

# **History of Interpreting Service in Utah**

**Compiled & Written by Jodi B. Kinner  
Edited by Valerie G. Kinney**

**2015**

Prior to the late 1950's and 1960's, there were no sign language classes or interpreter preparation programs (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). It was common for Children of Deaf Adults, known as CODAs, to serve out of the goodness of their hearts as interpreters for the Utah Deaf community in their occasional events, appointments, meetings, church activities, and [more](#). Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, a Utah native, CODA, and former director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf, noted that for years, the interpreters, particularly CODAs, volunteered to interpret for deaf people until the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) was formed in 1965 (Stewart, UAD Bulletin, June 1973). During the 1960s and 1970s revolutionary period, some minority groups across the nation attempted to get social equality in society at large. It was a critical time to expand the field of sign language interpreting (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). With the impact of the RID climate change, particularly the Code of Ethics (now called the Code of Professional Conduct), the role of interpreters eventually changed from "helper" to professionals.



**Beth Ann Stewart Campbell**  
**Photo by Robert L. Bonnell**

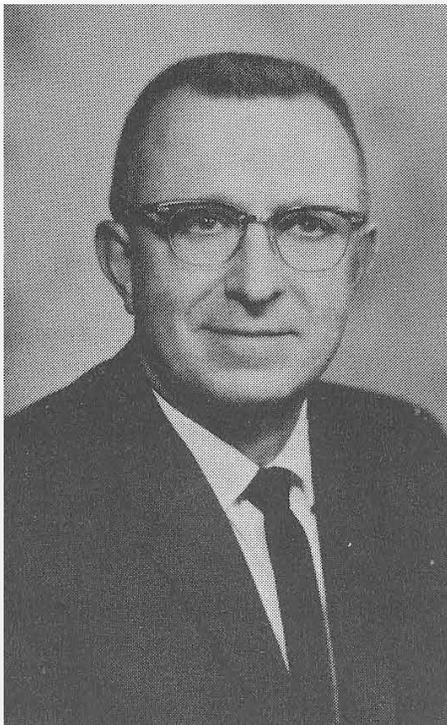
Besides CODA interpreters, the Utah Deaf community also leaned heavily on hard of hearing people who learned their language before utilizing hearing aids, and those who had lost their hearing later had acquired good oral speech. In Utah by 1961, the percentage of those who became deaf later started to decrease while the percentage of those who were born deaf started to increase. In addition, the proportion of deaf with multiple disabilities was increasing (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1961, p. 2). This impacted the need of interpreting service among the members of the Utah Deaf community. They

could no longer depend on those hard of hearing individuals to interpret whenever needed. It was obviously time to form the RID organization to meet their interpreting needs.

## **A Workshop on Interpreting for the Deaf**

On June 14-17, 1964, Ball State Teachers College (Ball State University) in

Muncie, Indiana formed an “Interpreting for the Deaf” workshop to bring a more formal and structured foundation to the training of interpreters and to upgrade services as well as support offered to deaf population. Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, a representative of the Utah Association for the Deaf and president of the National Association of the Deaf was appointed to attend this workshop as a consultant (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1964; Storrer, *UAD Bulletin*, May 2008).



**Robert G. Sanderson**  
**UAD Bulletin, Winter 1965**

## **A National Registry to Interpreters of the Deaf Established**

One year later in 1965, the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) was established after being pushed on several fronts. Discussions had pointed to the need for the development of a model state law, which would make provision for interpreters to assist the deaf population. At the time, many states had such laws giving the deaf a

constitutional right to have an interpreter available in court. The Deaf community felt this was important whenever a deaf person's life, liberty, property, health or pursuit of normal living was in jeopardy. Hence, guidelines were set up to make routine the appointment of an interpreter to assist deaf people who may have to appear in court, in order that legal rights may be safeguarded (UAD Bulletin, Spring 1965). In 1972, the RID became an incorporated organization. Soon thereafter, especially when the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990, the interpreting services became a rapidly expanding field. Schools, postsecondary institutes, government agencies, hospitals, court/legal systems and private business employ interpreters.



**Madelaine Burton Perkins relays information for Robert G. Sanderson during proceeding in Judge Gordon Hall's courtroom (UAD Bulletin, February 1972)**

### **Beth Ann Stewart Campbell Becomes the First Nationally Certified Interpreter**

Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, a Utah native, CODA, and former director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf had the distinction of being the first nationally certified interpreter in the United States and the story of how this happened is interesting (Campbell, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1992). While she was trained to be a professional certified interpreter working with Dr. Sanderson, she was sent to a National Registry to Interpreters of the Deaf training program in Indiana in 1965 (Beth Ann

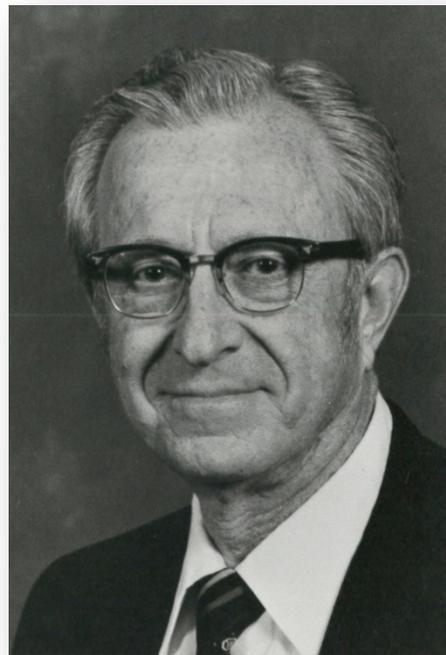


**Beth Ann Stewart Campbell  
UAD Bulletin, Fall-Winter, 1970-71**

Campbell, personal communication, September 18, 2012). Beth Ann's husband, Dr. Jay J. Campbell, a former Deputy Superintendent of Utah State Office of Education and an ally to the Utah Deaf community, shared that part of the training was to select and certify interpreters on a national basis. All the participants were tested and were asked to draw straws to determine the order to be tested. Beth Ann was selected to be the last one to be tested and the lady next to her drew first. She turned to Beth Ann and said: "I don't want to be first." Beth Ann replied: "I don't want to be last." They just exchanged numbers and Beth Ann ended up being tested first. It then happened that she became the first one tested and the first one who passed the examination. She then became the first nationally certified professional interpreter (Campbell, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1992). From then on, Beth Ann was a pioneer in the interpreting field.

