



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

Robert G. Sanderson, Ed.D.

For the SCCD Library.
Robert J. Sanderson
9-25-2004

Hopefully, someone will continue the
history while facts, events, dates and
people are known! RJS

SECTION 1

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Origins of the Robert G. Sanderson
Community Center for the Deaf
and the Hard of Hearing**

FOREWORD

As the saying goes, "No man stands alone," it is very true in my case. I received much help and encouragement from friends and colleagues in the work of writing and assembling this very brief history of how the Center came about. I would be remiss if I did not name those who were of particular assistance, and offer my warm thanks in no particular order to:

Valerie Kinney, for providing me with copies of the UAD Bulletin which were missing from my own files to help in my research;

Gene D. Stewart, for alerting me to the names of important people who he knew were involved while I was retired, and who reviewed this manuscript in draft form;

William "Rusty" Wales, who gave me some insight on the development of the campaign to get a needed "wing" on the Center, and who reviewed this manuscript in draft form;

Marilyn T. Call, current Executive director of the SCCDHH, who helped locate some important material in the Rehabilitation files that added perspective and tied down some dates, and who enthusiastically encouraged the idea of a history of the Center. She offered some important corrections that only an author can appreciate;

Jorie Hill, Executive Assistant, who was unfailingly helpful when I needed information about the Center;

The staff people at the Center, who cheerfully put up with my bothersome search for details;

The office staff and secretaries at the Office of Rehabilitation who provided access to the files;

Twila B. Affleck, Secretary to the Board of Education, and Lorraine Austin, Secretary to Dr. Laing, Executive Officer of the Board of Education, for helping me research Board minutes;

Dr. Walter D. Talbot, the past Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Utah State Office of Education, who not only encouraged me, but ordered me to make the Study that began the process, and who long later reviewed part of this manuscript in draft form;

Dr. Harvey Hirschi, a past Executive Director of the Office of Rehabilitation, one of my bosses at the time, who supported the Study and the need for the Center and pushed me along;

Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, a past Executive Director of the Office of Rehabilitation, also one of my past bosses, who reviewed part of the draft and who, during the campaign to get the new Center in Taylorsville, actively worked with the Utah State Legislature. She also fought off efforts to move the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind to the same property with the Center;

Beth Ann Campbell, my long suffering and patient interpreter and colleague, a tenacious advocate of the deaf, who was always ready;

Dr. Jay Campbell, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, a favorite colleague who guided me through more than one educational and legislative jungle;

Ms. Shelley Day, Information Consultant, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, who found the missing key item that was driving me crazy--House Resolution No. 5 from the 1975 session, the one that failed to pass and the one that set off Dr. Talbot's memo to me;

Dave Mortensen, long time friend and colleague who reviewed a rough draft and offered corrections;

And to a team of deaf people who significantly helped with lobbying at the legislature to get the Center: Don Jensen, Lee Shepherd, George Gavros, Robert Gillespie, Shirley Platt, Margaret Heinrich, Dave Mortensen, Lloyd Perkins, and Norman Williams. I apologize to those who may have helped and I cannot remember, or never knew their names.

Finally, to Mary, my wife, helpmate and cheerleader, for her tremendous help in searching nearly 50 years of UAD Bulletins for any and all items that mentioned the need and desire for a "Deaf Center, a Home of Our Own", on which I based my story, and without that help this project would not have been undertaken.

**Robert G. Sanderson, Ed.D.
March 9, 2004**

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A Brief History of the Origins of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

by Robert G. Sanderson, Ed.D

Fortunately, some of the significant movers and shakers in the brief history of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RGSCCDHH) are still around and available to input their perceptions, observations and participation in the events that led to the establishment of this unique institution. Lacking a perfect memory, I apologize in advance for the omission of people whose names I never learned or have forgotten although they may have played important roles.

Introduction

Herein I have attempted to paint with broad strokes a picture of the conception and birth of this comprehensive community center for deaf and hard of hearing people. It should be realized that no single event resulted in the "birth" of the Center; rather, it was the result of accumulated efforts over a number of years by a number of people inspired by developing ideas, challenging issues, and changing times. It should also be noted that since this is a personal narrative of the history, at times I will be as objective as I can be, and at other times I may be subjective and jump from "I" to "Bob" or to "Robert Sanderson" if I feel it would be more seemly.

Until August 1, 2003, when the Utah State Board of Education met and changed it, it carried the name the "Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing," more familiarly known as "The Deaf Center", or "UCCD."

A Gathering Place of their Own

My earliest memory of meeting up with the idea of a gathering place of their own where deaf people could socialize and perhaps

address their many unrecognized needs was when I attended my first Utah Association of the Deaf convention in 1946. It was in the old Newhouse Hotel in Salt Lake City, and several of my friends mentioned that it would be much more fun if we had a "Club for the Deaf" where we could establish our own rules and meet at our own times and convenience. It was well known that most large cities had clubs for the deaf. So, why not Utah? Why not Salt Lake City? Why not Ogden? Of course, since I was not, at the time, a Utahn, the idea did not concern me very much. I was from Nevada.

A year or two later, however, I had moved to Utah and slowly became involved in the "deaf community". Involvement meant meetings--socials, parties, athletic events and such--and always there was an underlying theme: Why did we always have to go begging for time and space? We seemed to have to take whatever time was available, not necessarily the time, date and place we wanted. It was a matter of renting a hotel ballroom room, an auditorium from a local utility, the gymnasium at the Utah School for the Deaf and the Blind, or the Murray B. Allen Center for the Blind. Always there were strict rules--"in by seven, out by nine," and pay the janitor overtime past nine. Ah, yes....the M.B. Allen Center...*for the Blind*. As might be assumed, the place was not designed with the *visual needs* of deaf people in mind! It was, for us deaf people, gloomy with poor lighting but what choice did we have? Still, we appreciated the cooperation of the blind people and their leaders, who perhaps recognized our needs more than others did. We were jealous of their good fortune to have their own meeting place but knew they deserved and needed their facilities.

Trained Deaf Leaders

In retrospect, I believe there were three major factors that prevented the deaf community of Utah (generally meaning deaf people of the two larger cities, Salt Lake and Ogden) from getting a frequently mentioned "club for the deaf" going. **One**, a "critical mass",

a population of deaf adults large enough to support *financially* an independent or free-standing facility had not been identified. **Two**, a large majority of the deaf adult population belonged to the dominant religion which actively discouraged the use of alcohol, which a club of the nature seemingly desired by the activists would have to sell in order to support itself. **Three**, lack of *ready* deaf leadership.

There were and are deaf people who demonstrated certain leadership skills--they were the officers of various organizations of and for the deaf, such as the Utah Association of the Deaf, the local divisions of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, the Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf and such. However, something was lacking among all the leaders: *Specific training*, which would boost them up to a higher level, remove fear, and enable them to meet with and talk to the *leaders of the hearing power structure*.

A subsidiary factor, but a very real one, **was** the fear of hearing people that deaf children developed as they grew, underlying the inability to speak understandably and well. Although a deaf leader might be a lion among his own kind, too often he becomes a lamb among the hearing, insecure and timid. Observing this, the hearing person may automatically become patronizing, thus reinforcing a negative attitude among some of the deaf toward the hearing. (Note, however, the above bold italicized word, "was". This problem may no longer be true today whatwith the advanced education many deaf people have been achieving in this past three decades).

Hence, there was (at the time) 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.

Barriers to Activism

Other factors should be mentioned: A great many, if not most

deaf people were (and still are) concerned with the mundane need to earn a living, support a family, and usually this meant an "eight to five" production job, leaving no time for meeting with high level professionals in education, community agencies or the legislature. As a practical matter, employed deaf persons who wished to meet with any community agency, such agencies normally meeting "eight to five", also would have to take time off from their jobs. Very few deaf people earned enough then (nor, for that matter, even now) to want to lose that pay. At the time, too, there were few professionally employed deaf people whose positions allowed them to engage in non-job (although community related) activities with pay.

Thus, those were what I believe some of the many underlying reasons 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.

Advanced education creates political awareness

But times were changing rapidly. Educated deaf spokespersons at the national level were getting the attention of important federal administrators. Dr. Boyce Williams, an articulate deaf graduate of Gallaudet College, became the director of the Office of Deafness in the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration (VRA) under the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. As such he reached the top level people within the administration with a powerful message of years of neglect of the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people at a time when more attention was being focused on the handicapped people of America.

Local, Regional and National Workshops Stimulate Deaf Leaders

Being both vocal and literate, in 1962 Dr. Williams spearheaded a drive that brought national attention to the needs of the deaf and

hard of hearing. He secured government grants for numerous workshops throughout the country. The National Association of the Deaf administered some of these workshops, as did the Utah Association for the Deaf in cooperation with the Utah Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). (Later the names were changed to Rehailitation Services Administration and Utah Division of Rehabilitation Services.)

Captions: a New Era for Deaf People

Another remarkable deaf person, Dr. Malcolm Norwood, also a graduate of Gallaudet College, became the director of the Office of Captioned Films for the Deaf. As such he persuaded top level administrators in the Department of Education of the need of deaf adults for education via films with captions. Historically, the advent of "talking" pictures left deaf people out in the cold since captions were no longer added to films. So Mac developed a nationwide program of captioned films for deaf people, and soon hundreds if not thousands of deaf people rented or purchased 16 mm projectors to show the films. After educational films were firmly established, popular movies were captioned and distributed nationally. Captioning of movies on television as supported by an understanding Congress through the Department of Education rapidly followed, liberating hundreds of thousands of deaf and hard of hearing people from the practically impossible task of trying to read lips on TV screens.

