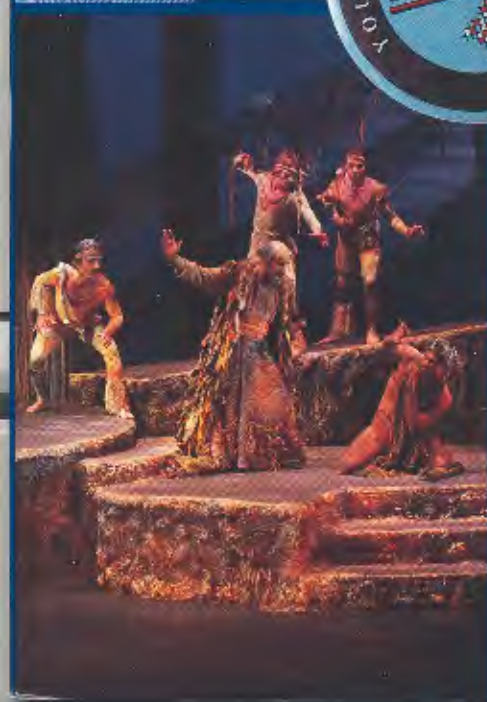


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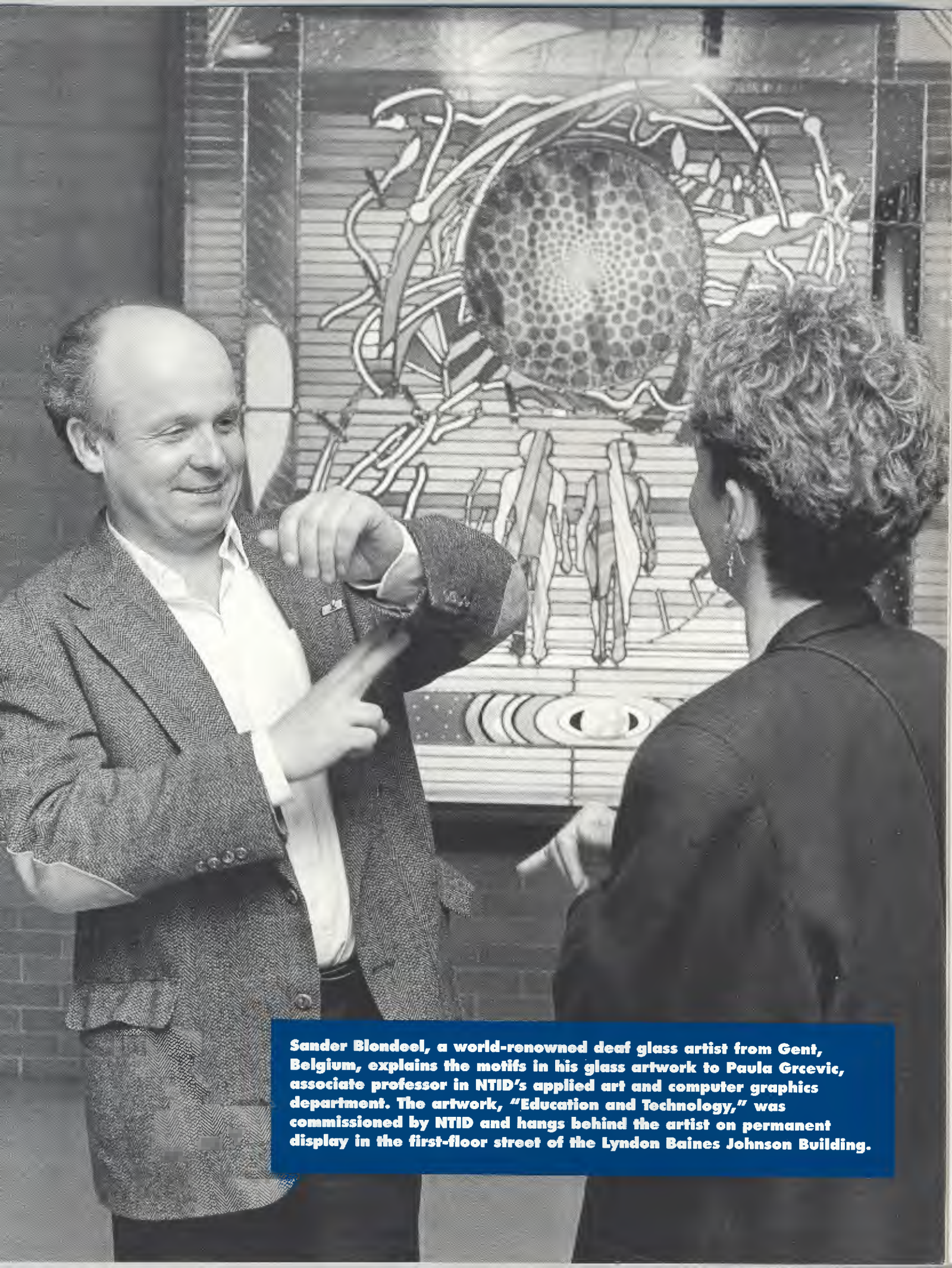
FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • A College of Rochester Institute of Technology



