabilitation at that time (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, who was still president of the National Association of the Deaf and had just completed his master's degree in Educational Administration in California, was a fortunate choice, said the Utah Deaf community. When the position opened, Dr. Sanderson applied and obtained the job with strong support from the Deaf community. On November 15, 1965, he was appointed as the first state coordinator of services to Deaf people in the United States, and his office was located at the Atlas Building, 36 West Second South in Salt Lake City (Sanderson, 2004). While working in this position, he led advocacy efforts to



**Robert G. Sanderson, first state coordinator of services to Deaf people in the United States
UAD Bulletin, Winter 1965**

establish a community center that the deaf could call their own, and developed a specialized rehabilitation unit for the Deaf and hard of hearing.

Finally, special services for Deaf adults were set up in the Division of Rehabilitation with a Deaf man, Dr. Sanderson behind the desk. In Washington, D.C., Dr. Boyce Williams, Dr. Mary Switzer and others copied Utah's rehabilitation system. The positions as well as responsibilities soon became a pattern for other state Rehabilitation Divisions to follow (Sanderson, 2004). Dr. Sanderson probably could not have won the position without the support of the community.

Over the years, Dr. Sanderson became a "rehab man," counselor, coordinator, and director. He was known as the "Father of Vocational Rehabilitation."

One-Year Anniversary of Services to Deaf Adults

The one-year anniversary of Services for Deaf Adults was observed in the fall of 1966. Dr. Sanderson and his "staff," Mildred Richardson, a secretary, struggled to keep up with the ever-increasing burden that had fallen on their shoulders. In previous years, Utah Division of Rehabilitation served an average of 11 Deaf and hard of hearing clients a year. By the time, Dr. Sanderson obtained his position, the word spread that there was someone behind the desk who understood their language; his caseloads increased to 94. There were many deaf and hard of hearing people in need of assistance, who had been held back in the past because of communication barriers. Dr. Sanderson was able to bridge that barrier; there was more than enough work to keep a vocational rehabilitation counselor busy (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1966).

He served in double roles in the combination of social services and rehabilitation services. Dr. Sanderson's new job was overwhelming. He carried many hats by assuming his responsibilities in the areas of rehabilitating, counseling, training, placing a job,



Utah Governor Calvin L. Rampton
Source: Wikipedia

coordinating the adult education and sign language classes, and advocating captioned films (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1966).

In spite of many problems and occasional frustrations, Dr. Sanderson found his job the most rewarding of a varied career. As he stated in the UAD Bulletin, Fall 1966, "I enjoy working with these people. The great majority are capable, self-reliant and a credit to the community. Some of them need guidance, some additional training, others may need only a chance;

they all need more understanding. The one thing they don't need or want is sympathy. The office is here to work with the deaf adults, to help when needed. But it was not and never was intended to 'do for' them" (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1966).

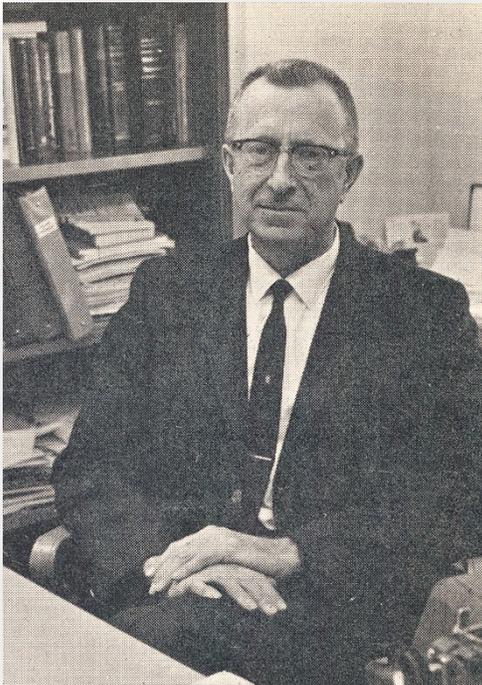
The Growth in Rehabilitation Services

Eugene Petersen, president of Utah Association for the Deaf, reported that in the past two years from 1965 to 1967, the Rehabilitation Services had been good to deaf adults in Utah. Under Rehabilitation Services, the number had grown to 135 new consumers who had been helped or were receiving help with 15 or 16 more on the waiting list. The Utah State Legislature was impressed and provided funds for an additional counselor and office help. Legislature also passed a bill providing for interpreters for deaf people in court. Dr. Sanderson as a service coordinator no longer had to look for an interpreter in court proceedings (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1967).

Most consumers were people UAD had never heard of. They did not use sign language and they probably never would be a part of the Deaf community, but they were deaf, and they needed help. Now, at long last, they were receiving the kind of understanding and assistance they needed (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1967).

At the time, many of these people had multiple disabilities (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1967). Young deaf adults were applying for rehabilitation services had

been increased. Training, counseling and placement were exceedingly difficult (UAD Bulletin, Fall, 1966). Utah School for the Deaf had more than one third of its student population with multiple disabilities (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1967).



**Robert G. Sanderson, a Coordinator
of the Deaf Services
UAD Bulletin, Summer 1968**

It was assumed UAD was not needed and the state would take care of deaf people. Dr. Sanderson argued that any deaf person who believed that the “state will take care of us” was completely wrong. It was expected to “give them everything they wanted and to “help deaf people more.” The philosophy

of rehabilitation was that of working with, not for (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1967).

Dr. Sanderson responded saying that those who get the most out of their help were those who were willing to work hard for themselves. Studying in school or learning a trade can take a long time, and it can be difficult for deaf people. Those who did not succeed in finding a suitable job were usually those who gave up or dropped out; those who succeed in getting work in the trade they wanted were those who stayed with it and developed the necessary skills and competencies. He pointed out that the type of

assistance in the rehabilitation program for deaf people would not create dependency. The goal was to assist deaf people along the road to independence and enable them to share more equitably in community resources. Community sponsored adult education programs, for instance, aimed to overcome educational deficiencies for deaf people, which made them dependent. The rehabilitation program provided appropriate training to enable them to become independent. Utah was not alone with this situation; other states experienced similar problems (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer 1967).

Needless to say, Dr. Sanderson emphasized that National Association of the Deaf and Utah Association for the Deaf must continue working actively to assist a segment of the deaf population which could not always help itself; those with multi-disabilities. The number of people with multi-disabilities was increasing and volunteer organizations must continually bring their unique needs to the attention of appropriate governmental agencies. Utah School for the Deaf was fully aware of the problems facing these exceptional children and the cooperative efforts between USD and rehabilitation services were developed (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer, 1967).

Did You Know?

In 1965, the percentage of multi-disabilities deaf children was increasing, and whether the educational authorities want it or not, the day when many of residential school will be taken over by these people was in sight. This may be for deaf children with multiple disabilities, but it means deaf children with normal minds and normal capabilities was pushed into the oral day schools where all too often their educational birthright was sacrificed in a pallid pretense at integration (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965).

Beth Ann Stewart Campbell's New Role in the Deaf Section

In 1967, Dr. Sanderson and his secretary, Linda Campbell, were the only two employees in the deaf unit (Stewart, DSDHH April 2012).

Three years later in 1970, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell began her employment as a rehabilitation aide in the Services to the Deaf Section, Division of Adult Education and Training, Utah State Board of Education. She was hired as a result of resolution passed

by the Utah Association for the Deaf at the 1969 convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was hired because a female counselor was requested to meet the consumers who would feel more comfortable talking with a woman than with a man (UAD Bulletin, Fall-Winter 1970-71).

She was an assistant working with Dr. Sanderson and Jack White, Rehabilitation Counselor (he was in charge of the office in Provo). Her job duties included intake (registering consumers), interpreting, job finding, case reporting, follow-up, and work adjustment counseling (UAD Bulletin, Fall-Winter 1970-71).



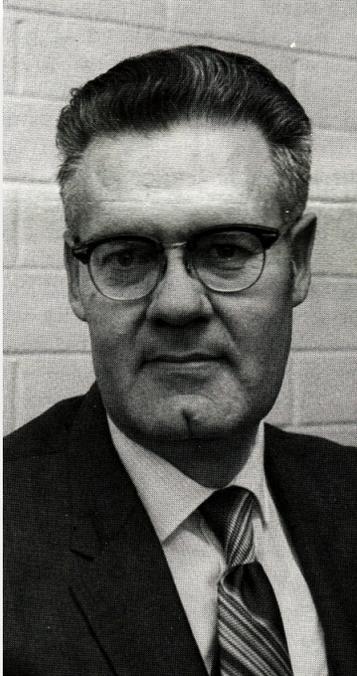
Beth Ann Stewart Campbell
By Robert L. Bonnell

Ms. Campbell was well known to Deaf people in Utah as the daughter of Deaf parents, Arnold and Zelma Moon (UAD Bulletin, Fall-Winter 1970-71). While working at the rehabilitation office, her interpreting duties eventually expanded a great deal over the years (Beth Ann Campbell, personal communication, September 20, 2012).

Feasibility Study for a Community Center for the Deaf

While working for the Office of Rehabilitation Services, Dr. Sanderson still had a vision of a community center for the deaf and spearheaded the drive for it. For several years, he persisted in engaging in-depth discussions with Deaf and hearing community leaders on what a community center of the deaf should be and what services it should encompass.

Dr. Sanderson's hard work finally paid off in June 1975 when the first actual spark that set in motion plans for a community center came about. Dr. Walter D. Talbot, Superintendent of Public Instruction of Utah State Office of Education, established a



**Dr. Jay J. Campbell, Deputy Superintendent of the Utah State Office of Education
UAD Bulletin, June 1973**

committee to study the feasibility and desirability of providing a community center for the deaf in the State of Utah, similar to the Murray B. Allen Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Dr. Sanderson was appointed as chairman. The committee consisted of Dr. Harvey Hirschi, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Dr. Jay J. Campbell, Deputy Superintendent of Utah State Office of Education; and Dr. Charles C. Schmitt, Facilities Coordinator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, along with deaf members, David Mortensen, Lloyd Perkins, Dora Laramie, and Ned C. Wheeler (UAD Bulletin, December 1975; Sanderson, 2004).

A forty-seven-page feasibility report of the study with recommendations was completed on December 1, 1975 and was submitted to Dr. Walter Talbot, State Superintendent of Instruction (UAD Bulletin, December 1975). Governor Calvin L. Rampton along with several organizations such as National Association of the Deaf, Utah Association for the Deaf, Utah Athletic Club for the Deaf, and Parent-Teacher-Student Association of the Utah School for the Deaf, wrote a letter to Dr. Sanderson in support of this concept of a community center of the deaf (Sanderson, 2004).



Dr. Walter D. Talbot, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Utah State Office of Education

Through the legislative process, Dr. Talbot, accompanied by Dr. Sanderson and his interpreter, Ms. Campbell, made several visits to the legislative committee dealing with capital funding. Governor Rampton was very supportive of this process, which helped tremendously (Sanderson, 2004).

A bill finally made through the various legislative committees. At the close of the official legislature at twelve midnight in February of 1977, Governor Rampton had the bill on his desk. He was about to sign it, but he noticed that the word, “deaf” was replaced with “blind” by mistake! Since it was past midnight closing of the legislature, he could not fix it (Sanderson, 2004).

In order to find out what caused the mix-up, Dr. Sanderson discovered from the Legislative Research Staff that the bills and resolutions that “failed” or did not pass may not have been filed nor archived. In other words, the bill did not go through the legislative process. No one informed him what happened to such legislation and he did not personally get any explanation of how that mix-up occurred. He believed that it was a Freudian slip by some bill sponsor or legislator who had blind people in mind since they were more visible than the deaf. At any rate, Dr. Sanderson was unable to find evidence to support the story. The Deaf leaders were filled with dismay when they learned that the bill failed because of the mix up. They testified for weeks in support of the community center for the deaf in various legislative committees (Sanderson, 2004).



Lloyd Perkins, a member of the Feasibility Study for a Community Center for the Deaf Committee

The Deaf leaders were dismayed to find out that the Utah State Board of Education minutes that included the study, resolutions and bills for the legislature in the years of 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980 and 1981 were nowhere to be found! Additionally, there

was no mention of a center in State Superintendent Talbot's 1976 budget. Perhaps the Deaf leaders missed something, since those yearly minutes books were pretty thick! Nevertheless, UAD Bulletin and Silent Spotlight proved to be rich resources with references to the progress of the center through the years (Sanderson, 2004).

Utah State Board of Education Adopts a Policy on Deaf

After a lengthy debate, members of the Utah State Board of Education voted on June 15, 1976 to adopt a policy statement that led to the decentralization of counselors for



**Dora Laramie, a member of the
Feasibility Study for a Community
Center for the Deaf
Committee**

deaf vocational rehabilitation consumers. Under the new policy, the counselors who had been housed in the state school office were located in the vocational rehabilitation offices in Ogden, Salt Lake City and Provo. Consumers served by those offices had a choice in selecting either a “total communication” or “oralist” counselor. The change had been made because Dr. Vaughan Hall, associate state superintendent, said oralists claimed they had not had a clear choice in selecting their counselors. Additionally, some

oralists had testified that they had been reluctant to come to the office of vocational rehabilitation in the state school office [Utah School for the Deaf] for fear they would not receive the services they wished. The totalists, on the other hand, opposed the new policy and expressed concern that it would weaken the services available for vocational rehabilitation consumers. Dr. Vaughan clarified that the new plan would not curtail services and he believed it would provide consumers a choice and that the counselors would be able to better tailor services to meet the need of individual consumer (The Salt Lake Tribune, June 16, 1976).

