

FALL / WINTER 2008

FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



40 Years of Excellence in Education

Staying FOCUSED

NTID's 40th anniversary marks the 40th anniversary of FOCUS as well. The magazine was first published in November 1968, and the cover story featured NTID's inaugural class. Over the years, the look of the magazine has changed, but like NTID, it remains firmly focused on students and their academic achievement, personal growth and career success.

Transition



November, 1968

ntid FOCUS

Publication of the
National Technical
Institute of the Deaf.
Rochester Institute
of Technology

From concept to reality:

NTID Welcomes First Freshman Class Early in September

"Tell it like it is," "Say it loud, say it clear."
That's exactly what Dr. Robert Frisina did as he welcomed NTID's first class to the Rochester Institute of Technology campus. The group of young men and women were on campus for a special orientation prior to classes starting in September.

Dr. Frisina detailed briefly the history of deaf education, NTID as a concept and then as a reality, and what everyone's responsibilities would be in order to make NTID a success.

"We will be living in a glass bowl, and the entire nation will be watching us very closely," Dr. Frisina said.
"For many years we have told the world that the deaf, if given the opportunity, could be educated on a college level, and as a result could make some outstanding contributions in the professions and business. Well, we now have the chance, and we must take advantage of the opportunity."

"A little over 100 years ago Gallaudet College was just a dream and not fully accepted. A lot of hard work by many people went into the Gallaudet dream, and now it is a reality. It proved that deaf young people with desire and interest can make achievements, similar to their hearing peers, if they are given the chance. We can benefit from the Gallaudet experience, but we must make our own contributions."

Dr. Frisina went on to define various areas of responsibilities. "You have a responsibility to your parents and your former teachers. They all worked hard to get you to this point in your lives, and now it is your turn to reciprocate. We have to show them that their efforts were not in vain. Make them proud of you, and in turn you will be proud of yourself."

"As mature young people, ask yourselves this question: Why was I chosen for this program?"

"Let me give you the answer as I see it.
"First of all, you were chosen because your record indicated that you could benefit from post-secondary education. Secondly, you have made a commitment to everyone concerned that you will give it all that you have in order to be successful. This is important."

"College should be fun, and a place where you have a good time. However, don't go hog wild in one direction. Al-

Dr. Robert Frisina prepares to welcome his first NTID class to the R.I.T. campus.



ways balance your studies and social activities. Remember your prime mission here is to get a solid education so that after you graduate you can be placed in a meaningful, creative job."

"Everyone at NTID and R.I.T. is anxious that all of you succeed, and we will do all in our power to make this a reality. However, we can't do this alone — we will need, and we will expect your complete cooperation."

"Remember, study as hard and as long as you need. You will know the problem and solution better than we. Never fail to yell for help, but don't panic. There's a difference and we should know what the difference is. Try to iron out your own problems. By doing this you undoubtedly will be a better person."

Dr. Frisina addressed himself to the area of cooperation for a few more moments. "This is an area of critical importance. You must help each other and you must also help the hearing students and instructors help you. This will determine, to a great extent, your degree of success."

"All of you will find life at R.I.T. interesting, different, and rewarding. At the same time it will place many demands on each of you. Accept them as responsible young adults. Many other colleges throughout the U.S. tend to accept as inevitable their dropout rate. We are different here at R.I.T. We will consider ourselves failures if you fail. Therefore, with your cooperation and determination, we will do everything in our power to make your college life a successful experience as well as lots of fun."

"Your families, friends, teachers, future deaf students, and the entire NTID staff are counting on you. Don't let us down. Play hard, have fun, but remember your prime mission at NTID is to study hard and prepare yourself for a promising future."

In closing, Dr. Frisina told the class that they were good guys and good girls. "You're all cool cats, and — in your vernacular — keep your cool. Good luck to all of you."

The class was quiet throughout. The message was clear, and they understood. They responded with an ovation as Dr. Frisina left the podium. All were satisfied. Each side had its tasks defined.



Portrait of the attentive NTID class listening to Dr. Frisina. From left to right: Dorothy Knight, Montrossville, Pa.; Kathy Tronig, Cecil; Bill Ingraham, Brockport, N. Y.; David Kilham, Orlinda, Fla.; Jeanne Fortune, W. Springfield, Mass.; George Dorough, St. Augustine, Fla.; Ross Higgins, Rochester, N. Y.; Jim Montgomery, Niagara Falls, N. Y.

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JORGE SAMFER

ABOUT THE COVER

In 2008, NTID celebrates its 40th anniversary of providing outstanding educational opportunities that prepare deaf and hard-of-hearing students to live and work in the mainstream of a rapidly changing global community. Pictured here is NTID's Lyndon Baines Johnson Building on the RIT campus.

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FOCUS

NTID

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Celebrating Past, Present and Future

Can NTID really be 40 years old? It seems like yesterday that my wife, Vicki, and I were packing suitcases in preparation for our move to Rochester, where I would begin my first teaching job at NTID. At the time, the college had been open for just a few years, and even though it was 38 years ago, I remember distinctly the feelings of energy, excitement and potential that permeated the hallways and classrooms.

That same energy filled the halls in June when a record number of graduates—720—returned to campus for NTID's 40th Anniversary Reunion. I was delighted to be on hand as families arrived and exchanged hugs and stories about their lives since leaving RIT/NTID. I was thrilled to learn of the professional and personal successes that our graduates have enjoyed,

and gratified at the number who told me how valuable their RIT/NTID education was to them in fulfilling their career goals.

As members of the inaugural class of '68 toured campus and marveled at the astounding physical growth of the college, they also spoke warmly of the aspect of NTID of which I am most proud—the teachers, counselors, coaches, interpreters and other people who collectively make NTID such a unique place.

Many things have changed since NTID opened its doors 40 years ago—new programs, new buildings, new technology and more—but one thing that hasn't changed is the dedication and commitment of the people in the NTID community. Ours is a community that cares, a community with great pride in our history and great enthusiasm for our future.