### **Workshop on Interpreting in Salt Lake City, Utah**

Under the direction of Robert G. Sanderson, an all-day workshop on interpreting issues was held at the Ramada Inn in Salt Lake City on June 3, 1967. The workshop was financed by the Utah Division of Rehabilitation as a part of its services to the deaf adults. About 45 participants were in attendance - community leaders, parents, teachers, and deaf people. The morning session featured talks by Dr. Vaughn L. Hall, administrator of Division of Rehabilitation, Maurice Warshaw, chairman of Utah Governor's Committee of Employment of the Handicapped, Dr. Max Cutler, a clinical psychologist, Judge Aldon J. Anderson, Robert K. Ward, statewide planning director of Division of Rehabilitation; and Lloyd Perkins, president of Salt Lake Valley LDS Branch for the Deaf.



**Robert G. Sanderson**  
Photo courtesy of the Gallaudet University  
Achieves

After lunch, the participants were divided into three groups to discuss specific problems and made recommendations. The workshop was conducted by Robert Sanderson and he was impressed with all participants' feedback. The purpose of the plans was to implement the recommendations, including setting up a chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and a training program (UAD Bulletin, Spring-Summer, 1967).

## **Organization of Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf**

On October 5, 1968, the Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (URID) was organized and became an affiliate chapter of the national organization, National Registry



**Gene Stewart**  
UAD Bulletin, Winter 1970

of Interpreter for the Deaf. This first chapter meeting of the URID was held at the Ramada Inn in Salt Lake City, Utah to create a constitution as well as bylaws and to elect a slate of officers to serve in the URID (UAD Bulletin, Fall 1968). Present at the meeting were 41 deaf and hearing persons, including Albert Pimentel, Executive Director of the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, from Washington, D.C.

Officers elected were as follow: Gene Stewart, president; Madelaine Burton, first vice president; Edith Wheeler (deaf) second vice president; Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, secretary; Dennis Platt (deaf), treasurer; Jonathan Freston, board member; Ned Wheeler (deaf), 6 year trustee; Lloyd Perkins (deaf), 2 year trustee.

## **The Purpose of Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf**

The purpose of URID was to provide an effective organization of interpreters to be used by and for the deaf as well as the general public for all purposes where interpreters would be beneficial. A registry of interpreters for both sign language and oral deaf persons was to be prepared and maintained by the URID. Since the establishment of URID in 1968, sixteen members joined this organization. Most of them were children of deaf adults, commonly known as CODA. Many of them were deaf and one of them was hard of hearing. Two individuals were married to a deaf spouse. Only one hearing individual learned sign language as a house parent and counselor at the South Dakota for the Deaf. Hearing persons served as [interpreters](#) and deaf individuals served as [reverse interpreters](#). The following [people](#) served [either](#) as an interpreter or reverse interpreter:

1. Lucy M. Greenwood (CODA)
2. Dennis R. Platt (Deaf)
3. Betty J. Jones (CODA)
4. Madelaine P. Burton (Spouse of a deaf adult)
5. Keith W. Tolzin (former houseparent and counselor at South Dakota School for the Deaf)
6. Beth Ann Stewart Campbell (CODA)
7. Nancy F. Murray (Deaf spouse, later O'Brien. Nancy herself is deaf. Her spouse, Johnny Murray, is deaf as well).
8. Ned C. Wheeler (Deaf)
9. Iola Elizabeth Jensen (Deaf)
10. Evern Lee Smith (CODA)
11. Edith D. Wheeler (Hard of Hearing)
12. Robert G. Sanderson (Deaf)
13. Gene Stewart (CODA)
14. Doris L. Wastlund (CODA)
15. Lloyd H. Perkins (Deaf)
16. Jon C. Freston (CODA) (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1970).



**Lucy M. Greenwood**



**Dennis R. Platt**



**Betty J. Jones**



**Madelaine P. Burton (Perkins)**



**Keith W. Tolzin**



**Beth Ann Stewart Campbell**



**Nancy F. Murray**



**Ned C. Wheeler**



**Lola Elizabeth Jensen**



**Evorn Lee Smith**



**Edith D. Wheeler**



**Robert G. Sanderson**



**Gene Stewart**



**Doris L. Wastlund**



**Lloyd H. Perkins**



**Jon C. Freston**

## Channel 4 News Controversy

When Beth Ann Stewart Campbell was interpreting the Channel 4 News on TV in 1971, Dr. Grant B. Bitter, an ardent oral advocate, along with oral supporters, were disturbed with her signing on TV. The oralists complained to Robert G. Sanderson's boss, Dr. Avarid Rigby, and asked him to stop allowing Beth Ann to interpret the news. At the meeting with the oral advocates, Gene Stewart (CODA and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor), his boss, Robert and Beth Ann were 'on pins and needles' to hear how Dr. Rigby would respond. Gene recalled there were three main news channels and Beth Ann was only on one of these channels. They were relieved when Dr. Rigby looked at the oral advocates and said, "Well, if you don't like watching her why don't you just change the channel?" The oral advocates also wanted Robert Sanderson fired. Dr. Rigby responded by saying, "I'm not going to fire him, he is one of my best employees" (Robert G. Sanderson, personal communication, October 2006; Stewart, *DSDHH Newsletter*, April 2012, p. 1).



