

1946-1960s

Early Years



1969-1971 OFFICERS
 Front row (left to right): Richard Brubaker, Valerie Platt, Joseph Burnett, Dennis Platt, Ned Wheeler. Back row, Robert Bonnell, Lloyd Perkins, David Mortensen, Robert Sanderson. Absent: George Laramie and Gene Stewart.

UAD Officers

1946: A Need for a Meeting Place

At the Utah Association of the Deaf convention, an idea surfaced to have a designated meeting place for those who are deaf. For years, the Utah Deaf community gathered for socials and activities, but always had to “beg for time and space.” This would eventually become a reality in later years.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”
 —Margaret Mead

1962: Establishing an Office

Driven by the inaccessibility of services and the need for the State of Utah to improve its services, these early leaders established an office to serve deaf people.



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson



Eugene W. Petersen



G. Leon Curtis

1963: Addressing Barriers

The Community Services Council (now known as the United Way) reported several barriers for deaf adults trying to receive services including:

- Communication barriers with family, friends and professionals
- Limited freedom of communication in counseling services
- Lack of skills working with those who are deaf
- Communication barriers at social activities

1965: First Deaf Coordinator

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson was appointed as the first state coordinator of services to people who are deaf in Utah. It was also the first position of its kind in the nation. While working

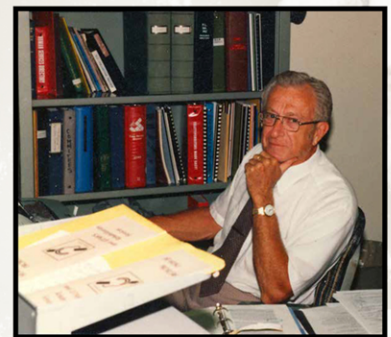
in this position, he led advocacy efforts to establish a community center and develop a specialized rehabilitation unit for those who are deaf and hard of hearing.



Beth Ann Campbell

Program Specialist for the Community Center in Bountiful

Campbell became the first American Sign Language interpreter in Utah to be nationally certified, and interpreted the local nightly news on TV. She also interpreted for Dr. Sanderson and W. David Mortensen as they lobbied the legislature.



1965: Successful Lobbying



At the Utah State Legislature session, the appropriation for services for the deaf was eliminated. Utah Association of the Deaf President G. Leon Curtis and his officers campaigned intensively to successfully reinstate funding.



Additional Milestones:

- 1958:** U.S. Congress created the Captioned Films for the Deaf
- 1965:** Rehabilitation Services Administration removed economic need as a federal requirement for vocational rehabilitation services
- 1965:** Services for Deaf Adults in Utah was created
- 1968:** Utah Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (now known as UTRID) was founded

1966: Increased Workload

In previous years, the Utah Division of Rehabilitation served an average of 11 clients who were deaf or hard of hearing. With Dr. Sanderson’s skill, caseloads increased to 94 clients by bridging communication barriers.