This fall we'll be focused firmly on the future as we begin development of a new strategic plan, Vision 2020, which will help chart our course for the next decade.

I begin this academic year with a new title—in June I was appointed NTID's first-ever president. I am honored to be leading the college and pledge to continue to find ways to improve what we do so that we can continue to attract the best and brightest young deaf people to RIT/NTID. We are the only college in the world that gives students both a top-notch technological education at a premier university as well as opportunities for leadership that they won't find anywhere else.

I look forward to enjoying a successful academic year with our largest-ever incoming class.

Alan

Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz
NTID President
RIT Vice President and Dean for NTID



Is that really you? Reunion attendees marvel at photos in a past yearbook as they reflect on NTID's first 40 years.

BEN LIDDLE

NTID's 40th Anniversary Reunion

by Susan L. Murad

More than 700 alumni, families and friends converged on the RIT campus amid columns of orange, blue and white balloons on the last weekend in June to "Remember, Rediscover and Reconnect" at NTID's 40th Anniversary Reunion.

"NTID has blazed a trail over these 40 years," said Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean for NTID. "Events like this allow us to take a moment and reflect back on the amazing work that has

been done here. Thousands of alumni are leading successful lives and are valuable members of their communities, due in large part to the world-class education they received here at RIT/NTID. That is truly something to celebrate!"

Reunion sponsors CSDVRS, Sorenson Communications, Sprint Relay, Advanced Bionics, New York Relay and Eastman Kodak Company provided food, entertainment and fun for the attendees.

"All of the planning is certainly worth it when you see so many happy faces," said Matthew Driscoll, NTID alumni relations director. "It's really wonderful!"

Those who were unable to attend or who wish to continue the fun are encouraged to attend RIT's Brick City Homecoming Celebration October 10-12, 2008.

To view more reunion images, visit www.rit.edu/ntid/reunion.



NTID's 40th Anniversary Reunion

1 Big hands waving The crowd cheers at the opening ceremonies of NTID's 40th Anniversary Reunion.

2 Holy cow! The 40th Anniversary Reunion Giving Challenge exceeded its goal of \$40,000. Co-chairs Robert and Susan Mather announced the \$46,850 total, which doubled to \$93,700 with NTID's federal government match. "We are so thrilled with the outcome of the challenge," said Robert. "Our alumni's commitment and generosity are the basis for the continued success of RIT/NTID," added Susan.

3 Celebrity time Two of RIT/NTID's "nationally known alumni—entertainer and Outstanding Alumni Award recipient CJ Jones (left foreground) and Ultimate Fighter Matt Hamill (right foreground)—react as they watch one of Hamill's matches.

4 "I want you all to know how proud I am of all of you." NTID's Founding Director Dr. D. Robert Frisina received a standing ovation when he addressed the crowd. "You have made it possible for students to come here and study and make successful lives for themselves," he said.

5 Take your best shot! NTID Alumni Relations Director Matthew Driscoll gets ready as a young reunion attendee pitches the ball at the dunk tank lever. The pitch was a strike, and Driscoll was instantly cooled off.

6 Cuddly as a tiger RITchie, the RIT mascot, poses with reunion attendees.



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PHOTO CREDITS:
BEN LIDDLE (#1, 2, 4, 5, 6), SETH PERSONETT (#8, 9),
JASON WITTIG (#3, 7, 10, 11, 12)

7 Almost! Alumnus and NTID Admissions Counselor John “JT” Reid reacts as he nearly makes his shot at the alumni golf tournament held on the opening day of reunion weekend.

8 Mixing business and pleasure Alumnus Andrew Brenneman (right), senior national account executive for Sprint Business Solutions, who serves on the RIT Board of Trustees and NTID National Advisory Group, understands the importance of such an event. “The reunion provides alumni a rare opportunity to gather and catch up on news, and provides an opportunity for social and business networking.”

9 Taking a moment to learn Alumnus Scot Atkins of Interpretex conducts a workshop on job skills during the reunion.

10 All aboard! Campus tours aboard Molly the Trolley provided attendees with a look at the many ways the RIT campus has grown.

11 Bouncin’ around There were plenty of activities for all ages, including a bounce house, water slide and spray jungle.

12 Tiger power! Alumni and reunion committee members Astrid “AJ” Jones and Donna Tuffner wear their tiger ears and pose with fellow attendees at the “Get Acquainted” reception sponsored by Sorenson Communications.

The Grand Success

by Kathy A. Johncox

Before NTID's charter class arrived on campus in September 1968, access to a college education for deaf people had been limited, with less than one percent of college-aged deaf people enrolled in higher education. Employment opportunities for deaf people were primarily in unskilled positions, with very few employed in technical or managerial positions. NTID was founded to change all that, and as this nation's first attempt to educate large numbers of deaf students together with hearing students on the same campus, NTID's founders termed it, "The Grand Experiment."

Now, 40 years later, NTID has more than 6,000 alumni, and over the past five years, 93 percent of the college's graduates who have chosen to enter the workforce have found employment in business, industry, government, education and other fields.

"NTID really has evolved from 'The Grand Experiment' to 'The Grand Success,'" says Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, NTID president and RIT vice president and dean for NTID. "Over time, exciting and significant changes have occurred that have contributed to the continued growth of the college and the increasing success of our students and alumni in the marketplace. It is my responsibility and my privilege to build on these changes by managing day-to-day operations, heading the college's fundraising efforts and leading NTID into the next decade with our strategic planning effort, Vision 2020, which starts this academic year."

Hurwitz and the NTID Administrative Team have logged a combined 187 years of contributing to the changes and growth of the college. The six of them offer the following unique perspectives on NTID's 40 years of success.



President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the National Technical Institute for the Deaf Act in 1965.



MARK BEJAMIN

Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, NTID president, RIT vice president and dean for NTID "Despite NTID's federal funding, over the years it became financially more difficult for

students to attend, so fundraising became essential," says Hurwitz.