Dave Mortensen, president of the Utah Association for the Deaf published his article on June 16, 1976 sharing his perspectives of the Board of Education's recent decision. He stated, as follows:

Won't Listen

“The Board of Education is making a serious mistake in listening to the wrong people in its plan to “decentralize” services to deaf people. Never once did they invite the input of the deaf people of the community itself. They listened only to people who do not understand the implications of deafness. People who do not know nor understand what it means to live in deafness everyday. They listened to people into their ivory towers who are far removed from the reality of life.

Never once did the Board of Education or personnel connected with it ask the deaf community nor make a survey of the services provided to the deaf to see if the present organization was satisfactory. The deaf community asked for services years ago and has been happy with the services rendered. Why change without asking the consumer if he likes what he's getting?

The deaf people are tired of paternalism, of being told by hearing people and educators that all we need is more speech and lip reading. We express to them – that such concepts deny deafness – and mislead people who have deaf children who will one day be as we are – deaf adults!

Apparently, the Board of Education is turning its back on deaf people, upon the mass of experience, and is listening only to those who have axes to grind. It was the deaf community that forced the board to take a hard look at its educational programs at the deaf school; to take another look at the conditions in school dormitories and to evaluate them.



**W. David Mortensen, a member of the
Feasibility Study for a Community
Center for the Deaf
Committee**

If it were not for the alertness of the deaf people then parents of deaf children would continue to receive a less than adequate program for their children. When deaf people speak, we speak with knowledge and experience, and perception that no hearing person can experience.

We believe the Board of Education should retain its Unit of Services to the Deaf as it is presently made up, and if needed, add another counselor to work exclusively with those deaf who are, by personal choice, oral in philosophy. We support the desires of such deaf people when they express themselves but no when others paternalistic step in and try to do for them” (Mortensen, The Ogden Standard-Examiner, June 16, 1976).

There was speculation that Dr. Grant B. Bitter, an ardent oral advocate and former Coordinator of the Oral Training Program at the University of Utah as well as Coordinator of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Deaf Seminary for the State of Utah, played a role behind the new changes.



Dr. Grant B. Bitter
The Utah Eagle, 1961

Reorganization of the Services to the Deaf Office

On June 15, 1978, the Utah State Board of Education voted again to reorganize the Services to the Deaf Office. The change was to take immediately. This decision caused quite a stir in the Deaf community. Because they had not seen the latest policy statement or the new organizational chart, they were uncertain how this change would affect various services to Deaf people (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

State Superintendent Dr. Walter Talbot assured the Utah Deaf community that the action of the State Board of Education on reorganization of the deaf simply guaranteed all Deaf clients to choose a counselor who signed or did not sign. As a result, Dr. Sanderson was given more responsibility; he had all program responsibility for Rehabilitation Services to the Deaf plus training responsibility for all counselors and supervisors who

served Deaf clients. The action also allowed for one more counselors for the deaf in the Salt Lake area (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).



Ned C. Wheeler, a member of the Feasibility Study for a Community Center for the Deaf Committee

Since setting up the Services to the Deaf Office in Salt Lake City in 1965, the Utah State Board of Education took positive steps forward in identifying a need and making services available in an accessible manner with staff capable of communicating with the deaf (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

As of June 1978, the deaf unit had grown in the space of thirteen years to three offices staffed by a director, four counselors and an interpreter for the deaf. The staff members had rapport, specialized knowledge of deafness and ability to communicate by speech, sign language or in rare cases, very basic gestures. Deaf consumers had the opportunity to seek a variety of services available such as financial aid, hearing aid evaluations, marriage counseling, sign language classes, speech therapy, job training, and much more (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

There was a segment of the population that suffered not only inability to hear, but also inability to communicate their needs effectively. The Services to the Deaf Office was the answer to their needs (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

Counselors in these three offices had also been goodwill ambassadors and opened up opportunities for the deaf. Sign language classes were given at businesses, government agencies and hospitals, so that staff members in turn could work with or serve the deaf; jobs opened up to the deaf, removing barriers that had kept them in low paying jobs. These counselors also gave talks to civic groups, enlightening them of the unique problems of the Utah Deaf community (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

The Utah State Board of Education voted to break up the Services to the Deaf Office. The new arrangement would place counselors who were with the Services to the Deaf Office under district supervisors. The counselors would answer to their district supervisors. These counselors were Norman

Roberts of the Ogden area, Gene Stewart of the North Salt Lake area, Jim Hilber of the Central Salt Lake area, and Jack White of the Provo area. Dr. Sanderson continued to coordinate all deaf unit activities to be sure that every deaf and hard of hearing people received equal treatment, regardless of their educational background (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

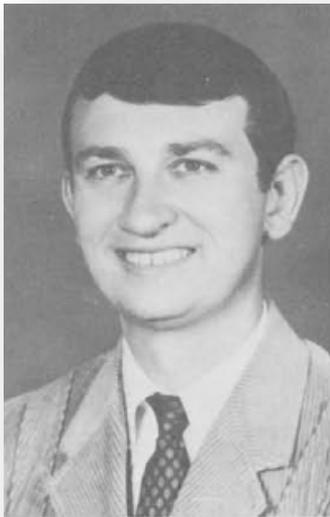
The supervisor screened all incoming applicants so that everyone had a choice of counselors. There was a choice of a counselor who did not use sign language but used speech as the mode of communication and one who could communicate in any way desired by the consumers – sign language, speech, writing notes, and the like (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).



**Jim Hilber, Counselor of the Central
Salt Lake area
UAD Bulletin, November 1973**

Dave Mortensen, UAD president expressed their concerns that the district supervisors did not possess the understanding, training and ability to deal with Deaf adults and their problems, and that the Deaf adults would no longer be able to find appropriate services through a counselor trained to serve the deaf. Conversely, the skills and knowledge built over the years by these counselors would go down the drain (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

At this time, the Utah Services to the Deaf Office was recognized by other states as an effective model of services to deaf people. While a few complaints had risen to the



**Gene Stewart, Counselor of
the North Salt Lake area
UAD Bulletin, Winter 1970**

surface, they were far outnumbered by many individuals who benefited from the easy accessibility of services. UAD understood that it would not be expected that such a model would be put out of existence on the basis of a few complaints. They also understood the reluctance of Deaf individuals whose main mode of communication was speech. They stated that there were several general counselors who could work with these individuals who wished to use speech only (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

UAD felt breaking up the deaf unit would not accomplish positive results. It could only do harm and create justifiable frustration to Deaf people and parents who sought help for their Deaf children. They had yet to see how such reorganization could improve delivery of services to meet the unique needs of Deaf children and adults (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

UAD believed that the Utah State Board of Education should have never taken this backward step. It asked that each member of this board to take the time to talk to Deaf people and ask them how they feel about the Services to the Deaf Office. It

reminded them that it was the Deaf taxpayers who stood to lose from this move – and they, too, vote in elections (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

Dave Mortensen as a Spokesman at the Utah Capitol

In June 1978, the Utah State Board of Education developed a budget for the next legislature to be used for the purpose of a comprehensive community center for the deaf. That way, the services of various types could be provided to Deaf people who were not necessarily consumers of the Division of Rehabilitation. It was a goal that the services of the future center could serve all Deaf people of the community, including hard of hearing. Speech and hearing conservation services would also be included so oral deaf people as well as hard of hearing people would be able to get services (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978).

During the same month, Mr. Mortensen appeared before the Joint House Senate Committee studying the social services at the State Capitol and presented a request for their help in developing a comprehensive community center for the deaf and a state commission for the deaf. In his presentation, he emphasized that the policy developed by Dr. Vaughn Hall of the Division of Rehabilitation with the Utah State Board of Education restricted services to the deaf to rehabilitation services only. This effectively eliminated many services that had been provided through the Services to the Deaf office for the past thirteen years. Mr. Mortensen gave a powerful message to the committee that that there was now a need for a center for the deaf and a commission to serve all Deaf people, not just rehabilitation consumers (The Silent Spotlight, June 1978; Sanderson, 2004).



**John A. (Jack) White, counselor
of the Provo area
UAD Bulletin, Winter 1970**

Back to Square One

In order to get funding for the new community center for the deaf, the Deaf leaders had to go back to square one (Sanderson, 2004). One of the leaders, Dave Mortensen, who had become the new president of Utah Association for the Deaf, was the most visible, active leader and spokesperson through the legislative process. At first, he accompanied Dr. Sanderson in meeting legislators and quickly learned the legislative process. From then on, he spent years lobbied the legislative branch and worked hard to see the legislature appropriate money to fund the community center for the deaf.

While Dr. Sanderson was employed at the Services to Deaf Adults, UAD President Mortensen rolled up his sleeves and kept the ball rolling preparing for another bill. Another two years would pass before the bill was ready to be sent to the legislature again. In 1979, a request for their help in developing a community center was granted. The next step was to obtain a facility.

Lobbying the 1980 Utah State Legislature for a Building for the Community Center for the Deaf

In September 1979, the Utah State Board of Education reserved \$2.5 million out of \$15.1 million budget for building construction and remodeling for the center for the Deaf. While the center was listed #1 on the building priority list, the board was in the process of preparing to present the request to the State Building Board and the 1980 Legislature (UAD Bulletin, September 1979).

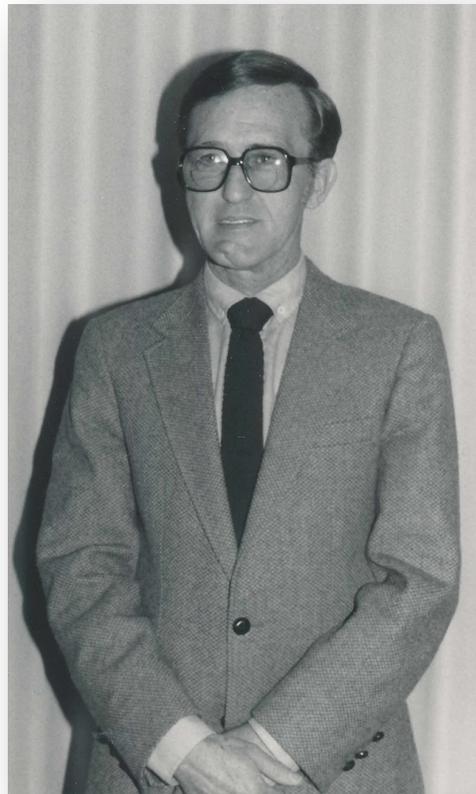
However, during the legislative process in January 1980, the community center for the Deaf was pushed down from its 6th place on the building appropriations list to 11th place by Governor Scott Matheson. The Utah Deaf community was in danger of losing the center. UAD President Mortensen urged them to contact their local legislators and members of the appropriations subcommittee to support the center. However, the center didn't make it to top priority (UAD Bulletin, January 1980).

While work was still in the process of moving the center for the deaf to top priority, an architectural firm in Ogden submitted tentative drawings for the center for the deaf to the State Building Board in May 1980. It was estimated that it would cost \$3.4 million for the land and the building; and inflation would push the price up (UAD Bulletin, May 1980).

In late July 1980, the Social Services Committee met at the Capitol and added its support to the center for the deaf.

Representative Charles Doane, R- Salt Lake City recommended that the funding of the center for the deaf be made a top priority item with the State Building Board and the Appropriations Committee. It passed with just one dissention. It was #1 on the Utah State Board of Education budget and it was planned to bring it up at the 1981 legislature in January (The UAD Bulletin, August 1980).

Utah Association for the Deaf urged the Utah Deaf community to contact their local legislators to support funding for the center for the deaf. They felt it was logical to set up a center in Salt Lake City where the majority of the Deaf people lived. It was intended as a state-wide center in one location and those who lived outside of Salt Lake City would find it beneficial to take the time to go to Salt Lake City. UAD went the extra mile to get the community center for the deaf set up through legislative funding (UAD Bulletin, August 1980).



W. David Mortensen, president of the Utah Association for the Deaf
Photo by Robert L. Bonnell

In September 1980, UAD President Mortensen informed the Utah Deaf community that the community center for the deaf was on the agenda for discussion this fall and the state committees were meeting to hear proposals. He again asked the Utah Deaf community to meet their local legislators and ask them to support funding for the center for the deaf. However, it came to his attention that a few Deaf people were opposed to the center, but the reasons were hard to determine. It might be that these people wanted a clubhouse where they could have the freedom to set up a private membership club and have a bar. He assured them that the center for the deaf would have nearly everything that Deaf people wanted, except liquor. The clubhouse would serve only a few needs, and not in any way begin to match the facilities and services of the center. He emphasized the importance of cooperating and working together as well as concentrating on one thing at a time, then go after other things they needed or wanted (UAD Bulletin, September 1980).