30 YEARS



Sander Blondeel, a world-renowned deaf glass artist from Gent, Belgium, explains the motifs in his glass artwork to Paula Greevic, associate professor in NTID's applied art and computer graphics department. The artwork, "Education and Technology," was commissioned by NTID and hangs behind the artist on permanent display in the first-floor street of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Building.

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Styles and technology may have changed, but the goals have remained the same over NTID's 30 years of providing postsecondary education and social opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

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FOCUS

NTID

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BOB'S BULLETIN

“Staying the Course”

The past 30 years or so have witnessed amazing progress for people with disabilities in general and for deaf and hard-of-hearing people in particular. Without a doubt, NTID has been a major player in creating this progress. Its role in preparing deaf persons for technical and professional pursuits has been empowering.

One milestone in the continuing quest for empowerment is being celebrated this year, a full 10 years after its epochal happening. The Deaf President Now (DPN) protest at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., created needed attention and resolution to the pent-up frustration of the deaf community over not being consulted and involved in matters critical to it. Like the larger disability community, the deaf community awakened to its own call to arms. Overnight, it seems, the public learned much about deaf persons and about their quest for a stronger voice in determining their destinies. This event did much to promote increased collaboration with other groups, especially groups representing persons with other disabilities.

“Are we better off today than we were before DPN?” The answer is a qualified “yes.” There have been positive gains as evidenced by new training and employment opportunities for deaf people, increased public awareness of deafness, and the forging of collaborative partnerships between the deaf community and other communities of persons with disabilities. However, I qualify my response because, in my opinion, there haven't been enough gains. There have been major gains in deafness-related employment, but gains in industry, business, and

commerce have been fewer, and these fields are accessible only to those who have the training, knowledge, competencies, and communication skills that can meet the demanding employment entrance requirements.

Here at NTID and at the other colleges of Rochester Institute of Technology, we have experienced a resurgence of vitality in our collaborative efforts to open doors to heretofore restricted or limited occupations, and the results have been very encouraging. This success needs to be tempered by the fact that we serve only about 1,100 young deaf men and women each year out of the tens of thousands more who need quality transitional services and training to prepare for such rewarding careers.

Rochester Institute of Technology, founded in 1829 as the Mechanics Institute, is one of the nation's pioneers in requiring cooperative work (co-op) experiences as an integral part of a student's education. This design has also been very much a part of NTID's career-oriented programs for students. Helping deaf students gain valuable on-the-job experience while still matriculated in their degree programs gives them the opportunity to return to RIT after the co-op placement experience and make critical mid-course corrections to their fields of study or branch out into newly developed areas of career interest. In many co-op situations, employers develop deep respect for deaf students' knowledge and skills and at times will offer permanent employment.