"Our fundraising was originally focused on scholarships and later moved to include research, facilities and equipment as needs arose in those areas. In fiscal year 2007-2008, 85 NTID endowed scholarships provided 535 scholarship awards, totaling \$737,000 for students. Among our most significant capital improvements are the Dyer Arts Center, the Communication Service for the Deaf Student Development Center, and the

D. Robert Frisina Quad, three facilities enjoyed by the RIT/NTID community through the generosity of our donors. Fundraising will continue to play a vital role in NTID's future in the face of the challenges of decreasing governmental support in the public sector."



MARK BEJAMIN

Donald Beil, executive assistant to the president of NTID "From the moment President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the law establishing NTID, a relationship was forged between the institute and

Congress that has continued to flourish through the years. One of our great strengths is the outstanding reputation NTID has with those in the federal government," says Beil.

"We have been very fortunate to have

support from staff members in the U.S. Department of Education. President Hurwitz meets with them on a regular basis to review our activities and plans for the future. NTID also has had tremendous support from Congressional offices, including not only members of Congress from New York, but from all regions of the country. As a national institute, we serve students from all 50 states and those in Congress know of our programs and how well we serve their constituents.”



MARK BENJAMIN

Dr. Gerard Buckley, assistant vice president for College Advancement “One of the key elements contributing to student success has been NTID’s ability to keep

pace with and strike a balance between the educational and academic needs of students and the technical and workplace skills required by employers,” says Buckley.

“NTID’s technical faculty and the NTID Center on Employment staff work hard to stay connected with employers through visits to students on cooperative work experiences, and by networking and reporting back what’s happening in the marketplace. The cutting-edge equipment available to students at RIT/NTID and the academic and technical courses they take prepare them to impress employers with their skills the minute they walk through the door.”



MARK BENJAMIN

Dr. Laurie Brewer, interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs “Over the past 40 years, both marketplace and student expectations

have changed curriculum offerings dramatically and have influenced the ways in which NTID’s academic

programs have been designed and delivered,” Brewer says.

“In the late 1970s, approximately 12 percent of NTID students were in baccalaureate degree programs. Today, that figure is 44 percent. As the number of students wishing to enter baccalaureate programs increased, we had to be creative in developing programs that improved the access, preparation, transfer of credits and success of qualified students. We added 2+2 programs, designed in cooperation with the other colleges of RIT, that allow students to get a solid foundation of core courses at NTID, graduate, and then move into a bachelor’s degree program in one of RIT’s seven other colleges. At the same time, changes in technology have required continual changes in our two-year career-focused programs to match the demands of the workplace and graduate students who are ready to enter their technical fields and make contributions on day one.”



MARK BENJAMIN

Dr. Ellie Rosenfield, associate dean for Student and Academic Services

“NTID has always been on the cutting edge of trends in higher education—especially when it

comes to enhancing student success,” says Rosenfield. “In the 1970s, first-year students attended the Summer Vestibule Program (SVP), which lasted most of the summer and was intended to prepare students for college work. After this, students took a Dimensions of College Life course.

“Today students still attend SVP, but it’s a 10-day program that integrates career sampling and co-curricular activities. After this experience, students can directly enter their majors or enroll in the Career Exploration Studies (CES) program, which offers them the opportunity to work closely with technical faculty and counselors as they make progress towards a degree while determining which academic program matches their interests and abilities.”



MARK BENJAMIN

Al Smith, assistant vice president for College Operations “Because of the integration of deaf and hearing students on campus, NTID needed to create access and support services

such as interpreting, notetaking, tutoring and captioning,” Smith says. “One of the challenges of NTID’s second decade of operation was providing access services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students who were cross-registering into bachelor’s and master’s degree programs offered by RIT’s other colleges.

“To address this issue, we developed the unique concept of ‘support teams’ for each college. Educational specialists with background and skills in the content taught in each college, serve as liaisons with faculty to tutor cross-registered students and to work with peer tutors, student notetakers and interpreters. This concept continues to be an important component of student success today.”

Looking Forward

Forty years later, NTID continues to grow and change, but one thing has stayed the same—the spirit of community that started with the early students, founders, faculty and staff who walked through the doors in 1968.

“Here, it has never been all about one person. The real spirit evolves from the members of the community and the support we give to each other,” says Buckley. “Everyone feels that they are contributing to the mission and success of this college with a passion that is shared by all.”

“As we begin the planning this year for Vision 2020, NTID’s new strategic plan, we will essentially be asking ourselves where NTID will be at 50,” says Hurwitz. “If history is any guide, NTID will still be serving the needs of students wherever they come from and responding to their needs as they change.”

The Road Ahead

by Kathleen S. Smith

NTID's 40th anniversary is an opportunity to look back, but also to look forward. What will the National Technical Institute for the Deaf of 2048 look like?



The journey begins Students in this fall's entering class will benefit from NTID's first 40 years of success as they take on the challenges of college and prepare for the future.

This past summer, the appointment of Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz as NTID's first-ever president marked a shift in the college's direction, presenting fresh opportunities to influence education for future generations of deaf students. One of Hurwitz's goals is to enhance NTID's name recognition nationally to ensure broad recognition of RIT as the place for deaf students to get both an excellent education and an unmatched opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Hurwitz sees such skills as essential to succeeding in tomorrow's job market, which will require employees to be knowledgeable, experienced and flexible in response to the demands of the international workplace. Students need to develop their business smarts during, not after, college, he says.

RIT President Bill Destler takes that idea one step further and wants

students to either develop a patent or create a business plan before they graduate. Both leaders encourage deaf students to embrace RIT's abundant study abroad options.

Hurwitz also wants to delve more deeply into the middle school arena to attract potential applicants.

"We need to expose younger students, particularly girls and our AALANA [African-American, Latino-American and Native American] students, to technological career choices to help them think about what courses they need to take in high school before they get here," Hurwitz explains.