Dr. Williams and Dr. Norwood had similar abilities to express themselves to the hearing leaders of the power structure, and through their efforts the general deaf population, including deaf people of Utah, greatly benefited. At the same time, they brought into focus for Utah deaf leaders the need and the ways in which to communicate the needs of deaf people to hearing leaders. Both Boyce and Mac learned leadership skills within their communities and at Gallaudet College, and used their skills and education to rise to be

the highest level deaf persons in the federal government at the time.

And what, you may now ask, has that to do with the history of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing? Well, they were, for one thing, models for Utah deaf leaders. For another, even more important, the work they did through local, regional and national workshops on the various aspects of deafness, which some Utahns attended, gave our deaf people the focus they needed. In a word, deaf people were learning about themselves and their own needs!

In different parts of the country events were happening concurrently that affected others indirectly. In 1962 a significant and trend-setting grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to San Fernando Valley State College (later re-named California State University at Northridge) in California established the National Leadership Training Program in the Area of the Deaf ("LTP"). Since some deaf people applied for and were accepted into the program, pragmatist professors realized that the intense program of studies and lectures at the master degree level required clear communication, so the college became the first in the nation to employ sign language interpreters on a full time basis in a graduate program. Robert G. Sanderson of Utah was accepted into this program and became a member of the LTP Class of 1965, in which there were five deaf and ten hearing persons.

Professional Interpreting Gets a Boost from LTP

The success of LTP under the guidance of Dr. Ray L. Jones, a professor of education, encouraged deaf people seeking higher education degrees to demand that other colleges and universities furnish interpreters as a matter of fairness and equality of opportunity. The federal law, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments of 1974 and later provided legal support. Lawsuits resulted, and courts generally agreed that publicly supported colleges, universities

and other institutions had to provide interpreters and other aids to the deaf and disabled to permit them equality of opportunity. Historians will recognize that a national trend resulted and gave a huge boost to interpreting as a profession.

In Utah, several deaf people, encouraged by the national developments and obvious local needs, became activists. Among them at the time were the officers of the Utah Association of the Deaf, Eugene Petersen, Leon Curtis, and Robert Sanderson.

"Birth" of Services for Deaf People

Eugene was a printer with the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper, (Newspaper Agency Corp.), and Robert was a deputy recorder and a draftsman for the Weber County Recorder's office and was serving as president of the National Association of the Deaf. Leon was a college student. Among them (but not exclusively to them) they came up with the idea of approaching the Salt Lake Area United Fund to ask for assistance in establishing Services for Deaf People. Robert was soon to leave Utah to study in California, so Eugene was left to carry the ball with help from Leon. The United Fund people were highly interested in the problems described by the deaf leaders, so in 1963 assigned a committee of the Community Services Council to study all of the community agencies to see whether any of them could provide the needed services. The Council appointed a representative committee of deaf members of the UAD, interpreters and hearing community leaders, and over a year of meetings concluded that the most feasible way to provide services for deaf people would be to wrap them into an existing agency. The members of the committee were: Larry W. Blake, chair; G. Harold Bradley; Philip R. Clinger; Miss Marguerite Davis; Clarence O. Fingerle; Mrs. Vera Gee; Miss Madeleine Helfrey; C. Russell Neale; R. Elwood Pace; Eugene W. Petersen (deaf); Mrs. Harvey S. Pusey (Interpreter); Mrs. Brigham E. Roberts; Ray G. Wenger (deaf); and Jerry Westberg (deaf). [Ref. 1] (Note: References are detailed in the Appendix).

The result was that the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in Salt Lake City was identified as the one that could handle the services. 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, Nov. 18-22, 1963. A search for a copy of this report was made by the United Way of the Great Salt Lake Area and the Community Services Council, but they did not have a copy of it. [Ref. 1A]

Meanwhile, some other deaf people were still actively trying to find a way to establish a club for the deaf. There was much talk, but little positive action. There was a lack of "know how" among the leaders. It is interesting to look back and see that there were two schools of thought developing: A club for the deaf (meaning probably patterned after existing clubs in large metropolitan cities), and a service agency to deal with the social, educational and economic problems of deaf people.

From my personal perspective, clubs that I had visited while serving as President of the National Association of the Deaf were focused on serving social interaction needs, such as cards, captioned movies, sports, chatting, parties and so on, most always funded by liquor and food sales. Over the years some of these clubs purchased their own buildings, although some were rather dilapidated. Curiously, 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 me that the club leaders lacked the training to directly address the burgeoning needs of the deaf population they served, other than simply furnishing a meeting place. Newsletters and magazines produced by deaf people around the country did not, so far as I can remember, 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. Boyce Williams, as mentioned, set up and funded through the RSA a number of

workshops exploring these problems.

Since it had become apparent to some local deaf leaders that a club was not really financially feasible, and supported by the findings of the Community Services Council Committee, they focused on working with the Utah legislature to secure funding for the services that would be provided under Rehabilitation. To do this, the UAD officers and some members visited Governor Rampton and secured his support for funding, and lobbied the 1965 legislature. Active in this effort were Leon Curtis, Eugene Petersen, Ned Wheeler, Joseph Burnett, and Mrs. Eula Pusey, an interpreter and strong advocate of deaf people. The legislature obliged by appropriating \$10,000.00 --a large sum at the time!--which would bring in matching funds from the federal government to the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

July 30, 1965, the Utah Merit System Council announced the opening of a new position: Coordinator, Services to the Adult Deaf 14, in the Department of Public Instruction, Written exam, 50%; Oral Exam, 50%.

Two full single-spaced typed pages of job summary, knowlege and training required, accompanied the announcement--much too long to copy here. [Ref. 2] Essentially, it covered a very broad array of services--and not merely traditional rehabilitation with a view to job placement-- to be provided by the individual selected, based on the recommendations of the Consumer Services Council. General supervision was to be by the State Administrator of the Division of Rehabilitation--at the time, Dr. Vaughn Hall.

Robert G. Sanderson applied for and was appointed to the position on November 15, 1965. At the time, he was in his second year as President of the National Association of the Deaf, and had just completed his masters degree in Educational Administration (in the "LTP" program) at San Fernando Valley State College (later re-named California State University at Northridge). (It should be

noted here that he received strong support from members of the deaf community, for which he was --and still is-- exceedingly grateful. Probably he could not have won the position without that help.)

Thus Sanderson became what was probably the first formal state coordinator of services to deaf people (SCD) in the United States. In Washington D.C. Dr. Boyce Williams, Dr. Mary Switzer and others took note and the position and responsibilities soon became a pattern (with variations) for other state Rehabilitation Divisions to follow.

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Please note: From this point in the narrative, Bob Sanderson became a "rehab man", a counselor and coordinator, and worked for several years engaging in depth discussions with deaf and hearing community leaders on what a community center for the deaf should be and what services it should encompass.

Feasibility Study for a Center for the Deaf

*In June of 1975 Dr. Walter D. Talbot, Superintendent, of Public Instruction, by memo to members of the Office of Education and Rehabilitation staffs established a committee to study the feasibility of a community center for the deaf, appointed Bob as chairman, and asked for a report and recommendation by December 1, 1975. **This might be called the actual spark that set in motion plans for a Utah Community Center for the Deaf.** In this memo, the first sentence aroused my curiosity in trying to pin down a "beginning" of the Center. "During the last legislative session we introduced a resolution calling for the State Board of Education and the State Building Board to study the feasibility and desirability of a Community Center for the Deaf. That resolution failed...."*

Researching Paper Trail of Center

In writing this narrative I felt that the "failed resolution" should be

included for historical purposes, and commenced a search for a copy of it. First I went to the Utah State Archives and Record Services, and the two staff persons on duty were very helpful--but could not find anything at all relating to a Community Center for the Deaf. They suggested that a bill or resolution that "failed" might not be archived. Next I went to the Division of Facilities Construction and Management ("DFCM") in the hope that since the Center eventually became a reality they might have a record of it. Their staff people, after some discussion, referred me to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, where, on my second visit, I was fortunate enough to meet Ms. Shelley Day, Information Consultant.

Ms. Day rose to the challenge, and after many hours of researching the legislative actions during the time period of interest (1975) she found "House Resolution No. 5", entitled " A resolution of the House of Representatives of the State of Utah directing a study to determine the need for and development of a community center for the deaf ". Stamped on it was the result: *Enacting clause stricken*. Feb. 13, 1975. [Ref. 3]

I believe that at this point the Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction from the Committee to Study the Feasibility of Comprehensive Community Center for the Deaf should be included in and read its entirety. It will also maintain the chronological progress.

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Please refer to the Appendix, Ref. # 56
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In its December 1975 issue, The UAD Bulletin noted that the report on the feasibility of a Center for the Deaf had been completed and turned over to Dr. Walter Talbot. [Ref. 4] In subsequent issues of the Bulletin the editor and the officers of the Utah Association for the Deaf closely monitored the progress of the Center.

Subsequent to the report Dr. Talbot, accompanied by Robert Sanderson and his interpreter Beth Ann Stewart, made several visits

to the legislative committee dealing with capital funding. Along the way Governor Rampton gave support, which helped tremendously.

A Bill that Failed! ?

A common story of the time is that a bill did make it through the various legislature committees and landed on Governor Rampton's desk at the close of the official legislature at twelve midnight in February of 1977. Disaster then hit: As he was about to sign the legislation, he noticed that the word "deaf" had been deleted and the word "blind" inserted! Since it was past the midnight closing of the legislature, it could not be fixed. In my efforts to run down this story I found out from the legislative research staff that bills and resolutions that "failed" or did not pass may not have been filed nor archived. No one could tell me what happened to such legislation.