**Dr. Grant B. Bitter**  
**The Utah Eagle, 1967**

This situation prompted Robert Sanderson to get his Ph.D. After the meeting, he told Gene Stewart, "No one listens to you unless you have a Ph.D., after your name; so, I'm going back to school" (Stewart, *DSDHH Newsletter*, April 2012, p. 1). Apparently, Robert Sanderson struggled to get everyone to listen to him while everyone listened to Dr. Bitter simply because he had Ph.D. at the time. As explained in "The Deaf Education History in Utah," there was animosity between Robert Sanderson (he earned his PhD in 1974) and Dr. Bitter over the philosophy of deaf education since 1965.

While battling with Dr. Bitter concerning the Channel 4 News, Dr. Sanderson, a non-member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, asked Lloyd Perkins,

bishop of the Salt Lake Valley Ward for the Deaf and Kenneth Kinner, branch president of the Ogden Branch for the Deaf to request church members to write a thank you note to Channel 4 News for providing an interpreter on their news. Judging from the photo of the February 1972 UAD Bulletin issue, Beth Ann continued to interpret the news after the meeting with Dr. Rigby a year ago.



**Beth Ann Stewart Campbell interprets for deaf TV viewers as Newscaster (UAD Bulletin, February 1972). She gave her time without pay serving as the interpreter down in the right-hand corner of the TV screen on Channel 4 for the news broadcast (Campbell, UAD Bulletin, March 1992)**

March 12, 1971

Mr. Lloyd Perkins &  
Mr. Kenneth Kinner

Dear

Channel 4 TV will have Beth Ann Stewart interpreting the morning news at about 8:45 a.m. beginning March 15th (Monday).

This will be one of the finest things that has ever happened, so we need to give the station 100% support to offset the almost certain reaction of oralists to "signs on TV".

So will you please ask your church membership and all of your hearing friends to write a simple note of thanks to Channel 4 TV, and ask them to do it in their own words.

It can be very simple --- "Thank you for putting an interpreter on TV for us deaf people. I enjoy it. Please put it on the evening news too so my husband can see it also" or similar things. Don't make it any longer, and please tell them NOT to try to start a long and rambling letter about oral/manual fights. Just "Thanks, we like it and want more!"

We'll get some circulars out soon, and will send them to you.

Regards,

ROBERT G. SANDERSON  
Coordinator, Services to the Deaf

RGS:lr

## **A Workshop for the Training of Interpreters for the Deaf**

In spite of battling with Dr. Grant B. Bitter, this did not stop the Utah Deaf community, especially Robert G. Sanderson from expanding the interpreting service. On May 6, 1972, the Division of Adult Education and Training and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation sponsored the Workshop for the Training of Interpreters for the Deaf.

The speakers at the workshop were: Ralph Neesam, president of the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Dr. Ray L. Jones, director of the Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf, San Fernando Valley State College, Northridge, California, and Robert E. Bevill, consumer-consultant, University of Arizona.

After the presentation, the objectives of the workshop were to develop professionalism among the interpreters, both oral and manual. Some of the topics discussed were ‘certification standards and procedures, evaluation methods, training experiences, fee schedules, and interpersonal relationships between deaf people and the interpreters, and between interpreters and interpreters’ (UAD Bulletin, June 1972).

### **Observation of Beth Ann Stewart Campbell Regarding the National and State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and Its Impact on the Utah Deaf Community**

Beth Ann Stewart Campbell shared her insight regarding several aspects of the interpreter and her job as an interpreter in the June 1973 issue of the UAD Bulletin. She hoped the Utah Deaf community would understand the responsibilities that interpreters had and compensate by figuring out their responsibilities as well as courtesies towards the interpreter.

Through the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification standards, certified interpreters got paid working as professional interpreters and were

expected to comply with the Code of Ethics (Code of Professional Conduct). Since the establishment of the RID in 1965 and Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf in 1968, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell observed the relationship between the interpreters and members of the Utah Deaf community eventually changed. She said that with ‘the new status of professionalism, the interpreter became almost like a machine.’ Likewise, she acknowledged that ‘the interpreter in some ways lost her identity with her own thoughts, feeling and viewpoints.’ Comparatively, Beth Ann recognized that the Utah Deaf community felt that if ‘the interpreter becomes so much like an unthinking and unfeeling machine, she would lose what they love: her ability to be a warm loving and understanding person.’ Beth Ann pointed out that ‘the interpreter was first of all a friend when not interpreting.’ She also emphasized that the interpreter should be able to accept deaf people on this basis when not acting the role of an interpreter and should know and always be dedicated to the cause of deafness (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, June 1973).



**Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, 1973**

Beth Ann Campbell recalled, “For years, the interpreters volunteered to interpret for deaf people until the Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was formed. Discussing money compensation for services became sticky between interpreter and deaf consumer” (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, June 1973). Beth Ann emphasized that for moral reasons, the interpreter should not accept money for providing services when she, herself, can see that it would be a hardship on deaf consumers that were in need of service. In this case, she clarified “if the interpreter feels that she cannot interpret without charging a fee, and then it is the responsibility of the interpreter to check beforehand as to whether or not

the job should be with or without monetary compensation from the deaf consumer” (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, June 1973). To be sure, Beth Ann recommended that the fee should be discussed in advance and is agreeable to both parties before the actual interpreting is done. With this in mind, she was concerned that charging a fee after the job is done and the deaf consumer feels that the fee was too much can destroy trust between the interpreter and the consumer. Additionally, it would be hard on the interpreter to expect to be paid and the deaf consumer telling her that he has no money. Beth Ann said the interpreter probably went through the trouble of hiring a babysitter and paying her own gas mileage (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, June 1973).