Technology in and of itself, he believes, will "set the stage in deaf education" as NTID heads into the next few decades.

Destler agrees. He says that while emerging technology and research in fields related to deafness undoubtedly

will make life easier for future deaf students, NTID's "unique programs will become even more important as the United States faces a growing shortage of technically trained individuals in the years ahead."

Future students will have more career options "when they begin their technical education in an NTID transfer program and then transition into RIT bachelor's degree programs," says Dr. Vince Daniele, chairperson of NTID's Department of Science and Mathematics. "NTID's 2 + 2 programs allow students to do that."

So what do NTID's future students look like?

A general profile shows more coming from mainstream schools, more choosing cochlear implants and more entering college with advanced skills. Entering classes of recent years, Hurwitz says, have been more technologically savvy than ever before.

"Our job," Hurwitz says, "is to stay one step ahead of them."

From a faculty perspective, this will be challenging, as NTID faces a large wave of retirements during the next five years. While those leaving possess an invaluable wealth of experience and history, Hurwitz is optimistic about finding "bright young graduates with the right credentials" to fill the void.

President Destler is confident that NTID's next four decades will be "even brighter" than its first 40 years.

"NTID provides an element of diversity that simply cannot be found elsewhere," he says.

"As a college, we're still relatively young," Hurwitz reminds. "But people are definitely starting to take notice."

Recognizing Generosity

by Susan L. Murad



A. SUE WEISLER

NTID History and Donor Recognition Wall

“Thank you’ is a sentiment that simply cannot be expressed enough,” says James Ebenhoch, NTID director of development.

That philosophy was the guiding force behind a recognition wall that recently was installed at NTID.

The wall, which is located in the hallway between the second floor of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Building and the Communication Service for the Deaf Student Development Center, was designed not only to thank donors whose generosity has done so much to make RIT/NTID what it is today, but also to provide a historical perspective of the past 40 years.

Career education, preparation for

success, diversity and student development, the major themes of NTID’s strategic plan, are highlights of the wall’s narrative.

In addition to thanking the many corporations, foundations and individuals whose names make up the donor section of the piece, the wall provides an opportunity to pay special tribute to those who have served as leaders of NTID over the past 40 years.

“It’s really amazing to look at the sketches of NTID’s leaders, both past and present, and realize that for all of our accomplishments, this is still a very young institution,” says Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, NTID president and RIT

vice president and dean for NTID. “We boast an impressive history, and yet, we know there is still so much ahead of us. It makes me very enthusiastic about what’s to come.”

The design of the recognition wall was chosen to reflect progress toward the future. The swooping design indicates movement—from the very literal movement seen in NTID’s halls and classrooms with students, faculty and staff—to the figurative movement of RIT and NTID into the future.

Editor’s Note:

For a detailed view of the wall, visit www.rit.edu/ntid/recognitionwall.

Goldmann Scholarship

by Susan L. Murad

In 1968, Warren Goldmann was among a group of men and women hired by founding director Dr. D. Robert Frisina to be NTID’s first faculty and staff members. Goldmann graduated from Stanford University with an electrical engineering degree and is a member of NTID’s Science and Mathematics Department.

Some 40 years later, Goldmann arranged a scholarship bequest for deaf and hard-of-hearing students interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs at RIT.

“Gratitude was a major reason for wanting to establish a scholarship at RIT/NTID,” Goldmann explains. “My career here has been a fantastic opportunity for personal growth. Other reasons included my strong belief in the importance of education and seeing first-hand how much RIT/NTID and its dedicated faculty have done to make it possible for deaf and hard-of-

hearing students to earn university degrees and go on to rewarding and remunerative careers.”

Knowing his \$25,000 bequest, which was matched by the federal government, would not be put into effect until he passed away, Goldmann began looking for ways to enable the investment to begin benefiting students sooner.

To that end, Goldmann contacted Sterling Franklin, trustee of the Morris S. Smith Foundation and a friend he first met as a classmate at Stanford. Franklin donated the initial funds to begin the scholarship now.

“Warren is a great guy,” Franklin says. “I was touched by his eagerness to help NTID students, and I wanted him to feel the joy of meeting the Goldmann Scholarship awardees starting in 2008. I am pleased to have been able to donate money to start the Goldmann Fund.”

Goldmann hopes that his gift will

inspire other NTID faculty and staff to do the same.

“I can’t think of any better way in which my NTID colleagues could make a positive difference for deserving students than by creating scholarships and contributing to their endowment.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sterling Franklin and Warren Goldmann

The 1970s

Fred Feldman

by Susan L. Murad



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The 1970s were a time of tremendous change both for the nation and the RIT/NTID campus. The Vietnam War and President Richard Nixon's resignation occupied the nation, while locally, construction continued on RIT's Henrietta campus.

In 1972, a young Fred Feldman came to RIT/NTID and witnessed more changes.

"I was a Mechanical Engineering major, and there was only one female student in my class when I started," the Yonkers, N.Y., native explains. "But by the time I graduated in 1977, there were more women studying engineering."

An owner in his family's business, Yula Corporation, which manufactures heat exchangers and is headquartered in the Bronx, N.Y., Feldman chose RIT/NTID for its engineering degree program, but gained much more.

"The most important lessons I learned at RIT/NTID were about myself," he says. "Growing up hard-of-hearing/deaf, I lacked

confidence, but being at RIT/NTID, I realized that other students and faculty had similar situations and were doing well. I gained a lot of confidence, and it helped me become successful in business and life."

Dom Bozzelli, NTID support faculty in NTID's engineering department, also had a positive influence.

"I am a better person because Dom was there for me during my college years," he says.

When asked what advice he would give today's RIT/NTID students, Feldman recommends balance.

"Students today need to remember that their college years are special, and their friends and experiences are just as important as a high GPA," he explains.

Feldman hopes that in five years he'll be semi-retired, traveling with his wife, April, playing tennis and golfing with his two sons.