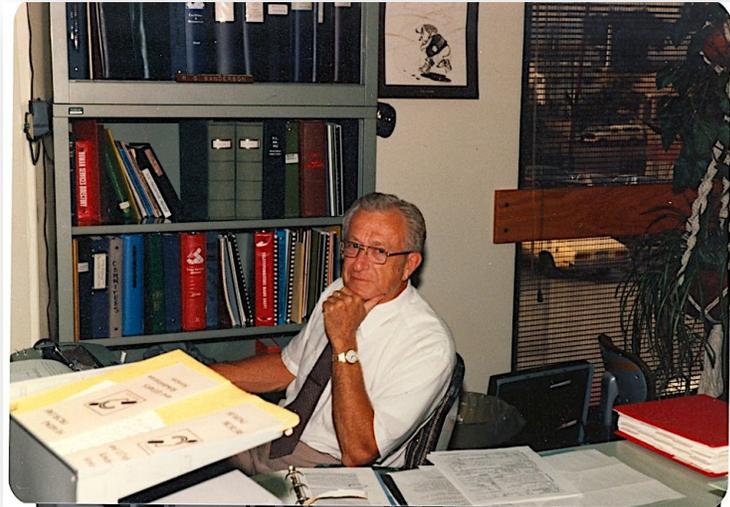
On October 11, 1980, the Utah Association for the Deaf invited several state legislators to meet with Deaf people at the UAD October Funfest at the Utah School for the Deaf, Ogden (UAD Bulletin, October 1980).

In November 1980, UAD encouraged the Utah Deaf community not to vote for Initiatives A and B. That way, the center for the deaf would be sure to get enough tax money to fund projects. Otherwise, this would cut down on the tax dollars available for projects and for the center for the deaf (UAD Bulletin, November 1980).

In December 1980, Deaf leaders continued to actively assist the Utah State Board of Education in its effort to secure funding through the legislature for the comprehensive community center for the deaf (UAD Bulletin, December 1980).

Unfortunately, in April 1981, the proposed community center for the deaf was not funded. Despite the effort of UAD encouraging the Utah Deaf community to contact their local legislators in March 1981, not everyone did. With very little effort from the Deaf community, the Republican-dominated legislature put the need of a dairy barn at Utah State University ahead of the needs of the deaf citizens. The dairy barn bumped the community center down

below the funding cut off line. The legislature even put the cows ahead of the need to purchase the Utah State Board of Education building before its option expired in December 1980. Dr. Walter D. Talbot, State Superintendent



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson working in his office

continued to work on behalf of the center and finally, a resolution was passed at the July 1981 convention of the Utah Association for the Deaf! (UAD Bulletin, March 1981; UAD Bulletin, April 1981; Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson Appointed to Dr. Powrie V. Doctor Chair

At the same time in July 1981, Gallaudet University announced that Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, director of Services to the Deaf Office in Utah, had been appointed to fill the Dr. Powrie V. Doctor Chair for the academic year 1981 – 1982. He was the fourth person to receive it (UAD Bulletin, July 1981; Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Sanderson and his wife, Mary, left Utah on August 24 to take his job. He took an educational leave of absence from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation from that time on until the end of May. Mary also took a leave of absence from the US Forest

Service for the same length of time (UAD Bulletin, July 1981).



Valerie G. Kinney, a board member of the Utah Association for the Deaf

Dr. Sanderson's project was doing research into the social rehabilitation of Deaf people as differentiated from vocational rehabilitation. He taught one or two classes in counseling in addition to research and writing. Additionally, he did some traveling to gather data from other rehabilitation agencies. Dr. Sanderson and Mary returned to their respective jobs in June 1982 (UAD Bulletin, July 1981).

During Dr. Sanderson's absence from the state, UAD President Mortensen asked for a meeting with Governor Matheson, but the governor couldn't meet with him. Governor Matheson sent his aide, Tony Mitchell, and called in William Boren of the Division of Rehabilitation, to meet with Mortensen along with Valerie (Kinney) Platt, UAD secretary and Alden Broomhead, an UAD board member. Their concerns were shared of several past failures of the legislature to pass funding for a community center for the deaf and the "cows before deaf people rejection." Mr. Mitchell, after talking about the failure of obtaining funds for a center for the deaf, told Mr. Boren to find \$500,000 from the Division of Rehabilitation budget and begin a search for a location (Sanderson, 2004).

Resignation of Dr. Walter D. Talbot Takes Utah Deaf community by Surprise

On January 15, 1982, Utah Association for the Deaf was taken by surprise to learn that Dr. Walter D. Talbot, superintendent of Utah public education, announced his resignation, effective June 30, at the Utah State Board of Education meeting (UAD Bulletin, February 1982).

Dr. Walter D. Talbot had long supported the Utah Deaf community in its endeavors, especially with the community center for the deaf (UAD Bulletin, February 1982).

Lobbying the 1982 Utah State Legislature for the Community Center for the Deaf

While many questions had come up, such as the naming of a director, setting up an administrative board, remodeling plans and the like, the UAD officers and member representatives wasted no time meeting with Dr. Walter Talbot to get the ball rolling (UAD Bulletin, March 1982).

Progress on Community Center for the Deaf

On January 14, 1982, the Public Education Appropriations Committee at the Capitol agreed to recommend a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building be converted to a center for the deaf in Midvale. The purchase price was secured at \$110,000 with \$30,000 more for remodeling. The State Building Board had an appraisal made of this used church building that was built in 1929. In the meantime, they were under the negotiation process with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the final purchase price before presenting the proposal to a legislative committee during this legislative session (UAD Bulletin, February 1982).

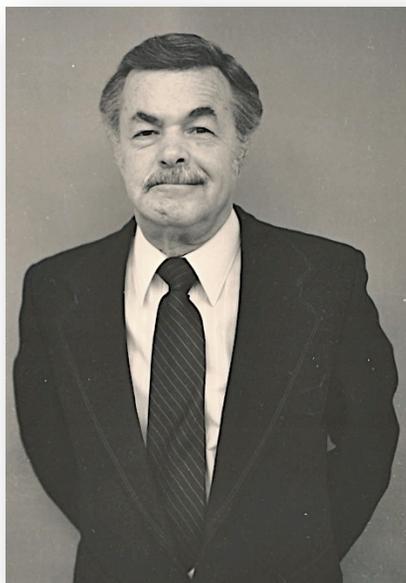
Funding for the Center for the Deaf Approved

During the last days of the 1982 Utah Legislature, a bill outlining the funded projects under the State Building Board was passed, containing a line item for a center for the deaf in the amount of \$200,000. This was cause for rejoicing, since Utah Association for the Deaf had worked for the last several years to obtain funding for the center (UAD Bulletin, March 1982).

Utah Association for the Deaf had many questions such as naming of a director, setting up an administrative board, remodeling plans and the like, which were settled within a month. In the meantime, UAD officers and member representatives met with Dr. Walter Talbot, superintendent of public education, to get the ball rolling (UAD Bulletin, March 1982).

The center for the deaf was put on the agenda for the Utah State Board of Education meeting on March 19, 1982 and a list of Deaf citizens was approved to form a committee to oversee the Center for the Deaf, which was to be located in a former Latter-day Saints Ward in Midvale. Advertising for the position of a director and a secretary for the Center began immediately (UAD Bulletin, April 1982).

The committee (Deaf) members consisted of George Gavros, Peter Green, Dennis Platt, Fred Bass, Robert Welsh, Dora Laramie, Richard Snow, Janny Scheeline, William Sevy, Celia May Baldwin, Lynn Losee, and Dave Mortensen (UAD Bulletin, April 1982).



Pete Green, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

Search for a New Location

The next step was to search for a location. The original plan was to find a site in Midvale, but none of the sites were found satisfactory due to lack of parking. One was found in an old city dump! (Sanderson, 2004).



Dennis Platt, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

An old church belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was found in Midvale. Although the building was small and lacked a much-desired gymnasium, Dr. Sanderson, Gene Stewart, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Norman Williams, and Robert Lunnen all thought it would do for a start with a lot of remodeling. The \$200,000 appropriation from the 1982 Legislature resulted in the

purchase and renovation began for a chapel to be used as a center for the deaf (Sanderson, 2004).

The Division of Facilities Construction and Management, the building manager for all state owned facilities, began planning with an architect and the deal was closed among Rehabilitation Services, Utah State Board of Education, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Sanderson, 2004).



**Robert Welch, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee
The Utah Eagle, April 1955**

Before the construction and remodeling of the Midvale building began in October 1982, Dora Laramie, a teacher at the Utah School for the Deaf, and her husband, George, both long-time members of the Deaf community, met with Dr. Sanderson and told him about a large church in Bountiful that had been standing vacant for a while. They felt that because it had a gym and many meeting rooms, it would be much more suited to the needs of the Deaf community. It required very little fixing up to be ready for immediate occupancy (Sanderson, 2004).

After Dora and George Laramie brought the Bountiful church to Dr. Sanderson's attention, he discussed it with his boss, Dr. Harvey Hirschi, Acting Administrator of Rehabilitation Services. He was very supportive of this building and immediately requested a halt to the proceedings at the Midvale building. As word spread, the Utah Deaf community and the Division of Rehabilitation Services expressed desire to change the location of the center from



Dora Laramie, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

Midvale to Bountiful. State Superintendent Kim R. Burningham, who replaced Dr. Talbot, gave the Utah State Board of Education information that there had been a change of direction, and that the center would be in Bountiful, in a much finer and larger, vacant church, rather than in the Midvale building. The board approved the change (Sanderson, 2004).



George Laramie

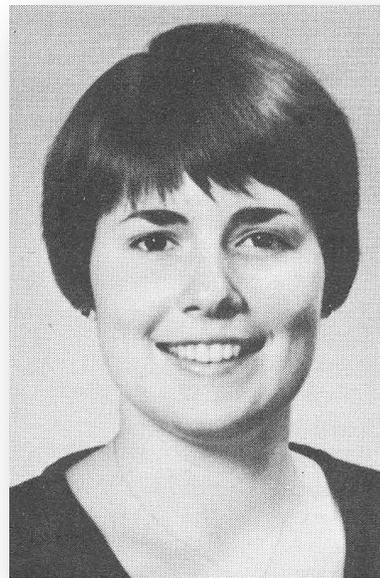
Eventually, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints agreed to take the Midvale church building as a trade-in and sell the Bountiful church building. In sum, the total estimated purchase and

renovation cost of the Midvale building was \$525,000. The total price of the Bountiful building, including purchase, renovation, real estate fee, and architect fee, was \$333,000! \$191,000 was saved while providing a more adequate building (Sanderson, 2004).

Deaf Dedicates ‘Home of Their Own’

After a long wait and much patience since the 1975 Feasibility Study for a Community Center for the Deaf, the Utah Community Center for the Deaf (UCCD) was officially opened at the Bountiful 33rd LDS Ward Chapel at 388 North 400 South in January 1983 (Sanderson, 2004). Dave Mortensen, president of the Utah Association for the Deaf and the state’s only deaf social worker for the deaf, said, “It was determined by the study that the deaf people of Utah had certain unique, well-defined needs” (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983).

On June 9, 1983, members of the Utah Deaf community had a ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the renovated UCCD a ‘home of their own’ after culminating years of frequently frustrating efforts to make their needs known to the legislature. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Dr. Sanderson and Mr. Mortensen felt the communication was the key. Dr. Sanderson explained that, “Deaf and hard of hearing people cannot be served effectively unless there is free and easy communication between them and the professionals and paraprofessionals who serve them.” He also said, “The mode of communication is left to the individual, and the helping professionals meet the desires expressed.” Mr. Mortensen stressed, “Deaf people need to have a place to go to where they know they will receive understanding and assistance whenever they want or need it. They need to have confidence and trust in the people they go to for help, and this is something they cannot always get it at those places where the people, no matter how



Celia May Baldwin, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee UAD Bulletin, Fall 1969

sincere they may be, cannot communicate effectively in the mode desired by the individual at the level of his language understanding” (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983).

At this time, the UCCD was expected to serve appropriately 78,000 Deaf and hard of hearing people in Utah – 10,000 of whom were estimated to be totally deaf for communication purposes (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983). Additionally, it was



Lynn Losee, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

UCCD’s goal to solve the problems experienced by the deaf, by the hard of hearing, and especially by the deaf with multi-disabilities, by providing facilities for social and recreational activities (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983).

Dr. Sanderson said, “It was a dream of many years come true with much appreciation to the Utah State Board of Education, Rehabilitation Services, and the Utah State Legislature” (Sanderson, 2004).

Home of the First Utah Community Center for the Deaf

A year before the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was officially opened in Bountiful, Dr. Sanderson was appointed as the first director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf by Dr. Harvey Hirschi. Three staff members, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Norman Williams and Robert Lunnen were engaged in 1982 (UAD Bulletin, July 1982; Sanderson, 2004).