I did not personally get any explanation of how that mix-up occurred, but in the back of my mind I believe it was a Freudian slip by some bill author or legislator who had blind people in mind since they are quite a bit more visible than the deaf. At any rate, I was unable to find anything to substantiate the story.

Back to Square One

So the Center was back to Square One, and another two years would pass before another bill could be prepared and sent through the legislature again. I can recall the utter dismay that hit the deaf leaders who had been testifying for weeks in support of the Center in the various committees of the legislature.

Researching the Paper Trail

The secretary for the Utah State Board of Education, Twila B. Affleck, and Lorraine Austin, secretary to Dr. Stephen Laing, the current Superintendent of Public Instruction, were kind enough to assist me in searching through the Board minutes for several of the

years under study, but we could find no mention of any resolutions or bills for the legislature in the years 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980 and 1981. There was no mention of a Center in Dr. Talbots 1976 Budget. It may be that we missed something, since those yearly minutes books were pretty thick!

UAD Bulletin a History in Itself

Nevertheless, the monthly newsletter, The UAD Bulletin, and a predecessor, The Silent Spotlight, proved to be rich resources with references to the progress of the Center idea through the years! There follows a list of references to the Spotlight and the UAD Bulletin with excerpts detailing the progress of the Center for the Deaf. The Appendix carries each reference in full where abbreviated in this narrative.

In June, 1978, The Silent Spotlight: "Informed sources indicated that the Utah Board of Education was developing a budget to be used for the purpose of a Comprehensive Community Center for the Deaf..." [Ref. 5, p. 1]

The Silent Spotlight, June 1978:

UAD Request Put Before Senate Committee

"David Mortensen, President of the UAD, appeared before the Joint House/Senate committee studying social services in the state legislature and presented to them a request for their help in developing a comprehensive Center for the Deaf, and for a state commission for the deaf...." [Ref. 6, p. 2]

The UAD Bulletin, Sept. 1979

Update on Center for the Deaf

"In the 15.1 million budget for building construction and remodelling, the Utah Board of Education has earmarked 2.5 million for the Center for the Deaf. A recent action placed the Center for the

Deaf as #1 on its priority list. The UBE will now present it to the state building board and the 1980 legislature...." [Ref. 7]

The UAD bulletin, January 1980:

Center for the Deaf Needs Your Help:

"The center for the deaf has been pulled from its 6th place on the building appropriations list to 10th place by Governor Matheson. We are in danger of losing our center unless we act now..." [Ref. 8]

The UAD Bulletin, May 1980:

Tentative Drawings Submitted for Center for the Deaf

An architectural firm in Ogden has submitted tentative drawings for the Center for the Deaf to the State Building Board. These plans are based on the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee which came up with specifications for the center from various sources, such as the UAD Fishbowl. If you are curious as to what these plans look like, stop by the Salt Lake Services to the Deaf office and ask to see them. It is estimated that it will cost \$3.4 million for the land and building; inflation may push the price up. [Ref. 9]

The UAD Bulletin, August 1980:

Support for the Center for the Deaf Grows

The Social Services Committee at the State Capitol is the latest group to add its support to the Center for the Deaf. At its meeting in late July, it was moved by Rep. Charles Doane, R-SL, that the Social Services Committee recommend that the funding for 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 dissension.

Now is the time to visit your legislators, and make the needs of the deaf--for a Center for the Deaf--known to them. If you need to know who your senator and district representative are, contact Robert Sanderson at his office in SLC. Ask them to support funding for the

center for the deaf. It is #1 on the State Board of Education budget, to be brought up at the 1981 legislature in January.

Now. Not later. Later is too late! [Ref. 10]

The UAD Bulletin, September, 1980:

Get Out and Meet Your Legislators

Have you gone out and met your local representative? If not, do it now! With the legislature opening in January, state committees are meeting to hear proposals, and our center for the Deaf has been on the agenda this fall for discussion. Now is the time to express your desire for the center.....(full page discussion). [Ref. 11]

The UAD Bulletin, October, 1980:

FLASH!

Several state legislators are being invited by the Utah Association for the Deaf to meet with deaf people at the UAD October Funfest on the 11th at the Utah School for the Deaf, Ogden. [Ref. 12]

The UAD Bulletin, November 1980:

Vote No to Initiatives A & B !

"..... The Center for the Deaf will not become a reality if voters say yes to Initiatives A and B--this will cut down on tax dollars available for projects and for the Center for the Deaf...." [Ref. 13]

The UAD Bulletin, December 1980:

What has the UAD Done for the Deaf Community ?

".....In addition, the UAD is actively assisting the board of Education in its efforts to secure funding through the legislature for the Comprehensive Community Center for the Deaf. ..." [Ref. 14]

The UAD Bulletin, March 1981:

Calling all Deaf Citizens !

Included with this issue is a list of Utah representatives.

Why? The Comprehensive Community Center for the Adult Deaf--or Center for the Deaf, in short-- is now being discussed in the Public Education Committee subcommittee. [Ref. 15]

Legislative Priorities?

The UAD Bulletin, April 1981

Utah Legislature Puts Cows Before Deaf People in Needs

By now deaf people know that the proposed Center for the Deaf was not funded. This Republican-dominated legislature put the needs of the (USU) dairy barn ahead of the needs of our deaf citizens. The legislature even put the cows ahead of the need to purchase the Board of Education Building before its option expires in December.

What the UAD tried to make clear to deaf people came true: If they did not contact their legislators, they would not get the Center.

Thanks should be given to those few deaf people who did contact their legislators and who did try. It will be necessary to start all over again. We have a lot to learn about how to compete with cows.

Many of you will be bitterly disappointed to learn of this news; the UAD certainly is. [Ref. 16]

Because the date, April 1981, of the issue, it appears that the article refers to the 1981 legislature that had completed its work in March. No reference is made to a bill or resolution; however, the news media at the time were also referring to the State Building Board priority listing, from which the Dairy Barn at Utah State University bumped the Center down below the funding cut off line. It is not clear how the Center for the Deaf got onto the priority listing in the first place, but to my personal knowledge, Dr. Talbot had continued to work in behalf of the Center. Indeed, a resolution passed by the July 1981 convention of the UAD thanked Dr.

Walter D. Talbot and the Utah Board of Education for its support of the Center for the Deaf, and encouraged them to continue working for it.

Also an item in the same July 1981 issue reported that Dr. Robert Sanderson has been appointed to the Dr. Powrie V. Doctor Chair for the academic year 1981-1982. [Ref. 36] Hence, he was absent from the state during an important meeting arranged by the Utah Association for the Deaf with Governor Matheson.

UAD president David Mortensen, secretary Valerie Platt, and Alden Broomhead, a member, met with Tony Mitchell, the governor's aide, and with Dr. William Boren of the Division of Rehabilitation. According to David, after some discussion, including mention of several past failures of the legislature to pass funding for a Center for the Deaf (and the "Cows before Deaf People" rejection) Mr. Mitchell told Dr. Boren to obtain \$500,000 from the Division of Rehabilitation budget and begin a search for a location. In a conversation with Valerie she confirmed what David had written to me in a personal communication. (Ref. #37)

During my visit to the Utah State Board of Education office, Ms. Affleck did manage to find several references to the Center in the 1982 minutes. Dr. Talbot in his report of January 14 said that a possible site for Center has been proposed—an old church building in Midvale. January 19, Dr. Talbot said that as a result of a \$200,000 appropriation by the legislature, the purchase of an old chapel in Midvale has been completed, to be used for a Center for the Adult Deaf. [Refs. 17, 18]

(Dr. Talbot retired during the time period covered here).

Supt. Burningham in later minutes (Nov. 19) reported that there has been a change of direction, and the Center would be in Bountiful, in a much finer and larger, vacant church, rather than Midvale; and December 17 Supt. Burningham reported to the Board that financing of the Center in Bountiful was being handled by Dr. Daryl McCarty. The Board approved the presentation. [Refs. 19, 20]

Looking for a Building Site

It is necessary here to jump a bit backwards to a time prior to the Board of Education actions as cited above. A search for a site for a center had begun as soon as Dr. Talbot had indicated that there was a strong possibility of funding. Several people from the Division of Rehabilitation Services, among them Dr. William Boren, Dr. Robert Sanderson, Gene Stewart, and a gentleman from the Division of Facilities Construction and Management, and several other people began looking at buildings that possibly could serve as Centers for the Deaf. Even a part of the old South High School on Main Street was considered, but the gentleman from the DFCM turned it down as being inadequate for our purposes. Vacant property along Fifth South near Redwood Road was considered as an ideal location but a veteran Rehab man remembered that it was the site of an old city dumps! No way!

A site on west 17th South was examined; it looked very good, especially to the golfers among us because it was located right across from a golf course. Dr. Vaughn Hall had a look at it, and when examining the plot found that it did not have access to the street. Getting an adequate right of way would be a problem. No way!

Next someone (I know not who!) mentioned an old ward building way down in Midvale, available and priced within the money available. [Ref. 17]. Gene Stewart, Beth Ann Campbell, Norman Williams, Robert Lunnen (on my staff at the time) and I had a good hard look at the building and decided that it was small, lacked a much desired gymnasium, but would do for a start with a lot of remodeling. Soon afterwards the DFCM people began planning with an architect, and the deal was closed between Rehabilitation, the Board of Education, and the LDS Church owner. [Ref. 18].