"Maybe I'll even have a couple of grandchildren to run after," he muses. "I believe things have a way of working out."

The 1980s

Valarie Randleman

by Kathleen S. Smith



A. SUE WESSLER

She didn't set out to become a professional sign language interpreter, but Valarie Randleman recognizes that life doesn't always go as planned.

As an RIT student in the 1980s, Randleman worked a variety of campus jobs, including front desk receptionist and Campus Safety officer, and at each turn found herself being drawn to the Deaf community, so she decided it was time to enroll in a sign language class.

"I thought it was unfair that the students were so willing to reach out to me, yet I didn't know how to communicate with them," she recalls.

Energized by American Sign Language Associate Professor Barbara Ray Holcomb and Professor Robert Panara, from whom Randleman took a literature interpretation class, she enrolled in NTID's Basic Interpreter Training Program in 1985 and was hired by RIT/NTID one year later. She's one of a handful of interpreters who has been with RIT/NTID for more than two decades.

Laughingly recalling the 1980s as "Reaganomics, Star Wars and the

information explosion," she believes the secret to her on-going success is her willingness to stay current with world events and technology. Her multiple cell phones, PDAs and computers keep her connected to her wide circle of friends and family.

The Ohio native, who calls herself a lifelong student, has a bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies from RIT and is working toward a master's degree in Communication. She fits one course per quarter into a schedule that includes interpreting roughly 20 hours per week, working at a local video relay center and leading an adult ministry program that she founded through the In Christ New Hope Ministry. She became an ordained minister last year.

Her advice to today's interpreters is simple: "To be effective in the language, you have to love and respect the people."

The 1990s

Toni Lynn Ferreri-Van Bramer

by Susan L. Murad

When the Internet revolution was taking place in the 1990s, among those riding the wave of new technology was Toni Lynn Ferreri-Van Bramer, a 1999 graduate of the Master of Science program in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (MSSE).

Technology was a huge benefit to a graduate student juggling the demands of a full-time job.

"E-mail made things easy," she explains. "I was able to contact my professors via e-mail, and began receiving assignments on e-mail, which allowed me to get a jump start on my work."

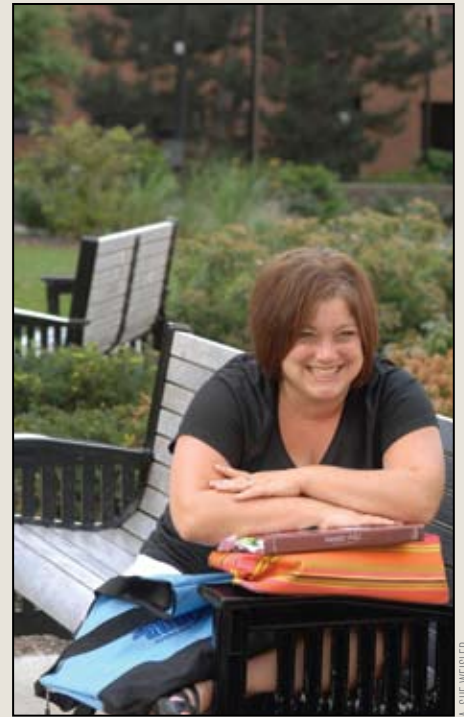
Now a teacher of American Sign Language as a foreign language in the Rochester City School District and an adjunct instructor at Nazareth College of Rochester, Ferreri-Van Bramer has never forgotten the positive impact the MSSE program had on her life. She recently wrote a letter of recommendation for one of her

Nazareth students who is now an MSSE teacher-candidate. She also brings middle and high school students to NTID's Panara Theatre and for college tours.

"I chose RIT/NTID because it is the best place to learn about deafness," she recalls. "I wanted to learn more about sign language, teaching and working with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, and I wanted the opportunity to use my sign language skills. As a hearing person, I wanted to be as proficient as possible in sign language."

Ferreri-Van Bramer lives in the Rochester suburb of Perinton, N.Y., with her husband, Kurt, and son, Joshua, and hopes to be a school administrator in the future.

"I'd like to pursue my Ph.D.," she says. "I haven't decided on the specific area of study, but will figure that out."



A. SUE WESLER

The 2000s

Jason Webb

by Kathleen S. Smith

Jason Webb is a small business owner with big dreams. He'd like to expand his Colorado-based graphic design firm, Sign*A*Rama Denver. He'd like to buy his first house. And he'd like to spend more time on the golf course.

The Maryland native, now living in Aurora, Colo., earned a BFA in Graphic Design in 2000 and a master's degree in Computer Graphic Design three years later.

While at RIT/NTID, Webb learned to "think outside the box—way outside" from the free-thinking teachers in his graphic design program. He also credits interpreters and counselors with helping him navigate through his college years.

"I never had that kind of support in all my years of regular schooling," he says. "It was a tremendous benefit."

Webb thrived amidst RIT's eclectic international student population, recalling in particular two classmates, one from India and the other from Pakistan.

"They were quite good friends, even if their countries did not get along," he says. "There's a message in that."

He advises incoming students to try

new clubs and activities and to "resist the pressure to be someone else. Stay true to who you are and never forget where you came from and honor that."

That advice hit home for Webb on September 11, 2001, when he sat in a master's degree class and watched, stunned, as an interpreter described the unfolding events.

"That was the moment when I realized how quickly the world around us can change," he says.

Webb says that the single most important skill he learned in graphic design, one that he uses every day, is the ability to look at things from the other person's perspective.

"It's easy to create and fall in love with your own idea or message, but if you don't step outside yourself and look at it impartially, you might miss your target audience," he says. "You have to constantly be your own critic."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Allison Anderson

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WESSLER

“Go-getter” is a phrase that aptly describes Allison Anderson. A woman of great energy and varied interests, Anderson has studied various subjects at RIT, including management, printing, psychology, photography, creative writing, packaging and industrial design. Next May, she’ll graduate from RIT’s Visual Media program.