At the present time, Beth Ann Campbell recognized that there were times when ‘the interpreter was willing to interpret because of her love and dedication to the deaf



**Interpreter, Betty Jones, left, practices sign language while another interpreter, Ms. Kinnett, looks on  
Deseret News, January 24, 1972**

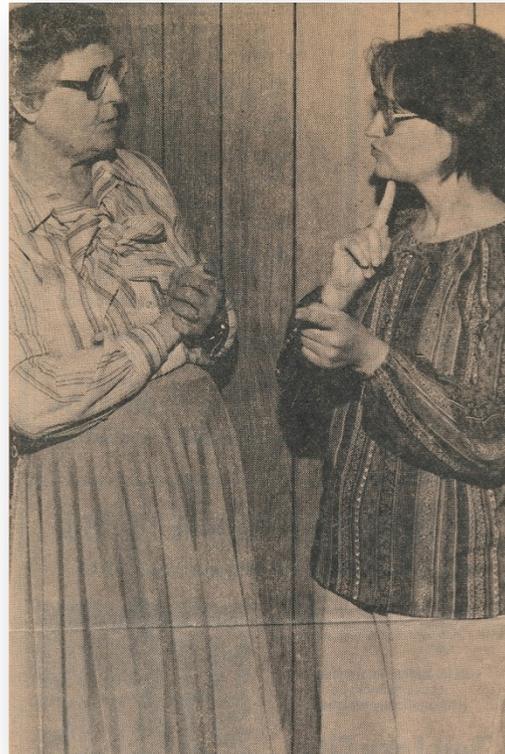
person. The interpreter had the skill and wanted to assist.’ She however observed that some deaf people took interpreters for granted at times and had often put them on a pedestal. For instance, the interpreters were raised up above the status they really were. Beth Ann shared her perspective that ‘the interpreter had to bridge a gap in helping the deaf person communicate with the world around him and in a way; the interpreter was a “hearing aid”

to the deaf.’ With this in mind, Beth Ann clarified that the interpreters should remember that they had been given the opportunity to be of service and the privilege to use their interpreting skills.

For this reason, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell noted ‘the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf recognized the unique position of an interpreter in the life of a deaf person. Hence, this organization established the principle of ethical behavior, known as Code of Ethics, to protect both deaf person and the interpreter in a profession that existed to serve those with communication barriers’ (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, June 1973).

Under those circumstances, RID recognized that through the interpreters, ‘deaf persons can be granted equality with hearing persons in the matter of their right of communication’ (UAD Bulletin, November 1973).

Further, RID recognized that ‘the basic system for self-regulation governing the professional conduct of the interpreter was the same as that governing the ethical conduct of any business or profession with the addition of stronger emphasis on the high ethical characteristics of the interpreter’s role in helping an often time misunderstood group of people’ (UAD Bulletin, November 1973). With the support of Code of Ethics, Beth Ann’s observation of both National and State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and its impact on the Utah Deaf community was valid.



**Lucy Greenwood, left, translates for Rosie Losee. Lucy is employed at the United Way to provide interpreting service for the deaf in Davis County, Utah  
Unknown date & publication**

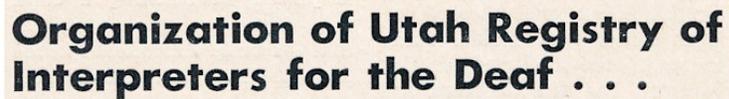
### **First Interpreter Service for the Deaf**

In the 1970s, Utah Association for the Deaf (UAD) officers secured and administered United Way funding to establish the first interpreting service for the deaf in Utah to serve the deaf and hard of hearing population – probably “first” in the nation (UAD Bulletin, June 1995, p. 3; UAD Bulletin, September 1996, p. 2; Sanderson, *UAD*

*Bulletin*, January 1999, p. 3).

## **Utah Certified Interpreters**

On November 16, 1974, thirteen Utah interpreters successfully passed the Utah Registry of Interpreters state certification. The well-known interpreters who passed both local and national certificates were Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Betty Jones, Madeleine Burton, and Lucy Greenwood. Two deaf individuals, Dr. Robert G. Sanderson and Dave Mortensen were first deaf Utahns to pass the state certification as reverse interpreters (UAD Bulletin, April 1975).



**Organization of Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf . . .**

## **The Establishment of Provo URID**

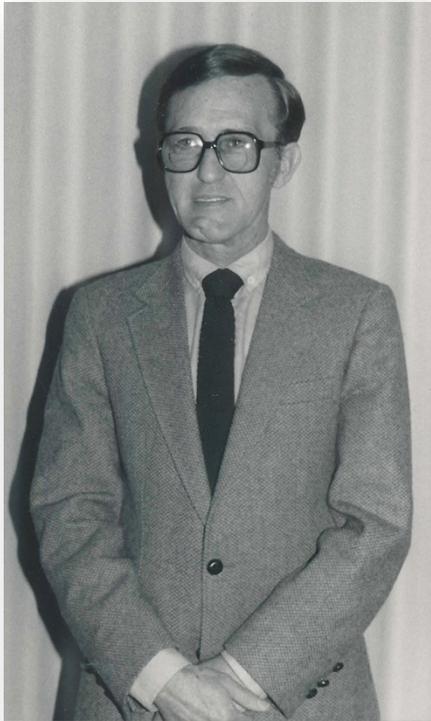
In 1975, the Provo Chapter of Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was established. Its first president was Emil Bussio and 23 members were on the roll (UAD Bulletin, June 1975). It is unknown how long this chapter was operated or when it was closed.