Location Changed for Better Building

Before actual construction and remodeling of the Midvale church began, Dora Laramie, a teacher at the Utah School for the Deaf, and her husband, George, long-time members of the deaf community, met

with Robert Sanderson and told him of a large church in Bountiful (the 33rd LDS Ward Chapel) that had been standing vacant for quite some time. They felt that because it had a gym, and many meeting rooms typical of LDS ward buildings, it would be much more suited to the deaf community needs. [Ref. 18-A, -B]

At that point, Sanderson discussed the Bountiful building with his boss, Dr. Harvey Hirschi, Acting Administrator of Rehabilitation Services. They received permission from the LDS real estate agency to examine the building, and after a visit determined it was far and away better than the Midvale building and more suited to the needs of the deaf community. Immediately Dr. Hirschi requested a halt to proceedings at the Midvale Chapel building, and began discussions with the LDS real estate people. Eventually it was agreed that the LDS church would take the Midvale Chapel back, and credit the purchase price less some fees against the purchase of the Bountiful building. These actions are detailed in References # 21 and 22.

Dr. Hirschi, as may be seen from the above, was a strong advocate for deaf people and his pushing for the Center was effective. He is due much credit for his efforts in making the Center a reality.

In sum, the total estimated purchase and renovation cost of the Midvale building was \$525,000. The total price of the Bountiful building (purchase, renovation, real estate fee and architect fee) was \$333,500, a savings of \$191,000 while providing a more adequate building. [Ref. 22]

Bountiful, Utah-- Home of the First UCCD !

The Bountiful building, located at 388 North 400 South, immediately became The Utah Community Center for the Deaf ! -- a dream of many years come true, thanks to the Utah State Board of Education, Rehabilitation Services, and the Utah State Legislature.

Months of rehabilitation of the building ensued, with deaf people of Ogden and Salt Lake areas pitching in to make the facility friendly, habitable and welcoming. Funding was secured by Rehabilitation



The original Utah Community Center for the deaf
located in Bountiful, Utah

and the Board of Education to make some needed repairs--replace worn floor tiles, do some painting, fix roof leaks, get the heating system working, secure furniture (a lot of used but good furniture was found at the State surplus warehouse--desks, chairs, tables, and typewriters) and we were soon in operation.

Dr. Robert Sanderson was appointed director of the Center by Dr. Harvey Hirschi, and staff were engaged. Beth Ann Campbell, an excellent interpreter and rehabilitation aide became actively involved in community activity programming. Norman Williams and Robert Lunnen were moved from the Salt Lake City Rehabilitation offices to the Center, where they set up a workshop for repairing the teleprinter machines being used for communication between clients and counselors. Offices for a rehabilitation counselor and a secretary were set up. A library on deafness research and related materials collected by Dr. Sanderson was created. A student volunteer from the Utah School for the Deaf began cataloguing the collection.

Offices for the various deaf community organizations were assigned, and they brought in materials that individual organization officers had been storing in their homes for many years for lack of a central facility. Among the organizations was one that was relatively new to the state: Self Help for the Hard of Hearing, (SHHH). As people who are hard of hearing--but not completely deaf--can attest, their needs are quite serious socially and economically. While they are "culturally different" from those who are members of a functionally deaf group, their needs are similar for communication facilitation. [Ref. 22A]

Parties were held. Basketball practice, archery practice, volleyball, movies. The kitchen saw increasing use. In short, the Center was humming!

Classes were being held--Art, Tough Love, Slim and Trim, and even Aerobics. Robert Welsh, a deaf man with a successful color-separation and photography business, was persuaded to teach a class in his special field to open up jobs for deaf people. A laboratory with furnishings largely provided by Mr. Welsh was set up in one of the upper floor rooms, and initial funding was secured from

Davis County. The first photo-technology class was announced to begin December 5th, 1983. [Ref. # 37]

The old floor tile was cracked and breaking up throughout the hallways of the building, so a bid went out and a small contractor was hired to tear up the tile. Dr. Sanderson scouted around for good used carpeting and found some that would serve the purpose because it was in very good condition and showed little signs of wear. Money would be saved. [Ref. 26]

All of this happened despite strong objections from the Division of Facility Construction and Management, November 23, 1982, which cited numerous building, fire, health and safety, and handicapped accessibility code violations. [Ref. 24] Such concerns were lost on the deaf consumers who were happy just to have a "place of their own," finally!

Our Dream Becomes a Nightmare

Soon, however, problems began to develop (perhaps the reason the LDS Ward abandoned the building in favor of building in another location?) in affirmation of the stand of the DFCM.

A neighbor's home and its sprinkling system was four feet higher on the east side of our building, and since water runs downhill, we had more water than we wanted running down into our driveway and on onto our parking lot. In the winter, daytime thaws and nighttime freezing resulted in the water becoming ice on the driveway and parking.

Our parking lot proved to be much too small for the crowds of deaf people coming for their parties and other events. Cars jammed the streets for blocks around.

In the summer, the upper floor did not have working air conditioning, so the operators working for the new Utah Association for the Deaf Utah Relay System sweltered. Large fans were provided, but they merely circulated warm air. The big old building became a bit spooky for the night workers, especially the ladies who worked the

night shift on the Relay System.

Then the large old coal-fired furnace caught fire early one cold morning when the automatic feed jammed and the fire backed up into the coal bin. A passing police patrol officer saw smoke coming from the building, and a merry time ensued. The furnace was condemned and a back-up in another (newer) part of the building proved to be inadequate for the larger old edifice.

Security became a bit of a problem when the building was entered and some items disappeared. All doors had to be re-keyed.

Maintenance became very expensive. Even toilet tissue disappeared at an astounding rate! Exterior was of stucco, and the paint was peeling, discolored and unsightly. Since it was a very large building the amount of paint needed brought forth loud questions from the DFCM and our Rehabilitation boss.

Commuting from a distance became a problem after the initial excitement of having a place of our own slowly waned.

Suddenly our dream building became a disaster waiting to happen, and it almost did in 1983. The mountains close to the east (practically in our back yard, so to speak) were overloaded with an unusual amount of snow. That snow melted much too quickly in a spring thaw, overloading the several creeks flowing down, which in turn overflowed and became "raging torrents" which in turn created massive mudslides, one of which filled 400 North street, at our building's north side, to a depth of about three feet. As I came to work that morning, I had to detour around several mudded, flooded streets to get to the Center. I was greeted by the sight of an automobile caught at the intersection of 400 North and 400 East, up to its windows in solid mud. Across the street, to the north, several homes were lower than the level of the street, so their basements were filled to the brim with mud.

It was called a "One Hundred Year" year event.

A storm knocked down several huge pine trees that graced our east property line, blocking the driveway. Some on our staff had chain saws, and it was a "fun time" for all. We were lucky that the mud missed our building, since we were a bit higher on the south side



Looking south from 400 North St.
Storm blew down huge pine trees,
blocking rear access road.

the street, and had a four-foot retaining wall along the sidewalk.

The National Guard helped clear the streets of mud in Bountiful but it did take quite some time. On the way to work each day the tires on my car became quite muddy.

This was the year when City Creek above Salt Lake City overflowed its banks and the underground pipes and turned the city's Main Street into a sand-bagged river. Make-shift plank walkways were constructed over what was usually a very busy downtown street, and the city's newspaper reported that an occasional rainbow trout was spotted in the shallows of the street! The southern end of the Great Salt Lake lapped at the very shoulders of I-15 on its westward way to Nevada.

Work Goes on

The Center survived! The next two years saw many activities taking place in the gym. Beth Ann Campbell was especially effective in getting sponsorships and donations from local service clubs, enabling the Center to provide supplies that could not be furnished by the state. [Ref. 27]

The TTY shop remained quite busy repairing old teleprinter machines and converting them to usable condition for deaf consumers to use for telephone communication. Robert Lunnen, a Navy veteran who repaired teleprinter machines for the service during World War II developed a love for the old equipment that Western Union, A.T. & T., Mountain States Telephone and other local businesses donated to the Center for deaf people to use. Communication technology made them obsolete, but they were a boon to deaf people who were just learning to communicate by telephone/TTY. Norman Williams, a deaf man of all around skills (craftsman, builder, electrician, tinkerer, mechanic--handyman!) was the other part of the team that kept the TTY system working for the deaf community. Supporting this mission was probably one of the greatest accomplishments of Utah's Rehabilitation Services--making communication possible for all deaf and hard of hearing people of the state. There was a bit of

self-serving, too: After all, it became much easier for rehabilitation counselors and social workers to communicate with clients. Prior to the invention of the TTY coupler, counselors had few options for communication since they could not use the ordinary telephone with deaf people; mostly they would have to drive to wherever the clients would be living and hope to find them at home! That could be miles and miles, and eat up valuable time.

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

The Center's location in Bountiful was easily accessible via the I-15 freeway from Ogden and northern Davis County cities, and about 10 to 12 miles from Salt Lake City. However the largest population of deaf consumers proved to be farther south, so a slow decrease in deaf consumer visits became noticeable--a 1985 memo (from Rehabilitation?) cites the need for a location in the Salt Lake City area. [Ref. 24] The same memo recommends necessary planning funds to take the project of a new center for the hearing-impaired through working drawings and eventual construction, and that the existing Center in Bountiful be sold and the sale price be applied to the cost of a new building.

A flurry of memos occurred during July 1985 between Rehabilitation, Education and the Building Board, citing the need for a new comprehensive Community Center for the Hearing Impaired, for housing state personnel, for recreational equipment, and noting the count of deaf and hard of hearing users of the present center. [Refs. 28, 29, 30] Dr. Judy Buffmire, director of Rehabilitation Services, through these memorandums indicated her strong support of deaf people and their need for a new Center.