“Visual Media encompasses the best of everything,” says Anderson. “I am combining my interest in photography with concentrations in graphic design and print media, and can use my experience in industrial design, creative writing and packaging science as well.”

One of the Phoenix, Ariz., native’s self-proclaimed most amazing experiences was an internship as a student photographer working on Balloon Manor 2007, a 10-room, walk-through haunted house made of 100,000 balloons in Rochester, N.Y. That experience resulted in a trip to Boston as a photojournalist to photograph one of the best known balloon conventions in the world. Her work at these events is being

published in *Balloon Magic* magazine.

At RIT, she’s served on a committee for supporting new cochlear implant users, and has been a member of Photo House. She also works as a research assistant for an NTID National Science Foundation grant, a lab technician in the RIT Imaging Systems lab and a photographer for the NTID theater program. Her photography for NTID Performing Arts has been featured in several past issues of *FOCUS*.

As she looks ahead to life after college, she sees...toys.

“I have always wanted to work for a toy company,” she says. “In the past, I thought I could design toys or create packages for them. Now, I can do their advertising or other communications work. I would really love to do anything related to toys.”

If that doesn’t work out, writing or teaching would be Anderson’s other choices; she enjoys things that are active, creative—and fun.

“I believe everything happens for a reason, you just don’t know what it is,” she says.

Dylan Heuer

by Greg Livadas



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE IOWA CUBS

Like many students, Dylan Heuer constantly dreams about summer. It’s not just the warm weather and more relaxed schedule he enjoys—he can’t wait to work again.

For the past two years, Heuer, 19, of Des Moines, Iowa, worked in the press box of the Iowa Cubs, the Triple-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs.

“When baseball season starts, I’m all excited again,” he says. “For me, baseball is life.”

His infatuation started when he was 9 years old and attended a baseball camp. There, he met players from the Iowa Cubs. He maintained those connections and in 2006 became a batboy for the team.

A year later, he moved up to the press box, compiling statistics for the team and providing images for the scoreboard. He continued that job this past summer.

“I have to watch every aspect of the game,” he says.

Heuer became deaf when he was 7 months old due to meningitis; he received a cochlear implant when he was 3. His hearing loss doesn’t affect his job.

“Sometimes it’s hard to communicate with other people, if they talk too fast or mumble. I just ask them to repeat,” he says.

Heuer impressed the team so much, they nominated him to serve as a bat boy for the Chicago Cubs in 2007. He did that twice, and was even in the dugout when a fight between teammates Carlos Zambrano and Michael Barrett made national news.

Although he has his favorite players—Ryan Theriot and Rich Hill of the Chicago Cubs, and former Cub Bobby Hill—he never asks for autographs from the players.

“To me, they’re normal, everyday people who happen to be good at baseball,” he says. “Just being part of the team and knowing the players and having the players know me too is the best part of the job.”

Heuer chose to attend RIT/NTID because he heard “that they have a great program in New Media Publishing,” which is his major.

“I think that will be the best fit for me in the future if I want to work for a major league baseball team after graduation,” he says.

Crystal Phan

by Ilene J. Avallone

“If I were to choose one word to describe RIT/NTID, it would be ‘wonderful,’” says Crystal Phan, 20. “There are so many opportunities for me here, and it feels so great to be a part of this college.”

Phan comes from Westminster, Calif., where she attended a mainstream high school with a small deaf program, and grew up in a hearing family not knowing much about Deaf culture.

When Phan was a junior in high school she came to RIT/NTID for the Explore Your Future program and decided that the college was the right place for her.

“The unique diversity of both deaf and hearing people at RIT/NTID intrigued me,” she says.

Now, this third-year student is taking advantage of the many opportunities on campus and making the most of her experiences here.

She’s a member of the Deaf International Students Association and the Asian Deaf Club.

“I’m thrilled to be able to learn so much about Deaf culture and interact with other

students like me,” she says.

When she’s not studying or doing homework, Phan enjoys reading, surfing the Internet and watching movies.

An Arts & Imaging Studies major, Phan’s interest in art began in high school.

“My favorite classes are graphic design and photo editing because I like taking photos and retouching them, and then using my graphic design skills to make posters, brochures and other publications.”

Her artwork was selected for the annual NTID Honors Art Show—which showcases the best works from students in the Arts & Imaging Studies program. Phan also has earned Dean’s List honors.

“I’m keeping my options open for my future, and wherever I go I will be successful because I know RIT/NTID will prepare me for the real world,” she says.

Her advice for other students is to “take advantage of every opportunity offered here and learn from each one of them.”



A. SUE WEISLER

Kumar Singh

by Kathy A. Johncox

Kumar Singh, 25, is a people-person—a quality that will serve him well in his career. The recent RIT Hospitality and Service Management graduate intends to work in the areas of reservations or resort management in the international hotel business.

“I like the idea of working in a nice environment and seeing guests who are happy and enjoying themselves,” says Singh. “People need a break and a vacation. A hotel gives them a place to enjoy life stress-free.”

Singh, who is from Orlando, Fla., says his path to college was influenced by the success of an older cousin whom he watched get a bachelor’s degree, continue on for her Ph.D. and have a happy life.

At RIT, Singh has taken advantage of innovative educational technologies to help him succeed in the classroom.