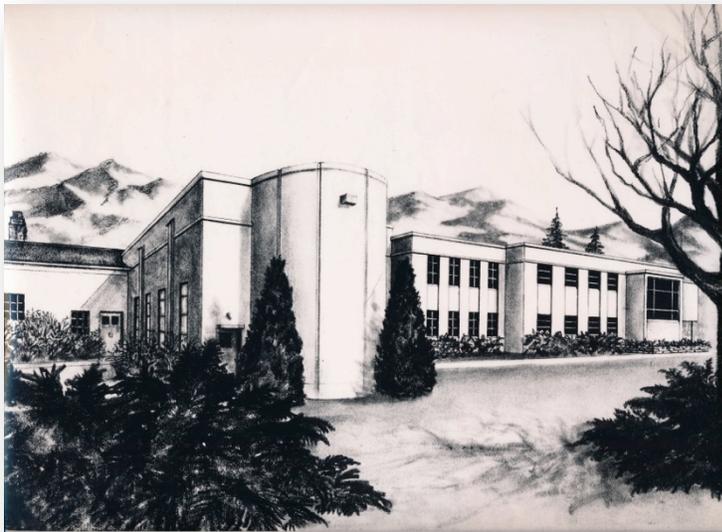
The UCCD provided a variety of services such as vocational rehabilitation services, counseling, interpreter services, telecommunications, information and referral, a

library on deafness, training programs, volunteer services, peer support, and classes (Sanderson, 2004).

The UCCD collected the best books and research materials on deafness in the state, equipment, photos and printing laboratory for retraining displaced deaf workers (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983). On December 5th, 1983, Robert Welsh, a Deaf man with a successful color-separation and photography business, taught a class to help open up jobs for Deaf people. His laboratory and furnishings were set up in one of the upper floor rooms (Sanderson, 2004).

In addition to providing rehabilitation services, adult education and retraining, the UCCD was the state hub for social activities

(The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983). The 22,000 square foot community center afforded a facility for physical recreation, socialization and activities. Parties were held. Basketball practice, archery practice, volleyball, and movies were also held. The kitchen was frequently used (Sanderson, 2004).



Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful Utah, 1983
Pencil drawing by Robert Winkelkotter

After improvements were completed, the office space was made available for the Utah Association for the Deaf as well as the various community organizations for the Deaf and hard of hearing, including Self Help for the Hard of Hearing. They were finally able to store their materials and carry on activities of their organizations (Sanderson, 2004).

Deaf people from Ogden and Salt Lake areas pitched in to make the UCCD friendly, habitable and welcoming. They finally had a meeting place of their own and they no longer had to worry about arranging events elsewhere.

Dream Becomes a Nightmare

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf soon faced numerous obstacles. While Dr. Sanderson was working as the director, he noticed that there was a flood on the east side of the building from the sprinkler system at a neighbor's home. The parking became extremely crowded when gathering for parties or other events. The air conditioning on the upper floor was poor during the summer and an old coal-fired furnace caught on fire during the winter. Security became a problem when the building was broken into and some items stolen. All doors had to be re-keyed. Maintenance became very expensive

when a lot of repairs were needed. Commuting from a distance became a problem after the initial excitement slowly diminished (Sanderson, 2004).



Richard Snow, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

The Deaf community's dream became a disaster when melting snow created massive mudslides from the mountains and hit 400 North Street. The depth of the mudslide was about three feet. Along the street, the basement of several homes, lower than the level of the street, were filled to the brim with mud. Luckily, the mud missed the Utah Community Center

building because it was a bit higher on the south side of the street and had a four-foot retaining wall along the sidewalk. The mudslide of 1983 was called a "once in hundred year" event (Sanderson, 2004).

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf Officially Dedicated

After many months of planning by the Advisory Council for the Deaf the dedication became a reality. On November 5, 1983, the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was officially dedicated. Celia May Baldwin, dedication chairperson, reported approximately 325 people attended the gala event (UAD Bulletin, June 1983).

A group called Irregularities gave a hilarious performance of unusual and odd fashion showings, and donated the fee, which had been paid for their performance plus an additional sum of money. This donation was a surprise and Utah Association for the Deaf greatly appreciated their service and donation (UAD Bulletin, June 1983).

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf Continues to Operate

The next two years, many activities were held in the gym. Life continued on at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf. The Utah Association for the Deaf established its first formal office in the Center and hired Valerie Platt (later Kinney) 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).

Ms. Campbell was effective in getting sponsorships and donations from local service clubs to give the Utah Community Center of the Deaf needed supplies that could not be provided by the state (Sanderson, 2004).



Valerie G. Kinney, a business manager of the Utah Association for the Deaf at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf

Before the Sorenson Communication, Inc. came along, the Text Teletype, known as TTY, was widely used by the Deaf community. Conversations were typed rather than spoken which allowed for direct communication with anyone who had a similar device. Robert Weitbrecht, a Deaf physicist, invented the first TTY in 1964. At the UCCD, the TTY shop remained quite busy repairing old teleprinter machines for Deaf consumers. When Sorenson Communications Inc. developed a videophone, it also provided a free video relay service provided by Sorenson Communications, Inc. The video relay service was launched in Salt Lake City in 2003 (Sanderson, 2004).

Robert Lunnen, a Navy veteran who repaired teleprinter machines for the military during World War II, developed a love for the old equipment that Western Union, AT&T Mountain States Telephone and other local businesses donated to the UCCD for people to use (Sanderson, 2004).

Norman Williams, a Deaf man and a graduate of Utah School for the Deaf in 1962, was the other half of the team that kept the TTY machines working for the Deaf community. Not only that, he contributed many skills to the Center as a handyman; he was a talented craftsman, builder, electrician, tinkerer, and mechanic (Sanderson, 2004).

According to Dr. Sanderson, supporting this mission was probably one of the greatest accomplishments of Utah's Rehabilitation Services because it made communication possible for all Deaf and hard of hearing people of the state. Prior to the invention of the TTY, rehabilitation counselors and social workers had few options for communication since they could not use the ordinary telephone with Deaf people. A lot of the time, they would have to drive to wherever the consumers lived and hope to find them at home. The TTY made it easier for counselors to communicate with consumers (Sanderson, 2004).

Did You Know?

In 1984, under the administration of Beth Ann Stewart Campbell at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful, Norman Williams ordered the round tables table (in sections) for the conference room from the state penitentiary for \$2,000.00. He insisted that the deaf-friendly oval and the round tables were the best choice, as they allowed the deaf and hard of hearing individuals to see each speaker (Norman Williams, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Dave Mortensen remembers Beth Ann bragging about her office and the table that the inmates of State Prison made, as well as the tables in the conference room (Dave Mortensen, personal communication, April 3, 2012).

Dr. Grant B. Bitter's Concerns with the Utah Community Center for the Deaf

While the Utah Community Center for the Deaf still utilized and operated its facility for both rehabilitation services and recreation services, on January 2, 1985, Dr. Grant B. Bitter, an ardent oral advocate, frowned upon services they provided. He criticized how the Utah Community Center for the Deaf offered recreation activities and how the UCCD counselors worked with the oral deaf population in the rehabilitation services, and its connection with the Utah Association for the Deaf. He wrote, as follows:

“No currently employed rehabilitation counselors for the deaf should be appointed as director for the Center for the Deaf...unless it is entirely separate from rehabilitation services; then the center should be supported by private funds and contributions as a “recreation center” for the Deaf community. Under those circumstances it should not be supported by public tax dollars. If the center is to be



Dr. Grant B. Bitter
The Utah Eagle, 1967

a place where all hearing impaired persons may go for appropriate services in meeting individual needs then it must be divested from any relationship to UAD, or any other organization of a special interest nature, and be entirely free from these groups to pressure special interest decisions or control.”

Additionally, Dr. Bitter emphasized the importance to have the legitimate needs of the Utah Deaf community considered and appropriate individual needs met as it would be with oral hearing impaired individuals. Moreover, he wrote in capital letters,

“NO PROGRAMS FROM ANY OFFICE SHOULD MANIPULATE, PROMOTE, OR OTHERWISE INFLUENCE THINKING OF CLIENTS OR POTENTIAL CLIENT TOWARD EITHER SIGN LANGUAGE OR THE ORAL, AURAL/ORAL APPROACH. COUNSELORS ARE TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS, REASONABLY, IN ORDER THAT CLIENTS MIGHT BE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED REALISTICALLY AND PRODUCTIVELY, WITHOUT INTIMIDATION AND PRESSURE. COUNSELORS MUST NOT GIVE INFORMATION FALSELY IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE ONE’S OWN WAY OF THINKING. HERE ARE SOME THAT HAVE BEEN USED TO PROMOTE SIGN LANGUAGE:”

- a. Learning sign language will not affect your use of spoken language. That statement must be qualified considerably. Which hearing impaired person will it not affect? Obviously, the “deafened” adult such as Dave Mortensen, Paul Chamberlain, Robert Sanderson, etc...persons who have developed oral language (spoken, written) before losing their hearing and who continue to use their spoken and written language daily in their work will retain that ability. However, most children who are prelingually hearing impaired if they have been educated orally and then learning sign language will lose a great deal of proficiency. Those who attempt to use a mix of sign language and oral language will use pre-dominantly the sign language modality. The phenomenon is demonstrated by research.
- b. To use spoken language is to deny your deafness or to not use sign language is to deny your deafness, or if you don’t sign, you deny your deafness.
- c. Deafness is your heritage.

- d. Speechreading is impossible (“40% look alike sounds on the lips, etc). This is a myth.....some research indicates that hearing impaired person who are visual oral (speechreading) as their primary mode of communicating, will comprehend about 95% of the concepts).
- e. Total communication really includes the oral approach. Such a statement is most commonly used and is not true. In reality don’t make of sign language something it is not and cannot do. It has its place for those who prefer that system of communication, but total communication is a philosophy not a method. It is a “supermarket” term. Sign language has many limitations. It isolates and segregates, creates dependency rather than functional independence and creates a psychological/emotional conditioning that is resistant to the concept of mainstreaming, etc... (“Mainstreaming denies deafness”).
- f. Sign language appears to have some charismatic affect on hearing people; many hearing people, including interpreters, frequently use it as a vehicle of control rather than a means of assisting the consumer to become functionally independent, or facilitating the sending of accurate messages to the receiver only.

As shown above, Dr. Bitter accused the Utah Association for the Deaf, rehabilitation counselors, namely Gene Stewart, Jim Hilber, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, for not respecting those options for educational and social programs for the oral deaf population and that there was little demonstrated evidence that they cooperatively work with divergent points of view to preserve the integrity of alternative programs in the State of Utah (Bitter, 1985).

Isn’t that ironic the Dr. Bitter was allowed to have control and influence over the University of Utah, Utah School for the Deaf and LDS Deaf Seminary while he felt that UAD should divest itself from any relationship with the UCCD? Little did he realize that it was UAD’s idea to form a community center for the deaf and worked hard to make it happen? Why did Dr. Bitter complain about the way UCCD provided services to the oral deaf population when they had a choice in selecting either a “total communication” or “oralist” counselor, as established in 1976 and again in 1978?

Additionally, why couldn't the deaf population have the same recreation opportunities as the hearing population with their local recreation center?

Did You Know?

During a retreat for members of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Advisory Council on August 28, 2009, Superintendent Steven Noyce, a former student of Dr. Grant B. Bitter at the University of Utah, erroneously stated that the Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing tended to focus only on Deaf people using American Sign Language. Marilyn Call, a member of the Advisory Council who happened to be the director of the Sanderson Community Center, clarified that the way he viewed the Sanderson Center sounded like how the old Deaf Center in Bountiful was operated, and that a lot of things had changed over the years. The Sanderson Community Center was now required by the State of Utah to be neutral by providing a wide continuum of services for all deaf and hard of hearing populations.

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson Announces Retirement

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson announced his retirement, effective as of November 15, 1985 after working 37 years of state employment – 20 of them with Division of Rehabilitation (UAD Bulletin, February 1985).

Under Dr. Sanderson's effective leadership, Services to the Deaf had expanded from a one-man operation in 1965 to a large staff located in several Utah cities. When he began with Rehabilitation in 1965, there were approximately eleven Deaf people on the rolls and only one fingerspelling counselor to serve them. Due to poor services at the time, Deaf people did not want to go to Rehabilitation for help (UAD Bulletin, March 1985).



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson



**Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire,
Director of Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation
Services
The Salt Lake Tribune, August
22, 2011**

Dr. Sanderson was instrumental in getting the Utah Deaf community to “talk more.” Throughout the Wasatch Front about 500 telephone communication devices were toiling away at about 50-60 words per minute. That was a lot of talk, about 750,000 words an hour. By that time, the Utah Deaf community couldn’t live without the teletype machine and they were grateful that Dr. Sanderson distributed the machines for them to use (UAD Bulletin, February 1985).

Another accomplishment that came to be during Dr. Sanderson’s tenure was the establishment of a center for the deaf. The project took over ten years of committee work, meetings, and continued even while he was at Gallaudet College for a year. Due to his persistence, the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was established where the deaf people could meet, work, and enjoy time together (UAD Bulletin, February 1985).

At his retirement in 1985, there were over 300 Deaf and hard of hearing people being served. There were many interpreters available, four counselors were experts in sign language, there was a full time Rehab interpreter, and two full time UAD interpreters (UAD Bulletin, March 1985).