A Fact Sheet dated 12 Nov 85 [Ref. 25]:

Present Building Board Recommendations to Governor says "we MUST take some action" ... "the problems of the Rehabilitation Deaf Center will not go away." And "we do not want to sink good

money after bad in present facility." "Major heating problems; life-safety to clients and staff; poor location." Planning funds were requested. So the push was on for a complete NEW center for the deaf.

+ + + +

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson retired on November 15th, 1985, after 20 years of service to deaf and hard of hearing people through his job as a coordinator, rehabilitation counselor and center director. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Director of the state Office of Rehabilitation Services appointed Beth Ann Campbell as Director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf.

Beth Ann Campbell 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. She was also a "CODA" --(child of deaf parents)--and enjoyed considerable support among the deaf community, reflecting her advocacy and activism in behalf of deaf people.

Jim Hilber, a graduate of the University of Utah hearing and speech department and one of the counseling team assembled by Robert Sanderson over the years, was appointed to the position of administrator over the deaf program. Although Jim lacked a cultural background in deafness, his education and experience qualified him for the position. It was during Hilber's time and with his active participation that the "Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired" was created. Such a title did not sit well with the deaf community, so after 1988 it was changed to Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

In 1985, a flurry letters and memos from Dr. Judy Buffmire of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bernarr S. Furse, to the Director of the Division of Facilities Construction & Management, (DFCM) began by suggesting that planning funds be directed more to a new facility (Center for the Deaf) instead of to the Bountiful center and its long-term needs for

meeting code violations and repairs. Officials clearly understood that money would not be used effectively by pouring it into the old facility, when the consumer usage was declining because of the location. [Refs. 31, 32, 33]

Obviously the largest population of deaf consumers was in the Salt Lake valley. Of course, locating a center farther south would inconvenience the deaf people of the Davis and Weber counties, but the numbers were significantly in favor of a more central location.

Meanwhile, life continued on at the UCCD in Bountiful. The Utah Association for the Deaf had established its first formal office in the Center, hiring Valerie Kinney Platt as its business manager on a part time basis. Probably, at the time the office was the first in the nation of any state association of the deaf. The UAD also located its interpreter services in the Center, using funds provided by United Way of the Greater Salt Lake Area. Two interpreters were hired to provide services throughout the metropolitan areas of Salt Lake, Davis and Weber Counties. Because of the huge area to be covered, and restricted funds, it quickly became evident that travel was a financial burden. A one hour "job" twenty miles or more away was an inefficient way to handle the service.

In several meetings during 1987 and 1988 the United Way people began suggesting to the UAD interpreter committee that such a vital service should be state-supported since it did not respect "boundaries" of community funding agencies. Logically it was a state or region-wide service. Nevertheless, the UAD continued to administer interpreting services out of the UCCD while operating with severely restricted funding.

The paper work of meeting United Way reporting requirements became quite burdensome to a part-time worker in the UAD office and to UAD officers, so ultimately the UAD board in its October 1989 meeting resolved to ask the administrator of the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to take over the interpreting services. The UAD had proved the worth and the need of the services, so the change was a natural and beneficial move. The Division as a heavy consumer of interpreting services made it logical. Then too, state law

required the U.C.C.D. to maintain an interpreter list. [Ref. 41a]

In April of 1987, a news item in the UAD Bulletin called upon the deaf community to gather at the state Capitol in SLC January 30 for a meeting with Governor Bangerter and legislators to support legislation for equal access to the telephone system for deaf people. Essentially the legislation would provide for a 24 hour, state wide relay system. [Ref. 34 and 34A]

In October of 1987 a memorable milestone occurred. The Public Services Commission of the State of Utah awarded a contract to the Utah Association for the Deaf to set up and operate a statewide relay system for deaf people. [Ref. 35] Dr. Judy Buffmire, Executive Director of the Rehabilitation Services gave the okay to establish the services in the Center for the Deaf building at Bountiful.

Madelaine Perkins, an experienced executive secretary from a SLC business, and well known interpreter with strong ties to the deaf community, was selected to be the Program Director.

Apparently the lobbying by the UAD officers, by deaf members, and by friends was effective in pointing out that deaf people for many years had been unfairly left out of the telephone communication system, and new technology had made it possible to correct that inadvertent injustice. David Mortensen, the UAD president, was an effective spokesman during these exciting times of change for deaf people.

By January 11, 1988, the Utah Relay Service was up and running, initially located in the upper floor of the Center.

New UCCD Still in the Works

In the January 1989 issue of the Bulletin, page 6, Letters to the Editor, at the end of Gene Stewart's letter an announcement popped up:

"NEW UCCD CENTER--HELP! We need help with our lobbying efforts to get a new center. For info on how you can help, please call: Dave Mortensen, Lloyd Perkins, or Gene Stewart." Included in this issue was a complete listing of the Utah State 48th Legislature,

Senators and Representatives, their home addresses and telephones.

So already the deaf community leadership was beginning to work actively for a new center in a new location.

Another landmark occurred in February of 1988 when the state legislature passed SB 218. The May issue (Vol.11 #12) of the UAD Bulletin printed the following portion of the minutes of the February UAD Board meeting as follows:.....

The board suggested that the president write a letter of appreciation to those instrumental in getting SB 218 passed. This is the bill that provides for a Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired. It was pointed out that Dr. Judy Buffmore had a great deal to do with the passage of this bill, and it is important that the deaf people show their appreciation for her efforts.

The UAD Bulletin, April 1989:

UAD board meeting summarization. February 7, 1989.

Status of the New Center Proposal

Dr. Judy Buffmire from the Department of Rehabilitation gave a brief presentation regarding the legislative approval of funds to explore proposals for a future center for the deaf. [Ref. 43]

In March, 1989, the Legislature passed SB 30, "Telecommunications Access for the Hearing Impaired," which raised the .03 cent surcharge for relay operations to a .10 cent cap, enabling the UAD to serve more deaf people. In his column of the same issue above, Dave Mortensen, President of the UAD, noted that very few deaf people were on hand to lobby for the bill, and editorialized, "One wonders if the deaf in Utah are so apathetic to improving their upward mobility in life that they leave the work to a select few. One could wish that those who worked "get paid" and those who don't get "deductions."

During the early years of the UCCD at Bountiful, the Utah Relay

Service was an important tenant in the building. However, as time went on it became abundantly clear that the facility for the relay service was very uncomfortable, and a quiet search had begun for better accommodations in another location. Ultimately the relay service moved to another site in Bountiful, closer to the business district, shopping and restaurants--much more convenient for the relay workers.

First Administrator Appointed for UCCDHH

During 1988 Jim Hilber resigned to take another job, and the position was opened.

As chronicled by the UAD Bulletin, the selection of an administrator for the new Division aroused strong feelings within the leadership of the deaf community. They felt that a deaf person who had deep insights as to the needs of the deaf community should be the administrator, not a hearing person. Because this was a highly interesting and contentious issue, it is recommended that the reader refer to the Appendix for the details cited in this reference. [Ref. 39]

The state of Utah personnel processes produced a deaf person who was qualified, but for personal reasons he turned down the job!

After consulting with representatives of the deaf community at a later time, Dr. Buffmire appointed Gene D. Stewart as Acting Administrator of the new Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired pending re-advertising of the position through the state personnel processes.

During the following year, the deaf community responded to the search for a new director by gathering signatures on a petition supporting Gene Stewart as the permanent director of the DSDHH, presented it to Dr. Buffmire, and the State Advisory Committee for Services to the Adult Deaf and Hard of Hearing similarly wrote a letter to her supporting Gene.

Later, an article in the UAD Bulletin quotes the Salt Lake Tribune of August 11, 1989 :

"STATE APPOINTS GENE STEWART

The Utah State Board of Education has appointed Gene Stewart as administrator of the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, where he has served for nearly a year as acting administrator....." [Ref. 40]

Hence Gene became the first Administrator of the new DSDHH.

(Note the change in the name of the Division from a previous paragraph).

Mr. Stewart was a "CODA" an acronym for "child of deaf ~~parents~~", and such grew up as the only hearing child in a home with two other deaf siblings, a sister and brother. Hence his first language was sign language, and his culture environment was that of the deaf community. He blended freely in deaf society, and was well respected for his ability to communicate in ASL, and he earned a professional interpreters certificate. He also served as a professional rehabilitation counselor in the division of Rehabilitation since 1967. His education included a bachelor's degree in speech pathology from the University of Utah and a masters degree in educational administration from the University of California at Northridge.

In September, 1989, Mr. Stewart responded to a request from Dave Mortensen, the president of the Utah Association for the Deaf to explain what the new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing would be doing, and who the people were in the organization. The following references include five pages of detail from the UAD Bulletin of September, 1989, showing vastly expanded services from those upon which the original UCCD was based. It is recommended that the reader refer to the Appendix. [Refs. 41, 41a, 41b, 41c, 41 d, 41 e]

June 16, 1989, Dr. Buffmire addressed the biennial convention

of the Utah Association for the Deaf, and in her speech mentioned that the "planning dollars were obtained from the last legislature for a new Center for the Deaf after four years of constant lobbying and pushing; and a relay system is up and running, with increased funding obtained this year--a year in which no one thought a new tax of any kind could be passed." It should be noted that Dr. Buffmire is a representative in the legislature, from the Millcreek District of Salt Lake City.