“What’s so special and unique about RIT are the support services,” says Singh. “Notetakers, C-print captionists and interpreters all have supported my bachelor-level course work. RIT also makes it possible for students to learn about many cultures, see and use many

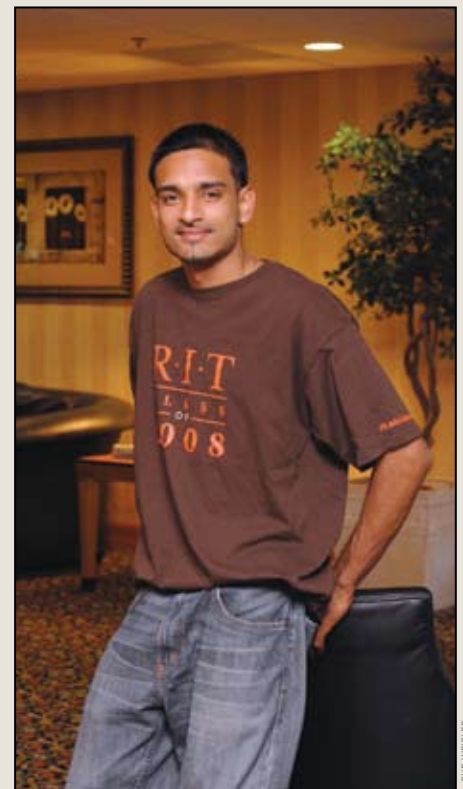
communication styles and meet students from different backgrounds.”

After completing his associate degree in Accounting Technology and first accounting co-op at a government agency, Singh started thinking about changing his major.

“I learned that although I like numbers and language, I enjoy being with people even more,” he says.

If being a people-person and participating in extra-curricular activities is any indication of success in the hospitality industry, Singh is headed on the right career path. He was founder and treasurer of the Caribbean Deaf Club, and has been a student advisor for the club. He was director of communications for NTID Student Congress, and was a member of the Hispanic Deaf Club and the Ebony Club. He played in the Deaf Basketball Association for four years, and was treasurer for Lambda Alpha Upsilon fraternity. In his time at RIT, he was awarded three different scholarships.

“Time goes fast; do not waste it,” is one of Singh’s mottos. He clearly is someone who takes his own advice.



A. SUE WEISLER

Students Reach Out

by Ilene J. Avallone

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT/NTID are tackling the toughest problems in America—hunger, homelessness, poverty-related issues and domestic violence—and participating in a wide range of service learning and community service activities, from raising funds for worthy causes and leading food drives for those in need, to helping their fellow Americans recover from natural disasters. Here are just a few of the many ways students at RIT/NTID are giving back.

Last fall, 16 sorority sisters from NTID's Alpha Sigma Theta sorority used their Thanksgiving break to head to the battered Gulf Coast where thousands of hurricane Katrina victims still are displaced and living in trailer homes. They made the 26-hour drive from Rochester, and arrived in New Orleans eager to aid in the rehabilitation efforts, and help build houses for victims. The sorority sisters held fundraisers and other activities to raise money to help pay for their expenses, and NTID donated funds to offset their lodging costs.

"We wanted to give back to a community that needed a lot of help, so we chose to assist in the recovery efforts of the Gulf Coast," says fifth-year Multidisciplinary Studies major Catherine Stutzman, assistant coordinator for the community service project.

"The experience was awesome for all of us—it was hard manual work, but well worth it," she says. "Helping others provided us with a sense of satisfaction and made us feel good."

The real rewards came from the connections they made with the homeowners.

"One of the things that all of us found so touching was how much they expressed their gratitude to us for coming and volunteering to help to rebuild their homes," explains Stutzman. "Seeing the smiles on their faces is what I will remember the most about the experience."

Closer to home, members of NTID's Deaf Women Engineering group participated in a community service project last fall to help reduce the population of feral cats in the Rochester area, building wooden cat shelters for the local Humane Society at Lollypop Farm.

"There are thousands of outdoor feral cats with no shelter, so this project gave the students an opportunity to do good for the community while gaining engineering experience," says Paula Zack, NTID group advisor.

Adriana Gaylord, a second-year Computer Integrated Machining Technology major, learned a lot by working on the project.

"I gained experience using new tools, enhanced my leadership skills and learned to work as a team member," she says.

Members of Sigma Sigma Sigma, an NTID sorority, logged nearly 500 hours of community service last year.

"We do a lot of community service work to benefit children in the Rochester community," says Catherine

Boornazian, a fourth-year Graphic Design major and TriSig community service chairperson.

Annual events the sorority participates in include the Autism Walk, the 5K Run for Fun, Camp Good Days and Special Times Kazoo Fest, and Boy and Girl Scouts of America clothing and food drives.

"It's great to give back to the community...there's no one word to describe the way you feel when you have finished a day's work of helping others," says Boornazian. "I think community service is something everyone should do because it really gives you self respect and pride as well as respect for others."

Many RIT/NTID faculty members incorporate service learning into their curriculum, which provides students opportunities to use the skills they learn in the classroom to meet real needs in the community.

Service learning is a component in Freshman Seminar, a course that all first-year NTID students take. Each fall,



Constructing for a cause Members of the Deaf Women Engineering group build wooden cat shelters to house feral cats. They donated the houses to the Rochester Humane Society at Lollypop Farm.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lending a hand Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority sisters volunteer in the face painting area at last year's Autism Walk in Rochester. From left to right, Colleen Donohue, Katie Boornazian, Alayna Zerlentes and Joia Yarboi.

they participate in a service project to make 1,000 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Rochester Open Door Mission, which serves people who are homeless.

“Community service activities like this one are a crucial part of a well-rounded education,” says Linda Bryant, NTID First Year Experience coordinator. “It gives our students the opportunity to understand the importance of service to others as a fundamental aspect of being a productive member of any community.”

“Service learning brings course content alive and provides students with an opportunity to connect what they are learning in the classroom with the rest of the world,” adds Linda Gottermeier, NTID faculty member, who incorporates a service-learning component into her Organizational Communication and the Deaf Employee class.

Michelle McMullen, a third-year Applied Accounting major, chose to lead a fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for her service-learning project.

“I saw a video about this organization, and it touched me so deeply I thought other NTID members would be affected too and would want to help,” explains McMullen, who organized a week-long fundraising event with her classmates that generated \$200—more than twice their goal.

“I met so many new people through this experience, and learned so much,” she says.

For his project, Scott Deden, a third-year Arts & Imaging Studies major, led a charity shoebox collection of toiletries for homeless people in Rochester.