Beth Ann Campbell

By 1985, over 9,000 people had registered in the guest book at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf! (UAD Bulletin, March 1985).

Upon the retirement of Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Executive Director of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services appointed Beth Ann Stewart Campbell as director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf. She had worked for the Division of Rehabilitation as a professional level interpreter and aide for over 15 years and was closely associated with the center for the deaf programs. Ms. Campbell, as a CODA, had strong support from the Deaf community. In addition, she reflected her advocacy and activism on behalf of Deaf people (Sanderson, 2004).

Beth Ann Campbell assumed the duties and responsibilities as the director of the UCCD in Bountiful, similar to Dr. Sanderson's position before his retirement.

Safety, Maintenance, Population Demographics Issues Demand a Change in Location

Because the Bountiful building was built in 1941 with a two-story addition in 1956, health and safety concerns became an issue. The number of necessary repairs to correct violations of fire, safety, and building codes would be expensive. There was a lack of handicapped accessibility, which was also a code violation. Lastly, the facility continued to deteriorate, and it was expensive to cover the maintenance (Sanderson, 2004).

Another issue was population demographics. The Utah Community Center for the Deaf, located in Bountiful, was easily accessible via the 1-15 freeway from Ogden and other Davis County cities, and about 10 to 12 minutes from Salt Lake City. However, the largest population of Deaf consumers lived farther south of the Salt Lake area. As a result, a slow decrease in Deaf consumer visits became noticeable. Moving the center farther south was not convenient for those who lived in Davis and Weber counties, but the large numbers of Deaf consumers in the Salt Lake Valley were significantly in favor of a more central location (Sanderson, 2004).

In 1985, a flurry of letters and memos to the Director of the Division of Facilities Construction & Management from Dr. Buffmire of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bernarr S. Furse, began. They suggested that planning funds be directed more to a new community center for the deaf instead of the Bountiful center and its long-term needs for meeting code violations and repairs. They clearly understood that money would not be used effectively by pouring it into the old facility when consumer usage was declining because of its location (Sanderson, 2004).

After the inspection of the Bountiful building, it was recommended in 1987 that a new/newer facility be purchased as soon as possible to serve the Deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Utah. It was necessary to bring the center up to health, building, fire, safety and handicapped accessibility codes to make the current center a safe and usable state building. Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire indicated her strong support for Deaf citizens and their need for a new center. Because this building was old and inadequate, lobbying efforts to get a new community center built began (Sanderson, 2004).

An Unexpected Bill Passes During the 1988 Legislative Session

The SB 218 bill, setting up a separate Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired, was passed by the 1988 legislature and signed into law by Governor Norman H. Bangert on March 10 without the knowledge of Deaf people. Dave Mortensen, UAD president, expressed his concern about the Utah Deaf community and its leaders not being informed about this bill and asked why they weren't asked for input, for opinions. He emphasized the importance of being involved in anything that pertained to the Utah Deaf community's future socially, economically, and educationally (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1988; Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, May 1988).

To this particular piece of legislation, the title, "Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired" was given. This title did not sit well with the Utah Deaf community.

Jim Hilber, a graduate of the University of Utah hearing and speech department and one of the counseling team assembled by Dr. Sanderson over the years, was appointed to the position of administrator over the deaf program. Although he lacked a cultural background in deafness, his education and experience qualified him for the position. It was during Mr. Hilber's time and with his active participation that the "Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired" was created. UAD President Mortensen questioned if this SB 218 bill had to do with the deaf in Utah, wouldn't it have been a proper procedure to involve the deaf themselves or at least let them know. He preferred the word, "Deaf" not "Hearing Impaired", and asked that the title be changed to "Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing," which became effective after 1988 (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1988).

Conversely, The Utah Association for the Deaf board went on record as not in support of Mr. Hilber as the person in charge of the Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired. While the Utah Deaf community was fuming with anger for not being included



Members of the Utah Deaf community at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful, Utah, 1988. Top Row: Pete Green, Jerry Wesrbery, Art Valdez, Ilene Kinner, Ken Kinner, Shanna Mortensen, David Mortensen, Clara Kendall. Bottom Row: (L-R): Sally Green, Donna Lee Westberg, Kay Curtis, Donna Mae Deyarmon, and Carol Wilson

in the SB 218 bill input, the recent protest in early 1988 and demands pushing for the selection of a Deaf university president at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. inspired them to take control of their destiny (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1988).

Gary Olsen, executive director of the National Association of the Deaf, stated that

the "Deaf President Now" protest at Gallaudet University served as an example to everyone that "deaf people want to control their own destiny." In addition to this, the

deposed hearing person, Dr. Elisabeth Zinser, said, “What is happening across the country is a civil rights time of the Deaf community.” UAD President Mortensen felt those words were well spoken and said that the deaf in Utah will want and demand more say in events and laws that affect their way of life (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1988).

On March 31, 1988 Dr. Judy Buffmire, Executive Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Utah, invited the Utah Deaf community and its leaders to the Utah State Office of Education to express opinions, ideas and proposals on the new SB 218 bill. Approximately 100 Deaf people were in attendance. Many of them stood up to speak about what their feelings were. In the end they received a response that the position of director of Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired/Deaf would be opened for nationwide recruitment (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, May 1988). It was a small victory.

UAD President Mortensen posted his President’s Message in the UAD Bulletin, May 1988, as follows:

“Historically speaking, for the past 75 years or more, programs for the deaf have always been proposed, developed, and administered by hearing people. There is only one exception that can be thought of when Dr. Robert G. Sanderson was placed in Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and remained for several years, leading deaf people and developing a variety of programs to serve them. Unfortunately, when he retired, he was not replaced by a deaf person. He was replaced by a hearing person. We feel there has been a deterioration or breaking up of some of these services that were of benefit to the Deaf community the past 4 years.

We believe it is time now to allow deaf people to have more say in matters that affect the quality of their life. We believe it is time now to select qualified deaf people to run programs or divisions. We are fast approaching the 21st century. We must control our destiny. We want to show you that we are no longer going to sit idly by and allow hearing people who do not understand us or our needs to continue to wreak our future.

Our educational needs suffered in the hands of hearing people who thought they were doing the best for us without even asking us (the

consumer: the product: the result) what would have been a better way to give us an education that we could be proud of.

We are at a point where we must say that we need more control over the Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired/Deaf. We are asking once again that people in position of power ask us, the deaf, what we want. And when given an answer, follow through with it.

We need clarification on the meaning of hearing impaired and deaf.

For 75 years plus, educational and rehabilitation officials who could hear invested money into programs to try and improve and educate the deaf while making sure that none of the deaf who were in their programs would ever rise above their own positions. Now we, the deaf, want to prove that part of their investments were worthwhile to a degree by choosing a deaf person to run the Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired/Deaf” (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, May 1988, p. 2).

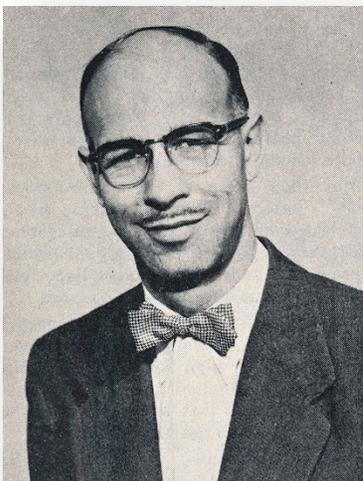
Did You Know?

The Deaf community view the label “hearing impaired” as negative and offensive. It implies something broken that needs to be fixed. The terms, “deaf and hard of hearing” are politically correct.

Deaf Vent Frustrations and Criticize the New Division

In the Utah State Board of Education room it was standing room only, with members of the Utah Deaf community in attendance. They lobbied closely with the board

members for two hours. The Utah Deaf community expressed their concerns and feelings about short-and-long term plans for the “Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired.” Several Deaf members spoke up. UAD President Mortensen said, “We must control our own destiny. We are no longer willing to sit idly by and watch hearing people wreck our programs and control our future” (Campbell, *Deseret News*, April 1988).



Rodney W. Walker
The Utah Eagle, April 1955

Rodney Walker, the local Gallaudet alumni association president stated, "They have been oppressed by hearing people and they [Deaf community] were pushed down." "Our feelings are the same as students at Gallaudet University" (Campbell, *Deseret News*, April 1988).

Lloyd Perkins said, "Deafness had been treated like AIDS in Utah – a disease to run away from." He also said, "The deaf in Utah in their own system have not been trained either in the school (for the deaf) or rehabilitation to be leaders." Perkins quoted a statement made during the Gallaudet protest, "When the hearing believe they have to take care of the deaf, this is outright hatred, prejudice, and discrimination and a grand display of ignorance" (Campbell, *Deseret News*, April 1988).



Lloyd H. Perkins

Dr. Sanderson, a former director of deaf services with the State Office of Education said, "The new division is a step in the right direction but criticized the Office of Rehabilitation for not seeking comment from the Utah Deaf community before introducing the measure in the Legislature." He emphasized saying, "I would strongly recommend that a trained, experienced deaf professional person be appointed to head the division. The reason for this is a deaf person with deep understanding will recognize the needs of deaf people and their culture" (Campbell, *Deseret News*, April 1988).

Lastly, Jim Harper of Provo said, "The deaf of the state feel as if hearing people are their puppeteers. The deaf may have a hearing loss, but they do not have a mental loss" (Campbell, *Deseret News*, April 1988). After the Deaf community, particularly UAD President Mortensen speaking up, it was agreed to change to new Division of

Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and this division was housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf.

First Division Director Appointed for Utah Community Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The position was opened after the resignation of Jim Hilber during 1988 when he took the job as the Division of Rehabilitation Services Facilities Specialist. After the Utah protest, the position was changed from “director” to “specialist” and had been held by Mr. Hilber since then. He was very supportive of a new community center of the deaf and played a huge role for years in working with the legislators, analysts, Division of Facilities Construction and Management and others. His relationship with the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities played a big part in the success of the legislative

funding for the center for the deaf.

Marilyn Call, a hard of hearing individual was the Executive Director of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities at that time and became acquainted with Jim Hilber, Gene Stewart and Deaf advocates (Sanderson, 2004).



Jim Harper

Utah Association for the Deaf and the Utah Deaf community strongly felt that the director be a deaf person. UAD President Mortensen stated in his September 1988 UAD Bulletin: The President’s Messages, as follows:

“Will the director be a deaf person, which is most logical and wise to install as the head of this new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing?” If a hearing person is selected, no matter what his skills and qualifications are in the field of deafness, or understanding the psychology of deafness, Utah will still be behind the times. It will be a backwards step to name a director who has hearing to lead the deaf into new fields of advancement” (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, September 1988, p. 2).

In September 1988, a Deaf person was selected as the new division director, but to the surprise of everyone, and for personal reasons, he turned down the job. Dr. Judy Buffmire and the screening committee could not select one of the applicants because the rest of the applicants had already received a letter letting them know the job was given to someone else or they would violate the Equal Employment Laws if they are doing it (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, September 1988).

After consulting with representatives of the Deaf community, Dr. Buffmire appointed Gene Stewart, a hearing Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, as Acting Division Director of the new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1988).

In late spring of 1989, Kenneth C. Burdett of Ogden initiated a petition to support Gene Stewart as permanent director of the DSDHH; it was signed by over 50 Deaf people and given to Dr. Judy Buffmire (Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1989; Darlene Stewart Cochran, interview with her brother, Gene Stewart, April 4, 2012).



Gene Stewart

At the Utah Association for the Deaf convention in June 1989, a resolution calling for support of Gene Stewart as a permanent division director of the DSDHH was written by Kenneth C. Burdett and passed by the Deaf members attending (Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1989; Darlene Stewart Cochran, interview with her brother, Gene Stewart, April 4, 2012).

On August 11, 1989, the Utah State Board of Education officially appointed Gene Stewart as Division Director of the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, where he had served for nearly a year as acting administrator. He became the first Division Director of the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1989). When the DSDHH was housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in 1988, services to the deaf grew. The administration divided responsibilities between the Division Director and the Director. Under Mr. Stewart's

administration, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell's title/role as the director remained the same and she reported him.



Kenneth C. Burdett

Mr. Stewart had served as a rehabilitation counselor since 1967, when he was hired by the Utah Division of Rehabilitation Services to provide vocational rehabilitation to the deaf. Like Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, he was also a CODA; his parents were Wayne and Georgia (Mae) Stewart. He grew up in the Deaf community as the only hearing child in a home with two Deaf siblings, Keith and Darlene (Cochran). Mr. Stewart earned a professional

level interpreter certificate. His education included a bachelor's degree with a major in speech pathology and minor in German from the University of Utah, and a master's degree in the education administration for the deaf from California State University at Northridge. His appointment was widely supported by the Deaf community. His primary goal was to establish a new Utah Community Center for the Deaf (Sanderson, 2004).