This we have known for many years: all that a deaf person sometimes needs is a little assistance in opening doors to opportunity. We have learned to appreciate that once they pass this threshold, there is no stopping dynamic and talented young deaf people from creating

their own niches in very competitive mainstreamed situations. NTID maintains a staff of trained employment and career education counselors and specialists to help open these doors and create opportunities.

In order for NTID to stay on the cutting edge of fast-changing employment conditions and continue to serve deaf students as no one else can, our faculty and staff members regularly engage in labor-intensive and mind-challenging curriculum and program development work. They must do market studies to identify required new knowledge and skills and determine potential new program offerings. This is necessary because students must acquire state-of-the-art knowledge of work processes and develop the skills to perform in order to compete successfully for jobs in the marketplace. The Center for Arts and Sciences, for example, recently implemented a new curriculum designed to complement the NTID technical curriculum and prepare students for study in the other colleges of RIT. By the fall of 1999, the Center for Technical Studies will implement six new technology-related programs and major curriculum revisions to the other programs.

NTID was established in response to a congressionally mandated study of education of the deaf that deplored the lack of education, training, and employment opportunities for deaf Americans. At the time of the study in the mid-1960s, the average deaf adult had an eighth-grade education, and 80 percent of deaf workers were working with their hands, mostly in manufacturing jobs that are now either obsolete or have moved overseas to cheaper labor markets.

That NTID has fulfilled the vision of its founders is an absolute understatement. It has exceeded the wildest dreams of our national deaf community and the benefactors who worked tirelessly to promote opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. Consider, if you will, that 95 percent of NTID/RIT graduates are gainfully employed in



Rewarding potential Dr. Robert Davila, left, congratulates Katherine Hoheusle, third-year imaging technology student from Bethel, New York, on her accomplishments as RIT's first Clare Boothe Luce scholar and NTID's first female captain of its College Bowl team.

occupations commensurate with their education and training. Furthermore, available data indicate that by the age of 30, far fewer NTID graduates remain dependent on public assistance programs such as SSI or SSDI than the general deaf population. Our data also show that our graduates repay the public several times over the cost of their education over their employment lifetime through their taxes alone.

Paul Miller, former president of RIT, was once asked to define the mission of the university. He responded that it was to help students "Earn a living, and live a life." I think about this often. I want to see our students graduate and get a job. Not just any job, but one that will give them satisfaction with themselves, a sense of accomplishment, and a feeling of pride in having knowledge and skills that not many others have. I want our students to live a life, a life of good quality and economic well being, a life that is filled with contentment and positive self esteem that promote healthy family, social, cultural, and leisure attainments. At NTID, we work to help our students acquire the skills and confidence to earn a living and live a life. And our alumni demonstrate success at this by their achievements. This is the NTID story. It's a great story.

Let me take the opportunity to introduce to you Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz as the new dean of NTID. Dr. Hurwitz took on his new duties July 1, 1998, and has served NTID and RIT since 1970 with distinction in a number of increasingly more responsible positions, including Support Department Chair for Engineering and Computer Science Programs; Director for NTID Support Services; Associate Dean for Educational Support Services Programs; Associate Vice President for NTID Outreach and External Affairs; and Associate Dean for Student Affairs. He is an internationally known leader in the education of deaf people who has made important contributions to technical education and improved employment opportunities. His vast experience and his relevant and unique qualifications and training will serve him well in his new leadership role. We look forward to working with him in his efforts to help NTID fulfill its strategic goals. Welcome, Alan!

Dr. Robert R. Davila
Vice President, NTID

Reflections of the Elite Eight

by Kathryn L. Schmitz

When NTID officially (and figuratively) opened its doors in 1968 to 71 students (the Lyndon Baines Johnson Building was not constructed until 1974), 34 professional staff members welcomed them. Of that original group, eight remain at RIT 30 years later, most still working within NTID. *FOCUS* asked these eight veterans to reflect on major changes and memories of their 30 years at NTID. Their answers follow.

