

Ned C. Wheeler

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Ned C. Wheeler was born on March 1, 1915 in Ogden, Utah. He was a son of L. Claude and Vera Royle (Standard-Examiner, December 11, 1981). At the age of 13, he became Deaf from spinal meningitis, and transferred from Weber High School to Utah School for the Deaf (USD) in 1931. He graduated from USD in 1933 (Edith Wheeler, private interview with Valerie Kinney, March 9, 2009).

Ned attended Gallaudet College for three years from 1937 to 1940 (Gallaudet University Alumni Cards, 1866-1959). He came home in the spring of 1937 and married Edith Deininger of Wisconsin on November 23, 1937. He was a member of the Gallaudet Class of 1940. It is suspected money could have been the factor for Ned not going back to Gallaudet College, as Depression was still on.

According to R.W.T, an author of the USD's Utah Eagle magazine, Ned's specialized education in civil engineering was obtained thorough the University of Utah. He organized and operated his own engineering company, Engineering Consultant, Inc., from 1948 until 1967 (The Utah Eagle, February 1973, p. 3).

R.W.T. also reported that Ned was also a survey engineer for several years. When he started out, he worked as a draftsman and later as design engineer for the engineering division before being named in 1962 as office engineer. Various



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drafting and engineering capacities with both country and city had occupied him since 1938 (The Utah Eagle, February 1972, p. 3).

Ned had served as a civil engineer with the Ogden City for 40 years prior his retirement in 1980. From 1950 on, he was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineering. He completed several civil engineering courses at the University of Utah. He was honored by the



Ned, a Civil Engineer
The UAD Bulletin, Summer 1968

Ogden City Council in 1974 Outstanding Public Employee (The Ogden Standard-Examiner, December 11, 1981).

Ned was a conservative leader (Dr. Robert Sanderson & Valerie Kinney, personal interview, July 8, 2011). Ned was one of notable leaders from the 1940s until his death in 1981. He volunteered a great deal of his free time to various organizations. Locally, he served the Utah Association for the Deaf for three years as its president and had filled the office of chairman of the Board of Directors for 15 years (Valerie Kinney, personal communication, March 9, 2009). As explained in the “The Deaf Education History in Utah,” Ned was on the Governor’s Advisory Council to the Utah Schools for the

Deaf and the Blind as a member as well as chairman from 1968 to 1981. While he was chairman of the Governor’s Advisory Council in 1970, he witnessed the “Y” System replaced with the Dual Track Program, designed to provide options for parents to choose between oralism and total communication.

The 1982 Utahn Yearbook noted, “He was an inspiration to the pupils, patrons, and staff at the USDB. Ned and his wife, Edith, were always interested in the school and strove to make it better. In addition to his prestigious accomplishments, he was always willing to get involved in

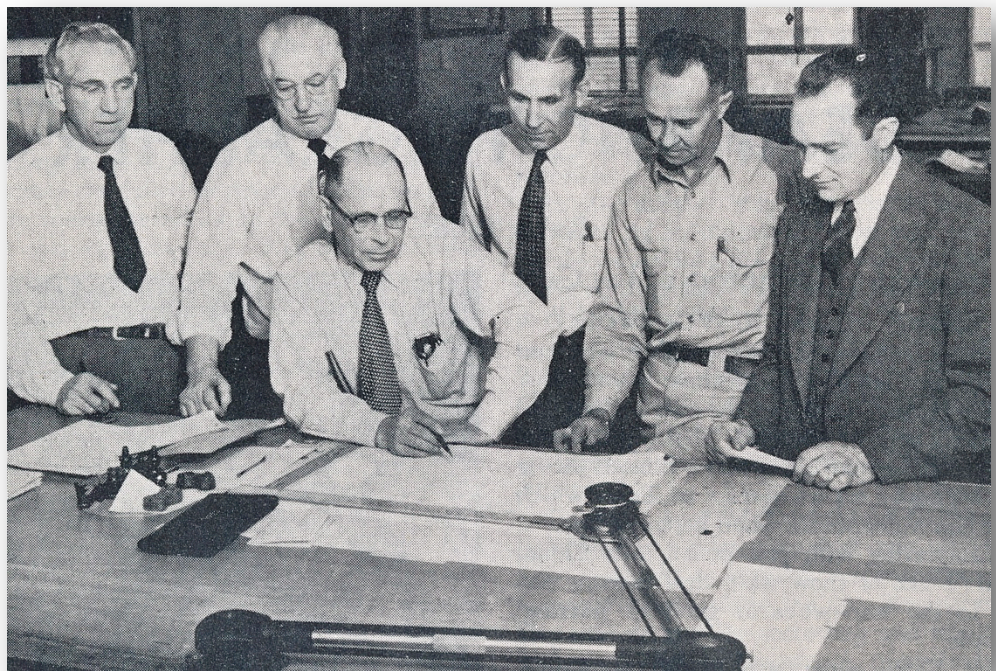
the small day to day problems of the school. The week of his death in 1981 Ned had planned to help organize a museum for the school” (Utahn, 1982).

Nationally, Ned served as a member of the Ways and Means Committee of the National Association of the Deaf since 1966 and was convention chairman for the NAD conference in Las Vegas in 1968. He even served as Grand Western Vice President of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf (NFSD). He was inducted into their Hall of Fame. After helping organize the local chapter of NFSD, he served as an officer from its inception until his appointment to the national level,

which then precluded his holding office on the local level (The Utah Eagle, February 1972, p. 3).

On January 27, 1972, Ned was notified that he had been unanimously elected to the Board of Directors of Gallaudet College,

effective January 20, 1972. The Utah School for the Deaf considered this appointment to the board of his alma mater to be a great honor, not only to Ned personally, but also for USD and the State of Utah. This appointment was one of the highest honors ever bestowed upon a former student of the USD as he became the first Utahn ever to hold membership on that most important governing body of the world’s only liberal arts college. Two other products of the school, Dr. Robert G. Sanderson and Celia May Laramie Baldwin, were appointed to Gallaudet’s first nine-member Board of Fellows, which added to USD’s pride (The Utah Eagle, February 1972).



Ned (at right) employed as a civil engineer in 1955
The Utah Eagle, April 1955

Ned, as a founder of Utah Scholarship Foundation for the Deaf, administered the fund and scholarship awards, with a governance board, from 1975 until his death in 1981. Not long after his death, the scholarship foundation was renamed Ned C. Wheeler Scholarship Foundation for the Deaf (Edith Wheeler, private interview with Valerie Kinney, March 9, 2009).

In spite of his busy schedule, he found time to hold high office in his Ogden Branch for the Branch. Travel and woodworking were two of his favorite hobbies. While his children were small, he made wooden toys for each of them for Christmas. Not long before he passed away, he built a grandfather clock for Edith (The Utah Eagle, February 1972). Additionally, he enjoyed fishing, camping, golfing and bowling (Edith Wheeler, private interview with Valerie Kinney, March 9, 2009).

Ned passed away December 10, 1981, leaving behind his widow, Edith, and two daughters, Nedra and Valarie. A son, Victor, predeceased him (Edith Wheeler, private interview with Valerie Kinney, March 9, 2009).



Edith D. Wheeler
UAD Bulletin, Winter 1970

Notes

Edith Wheeler, private interview with Valerie Kinney, March 9, 2009.

Robert Sanderson & Valerie Kinney, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, July 8, 2011.

Valerie Kinney, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, March 9, 2009.

Bibliography

R.W.T. "Gallaudet Board Gets USD Grad." *The Utah Eagle*, Vol. 83, No. 5 (February 1972): 3.

The Utah Yearbook, 1982.