With the planning funds secured, an Ad Hoc planning committee for the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf was formed, and met on July 5th, 1989. This committee included about 14 deaf people, some hard of hearing individuals, architects, and staff of the DFCM. A broad range of concerns were discussed--budget for purchase of land, size of the land, size of the building (square footage) and construction, what should be included in the building, how many people it would accommodate, and numerous other details. The minutes of this meeting are detailed in the Appendix. [Ref.49]

September 20th, Dr. Judy Buffmire appointed seven new members to the State Advisory Committee for Services to the Adult Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Past members were thanked for their services. The terms of service are for three years. The committee has continued in its advisory capacity through the years and it represents a very good cross section of the community being served. Over the years recommendations were made with respect to needed services or programs for deaf and hard of hearing people, some of which were implemented as funds and personnel became available [Ref. 42]

Dated October 1, 1989, An Architectural Program Guide, Utah Community Center for the Adult Deaf, DFCM Project No. Ed 89-026 from the architects, Frandsen-Chamberlain of Ogden, Utah 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. 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. [Ref. 51]

Thus it was with sheer delight that the deaf community learned that the Governor of Utah was supporting us!

Governor Bangerter Proposes Funding for New Center!

Finally! The February 1990 issue of the UAD Bulletin reports:

Governor Bangerter has recommended that the Legislature support funding for two projects for the deaf as a part of his state building program recommendations. These are a new Community Center for the Deaf at \$3,359,100, and a consolidated School for the Deaf and the Blind at \$8,184,300. The Legislature will decide whether or not to approve funding for these new buildings at these suggested amounts. Attending Legislative sessions to show your concern and support for these projects will help assure their approval. Contact Gene Stewart at 533-5997 or Dave Mortensen at 262-4760 to find out how you can show your support. [Ref. 45]

The same page also cites how the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Institutional Council plans to work with the Legislature to get a new building as proposed by the Governor. It seemed that the two projects were entwined 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 Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind administration began. The Office of Education added its considerable influence to the effort, and legislators responded!

Success at Last !

In the March 1990 issue of the UAD Bulletin, Gene Stewart, the administrator of the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, tells the story:

THANK YOU !!!
1990 UTAH LEGISLATORS!

**APPROVED! INTERPRETER FUNDS APPROVED!
NEW DEAF CENTER**

We've got a lot to thank the Legislature for this year! They listened and responded!

Thank you too, Utah State Office of Education (USOE) chief Executive Officer James Moss! Without Superintendent Moss' support down to the wire our efforts would not have been rewarded.

Thank you too, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, USOR Executive Director. Numero Uno! Your enthusiasm, knowledge and guidance led us through all those "days" at the Legislature...to a great successful closure! (Judy spent some nights there too!)

Thank you too, Blaine Petersen, Division of Rehabilitation Services Director (DRS). Your timely tips and advice were much appreciated and needed. It was nice to know you could be depended upon to answer our questions and to help.

Thank you too, Jim Hilber, DRS Facilities Specialist, for the years of working with the Legislators, analysts, Division of Construction and Facilities Management (DFCM) and others. The relationship you developed over the years and your work with the Legislative Coalition for the Handicapped certainly played a big part in the success of the Legislative funding for the Deaf Center. If anyone wants to know who someone is, their name, job and title, Jim remembers them all. Thanks again, Jim!

Here is what the Legislature approved for the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation/Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

- + Monies for equipment and programs at the UCCD (Utah Community Center for the Deaf) through 6-30-90.
- + Permanent annual funds for interpreter training and employment.

- + Permanent annual funds to increase/improve programming at the UCCD.
- + Building funds for a new Deaf Center.

The search for property for the new center has begun. I will keep you informed. We have the staff of DFCM to thank...Neal Stowe, Patrick Hayes, Dal Allred and others, like Max Anderson and Wayne Bingham who were always there to answer questions. Thanks a million, guys!

It is important to thank UAD president Dave Mortensen, and UAD Chairman of the Board Robert Sanderson, for their speeches to the Legislative committee. They were definitely influential.

A big thanks also to the "New UCCD Committee" members who worked hard for over a year on program plans for the new Deaf Center: George Gavros, Margaret Heinrich, Dave Mortensen, Shirley Platt, Lee Shepherd, Norm Williams, Robert Gillespie, Don Jensen, Lloyd Perkins, Robert Sanderson and Beth Ann campbell. (P.S. We still have work to do.)

Thanks too to our Senators and Representatives of the legislative committee, General Government and Capital Facilities: Sen. LeRay L. McAllister, Sen. Glade Nielsen, Sen. Cary G. Peterson, Rep. H. Craig Moody, Rep. Brent H. Goodfellow, Rep. Tim Moran, Rep. R. Haze Hunter, Rep. Bob Anderton, Rep. Douglas J. Holmes, Rep. Jeril B. Wilson, and Rep. Larry V. Hunt.

The success of this year's efforts is not simply the result of this past year's work! Not at all. Success this year is due to many years of thinking, thinking, planning, planning and effort. Names such as Gene Petersen, Ned Wheeler, Robert Sanderson, Lloyd Perkins, Kenneth Burdett, Dave Mortensen, Dennis Platt, Joe Burnett, past and present UAD Board members, church leaders Lynne Losee, Roy cochran and Rodney Walker all come to mind, Everyone helped!

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to call 538-7547 V/TDD.

----- Gene Stewart

In a Memorandum to the New UCCD Committee Members, Gene thanked them for helping to decide on a property that they

had visited: 5770 South 1500 West. [Ref. 50]

As can be seen, Gene pretty much covered all bases, and it is quite clear that it took a large number of deaf and hearing people working together to make our dream come true.

It did not take long to locate a suitable plot of land for the new Center. According to the UAD Bulletin, on March 13 Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire gave Gene Stewart the okay to sign a document that opened the way for the purchase of property for a new Deaf Center. 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--close to shopping, surrounded by new condos, apartments and only two blocks to a bus stop. It remained only for the Division of Facilities and Construction Management to check out the suitability of the land for the type of construction and go through all of the normal procedures for purchasing it, which they did. My hat is off to the DFCM people for both the site selection and the promptness in acquiring it. The land totalled approximately 5.46 acres at 60,000 dollars per acre, which was a very good price for such desirable and well located property.

GROUND BREAKING !

It was my privilege and great pleasure to attend the ground breaking ceremony for the new UCCD on June 10, 1991, a warm, sunny day. A crowd of approximately 200 people attended, attracted in part, no doubt, by the free hot dogs and soda pop.

As narrated by the UAD Bulletin [Ref. 47] Executive Director Dr. Blaine Petersen of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) welcomed the spectators and introduced speakers as the program progressed. One by one, VIPs took the stand and congratulated the those who were instrumental in making it all come to pass. Among speakers were Beth Ann Campbell, Director of the UCCD, who promised that construction would be recorded step by step, and that Norman Williams "would check where every nail goes" so that deaf Utahns would be assured that building plans and construction would

go right. She expressed confidence in the architects, Burtch Beall and Mary Guy-sell.

Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, retired executive director of the USOR, Val Overson, Lt. Governor of the State of Utah, and the architects all expressed wishes for the success of the construction of the center.

Dave Mortensen briefly outlined the history of the center and some of the delays and frustrations encountered 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 building in which deaf people themselves would have a say in the design to meet their unique needs.

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

Larry Kinnett, deaf, winner of a ticket drawing, joined Mary Guy-Sell, Beth Ann Campbell, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Norman Williams, and Lt. Governor Val Overson as they hoisted shovels and broke ground for what was to become a first in the nation, an unique Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(Feedback)

UAD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Lyle G. Mortensen

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 facilities and services which benefit all. To name a few from a long 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. Out hats are off to your excellent leadership and also to the past UAD Board of Directors which served you so well.....[Ref. 48]

Construction Begins

While the new Center for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing was under construction, programs serving deaf and hard of hearing people continued at the Bountiful Center, but were restricted from meeting the growing needs by the distance from the center of things. Parking continued to be a severe problem, limiting use of the facilities. Minimal maintenance was all that was forthcoming, so everyone was marking time, waiting for the new Center, and planning, planning, planning!

Week by week, day by day, excited deaf people drove by the site of the new center, watching the progress, watching the land preparation, watching as the foundations were laid and utilities brought in. It looked a muddy mess at first, but after a few months walls began going up and the building took shape ever so slowly for impatient deaf people. And construction was on time target, as promised.

Apart from the DFCM professionals who always monitor new construction, and the architects, Norman Williams practically lived for the action! He knew every brick personally, it seemed, and this served him well as he grew familiar with the building and all that went into its construction—enabling him to become in effect a maintenance man who knew every inch of the building and how to take care of it. Of course he did not actually take part in the construction—rather, he watched everything with every minute he could spare from his own duties at the old Bountiful center. Norman and the new building were practically made for each other! All of this, of course aided greatly in the transition from the old center to the new center. He knew where everything was and what the functioning parts of the building were supposed to do and when.

As completion of the center drew close, Beth Ann Campbell and Gene Stewart began the process of getting new furniture for the new building. The old --previously used furniture from the Bountiful center that we had begun with--was turned back to the State surplus. Much of it was simply junk, showing decades of wear and tear; only a few reasonably good pieces were kept, such as some file cabinets.

Around this period of time Beth Ann Campbell retired, leaving a legacy of creative work with and strong advocacy for the deaf, and as a superb professional interpreter. She earned the respect of all who worked with her.

By the time the new building was ready for occupancy in September of 1992, most of the new furniture was in place, staff were assigned space, and the keys were turned over on (date?)

Deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Utah finally had their building, the **Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing!**

And what is this building?