Dr. D. Robert Frisina

1967: Vice President of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf

1998: Director of the International Center on Hearing and Speech Research

First, it is necessary to look at the larger world in which NTID operates. When we started 30 years ago, 86 percent of all deaf workers were in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs. The other 14 percent were linotype operators in newspapers and the U.S.

Government Printing Office or faculty and staff members in residential schools for the deaf. Of equal importance is the recognition that fewer than one percent of secondary school graduates were enrolled in colleges and universities.

When NTID began, RIT had a small undergraduate enrollment of about 2,000 with a very large part-time student population. Today, however, RIT's undergraduates number some 11,000 with a sharply reduced part-time enrollment. Most of RIT's faculty in 1968 held master's and bachelor's degrees, with very few Ph.D.s. This reflected the requirements of the world of work, which have since changed dramatically. As the work world became more demanding, RIT reacted by constantly upgrading its faculty and staff requirements and curricular offerings to keep pace with advances in technology and science. The challenge for NTID was to prepare technical and professional graduates who could compete successfully in the open marketplace,

something that had not been attained in the history of deaf education.

The biggest change I've seen relates to the acceptance of deaf graduates into private sector business and industrial employment. NTID has made a dramatic contribution to the economic status of deaf people, both in terms of number and types of positions. Our alumni have earned their way in technical and professional fields. Moreover, through the influence of NTID, deaf people are better understood and more accepted generally throughout all of society.

Dr. Jack Clarcq

1968: Director of Student Development

1998: Professor, NTID Business and Computing Technologies Support Department

Two things stand out in my mind about NTID over the past 30 years. First was the foresight and intelligence of those individuals who supported NTID in the early years, particularly Hettie Shumway, Gus Rathe, Dick Silverman, Eloise Thornberry, and Ralph Tyler. Many of these people set principles that guided NTID through its early development, principles that included focusing on the students and remembering NTID's mission. The early National Advisory Group members were instrumental in ensuring that NTID retained its focus.

A second highlight for me was being involved in developing an admissions process for the first group of students who came to NTID. I still remember when the students arrived on campus and how wonderful I felt putting a face to a name and working with students as they adjusted to RIT.

Vernon Davis

1968: Communication Specialist

1998: Counselor, Center for Technical Studies

I can think of nothing more remarkable than the many individuals who have worked together these many years to fulfill a dream that became a mission that became a reality: The reality of students who become skilled workers with good jobs,



The Elite 8 then (from left to right): Jean-Guy Naud, Elizabeth O'Brien, Ross Stuckless, Vernon Davis, Gerard Walter, and Robert Frisina. Insets: (left) Jack Clarcq and (right) Warren Goldmann.

of strong deaf families now building a new fabric in our cultural matrix, of a whole culture now able to participate in the American dream, and of some of our graduates returning to fill vacancies here at NTID and enrich us all with their skills and insights. What could be a more dramatic testimony for the success of NTID?

Warren Goldmann

1968: Assistant to the Educational Specialist
1998: Support Faculty, Science and Engineering Support Department

I'm proud of NTID's ongoing positive impact on post-secondary technical and career education for deaf individuals. I am particularly happy with NTID's current outstanding notetaking services and research efforts exploring additional ways (such as real time captioning) to provide quality class notes for its students. Likewise, NTID has developed diverse and outstanding approaches to providing other forms of academic support, such as the variety of tutoring models used by support faculty, NTID classroom instruction in technically-advanced "smart classrooms," the well-equipped and staffed NTID Learning Center, skilled academic advising, personal counseling, and job placement.

Over the years I've noticed a trend towards much greater self confidence and self esteem among deaf students, some of it stemming, I think, from their sense of empowerment in being part of NTID's strong community and having so much more opportunity for personal and academic growth and development through their own and NTID's presence on the RIT campus. I've also seen much more variety among NTID students, including growing numbers who excel academically with little or no support, and a significant increase in those who aspire to a baccalaureate degree or higher.