## **The Role of Utah Association for the Deaf In Interpreting Service**

Under the direction of Dave Mortensen, [president](#) of Utah Association for the Deaf (UAD), he had been a friend and advocate of interpreters for many years. He had served in many leadership capacities that had changed the way interpreters think and approach their work. Through Dave's leadership and vision, interpreters recognized the importance of quality interpretations and respect for the Utah Deaf community members they serve. Old-time interpreters cherished their opportunities working with him. He took interpreters under his wing and acted as a mentor while he patiently sat through important meetings. In addition, he took his time to provide feedback to the interpreters he worked

with. The training opportunities interpreters had were a direct result of his unwavering commitment to the professional of interpreting, and the Utah Deaf community.

In 1982, Dave Mortensen, as UAD president, actively worked with the Salt Lake Area Community Council to get funding for UAD's interpreting project. As a result, the



**W. David Mortensen**  
Photo by Robert L. Bonnell

money allowed the UAD to hire two full time interpreters housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf to service the “entire-state.” As can be seen, Dave was very “persuasive and persistent.” The project was the ultimate impetus for the development of professional interpreting in the state of Utah. Due to pressure from the Salt Lake Area Community Services Council, UAD had to give up the interpreting project because they felt it was a statewide problem. This however did not stop Dave from seeking improvement in interpreting services. He, as UAD president continued his effort to present the need of deaf people for reliable, competent, trained, and professional

interpreting services. Moreover, he lobbied the state legislature, and was a member of one of the several legislative committees that studied the sign language and the interpreting issues (UAD Bulletin, July 2003).

### **The Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Hold an Annual Workshop**

Since the establishment of the Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf in 1968, the training workshops were held annually. Trained interpreters who wished to become certified were practically required to attend the workshops where information was presented and skills learned in order to pass state certification examinations. Over the

years, the Code of Ethics, Preparation of the State Certification Examinations, Reverse Interpreting, Interpreting Complexities: Role and Function of the Interpreter, The Oral Interpreter: A New Professional, and many more were taught in a series of workshops for interpreters (UAD Bulletin, July 1976).

### **First Training Program for Interpreters**

In 1983, the Utah Association for the Deaf (UAD) assisted the Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (URID) in developing its program for certification of qualified interpreters. In cooperation with this organization, the UAD developed the first training program for interpreters, and the

first testing and certification systems in Utah – probably another “first” in the nation (Sanderson, *UAD Bulletin*, September 1996, p. 1-3; Sanderson, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1999).



**Doris Wastlund interprets the classroom at the University of Utah  
UAD Bulletin, February 1972**

The UAD also advocated for and achieved passage of the first interpreter bill called “Interpreters for the Hearing-Impaired” at the 1983 Utah State Legislature. This law gave recognition to the use of qualified interpreters in the legal system, such as in courtroom, and in doctor’s office/hospital visits. This law also protects the confidentiality of all interpreted communications (UAD Bulletin, June 1995, p. 3; Sanderson, *UAD Bulletin*, October 1999, p. 1 & 3; UAD Bulletin, January 2003, p. 3).

### **The Change of the Utah Interpreting Services**

For years, the Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was assisted and operated by employees of the Division of Rehabilitation. In the 1980s, the individuals outside of

the Division were elected to operate the URID (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, September 1990).

In 1985, there were also two agencies where the members of the Utah Deaf community requested for interpreting services. One was at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful and the other was at Salt Lake County Mental Health. Interpreting services were available for court appearances, doctor's appointments, job interviews and the like. Deaf people themselves had to assume full responsibility to call to schedule an interpreter for an appointment ahead of time (*UAD Bulletin*, February 1985).

In 1990, officers of the URID decided to transfer the interpreter training, referral, and certification responsibilities to the Division of Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH), housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf (later renamed Robert G. Sanderson Community Center).



**Mitchel Jensen**

DSDHH gladly accepted the responsibilities (Gene Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, September 1990). Two years later in May 1992, the DSDHH established a Utah Interpreting Program (UIP) under the direction of Mitchel Jensen (*UAD Bulletin*, June 1992). The agencies shifted their contact to the UIP to schedule an interpreter and send an interpreter for the members of the Utah Deaf community.

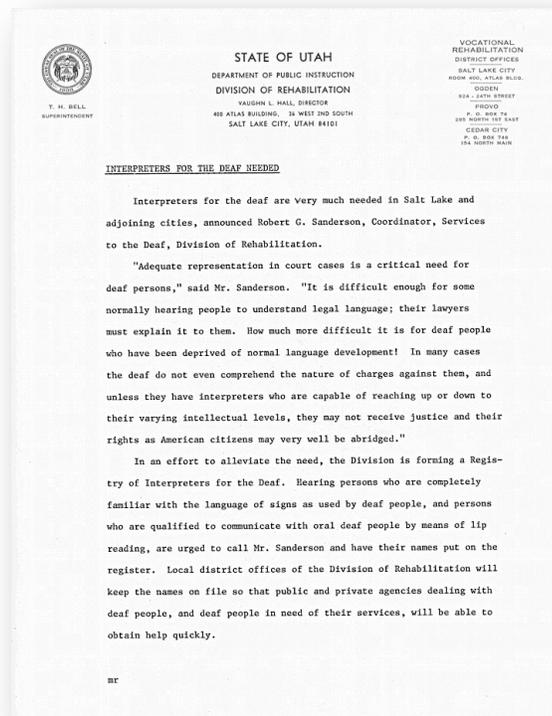
After the enactment of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), more interpreting agencies such as InterWest Interpreting Agency, Kajika Interpreting Agency and others were established to provide interpreting services for the Utah Deaf community. ADA had profound impact in the interpreting services across the nation because it placed the

responsibility for ensuring “effective communication” to remove barriers by providing furnishing auxiliary aids and services when necessary.