It is 25,000 square feet in size, and is the largest state-owned building dedicated for the use of deaf people in the United States. It is "home" to deaf people of the state of Utah. All manner of events take place within its walls: Classes, socials, sporting events, meetings, seminars, crafts, bazaars, drama presentations, conferences large and small, and TTY and TDD repair services to name a few. There is also 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, TDDs and other communication devices are spread out for deaf and hard of hearing people to test to find what meets their particular communication problem.

A large reception room is in the immediate entrance area, where people can sit, relax and chat. The original building also had fifteen offices and a workroom. Abutting the lounge is a courtyard with a beautiful fountain donated by O.C. Tanner, a local philanthropist. And of course there are modern restroom facilities in three convenient locations.

And what of the people who work in our beautiful Center? What do they do? It may be best to list the programs, rather than the names of people because sometimes they come and go—some retire, some get married, some move out of state and so on.

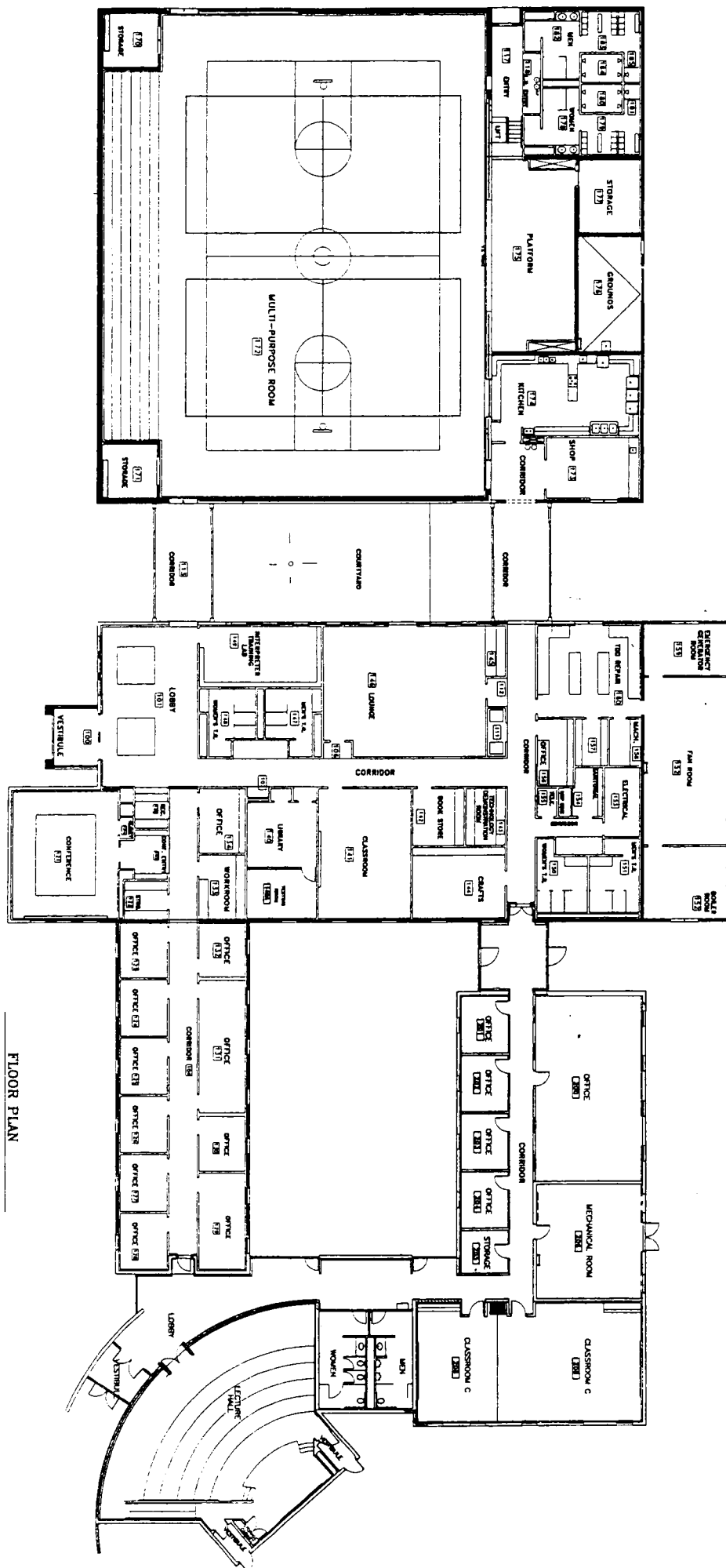


Notice the blue tarp hanging from the upper right hand corner of the Gym and Multipurpose Building. It covers the new name just prior to the re-naming ceremony of October 4th, 2003.



Main Entrance

Robert G. Sanderson
Community Center of the deaf
and Hard of Hearing



Programs

- Rehabilitation services.
- Peer counselors.
- Interpreter Testing & Certification.
- Adult education.
- Deaf Senior Citizens.
 - Card clubs
 - Educational tours
- Youth and Family
- Circle of Friends
- Computer training.
- Western Regional Outreach Center and Consortia Site.
- Hard of Hearing Assistance Technology.
 - Self Help for the Hard of Hearing Education
 - Association of Late Deafened Adult Education
- Telecommunications and Electronics repair (TTD, TTY).
 - Education and Home Assistance with Electronic Setups
- Crafts--(Quilting, etc.)
- Ad hoc training and assistance:
 - Legal seminars
 - Tax assistance
 - Health education
- Sports--tournaments, etc.
 - Basketball
 - Softball
 - Volleyball
- Social work (LCSW)
- Miss Deaf Utah Pageant facilities.
- Deaf Organization Meetings w/Technology Assistance
- Annual Bazaars

As an example of one on-going program: Interpreting. Among the offices is an interpreter lab and testing equipment. In this program, the Utah Registry of Interpreters maintains a list, and officially tests and certifies interpreters before they can legally work for

compensation in Utah. A full time program director, Mitch Jensen, and a secretary keep the Registry up to date.

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From the time of beginning of operations in this beautiful new building, programs grew in response to demands and needs of the population of deaf youths and adults, and hard of hearing youths and adults. Gene Stewart, as the administrator of the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing oversaw the burgeoning development of the programs.

The increasing workload made it necessary to hire a qualified person for Program Director, and in June of 1992 Marilyn Call was hired. Ms. Call brought to the job several years of experience as Executive Director of the Legislative Coalition of the Handicapped, an organization that worked actively with the Utah State Legislature in advocacy of disabled people. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Among other qualifications, she also is the mother of a deaf daughter--and she herself is losing her hearing.

Four years of rapid growth in the programs of the Center followed, and it soon became evident that as large as it was, the building was not large enough to house all of the staff needed to administer them.

Gene Stewart decided to retire as soon as he became eligible to do so in July, 1996, leaving as his legacy a great staff and a very successful, growing program serving a long underserved population. A national search began for his replacement.

New Administrator Takes Over

William "Rusty" Wales was hired in September of 1996. He brought to the position a lifetime knowledge of personal deafness, of the struggles a deaf person has in trying to develop speech, and in

acquiring an education. After experiencing an early oral program at the John Tracy Clinic in California, he went on to graduate from the California School for the Deaf at Riverside, and later from Gallaudet University. He taught at the J.T. Tracy school while studying for his masters degree at California State University Northridge, while raising a family.

He made a career change, becoming a rehabilitation counselor in Denver, Colorado, a position he held for 10 years. From there he jumped to a position as a training supervisor with the Sprint Relay Center in Independence, Missouri. After three years with Sprint he learned of the opening for an administrator of the Division of Services to Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, Office of Rehabilitation Services, Utah State Office of Education and applied for it, believing it posed more of a challenge. He was hired in 1996. [Ref. 52]

For the first few years of his administration at UCCD he continually talked up the need for a new wing (not a new "annex") to serve the growing programs, gathering support from the deaf community and legislators. He envisioned classrooms, offices, and a lecture hall that would be designed specifically for the needs of deaf audiences--tiered seating. He worked tirelessly, persuading, cajoling, citing facts and figures, needs and benefits, keeping a positive attitude despite questionable chances of getting money. 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 State Board of Education, a formal request went to the legislature.

Rusty Wales persuaded many members of the deaf community to help with lobbying the capital facilities subcommittee, and with the support of the officials of the State Office of Education and Rehabilitation Services the effort succeeded.

In Utah, state agencies making requests for funds for the construction of buildings must convince a capital facilities subcommittee of the need, and then if the full committee approves, it moves to the State Building Board which determines priorities among the many state agencies and universities making requests. The board determines the amount of funds available as appropriated by the

legislature for capital facilities construction, repairs, etc., and establishes a priority list. Usually the top ten agencies on the list feel they will have a chance at funds, but politics frequently enter the picture, and priorities get moved accordingly. An agency near the top can find itself near the middle or lower on the list as the work of the legislature continues, so constant watchfulness is necessary. And yes, one must use persuasive tactics with key legislators to be sure that once a favorable spot on the list is secured, it is not bumped down--which is what once happened to our first request (we were very naive then), and were bumped down from about number five to eleven when, in 1981, the need for a new dairy barn for cows at Utah State University appeared to be more important than the needs of deaf people, or so it seemed to one or more legislators who were lobbied by the University. Hence, pressure from the legislature on the Building Board members changed the priority listing. [Ref. 16]

New Wing on UCCD Approved !

The total cooperation of the deaf community with Rusty's effort, and the support of the State Board of Education and the Office of Rehabilitation Services administrators, plus the support of key legislators (and the availability of funds!) made it all possible: The new wing became a reality! Our new wing was not bumped off the priority list in this year!