Jean-Guy Naud

1968: Assistant to the Educational Specialist
1998: Chairperson, Imaging Technology Department

The most significant change I've seen in 30 years at NTID has been the role of faculty and staff in decision making on campus. NTID faculty and staff have been accepted as peers on campus, and we've contributed a lot to shared governance at the university, serving on major committees. Now we're totally integrated and not as "unique" anymore. We were the first to undergo a strategic planning initiative; the greater university followed a couple of years later. We've done a lot of self evaluation and developed comprehensive promotion and tenure processes that have influenced the other RIT colleges over the years.

Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien

1968: Communication Specialist
1998: Professor, English Department

Certainly there was skepticism and resistance on many fronts 30 years ago, but the staff of NTID back then was adamant about making the dream a reality. We had the right collection of deaf and hearing individuals, blending a diversity of skills and backgrounds, who came together to create NTID and make it a major part of the history of deaf education. Dr. Robert Frisina laid the foundation of NTID, Robert Panara created the theater department, Dr. William Castle guided NTID's growth and success for two decades, Dr. Don Johnson designed NTID's communications programs, Jim Stangarone implemented the first interpreter training program in the country, Betty Toney set up the social work support team, Karen Conner developed the office technologies program, and John Kubis initiated the mathematics curriculum. All of these individuals were, in every sense of the word, pioneers entering the postsecondary arena with this maverick approach to educating deaf college students. NTID worked because there was an energy and a spirit that melded a team of people and students who shared a vision.

From my perspective, there has been a consistent pattern of quality and commitment in the individuals who have been a part of NTID over the past 30 years. NTID grew and flourished because of this special blend of people then and now who continue to contribute and nurture its programs. The uniqueness of NTID is its ability to accept challenges, overcome obstacles, strive for excellence, and be reflective in providing quality programs to ensure deaf people equal access to the mainstream of life in America. Having a role in NTID's history has been the most satisfying endeavor of my professional career.

Dr. E. Ross Stuckless

1967: Director, Division of Research and Training
1998: Professor and Research Associate, Department of Educational and Career Research



The Elite 8 now (from left to right): Robert Frisina, Jack Clarcq, Elizabeth O'Brien, Warren Goldmann, Vernon Davis, Gerard Walter, Ross Stuckless, and Jean-Guy Naud.

The first change that comes to my mind is the considerable increase in both the numbers and the proportion of our students who enroll in baccalaureate programs at RIT. In my judgment, the scope and quality of support services available to "mainstreamed" deaf students at this level remains unchallenged elsewhere, and I think that in tandem with the other colleges of RIT, we have the imagination and the resources to continue to improve on these services. I should add that as a national institution we also have an obligation to do so.

Over the past three decades, we've seen enormous changes nationally in the education of deaf students—both ideologically and in the process itself. I think that as an institution we've adapted rather well to these changes. But we've never—I guess I should say almost never—allowed these changes to distract us from NTID's central mission in preparing deaf students for productive employment.

When I left Pittsburgh in 1967 to come to Rochester, several of my colleagues questioned my decision, saying NTID would never last. They were wrong.

Dr. Gerard G. Walter

1968: Research Associate
1998: Research Faculty, Department of Educational and Career Research

The biggest change I have seen in NTID and education for deaf people generally is the number of deaf or hard-of-hearing persons who are qualifying for jobs at NTID. When I started at NTID 30 years ago we were hard pressed to find any deaf person qualified to become a member of our technically oriented staff. Today, largely as a result of NTID, we have some 84 members of NTID's staff who are deaf or hard of hearing, many of them graduates of programs offered on the RIT campus. ■

The National Advisory Group: Past, Present, and Future

By Frank A. Kruppenbacher

June 8, 1965

Public Law 89-36: Agreement for establishment of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)

(b) Provisions of agreement
The agreement shall -
(2) *provide that the Board of Trustees . . . subject to the approval of the Secretary, . . . appoint an **advisory group** to advise the Director of NTID in formulating and carrying out the basic policies governing its establishment and operation [The] group shall include individuals who are professionally concerned with education and technical training at the post secondary school level, persons who are professionally concerned with activities relating to education and training of individuals who are deaf, and members of the public familiar with the need for services provided by NTID . . .*

Since NTID's early days, advice and consent from a council of professional individuals concerned with education, services, and technical training for deaf students at the postsecondary level has helped to chart the direction of NTID. Now, more than 30 years later, the foundation of national advice for NTID is even more unwavering. As NTID prepares for the challenges of a new century, its National Advisory Group (NAG), a living symbol of experience and progressive insights, stands ready to serve.

