

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 for 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).

Did You Know?

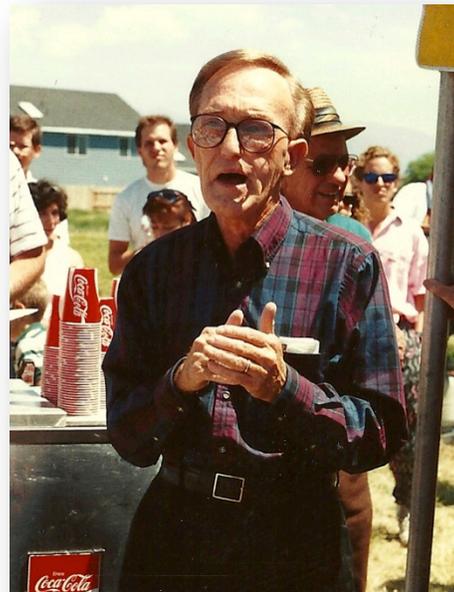
The two projects: Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind were intertwined in the minds of the legislators although the purposes were quite different.

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



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

Office of Rehabilitation welcomed the spectators and introduced speakers as the program progressed.

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

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

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



Lyle G. Mortensen

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).

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).



Lisa Cochran



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.

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).



Kristi Mortensen

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



A blueprint of the UCCD with a new wing

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 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).