## The Impact of Americans with Disabilities Act

Two years after the enactment of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, Mitch Jensen, a former Vocational Rehabilitation counselor had been offered the job as a director of the Utah Interpreting Services (UIS) at the Division of Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Taylorsville in 1992. He learned American Sign Language through his deaf brother, Barry (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, May 1992).

At the time, Mitch Jensen predicted that the Utah Interpreting Services was likely to face many changes because of ADA. Though this federal law, more doctors, lawyers, and other private and public services were required to pay for interpreting services (Stewart, *UAD Bulletin*, May 1992).



Eventually, Mr. Jensen’s prediction came true when 19 of 21 doctors told him they will no longer treat deaf patients if an interpreter is required. As mentioned in the Salt Lake Tribune dated December 25, 1992, the Utah Interpreter Services, part of the state Office of Rehabilitation, notified doctors in November 1992 that it will no longer provide interpreters for free. In that case, doctors and other healthcare providers will be billed between \$10 and \$25 per hour for interpreters. Mitch warned them that ‘refusal

violates the Americans with Disabilities Act' (Wilson, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 25, 1992).

Further, Mitch Jensen explained that the ADA required the providers to take responsibility to ensure "effective communication." This would mean the doctors were required to pay an interpreter, if the deaf patient needed one (Wilson, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 25, 1992).

With this in mind, Tamara Wharton, ADA ombudsman for the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities said, "the refusal to treat deaf patients would amount to discrimination." She further said, "The unfortunate thing is that people feel if they don't have to comply. If you refuse to accept patients for that reason, it's discrimination" (Wilson, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 25, 1992).

In contrast, Dr. Robert H. Horne, a Sandy orthopedic and hand surgeon said, "saddling doctors with the financial burden of paying interpreters is not fair." He argued, "Why should I bear the expense of treating the disabled?" He felt that somewhere along the line they can't put the whole burden on the physician for what would normally be paid for by a state institution. He also said, "he already required treating patients on public assistance when he is on duty in the emergency room. But the government payment for such treatment is lower than his billed charges." Further, Dr. Home questioned, "Why should I be taking care of people for free?" (Wilson, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 25, 1992).

Nonetheless, Ms. Wharton clarified and responded that 'the healthcare professionals are not being targeted, because anyone who serves clients with disabilities must ensure equal access. Tax credits are given for providing such "auxiliary aids" as interpreters.' She said, "Just as we're trying to remove those structural barriers, we're trying to remove the communication barriers" (Wilson, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 25, 1992).

## **Deaf Community Questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**

Apparently, the situation with doctors for refusing to pay for interpreting services led many members of the Utah Deaf community to questions themselves concerning the ADA. The questions they asked themselves were: “What is the impact of ADA in my own personal life? Can ADA work for me? How can I make it work?” (Jensen, *UAD Bulletin*, February 1993, p. 3).

Correspondingly, Mitch Jensen, director of the Utah Interpreter Service clarified in the February 1993 issue of the UAD Bulletin that ‘ADA had some far-reaching implications that made it possible for them to have the same opportunities that hearing individuals had’ and they were, as follows:



**Mitch Jensen, left, Director of Utah Interpreter Service and  
Jennifer Harvey Storrer, right, interpreter  
Salt Lake Tribune, September 22, 2005**

- It allows you to attend classes that otherwise you would have been unable to attend because no interpreter was available.
- It allows you to see your doctor, dentist, and lawyer and communicate in the same way that hearing persons do, through use of an interpreter or other assistive aids.
- It allows you to become part of the legislative process that previously you may have been exempted from because you were unable to communicate with those involved.
- It allows you to serve on jury duty, and have the same opportunities and hearing individuals have.

In the light of resistance by doctors for paying the interpreting services, Mitch reported to the Utah Deaf community that “All the doctors and lawyers had been

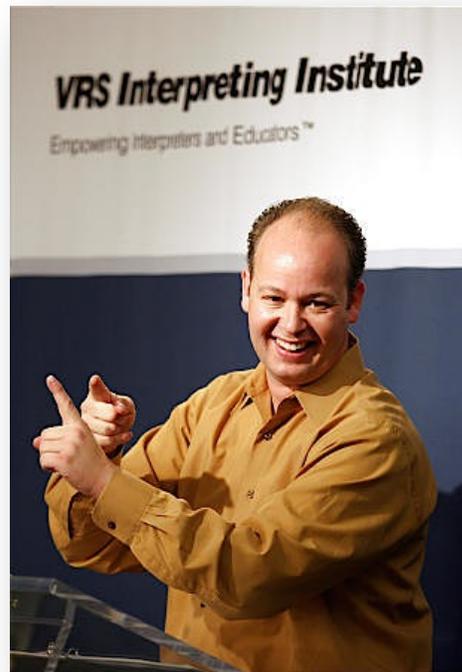
contacted by the Utah Interpreter Program regarding the ADA's requirement for providing an interpreter. Doctors and lawyers were informed that they were required to provide an interpreter for a deaf individual during the appointments with them. Some had been very resistant to this" (UAD Bulletin, February 1993). Furthermore, Mitch informed them that that he hoped 'with time many will become understanding of this law and will provide them with the appropriate communication to which the members of the Utah Deaf community were entitled.' Moreover, Mitch emphasized them that 'ADA process only works if the Utah Deaf community becomes involved and let others know what they need and require' (UAD Bulletin, February 1993, p. 3).