Working on Getting a New Community Center for the Deaf Building in Another Location

On June 16, 1989, at the biennial convention of the Utah Association for the Deaf, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Executive Director of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, told the audience, “planning dollars had been obtained from the legislature for a new center for the deaf after four years of constant lobbying and pushing” (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Sanderson reported that with planning funds secured, an Ad Hoc Planning Committee for the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf was formed and met for the first time on July 5, 1989. Several Deaf and hard of hearing individuals joined this committee along with architects and staff of the Utah State Division of Facilities Construction and Management. Deaf members were Shirley Platt, Lee Shepherd, John Peebler, Norman Williams, Lloyd Perkins, Keith Lauritzen, Don Jensen, Dave Mortensen, Robert Sanderson, and Robert Gillespie (Sanderson, 2004).

The Ad Hoc Planning Committee gathered to discuss a broad range of concerns. They discussed the budget for the purchase of land, size of the land, size of the building (square footage) and construction, what to include in the building, how many people it would accommodate, and numerous other details (Sanderson, 2004).

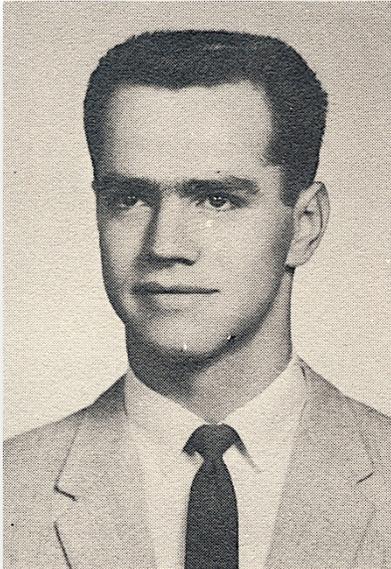


Shirley Platt, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

The building priorities were for good lighting throughout the building, fire alarms for the deaf, as well as other safety precautions for the deaf. A baseball diamond would serve as an enticement to bring young deaf to the Utah Community Center for the Deaf. In addition, the availability of a basketball court/gym with a stage would be helpful for the young deaf to utilize. It was a goal that basketball and baseball be provided as a means for strong community support. Sports have always been important in the Deaf

community. Nationally, Deaf students enjoyed participating in competitive sports with other Deaf students, similar to the hearing peers at public schools. The local Deaf

community, who were USD alumni, wished to see mainstreamed students share the same opportunity at the center (Sanderson, 2004).



Norman Williams, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

In order to prepare for the *architect's* sketch of *proposed* building plans, Norman Williams visited various buildings that had a gym. Much to his dismay, he couldn't locate a satisfactory one. So he visited the Idaho School for the Deaf that had a new full size basketball court with bleachers. He took satisfaction in the size of that gym and requested that the center copy the school's size of the gym. As a result, the gymnasium was designed to house a basketball

court with moveable bleachers! (Kenneth L. Kinner, personal communication, 2008; Norman Williams, personal communication, May 8, 2012).

On September 20, 1989, Dr. Buffmire appointed seven new members to the State Advisory Committee for Services. The purpose of this committee was to serve in an advisory capacity for a term of three years. Various representatives from the Utah community were served. Mr. Mortensen was one of the members representing the deaf (Sanderson, 2004).



Lee Shepherd, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

In September 1989, Mr. Stewart responded UAD President Mortensen's request to explain what the new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing would do,

and who the people were in the organization. Mr. Stewart worked hard serving the Deaf community as an ally. When he started his

position in October 1988, he told himself, “The deaf must be involved and be kept informed.” He did that through the UAD Bulletin, the Deaf Services Advisory Committee, and attendance at the UAD Board meetings, as well as through individual conversations (Sanderson, 2004).



Robert Gillespie, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

Did You Know?

While the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was searching for a new director,

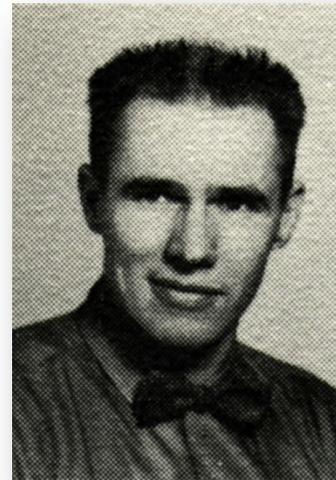
Mabel Bell, a columnist for the October 1989 UAD Bulletin (known as Ron Nelson) wrote, as follows:

“Let me ask you a question. Can hearing people make the best possible decisions for the Deaf community without any feedback or representation from them? Up until very recently, every program set up by legislators or state agencies that affected the Deaf community were administered and staffed entirely by hearing people. Is this fair representation?

...It is long past time that Gallaudet had a deaf president, as testimony that deaf people are capable of leading themselves.

...Why aren't [State Board of Education, Voc Rehab, etc] selecting qualified deaf people to be administrators in those programs directly affecting the Deaf community of Utah?

...Deafness should not be the only criteria for the job, but if the deaf applying is an active member of the Deaf community, the deaf applicant has something that no hearing person will ever be able to develop – an intimate understanding of deafness and its culture.”



Donald Jensen, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

In October 1989 UAD Bulletin, Ron Nelson explained that “I think Dr. Judy Buffmire did not ignore the Deaf community. At first, the Deaf community strongly supported the concept of having a deaf director and a deaf person was selected. Several months later, the Deaf community changed their minds and decided they wanted a hearing person as director. Several other deaf groups related to deafness also supported the concept of a hearing person as director, including the DSDHH Advisory Council. A hearing person was selected as the new director.”



Ron Nelson

Ron also said, “If the Deaf community had remained steadfast in their support of the concept of a deaf person as the director, would events have been any different? We will never know (Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1989).

Utah State Board of Education Gives the New Utah Community Center for the Deaf #1 Facility Priority

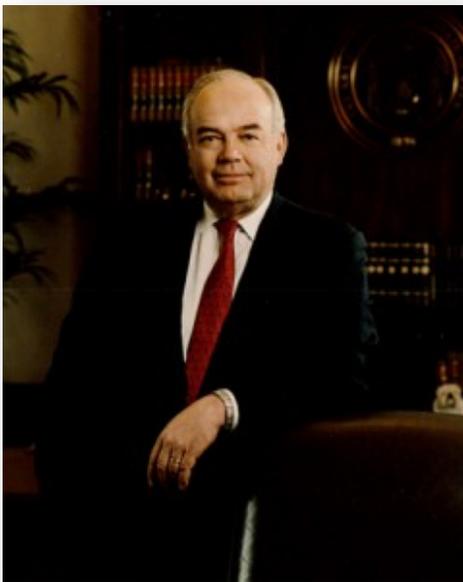
In January 1989, Mr. Stewart, Division Director of the Division for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, along with UAD officers, Dave Mortensen and Lloyd Perkins urged the Utah Deaf community to assist them with their lobbying efforts to get a new community center for the deaf building in another location. They encouraged the Utah Deaf community to write letters to their local senator and representative (Sanderson, 2004).

On September 8, 1989, the Utah State Board of Education gave the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf building #1 facility priority. With their support the Utah

Deaf community would be more able to convince the 1990 Legislature to award building funds to the Division. UAD officers were in high spirits. They were one step closer to building a new community center of the deaf where they could meet to grow and learn in the most populated area (UAD Bulletin, September 1989).

On October 1, 1989, plans for the *proposed* building were completed by the architects, Frandsen-Chamberlain of Ogden, Utah. The document detailed an executive summary of the project, amounting in effect to a building request. Among other things in the project floor plan was a full-size basketball court fronting a large stage – or, in other words, a multi-use auditorium. According to Dr. Sanderson, “Part of the justification of the new center was the estimated cost of maintaining the old Bountiful Center, pointing

out that it was fiscally unwise to authorize funds for maintenance and meeting code compliance on an old building with a projected limited lifetime” (Sanderson, 2004).



Utah Governor Norman H. Bangerter
Source: Wikipedia

The State of Utah began to comprehend the impact of deafness. They recognized that deaf people were under educated, under employed, under represented and socially isolated, all of which had a negative financial impact on the individual and the community. To address these issues, the Utah State

Office of Rehabilitation, Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing developed and implemented specialized services to reduce dependence on tax dollars and increase independence and production of Deaf adults. The services included interpreter referral assistance, youth support, counseling, socialization and independent living. The state recognized these unique services were most effectively delivered through a specialized rehabilitation facility. The programs offered at the current facility had a significantly

positive impact on the Utah Deaf community. They agreed that providing quality services in the current facility had barriers because of problems with the building and its location. Thus, the Utah Deaf community was delighted to learn that the Governor Norman H. Bangerter supported them!

Governor Bangerter Proposes Funding for New Center

During the 1990 legislative session, Governor Norman H. Bangerter recommended the legislature to support funding for two projects for the deaf as a part of his state building program recommendation. These agencies were a new Community Center for the Deaf at \$3,359,100 and a consolidated Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind at \$8,184,300. The Legislature was to decide whether or not to approve funding for these new buildings at these suggested amounts. Mr. Stewart and UAD President Mortensen encouraged members of the Utah Deaf community to attend the legislative sessions to show their concerns and support for these projects to help assure their approval (UAD Bulletin, February 1990).

Success at Last!

The 1990 Utah Legislature approved the budget for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation/Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing! The following approvals were:

- Monies for equipment and programs at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf through 6-30-90
- Permanent annual funding for interpreter training and employment
- Permanent annual funding to increase/improve programming at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf
- Building funds for a new Deaf Center (Sanderson, 2004).

It was a victory! It did not take long to locate a suitable plot of land for the new community center (Sanderson, 2004). After visiting the new site, Mr. Stewart, Division Director received a 100% consensus on one particular piece of property located at: 5770

South 1500 West. He excitedly stated, “Isn’t that a miracle!” A large number of Deaf and hearing people worked together to make a dream come true (UAD Bulletin, March 1990).

According to the March 1990 issue of the UAD Bulletin, on March 13, 1990, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire gave Mr. Stewart the okay to sign a document that opened the way to purchase of property for a new deaf center (UAD Bulletin, March 1990)

Dr. Sanderson said, “The land selected was a large vacant plot in a new and growing area about 10 miles south of the center of Salt Lake City. The location was ideal because it was close to shopping, surrounded by new condos, apartments and only two blocks to a bus stop. The Utah State Division of Facilities Construction and Management obtained this land for them. The land totaled approximately 5.46 acres at \$60,000 per acre, which was a very good price for such a desirable and well-located property” (Sanderson, 2004).



W. David Mortensen UAD president briefly outlines the history of the UCCD

Did You Know?

The two projects: Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind were intertwined in the minds of the legislators although the purposes were quite different.

A concentrated lobbying effort on the part of the deaf leadership and the USDB administration began. The Utah State Office of Education added its considerable influence to the effort, and legislators responded (Sanderson, 2004)!

Ground Breaking!

On a sunny day, a crowd of approximately 200 people was present at the groundbreaking ceremony of the new facility for the Utah Community Center for the Deaf on June 10, 1991 (UAD Bulletin, July 1991; Sanderson, 2004).

As narrated in the July 1991 UAD Bulletin, Dr. Blaine Petersen of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation welcomed the spectators and introduced speakers as the program progressed.

Gene Stewart, Division Director of Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as one of the speakers, spoke of his experience as a little boy wanting a cap gun



Dr. Robert Sanderson, UAD chairman and retired USOR state coordinator of services to the Deaf adults and UCCD director, spoke briefly, expressing deep gratitude to those who made it possible for the dream to come true for Deaf people in Utah

with an ivory handle. After begging his father for one, he finally got one. In the car on the way home, Mr. Stewart cried again because he wanted caps for his gun. His father got mad and took it back to Grand Central so he never got a cap gun. Mr. Stewart used it as an analogy in the way the Utah Deaf, with their patience, finally got their own deaf center.

Another speaker, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf, promised that construction would be recorded step

by step and said Norman Williams will “check where every nail goes” so that deaf Utahns would be assured that building plans and construction would go right. Ms.

Campbell expressed confidence in the architects, Burtch Beall and Mary Guy-Sell (UAD Bulletin, July 1991; Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, retired executive director of the USOR, Val Overson, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Utah, and the architects all expressed wishes for the success of the construction of the center (UAD Bulletin, July 1991, Sanderson 2004).

Dave Mortensen, UAD president briefly outlined the history of the UCCD, the idea of the center for the deaf came up in 1970 and shared the delays/frustrations encountered by

UAD officers and its Utah Deaf community when dealing with the legislature, from the earliest lobbying to the success of getting the first center in Bountiful and then for eight years working towards

getting a brand new building to meet the needs of Deaf population (UAD Bulletin, July 1991; Sanderson, 2004).



L-R: Norman Williams, Larry Kinnett, Mary Guy-Sell, Beth Ann Campbell, Lt. Governor Val Oveson and Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire host shovels and break ground

Dr. Robert Sanderson, UAD chairman and retired USOR state coordinator of services to the Deaf adults and UCCD director, spoke briefly, expressing deep gratitude to those who made it possible for the dream to come true for Deaf people in Utah (UAD Bulletin, July 1991; Sanderson, 2004).