The architectural proposals are worth reading for those who may wish to know what goes into the planning of a state building. [Ref. 53, 54]

After planning of the physical building was completed, the matter of furnishing the tiered seating for the new lecture hall came up. Along with Rusty, I insisted on "fixed" seating, rather than metal chairs or movable classroom style seats. The cost became a factor, but ultimately the fixed seating won out. Movable seats would be disruptive as people shifted around, pushing and pulling seats to suit their own comfort or view. Thus the lecture hall became a comfortable place to learn in, a quiet place (yes, deaf people do need a "quiet"

environment !!--especially the interpreters who serve them).

In May, 2001, groundbreaking for the new addition to the Center took place. The occasion was properly celebrated with a ceremony that included certain officials and legislators directly or indirectly involved in the long process of securing approvals and funds. [Ref. 55]

Construction commenced and work as usual continued in the Center. Contractors managed to close off certain hallways and rooms with the least possible disruption to activities.

Meanwhile, a change in administration occurred. Rusty Wales moved on to another job in Washington state, and Marilyn T. Call, who had been serving under him as Program Director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (UCCD), was promoted in July, 2001 to Acting Director of the Division of Services to the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. After serving six months, Ms. Call, with the enthusiastic assent of the deaf community, was promoted to Director in January of 2002.

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

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I have been asked frequently about how the Center is financed. There is an agreement between Department of Administrative Services, Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM) and the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (OFFICE) for the operation and maintenance of the Center. A copy of such agreement is in the appendix. (Ref. 57)

Salaries and wages of personnel are paid by the Division of Services to the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, Office of Rehabilitation, State Office of Education, Utah State Board of Education.

The Director of the Center has an Advisory Committee of

deaf and hard of hearing people to assist in developing rules and regulations in the use of the facilities, including hours and days of operation. As a community center it caters to all ages of the deaf and hard of hearing and their families.

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And now perhaps another person, closer to the current events in the Center, will continue the story. If I have learned anything at all, it is that small and large events need to be recorded along with their dates and the people who are intimately involved. Only such a record written at the time will be historically as accurate as possible.

--R.G.S. 3-10-04



Addendum to History of the Center's Creation

--Marilyn Call

This 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. Dr. Sanderson did not cover this in his written history because he is a modest man. I asked him if I could add to his history to tell this story.

As current Director, and former Program Director, I have always thought this building should carry the name of a Deaf individual because we would not have this Center without Deaf People's persistent advocacy.

I had to convince my Boss, Blaine Petersen and then with his permission On August 1, 2003, I presented the following speech to the Utah State Board of Education:

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

Good morning. I returned late last night from a one-week camping trip. Please excuse me if I still smell like mosquito repellent and if I use metaphors from Nature. Yesterday morning, I went on a last bike ride to say good bye to my favorite mountains. I followed a path that took me to a big jagged boulder framed by Jackson Lake and Mount Moran. On this big rock was a plaque that read, "This bay was named for John Colter, the first white explorer to discover the Teton Mountain Range." This piqued my curiosity about John Colter. How did he feel when he first saw these mountains?? Did he keep a journal? What season was it when he came into this beautiful valley?

I bring this up because a few weeks ago I told a friend of mine about this dream I have to rename our community center. I want to see it named after a hero and legend in the Deaf community. My friend commented that he thought naming buildings for people was a stupid idea. He said in 25 or 30 years no one will know who Bob Sanderson is.

I was surprised at his perspective but I 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."

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 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.”

Twenty to fifty years from now I want everyone one who comes to the community center to wonder who is Robert G Sanderson? I want them to learn the history and appreciate what Dr. Sanderson and other great Deaf leaders of the 1900’s such as Dave Mortensen and Dennis Platt have done.

Why does our beautiful community center exist? Is it because Legislators were bored and decided they wanted to help Deaf people? No. It is because Deaf leaders persevered at lobbying for this center for 46 years. They also lobbied for the relay system, interpreters and the many other accommodations we have today. One hundred years ago Deaf people were not even allowed to marry or obtain a drivers license. People need to know what a small group of Deaf leaders in Utah accomplished by hard work and sacrifice.

Now, each of you has a copy of a memorandum which gives a brief outline of the history of the Deaf center and why Dr. Sanderson was chosen to represent Utah’s Deaf leaders. I won’t take the time to go over everything in that Memo but let me highlight a few reasons.

- 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.
- 2 He has been lobbying the legislature for better services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Utahns for over 40 years.
- 3 He is the first Deaf professional hired by the State Board of Education.
- 4 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.
- 5 When he retired in 1985, he didn’t quit working for the cause. He just stopped getting paid. He is still comes to the community center 2 or 3 times a week from Roy. He serves on various committees, boards, volunteers at the book store, etc.

He reminds me 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. Dr. Sanderson may not walk as fast anymore, or jump as high, but he is always there to do a job when he is needed - just like Old faithful.

I ask you to support this request to rename this state building after this deserving Deaf Leader.

The State Board of Education supported renaming our Center unanimously.

On October 4, 2003, a huge renaming celebration was held. There were 1,000 people in attendance. Noted guests included Dr. Sanderson and his family from near and far, Governor Olene S. Walker, Dr. I. King Jordan, Dr. Blaine Petersen, and Representative Judy Ann Buffinire to name a few.

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 home of the Deaf community along the Wasatch Front.



Marilyn Call

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Blaine Petersen

FROM: Marilyn Call

DATE: July 11, 2003

SUBJECT: Robert G Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf & Hard Of Hearing

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a second home to individuals with hearing loss throughout the Wasatch Front. It is one place where the communication barriers of the world don't exist. It is a refuge. I believe a home such as this for the Deaf should bear the name of an outstanding Deaf individual.

This center would not exist without persistent, coordinated advocacy efforts of the Deaf Community that spans at least five decades. Though it is recognized that the birth of this Center came about by the efforts of many, Dr. Robert G. Sanderson is the obvious choice of the deaf community as the one most deserving of having his name carried on forever...as a symbol of accomplishment, leadership, service and integrity.

The idea of having a meeting place for Deaf People was first discussed in 1946. In 1992 this community center, built and designed for the Deaf opened it's doors and a dream kept a live for forty six years came true.

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson (Bob) has had an ongoing leadership role in the pursuit of this dream. His life is also exemplary of the power to overcome. Bob was born in Las Vegas, Nevada and lived the carefree life of a country kid until 1930 when he became ill with Spinal Meningitis. There was a national epidemic at this time. He survived the illness, but was deafened by this disease at the young age of 11.

There was no school for the Deaf in Nevada so Bob was sent away from his family to the Utah School for the Deaf in Ogden in 1931. He was very successful there and graduated from the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind in 1936. He then attended Gallaudet College, the only higher education institution for Deaf people at the time. He graduated from Gally with a BA in 1941.

He married Mary Antonietti in 1946, settled in Roy, Utah and found work

as a Draftsman for Weber County. At this time there were not many employment opportunities for educated Deaf people but times were beginning to change. By the early 60's there was a national movement to better serve Deaf individuals, within the Rehabilitation System. Because of this movement leadership programs were born and specialized services for the Deaf were sprouting up through out the country.

Deaf Utahns did not want to be left behind so they organized a lobbying effort to get Rehab services for Deaf Utahns. In 1965 Deaf advocates visited Governor Calvin Rampton. The Legislature followed the Governor's suggestion and appropriated ten thousand dollars to be matched with Federal Rehabilitation funds. Utah's Rehab program hired Robert Sanderson on November 15, 1965. He was the first coordinator of Services to the Adult Deaf in the Department of Public Instruction, under Dr. Vaughn Hall, State Administrator of the Division of Rehabilitation. Thus, he is known as the Father of Adult Deaf Services. At this time he had just completed his Master's Degree in Educational Administration at California State University Northridge.

He worked as the state coordinator for the Deaf until his retirement in 1985. While working in this position he led the continues advocacy efforts to establish a community center that the deaf could call their own as and developed a specialized Rehabilitation unit for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Since there were no Deaf individuals with Doctorate level degrees in Utah, he decided to further his education and show what could be done. He commuted from Roy to BYU in Provo while working full-time and received a Doctor of Education degree in 1974. This was pre-ADA... before interpreter services were provided.

During this time he was also looked to as a leader in Utah's Deaf Community affairs as well as national Deaf advocacy organizations. He served as President and several other positions in the Utah Association for the Deaf Organization. He served as President of the National Association of the Deaf from 1964 to 1968. He served on the board of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf, and on the Board of Trustees for Gallaudet University during the "Deaf President Now" student revolt.

The first actual spark that set in motion plans for a Community Center came about in June 1975. Dr. Walter D. Talbot, Superintendent of Public Instruction, asked Bob to bring together a committee to do a feasibility study.

Bob Sanderson chaired this committee and a forty-seven page feasibility report was presented to the Board of Education in December in 1975. In the 1980's the first Community Center opened its doors in an old church building in Bountiful. Bob Sanderson became the first Director. Though this building was a

good start it was old and inadequate, so lobbying efforts continued to get a new community center built. In 1989 funds were finally granted to build a brand new Community Center in Taylorsville.

Though Bob retired from work in 1985...he did not retire as an advocate. Almost 20 year past retirement, he never misses an opportunity to lead and advocate for the Deaf. He continues to drive down to the Capitol even on snowy days to lobby for the cause. He continues to drive from Roy to the Center two or three times a week to volunteer his time in various ways including staffing the Utah Association for the Deaf Bookstore. Just this past June he was voted to serve again on the UAD Board.

Bob reminds me of the Energizer Bunny. Though his body is eighty-four years old....his passion for advocacy is still young. He never gives up. He just keeps on going and going to make the world the best place possible for others who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. He is 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**.