By April 1993, Mitch Jensen began to observe how ADA was beginning to take effect. More and more businesses and public accommodations took responsibility of finding interpreters for deaf individuals who need them. Notably, the calls from deaf individuals became less. Conversely, more and more calls were from those who needed interpreters for deaf individuals. Mitch said, "This is the way that ADA works best – taking the responsibility off the deaf and putting it on the hearing individuals to find and provide interpreters" (Jensen, *DSDHH Newsletter*, April 1993, p. 2).

### **The New UTRID**

On September 26, 1992, a special meeting was held at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf to establish a new affiliate state chapter of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, known as UTRID. It is unknown when and why the former Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (URID) was closed.

The purpose of this organization was to bring the Utah Interpreter



Chris Wakeland talks about ASL at the Sorenson Communications Video Relay Service Interpreting Institute. Photo courtesy of Kristen Murphy, *Deseret News*, November 8, 2009

community together and help to professionalize the profession of interpretation as well as to solidify ties between interpreters and the Deaf community. The UTRID's first board of directors were:

- President: Chris Wakeland
- Vice-President: Catherine Spaulding
- Secretary: Alli Robertson
- Treasurer: Jennifer Forsgren
- SLC Region Representative: Annette Tull
- Provo Region Representative: Dan Parvz

(Wakeland, *UAD Bulletin*, November 1992).

### **The Enactment of Senate Bill 41**

During the 1993 Utah State Legislative session, individuals spent countless hours advocating and lobbying the legislators to get the House Bill (HB) 161 enacted. It was sponsored by Mel Brown and passed during that session (Jensen, *DSDHH Newsletter*, April 1993).

With the passage of House Bill 161, the State Legislature Task Force was formed



**Jean Greenwood Thomas**

in 1993 to study interpreting service needs for the State of Utah (Jensen, *DSDHH Newsletter*, May 1993). Jean Thomas, an ASL interpreter, ASL teacher and daughter of a well-known interpreter, Lucy Greenwood, served on the task force to recognize the interpreter state certification through a formal interpreter training program and recognize American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language in school (Jean Thomas, personal communication, October 24, 2012). Kristi Mortensen, a deaf education

advocate, was also a member of the task force (Mortensen-Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1994).

The task force was to address areas, as follows:

- Certification, enforcement, and definition of a qualified interpreter.
- Minimum standards required to work as an interpreter in Utah in elementary school, high school, post-secondary school, community interpreting, legal and medical situations.
- Recruitment of qualified interpreters.
- Training of qualified interpreters.
- Teaching ASL as a foreign language in Utah (Jensen, DSDHH Newsletter, May 1993).



**Kristi Mortensen**

After months of conducting the study of interpreter certification issues and standards, both Senate Bill (SB) 41 and Senate Bill (SB) 42 were passed (Mortensen-Nelson, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1994). SB 41 focused on interpreter training and certification while SB 42 recognized ASL as a foreign language in secondary and post-secondary institutions (Kinney, *UAD Bulletin*, April 1994).



**Annette Tull**  
Photo by Robert L. Bonnell

During the 1994 Utah State Legislature, the Utah Association for the Deaf successfully got the Interpreter Training Bill, known as SB 41, passed. It became a formal part of the curriculum at Salt Lake Community College, funded by the State of Utah. Dave Mortensen, UAD president and Annette Tull, interpreter training program instructor at Salt Lake Community College,

worked hard in advocating for this bill going through the legislative process. Since the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), SB 41 had a particularly strong impact in promoting interpreting services to meet communication accessibility needs for individuals who were deaf. It barely passed the Senate. Legislators were aware of how important SB 41 was due to the ADA law and was therefore enacted during the 1994 Legislature (Mortensen, *UAD Bulletin*, February 1994). Without Dave, interpreters would not have the Interpreter Training Program at Salt Lake Community College. No agencies that served deaf and hard of hearing populations would have the information necessary to continue funding training for quality interpreters. After all, Dave had provided ‘a great legacy that invigorated interpreters towards professional development’ (UAD Bulletin, July 2003). Behind scenes, Jean Thomas and Kristi Mortensen, then a legislative intern who had network access to key people with the 1993 State Legislature Study Group, played a huge role advocating the passage of the SB 41 and SB 42.

Utah is *the first* state to enact the interpreter certification law. As of 2015, Utah is one of three states (South Dakota in 2006 and Illinois in 2007) to require state certification for all interpreters and it was the first of those three states to pass this law (Schafer, *The Views*, Fall 2014-Winter/Spring 2015). Compared to other states, the Utah Deaf community is really spoiled to have luxury services full of qualified interpreters.

### **Dave Mortensen's Service**

In 1994, Dave Mortensen, UAD president also lobbied the Utah State Legislature to recognize American Sign Language as a language, known as Senate Bill 42. This bill provided legitimacy for the language of the deaf in many applications. One application was in the establishment of the

Interpreter Training Program at the Salt Lake Community College, which Dave helped



**Dave Mortensen**

set up (UAD Bulletin, November 1999). He accomplished this task by speaking with committees at the Community Councils of Salt Lake City and United Way. This led to the establishment of the interpreter service operated by the UAD. Appointments could be made through UAD for situations such as doctor's appointments, meetings with lawyers, and more. That morphed into the Utah Interpreter Program housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (renamed Robert G. Sanderson Community Center) with Mitchel Jensen as director. A numbers of interpreting training programs at various colleges and universities were expanded throughout Utah and a number of freelance interpreting businesses also sprang up (Valerie G. Kinney, personal communication, November 4, 2013). It was through Dave's reminders to the medical community to provide interpreters for their deaf patients/clients that the medical professionals now know to arrange for sign language interpreters (UAD Bulletin, October 2007, p. 1 & 5).