There was a ticket drawing for a lucky Deaf person from the crowd to help with the digging. Larry Kinnett was winner of a ticket drawing and joined Mary Guy-Sell, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Norman Williams, and Lt. Governor Val Overson, as they hosted shovels and broke ground for what was to become a first in the nation, a unique center for the deaf and hard of hearing (UAD Bulletin, July 1991; Sanderson, 2004).

Did You Know?

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson believed the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was the first in the nation that was being built by a state specifically for the deaf, and designed specifically with the deaf people in mind. In fact, deaf people were involved with the architectural planning from the very first (Sanderson, *UAD Bulletin*, July 1991, p. 7).

UAD President's Message

Lyle G. Mortensen, president of the Utah Association for the Deaf, took the opportunity to write a message of gratitude in the UAD Bulletin thanking Dr. Robert G. Sanderson and David Mortensen as noted below:

“To Robert Sanderson and David Mortensen...a TREMENDOUS THANKS...for a job well done from the UAD members and the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing of Utah. You've made outstanding accomplishments and done excellent teamwork in providing us with list: the UCCD, Interpreting services, telephone relay, TDD's and repair services, and the new building complex Center which is more centrally located and will provide increased space and better activities and attendance. Our hats are off to your excellent leadership and also to the past UAD Board of



Lyle G. Mortensen

Directors which served you so well” (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, August 1991, p. 3; Sanderson, 2004).

Construction Begins

While the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was under construction in 1991 – 1992, the Bountiful center continued to serve Deaf and hard of hearing population. However, the programs at that center were limited in meeting the growing needs because of the distance from the center. Parking continued to be a big problem, limiting use of the facilities. Additionally, maintenance was minimal as the new center was being built. Everyone marked the time waiting for the new center (Sanderson, 2004).

For weeks, Deaf people excitedly drove by the site of the new center, watching the building being built. While watching the progress, Norman Williams, a maintenance man grew familiar with the building and all that went into its construction. He knew the building by heart. Dr. Sanderson basically said Norman knew every brick personally and how to take care of it. Moreover, he knew where everything was and what the functioning parts of the building were supposed to do and when (Sanderson, 2004).

In September 1992, the new building of 25,000 square feet in size was ready for occupancy. Most of the furniture ordered by Gene Stewart and Beth Ann Stewart Campbell was in place, staff members were assigned to offices, and keys were turned over to the director. Deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Utah finally had their own building. Before being named the Sanderson Center, it was usually referred to as UCCD (leaving off hard of hearing). The Division for Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Offices were housed at the UCCD (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Sanderson described the community center with all the events taking place at the center such as classes, socials, sporting events, meetings, seminars, crafts, bazaars, drama presentations, conferences large and small, and TTY repair service. The center

also consisted of a full size gymnasium, dressing room and showers, a large kitchen, a weight and exercise room, a lounge and library, a bookstore, and an assistive technology demonstration room where a number of telephones, amplifiers, TTYs and other communication devices were tested by Deaf and hard of hearing people to find what meets their particular communication needs (Sanderson, 2004).

From the time the new building opened, Mr. Stewart recognized the programs were growing in response to the demands and needs of the Deaf and hard of hearing youths as well as adults. The increased workload made it necessary to hire a qualified person for a program director. This program director position was created after Beth Ann Stewart Campbell retired in 1992. In June 1992, Marilyn T. Call was hired for this position, three months before the Bountiful Center moved to the Salt Lake area. As a licensed clinical social worker, she brought to the job several years of experience as executive director of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, an organization that worked actively with the Utah State Legislature in advocacy of people with disabilities. Among other qualifications, she is also the mother of two Deaf daughters: her older daughter, Ashley also autistic and her younger daughter, Camille (Sanderson, 2004).

The Utah Community Center of the Deaf Building Dedication

The dedication ceremony of the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf was held in spring 1993. People planted flowers, talked for hours, had hot dogs and soda pop, toured the center, talked some more, and returned for another hot dog (Stewart, DSDHH Newsletter, June 1993).

Grant Hurst, Chairman of the Utah State Board of Education, discussed the hard work of the Utah Deaf community and expressed support from the Board. Regional Rehabilitation Commissioner James Dixon brought greetings from the Regional Office as well as a plaque honoring Blaine Petersen, Executive Director of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, and Gene Stewart, Director of the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Stewart, *DSDHH Newsletter*, June 1993).



Lisa Cochran

Four Deaf individuals, Dr. Robert Sanderson, Lyle Mortensen, Norman Williams, and Lisa Cochran, a daughter of C. Roy and Darlene Cochran, spoke of their experiences both past and present, and of the future of the new community center for the deaf. Representative

July Ann Buffmire was in attendance with her husband, La Mar (“Buff”). They were busy talking with many of their deaf friends. State Board of Education member, Kay McDonough and her husband, Gene, enjoyed the ceremony and meeting new friends. The wonderful meal of chicken cordon bleu was served by Five-Star Catering and enjoyed by all; second servings were also taken advantage of (Stewart, *DSDHH Newsletter*, June 1993).



Gary Sanderson

Gary Sanderson, son of Robert and Mary Sanderson, gave a delightful, funny, and entertaining talk about interpreters. Excerpt of a beautiful poem was written by Steve Zakharias and this poem presented by both Kristi Mortensen and Steve in American Sign Language (Stewart, *DSDHH Newsletter*, June 1993).

Steve Zakharias's Poem

We meet to dedicate a building.
We meet a center to bless.
Through our presence
On this historic day.
A landmark – our success

We meet to dedicate this day
At this historic space
When we can proudly now proclaim
In the course of Utah's deaf.
"This is, indeed, the Place."

Within these walls a culture thrives
A culture of our own
With our own language.
Our design.
A place to call our home.

We bless this center with our hearts
That it may always be
The center place
To set the pace
For our own destiny.

We bless this center with our minds
That we may share our thought.
Our goals, our triumphs,
And ourselves
That which our hands wave wrought.

We bless this center with our eyes
So we may communicate clear
And teach those
Who don't understand
The way to use that's dear.

We bless this center with our time
For generations here.
And for those yet to come
May we make successes bold.
In these halls where eyes can hear.

For many years we sought the funds.
A center for us all.

A place, a home.
A space where friends can meet.
Not many heard our call.

Took 18 long years, but we prevailed!
A building, new, and strong.
Thanks to the people
Of our State.
A place where we belong.

While there be those who do not care
Or see as we're not.
We'll show the world

How it is done.
With equal access wrought.

We bless this building with our hands.
With which we work and speak.
May it remain
For many years.
Its shelter strong we seek.

We meet to dedicate a building.
We meet a center to bless.
Through our presence here
On this historic day.
A landmark – our success.



Kristi Mortensen

We meet to dedicate this day
At this historic space
When we can proudly now proclaim
In the course of Utah's deaf.
"This is, indeed the Place."

Copyright by Steve Zakharias
Signed by Kristi Mortensen
(Zakharias, DSDHH Newsletter, June 1993, p. 3)

The evening closed with a two-hour dance with The Sun, Shade, and Rain Band.
The music was so loud that some heard for the first time, and others had to wear their
earplugs (Stewart, *DSDHH Newsletter*, June 1993).

Gene Stewart Retires

In July 1996, Gene Stewart retired and left his legacy of a great staff and a very successful, growing program serving Deaf and hard of hearing populations. A national search began for his replacement (Sanderson, 2004).

New Director Takes Over

William “Rusty” Wales applied for this challenging position as a director of the Utah Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and was hired on September 3, 1996. He had worked 10 years as a rehabilitation counselor in Denver, Colorado and 3 years as a training supervisor with the Sprint Relay Center in Independence, Missouri (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1996; Sanderson, 2004). Before Mr. Wales was hired, his position apparently changed from Division Director to Director. Marilyn Call, a program director reported to him.

Mr. Wales was born Deaf and was initially educated in the oral program at the John Tracy Clinic in California. He later transferred to California School for the Deaf at Riverside, where he graduated. He graduated from Gallaudet College. While teaching and raising a family, he studied for his master’s degree at California State University at Northridge (Sanderson, 2004).



William “Rusty” Wales

Mr. Wales’s legacy in his administration position is functional new wing on the south end of the Utah Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Sanderson, 2004).

According to Dr. Sanderson, he observed that Mr. Wales's first few years of administration at the Utah Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, was devoted to working on the need for a new wing to serve the growing programs and gathering support from the Utah Deaf community as well as legislators. Mr. Wales envisioned classrooms, offices, and a lecture hall that would be designed specifically for the needs of a deaf audience – tiered seating. He worked tirelessly, persuading, cajoling, citing facts and figures, needs and benefits, and keeping a positive attitude despite the challenges of getting money (Sanderson, 2004).

Due to the addition and expansion of programs housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful, increased space was critically needed. Dr. Sanderson notes that funding limitations in 1992 resulted in a smaller building than anticipated. Services to the consumers had tripled since that year and office space had become inadequate. Staff members had to squeeze into existing office space (Sanderson, 2004).

During the first year of operation in the new facility in 1992-1993, the center had already become crowded and many public areas were booked. Since then, this problem continued to increase. Scheduling of classrooms was also difficult. Because of heavy usage, many community organizations had to schedule classes and activities months in advance. Many public group requests were denied. Due to the steady increase of visitors in addition to the staff expansion, parking had become an issue (Sanderson, 2004).

The goal of the new addition was to add approximately 6,500 square feet and it was attached to the existing building on the south. The construction of this wing was brick to match the existing exterior. The main features of the new wing included new lecture hall, a large office space, which allowed for as many as 12-15 offices, an assistive technology demonstration room, two large classrooms with an accordion-type divider in the middle; and two storage spaces. An additional parking lot was added south of the wing (Sanderson, 2004).

Eventually, Dr. Blaine Petersen, Rehabilitation Services Executive Director, agreed to the obvious need and, after securing support of the Superintendent of the State Office of Education and the Utah State Board of Education, a formal request went to the legislature (Sanderson, 2004).

Not only that, Mr. Wales persuaded many members of the Utah Deaf community to assist with lobbying the capital facilities subcommittee and he gained the support of the officials from the Utah State Office of Education and Rehabilitation Services. His efforts had been paid off (Sanderson, 2004).

Through the legislative process, the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as a state agency had to first convince a capital facilities subcommittee of the building/space

need. This committee approved, the request was then moved to the State Building Board, which determined priorities among



A blueprint of the UCCD with a new wing

the many requests from state agencies and postsecondary institutions. While reviewing the requests, the board determined the amount of funds available as appropriated by the legislature for capital facilities construction, repairs, and other needs. Once determined, the board had established a priority list. The DSDHH was one of the top ten agencies on the list. The DSDHH, UAD and Utah Deaf community had to keep an eye on it, as they may not have a chance at funds when politics frequently enter the picture. The priorities could move around accordingly. For instance, an agency near the top can find itself moved to the middle or lower on the list as the work of the legislature continues. Hence, constant watchfulness is necessary, according to Dr. Sanderson (Sanderson, 2004).

New Wing for Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Approved!

With Mr. Wales's effort, the total cooperation of the Deaf community, and the support of the Utah State Board of Education and the Office of Rehabilitation Services administrators, most importantly, the support of key legislators, the new wing became a reality. Dr. Sanderson was glad that the wing was not bumped off the priority list in 1981, like the request for a new center of the deaf when it was bumped down from number five to eleven favoring the new dairy barn for cows at Utah State University. He said, "We [UAD and the Deaf community] were very naïve then" (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Sanderson said that one big reason the wing was funded that particular year was because there was not much funding for new projects. Most projects were requesting several million

dollars. The legislative committee was able to give \$1.5 million and luckily, the new wing request was for \$1 million. Thus, the wing was



Utah Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 2002

funded because the request was such a relatively small one (Sanderson, 2004).

On May 4, 2001, a groundbreaking ceremony for the new addition to the Utah Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing took place. The center staff members, Deaf and hearing communities, officials and legislators were present to celebrate the occasion (UAD Bulletin, June 2001; Sanderson, 2004).

Soon after the ceremony, construction commenced and work as usual continued in the center. The certain hallways and rooms were close off with the least possible disruption to activities (Sanderson, 2004).

At the same time, there was a change in administration. Mr. Wales obtained another job in Washington State. Marilyn Call, who had been serving under him as program director, was promoted in July 2001 to Acting Director of the DSDHH. After serving six months, she, with the enthusiastic support of the Deaf community, was promoted to director in January 2002 (Sanderson, 2004).

The new wing of the building was completed on time, in January 2002 and celebrated in March (Sanderson, 2004).

Did You Know?

According to Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, during Rusty's second year as an administrator, he held a strategic planning session that answered the question of whether the Division for Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Offices should serve the hard of hearing population and whether it should have a neutral position on communication methods.

The members of this committee studied the Utah Code that pertained to the division, and after much discussion agreed that services were meant to be offered to people who were Deaf, oral deaf, hard of hearing, and people with cochlear implants.

An in-house policy concerning communication states that all people should be able to understand and communicate each other at the Sanderson Community Center. In addition, all staff members whether they were deaf, hard of hearing or hearing was to sign what they were saying in the halls and common areas. In this way, the center was a barrier free communication area. The division strived to provide accommodations such as signing interpreters, voice interpreters, real time captioning and etc. (Sanderson, 2004; Marilyn Call, personal communication, October 15, 2009).