“I spent a few hours every week for one month organizing, promoting, collecting and sorting items and was overwhelmed by the number of filled shoeboxes that we were able to distribute,” he says. “Leading the efforts on this project boosted my confidence and leadership skills while providing an important service for people in need.”

In another section of the course, students held a fundraiser for training guide dogs as a show of support for a fellow classmate who is legally blind and uses a guide dog to help her get around campus. Students created fliers, posters and donation jars, and sold refreshments at the premier of a documentary film held at NTID. The class raised more than \$100 at the premier alone.

Students enrolled in NTID's Advanced Web Development course also are required to complete a service-learning assignment. This past spring they designed a new website for the SouthWest Common Council, a non-profit neighborhood association in Rochester.

“We incorporate this requirement into the course content because it's a

great way for the students to take what they know and apply it to real-world projects,” says Information and Computing Studies faculty member Myra Pelz. “The students and the community gain so much.

“In this case, the organization received a free website that they can maintain, and our students gained beneficial real-world experience and learned how to create solutions from concepts other than their own.”

Says third-year Applied Computer Technology major Krista Untalan, “This service-learning project taught me how to be a team player, gave me the opportunity to learn new web design applications, and taught me valuable job skills, one of which is making sure my client is always happy.”

RIT/NTID students volunteer for many different reasons, but all of them are making the world a better place because of their contributions, and in turn, they gain the opportunity to learn new skills, and become better citizens knowing that they have made a difference.

RIT/NTID students say they get involved in community service to:

- Enjoy a sense of belonging and accomplishment
- Develop friendships and a stronger sense of community
- Deepen their understanding of complex social, environmental and political issues
- Get the opportunity for greater self-awareness emotionally, intellectually and spiritually
- Build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds
- Connect what they learn in the classroom with the real world
- Get experiences and opportunities that develop leadership and technical skills and professional networks and contacts
- Gain unique experiences that are attractive to employers

Annemarie Ross

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WEISLER

Challenge is the name of the game for Annemarie Ross, so being a woman in a scientific field suits her just fine. And as a faculty member in NTID's Laboratory Science Technology program, she's happy to see more young women taking a similar path.

"I enjoy the challenges of being in the minority," says Ross. "This probably stems from being born with a hearing loss. I'm proud to be in that minority and to be a female in science."

After graduating in 2005 from RIT's College of Science, Ross was thrilled to accept a job as a biochemist with IBM where she had been hired for a co-op while at RIT.

"It was a great experience," says Ross, "but after a time, I realized that I wanted to try other things, and teaching was one of them."

Ross credits her sense of pride for RIT and the strong science background she received here for encouraging her to apply for NTID's Professional Fellowship Program

to get her master's degree in Professional Studies with concentrations in Chemistry and Biotechnology. Part of the program required her to be a graduate assistant, and it was in that assignment that she experienced her first taste of the teaching life.

"I realized how much I enjoy interacting with students and preparing them for their career," says Ross. "It's important to me that they have all the information they need to be successful."

In keeping with her love for trying new things, her hobbies include biking, reading and taking care of her new house.

But what is typically front and center on her mind is her students. She knows first hand what it will take for them to succeed in the field, and like any good role model, she shows them how to achieve their goals.

When asked what the future holds, Ross is unsure but optimistic.

"Let's see where this new path takes me," she says.

Gerard "Jerry" Walter

by Ilene J. Avallone



A. SUE WEISLER

To prepare for the arrival of NTID's first class, founding Director Dr. D. Robert Frisina sought out faculty and staff who were experts in educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and who were willing to commit to making NTID a success.

Frisina found that combination of expertise and commitment in one of the first staff members he hired.

Dr. Gerard "Jerry" Walter arrived at RIT/NTID in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Saint Vincent College; an M.Ed. and Ed.D. in Special Education and Rehabilitation, both from the University of Pittsburgh; and experience as a teacher at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.

"I came to RIT/NTID because it was a new opportunity for me to make a difference in the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing students," says Walter, who for more than 30 years led NTID's institutional research efforts, playing an integral role in student assessment, enrollment and outcomes at the college.

Walter retired in 2006, but he didn't see his retirement as a time for rest.

"Within six months, I was back to work,

part time, developing an online and interactive version of the book, *College and University Programs for Deaf Students* for [NTID-based] PEPNet-Northeast," he says.

Throughout his career, Walter has demonstrated his commitment to improving opportunities for deaf students through ongoing involvement with a wide variety of organizations such as Rochester School for the Deaf, where he's been a board member since 1992 and past board president. He served as editor of the *Journal of American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association*, published more than 40 journal articles, and co-edited two books on the field of deafness.

Outside of work, Walter is the cooper (barrel maker) at the Genesee Country Village and Museum, a 19th-century living museum, and a member of its interpretive staff.

"Working on diverse tasks and seeing the successes of the students is why I enjoy my job," he says. "Every day is different, challenging and rewarding!"

Applefest '08

PHOTO OF APPLES BY JASON WITTIG



JASON WITTIG



JASON WITTIG



JASON WITTIG



MARK BENJAMIN

A Fall Tradition At the 11th annual Applefest in September, hundreds of students, faculty and staff enjoyed a sunny afternoon, apple-themed food and opportunity to meet, mingle and learn more about RIT and NTID clubs and organizations.

R·I·T

Rochester Institute of Technology

National Technical Institute for the Deaf
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Rochester, NY 14623-5604

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Forty Years and Growing This year marks not only NTID's 40th anniversary, but also the 40th anniversary of RIT's move from downtown Rochester to its current location. The campus has seen many changes over the years, and one of the latest is Park Point at RIT, the much-anticipated "college town" development, which opened this summer. The \$72-million privately owned and managed project includes a blend of housing and retail businesses, including Barnes & Noble@RIT, a 40,000-square-foot, two-story bookstore, which carries textbooks and RIT merchandise.

MARK BENJAMIN