### **Certified Deaf Interpreter**

The Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), a nationally certified interpreter who is deaf or hard of hearing was formed. Trenton Marsh became the first deaf Utahn to obtain an official Certified Deaf Interpreter designation in 2006. At the Sanderson Community Center, he provides curriculum to train deaf and hard of hearing to become CDIs. He also educates the community about how to use CDIs, needs of individuals who are deaf and serves as language mentor for the Interpreter Certification Advancement Network (ICAN) program.



**Trenton Marsh**

## HB 371 Would Penalize ASL Interpreters Working Without Certification

In 2013, the Utah interpreting community pushed to make changes in the current Utah interpreter law, known as Senate Bill (SB) 41 which had been enacted in 1994. SB 41 had a few loopholes that made it possible for the hospitals to bypass the law by telling the deaf individuals to bring in a signer when requested a certified interpreter (Mitch Jensen, personal communication, March 11, 2013). Moreover, SB 41 left many members of the Utah Deaf community unprotected for years (Leonard, *KSL.com*, March 2, 2013). As a result, House Bill (HB) 371 amended



**Dale Boam**

‘previous rules to penalize individuals who don’t obtain state certification as American Sign Language-trained interpreters’ and this bill was to make sure they obtain qualified

interpreters (Leonard, *KSL.com*, March 2, 2013). Under those circumstances, Mitch Jensen, director of the Utah Interpreter Program said, “HB 371 will help close the loopholes when request for a certified interpreter is made and gives DSDHH some power to enforce the law” (Mitch Jensen, personal communication, March 11, 2013).



**Ronda Menlove**

Photo courtesy of Sophia M. Dicaro

In a like manner, Dale Boam, a Utah Valley University professor of Deaf Studies, attorney and an experienced ASL interpreter said, “Many have performed the duty

without the correct certification, essentially bilking deaf individuals” (Leonard, KSL.com, March 2, 2013). Furthermore, he said, “Making the law enforceable will help to ensure quality for Utah's Deaf population” (Leonard, *KSL.com*, March 2, 2013).

Bill sponsor Representative Ronda Menlove, R-Garland realized how absolutely important appropriate signing is (Leonard, KSL.com, March 2, 2013). On a side note, she is the wife of Dr. Martell Menlove, state superintendent of public instruction, who was dealing with a controversy involving Steven Noyce, superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and Utah Deaf Education Core Group, as explained in “The Deaf Education History in Utah,” In addition, Ms. Menlove is the grandmother of a deaf girl whose mother, Sara Menlove Doutre, is president of Utah Hands and Voices Chapter.

During the legislative session on March 13, 2013, HB 371 was passed. Before the enactment of this law, Mitch Jensen shared that some doctors came to the Capitol Hill and opposed this bill when ‘it had been clear sailing up to that point.’ He further noted that the doctors talked to Senator Aaron Osmond and told him they wanted to make some amendments to the law so that doctors were not required to hire certified sign language interpreters (Mitch Jensen, personal communication, March 14, 2013). When Representative Menlove heard doctors’ opposition, she took ‘the bull by the horns and made it clear that this law was going to pass as it was written’ (Mitch Jensen, personal communication, March 14, 2013). Ironically, a while back on March 2, Representative Menlove said, “the bill only clarifies existing law and is not contentious” (Leonard,



**Two-year-old Daisy Doutre sits with her mother, Sara Menlove Doutre at the University of Utah Medical Center. Daisy became deaf after contracting a virus called cytomegalovirus in utero. Rep. Ronda Menlove, R-Garland, introduced a bill at the state legislature that would establish a statewide educational program to inform pregnant women and others who deal with young children who may be infected of the issues surrounding CMV, as well as direct physicians to test for it in babies who fail newborn hearing screenings, among other provisions (Laura Seitz, Deseret News, March 16, 2013)**

*KSL.com*, March 2, 2013). Yet, doctors were objecting to the bill. Marilyn Call, director of DSDHH ‘spent countless at the Capital Hill talking and using her charm’ (Mitch Jensen, personal communication, March 14, 2013). As a matter of fact, doctors’ opposition led to the enactment of the HB 371 and this bill finally gave the DSDHH power to enforce the law in order to protect the members of the Utah Deaf community.

### **The Expansion of the Interpreter Training Programs**

Today, the interpreter training programs have expanded and the demand for interpreters are still high. Those interested in the interpreting profession have the option to get formal training through the Utah Interpreter Programs housed at Robert G. Sanderson Community Center, Salt Lake Community College, Utah Valley University, Davis Applied Technology College and Utah State University. The VRS Interpreting Institute (VRSII) housed at Sorensen Communications also provides training for continuing-education needs of recent interpreting graduates, seasoned interpreters and interpreter educators.

As can be seen, the provision of interpreting service in Utah is ahead when compared to other states. With support of Utah law, we are fortunate to have a well-structured interpreting system as well as strong interpreting services to meet communication accessibility needs for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Salutation to the many pioneers who established and expanded the interpreting services in the state of Utah!

## Notes

Beth Ann Campbell, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, September 18, 2012.

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

Mitch Jensen, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, March 11, 2013.

Mitch Jensen, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, March 14, 2013.

Robert G. Sanderson, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, October 2006.

Valerie G. Kinney, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, November 4, 2013.

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