How the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs Grew to Fit the New Building

When the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) moved into the new building in 1992, the budget for services was quite small. One of the reasons Ms. Call was hired as Program Director was because of her experience on the Capitol Hill and her good relationship with many legislators. When she was hired, she realized there was much work to be done to expand needed social services so program could match the great caliber of the building (Sanderson, 2004).

When DSDHH was formed in 1988, the Division of Rehabilitation became the Office of Rehabilitation with four divisions under it in enabling growth for DSDHH (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire made the mistake of not involving Deaf people when she passed the SB 218, but she made it so that Rehabilitation Services and its four divisions could request line item funding each year for new programs. With this change and after Ms. Call's knowledge of new funding was obtained year by year for services such as counseling, case management, hard of hearing adjustment classes, and interpreter training and certification (Sanderson, 2004).

The Division budget grew by almost \$1.5 million in a decade and services were greatly expanded in the same time period. Each year Deaf and hard of hearing individuals lobbied for funded request (Sanderson, 2004).



Marilyn Call

Renaming the Utah Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

While Marilyn Call was the director of the Utah Community Center of the Deaf, she felt the history would not be complete without telling how the Utah Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing became the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She always thought the center should carry the name of a Deaf individual because the center would not have been possible without Deaf people's persistent advocacy (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003 Sanderson, 2004).

During the year of 2003, Ms. Call told a friend of hers about this dream she had to rename the community center. She wanted to see it named after a hero and a legend in the Deaf community. Her friend commented that he thought naming buildings for people was a stupid idea. He said 25 or 30 years, no one will know who Bob Sanderson is. Ms.

Call was amazed at his perspective, but she replied, "That is exactly why we need to name this building after a Deaf leader. People need to know about those who came before. They need to have their curiosity piqued and more importantly their gratitude inspired." She quoted saying, Richard L. Evans once said, "It is sobering or should be, to each of us to consider how much of the hours and efforts of others have gone into the making of all of us. The time others have taken to feed us, teach us, preserve our

freedom, write the books we read, invent the tools we use; all of the tangibles that are ours; the very houses and buildings in which we live our lives. All this and so much else unmentioned, others have done for us. We are the inheritors of so much more than we can



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson

calculate. One measure of our gratitude should be our willingness to work, to serve, to pass on to others such things as we ourselves have received” (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003; Sanderson, 2004).

Ms. Call stated that the community center would not exist without persistent, coordinated advocacy efforts of the Utah Deaf community that spanned at least five decades. She also desired to see in twenty to fifty years from now everyone who comes to the community center knows who Dr. Robert G. Sanderson is. Additionally, she wanted them to learn the history and appreciate what Dr. Sanderson and other great Deaf leaders of the 1990s such as Dave Mortensen and Dennis Platt had done (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003; Sanderson, 2004).



Marilyn Call

Additionally, Ms. Call reminded that Deaf leaders persevered at lobbying for the community center for 46 years. They also lobbied for the relay system, interpreters and many other accommodations the Utah Deaf community have today. 100 years ago Deaf people were not even allowed to marry or get a driver’s license.

Because of this, Ms. Call wanted people to know what a small group of Deaf leaders in Utah accomplished by hard work and sacrifice (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003; Sanderson, 2004).

According to Ms. Call, the Deaf Center was second home to individuals with hearing loss throughout the Wasatch Front. It was the one place where the communication barriers of the world did not exist, and it was a refuge. She believed a home such as this should bear the name of an outstanding Deaf individual (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003; Sanderson, 2004).

After all, Dr. Sanderson reminded Ms. Call of Old Faithful. A new sign in Yellowstone National Park explains that the Old Faithful geyser does not shoot as high or as fast as it used to perhaps because of earthquakes and human pollution. However, it is still the most faithful geyser in the park. She explained that Dr. Sanderson may not walk as fast anymore...or jump as high...but he was always there to do a job when he was needed...just like Old Faithful (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003; Sanderson, 2004).

Marilyn Call Gives a Speech at the Utah State Board of Education

On August 1, 2003, Marilyn Call gave a short speech at the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) on why the community center should be given a new name; Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She requested that the USBE name the Center after Dr. Sanderson. The board unanimously supported renaming the community center (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003).

At the State Board meeting, Marilyn Call shared the excellent reasons why Dr. Sanderson was chosen to represent Utah's Deaf leaders (Marilyn Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003).

1. Dr. Sanderson was the first person hired to create a rehabilitation service program for Deaf people. The many services that we have today stem from his creation of a Deaf Unit of Vocational Rehabilitation.
2. He was the Chairman for the Feasibility Study committee, which submitted the findings to Dr. Talbot in 1975. This officially began a quest for funding for a Center, which culminated in 1988.
3. He has been lobbying the legislature for better services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Utahns for over 40 years. Many of the services provided to the Deaf community today were his original ideas.
4. He was the first Deaf professional hired by the Utah State Board of Education.
5. He is the first Deaf person in Utah to get a Doctorate degree. He didn't need this for his job. He just wanted to prove that Deaf people could do it.
6. When he retired in 1985, he didn't quit working for the cause. He just stopped getting paid. He continued to serve as an advocate. Almost 20 year past retirement, he never misses an opportunity to lead and advocate for the deaf. He continued to drive down to the Capitol even on snowy days to lobby for the cause.

He continues to drive from Roy to the Center 2 or 3 times a week from Roy. He serves on various committees, boards, volunteers at the bookstore, and more.

The State Board unanimously supported renaming the community center (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003).

Historic Moment

Ron Nelson, UAD president went to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) meeting when Ms. Call gave a short speech on why the Utah Community Center of Deaf and Hard of Hearing should be given a new name. Robert Sanderson and his lovely wife, Mary, were present along with Dave Mortensen and his lovely wife, Shanna, Ron Nelson and his lovely wife, Kristi Mortensen. Dennis Platt, Camille Call-Garcia, Kathy Evans and Mitch Jensen also attended the meeting to witness such an historic moment.

Mr. Nelson said it was historical moment for all of them to see the USBE board voted unanimously to support the name change and said that Dr. Sanderson gave a short speech with tears in his eyes and thanked the board for the honor. He said he was lucky to be with the right people at the right time, especially his wife, Mary Sanderson and also Dave Mortensen.



Ron Nelson

Mr. Nelson observed that they were fortunate to have their previous center named after one of their own people. It gave them another reason to be proud of the center and take care of it the best they can (Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003).

Robert G. Sanderson Community Center Celebration

On October 4, 2003 from 6:30 to 9:00 PM, a huge renaming celebration was held in honor of Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, a leader in the Utah Deaf community of Utah.



Dr. I. King Jordan with his wife, Linda walking into the Sanderson Community Center

There were 1,000 people in attendance. Dr. Sanderson, his wife Mary, and his two sons, Gary and Barry, and their spouses and children came. Governor Olene S. Walker, Dr. Blaine Petersen, and Representative Judy Ann Buffmire also came. Dr. I. King Jordan, president of Gallaudet University flew from Washington, D.C. to join the celebration. Dr. Jordan spoke at the event. He and Dr. Sanderson were longtime friends (Dr. Sanderson was a member of the Gallaudet College's Board of Trustees during the 1988 Deaf President Now) (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Sanderson reminded Marilyn Call of the Energizer Bunny. Though his body was 84, his passion for advocacy was still strong. He never gave up. He just kept on going and going to make the world the best place possible for others who are Deaf or hard of hearing. He was respected by all and his legacy deserves to be immortalized by renaming this building the Robert G. Sanderson Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. After all, he deserved to get a large portion of the credit for keeping the dream alive (Call, *UAD Bulletin*, September 2003).



Dr. Sanderson has a heartwarming encounter with Beth Ann Stewart Campbell

The Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is the first state building that we are aware of to be named after a Deaf individual. It is the pride and the home of the Deaf community in Utah.

Dr. Sanderson said that, “Having the Utah center named after him was “humbling.” He added, “It’s something I never expected, “an honor that should also go to his supportive family, friends and colleagues. I didn’t stand alone” (Urbani, *Deseret News*, October 2003).

The Sanderson’s Memorial Stones and Bench

Upon the death of Dr. Robert G. Sanderson’s wife, Mary, in October 2008, Dr. Sanderson and his son Barry approached Marilyn Call about putting a bench and stone up



Dr. Sanderson and Marilyn Call. The man next to Robert is unknown

in memory of Mary. Marilyn felt this was appropriate and gave the okay because this building is named for Dr. Sanderson and they all knew that his time would follow within a few years. s. Call showed the family a few possible places for the bench and marker. When they walked the grounds, they said they could sense from Mary's spirit that she wanted the

memorial site to be close to the playground where children would be happily playing.

The day is here, so to speak. On March 31, 2012, Dr. Sanderson’s memorial stone, with name and dates, was placed with Mary’s stone. Gary Sanderson, who died in

2011, will have his name on the same stone as his father. Gary was a nationally known interpreter as well as the director of CSUN National Center on Deafness in California (Marilyn Call, personal communication, March 21, 2012).

Sculpture Unveiled at Celebration

In the November 2012 issue of the UAD Bulletin, Valerie Kinney wrote in her article that the highlight of the 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center was the unveiling of a metal sculpture of Dr. Robert G. Sanderson who was the namesake of the community center (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, November 2012).



Trenton Marsh
StreetLeverage.com

Trenton Marsh, a metalworker on the side, an interpreter trainer (Deaf) with the Utah Interpreter, carved the sculpture of Dr.

Sanderson. Under the sculpture, the words, “When we lose the right to be different, we lose the right to be free.” His birth date and death date, 2-20-1920 and 2-25-2012, are under the quotation.

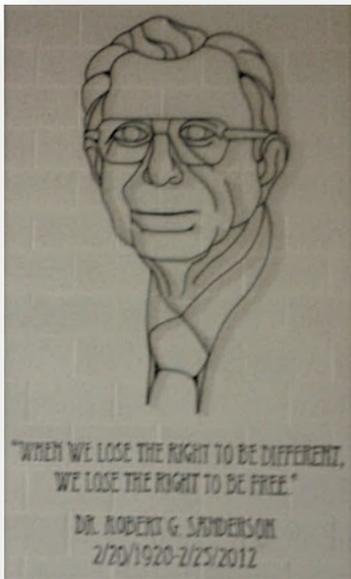
Dr. Sanderson’s family – son Barry and his wife, Teresa Sanderson, grandson Robert and his wife, Nicole Sanderson, granddaughter McKalle and husband Tyler Dahl - were present for the unveiling. When Barry was asked what his thoughts were as the sculpture was unveiled. He said, “The thing that struck me most was that Dad would have been thrilled to see so many people there,



Barry Sanderson and his wife, Teresa

young and old. When he and the other began work on the dream of having a community center, I don't think they could have imagined what it would become. It is a dream fulfilled by being a place where generation after generation can enjoy social events and have the necessary resources to lead happy and productive lives. We were honored to be there" (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, November 2012).

During the Italian dinner through a program hosted by Marilyn Call, director spoke of how five deaf leaders met to form a [1975] feasibility committee to explore ways and means of making a center for deaf and hard of hearing a reality. Of the five, only one is living: Dave Mortensen. Others were Dr. Sanderson, Ned C. Wheeler, Dora Laramie and Lloyd Perkins (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, November 2012).



The theme of the event was “Roaring 20’s Party,” was mirrored in the 1920’s costumes worn by some of the nearly 300 attendees. Ms. Call explained that the number 20 resonated – October 20, 1920’s era, 20th anniversary celebration, Dr. Sanderson’s birthday, 20th of February, and birth year, 1920 (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, November 2012).

After dinner, various games such as shuffleboard, pinball, and bingo were provided for everyone to play and the costume judging was also held. Some participants had fun showing off their dance moves. Ms. Kinney stated, “It was an evening to be remembered long after everyone went home! (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, November 2012).



Conclusion

All things considered, I wanted to say that we are very fortunate to have our own Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing available for deaf and hard of hearing populations in the state of Utah. It took the Utah Association for the Deaf officers and members of the Utah Deaf community 40 years to make our community center a reality. For years, the Deaf leaders, especially Dr. Sanderson and Dave Mortensen got active and remained active throughout the political process without giving up so that we have a luxurious community center to meet our communication and accessibility needs. In addition, they were persistent in keeping the ball rolling despite bumps in the road to reflect the vision of the community center. Now that they have conquered hurdles to realize the Sanderson



Dr. Sanderson

Community Center for the benefit of the Deaf community. I hope this historical document helps you remember and appreciate what the self-sacrificed leaders had done for us that we now take for granted.



W. David Mortensen
Photo by Robert L. Bonnell

Notes

Beth Ann Campbell, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, September 20, 2012.

Darlene Stewart Cochran, interview with her brother, Gene Stewart, April 4, 2012.

Dave Mortensen, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, April 3, 2012.

Kenneth L. Kinner, personal communication, 2008.

Marilyn Call, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, October 15, 2009.

Marilyn Call, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, January 25, 2012.

Marilyn Call, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, March 21, 2012.

Norman Williams, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, April 12, 2012.

Norman Williams, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, May 8, 2012.

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