Dr. Robert Davila is no stranger to NAG. In 1996, Davila, then headmaster of the New York School for the Deaf in White Plains, was two years into his first term as a member of NAG when he was appointed the first deaf vice president for NTID. The appointment would catapult him from the role of advisor to that of advisee.

"It's written into the law," explains Davila. "We must have a National Advisory Group, and we will use this collection of knowledge to our best advantage."

"Today we are institutionalizing the NAG to become a functional source of input and skills for NTID," adds Davila, "so that we can continue a tradition of excellence in advice that NTID has received for more than 30 years."

NAG consists of 16 voting members and eight non-voting members. At least 51 percent of the NAG includes individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Four members of NAG serving four-year terms are selected each year to replace four members who rotate off the board.

Currently, NAG works in three committee areas:

- Administration/Development/ Government Relations;
- Academic and Student Affairs;
- Research/Training/Outreach/ Employment/Recruitment.

Curriculum development, student retention, and access to support services are just a few of the important issues facing NTID and its advisors today.

These issues and their complexity are not much different from some of the concerns that faced the college during its formative years. National advice during NTID's early development was critical in order to build from the ground up a one-of-a-kind technical education infrastructure for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

In 1965 NTID was nothing more than an innovative concept. The National Advisory Board (NAB), a precursor to the NAG, was established and charged with creating the policies, guidelines, and application procedures for institutions to use to prepare bids to become NTID's sponsoring host. The board extended invitations to more than 250 college and universities across the United States.

Less than a year after the NTID bill was signed, NAB whittled their selections down to four institutions: University of Illinois, University of Pittsburgh, University of Tennessee, and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Site visits were conducted during the summer of 1966.

Robert F. Panara, NTID Professor Emeritus, was a member of NAB while professor of English and drama at Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University). He recalls events leading to the naming of NTID's host university.



Robert F. Panara

"It was an interesting time, and I was surely on the 'hot seat' during that period," says Panara. "The Gallaudet students, through their newspaper, of which I was the faculty

advisor, supported the NTID concept in spite of the Gallaudet administration's negative view of NTID during the NAB's screening process. The students wanted a choice, and I agreed with them."

The NAB reconvened September 29–October 1, 1966, in Washington, D.C., to debate their findings, vote, and ultimately recommend the place where NTID would be located.

"The day that we tossed the names of the 'final four' back and forth was a long one," recalls Panara. "Truth be told, I actually voted for University of Tennessee as I felt they had a great program. Plus, they had lots of exposure with deaf people and deafness.

"For the record, I finally did throw in my vote for RIT to make it unanimous."

As fate would have it, Panara joined NTID as its first deaf faculty member. He also became a member of NTID's very first NAG.

Formal agreement between the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW, now the U.S. Department of Education) and RIT for the construction and operation of NTID was achieved December 20, 1966.

NTID's first director, Dr. Robert Frisina, currently director of the International Center for Hearing and Speech Research based at RIT, recalls the role that national advisors played in determining what NTID would become.

"Before settling in at RIT, I devoted time at HEW studying the NTID legislative and NAB histories in great detail," says Frisina. "For a smooth transition, we carried over some original NAB members to the first NAG to assure consistency of purpose. Since different people had conflicting views at different stages of NTID's development, the cumulative experience and knowledge of the NAG was extremely helpful to me in formulating a set of objectives that we ultimately achieved for this unique educational program."

NAG then, as now, has no direct power over NTID or RIT policies and procedures. The group's influence, however, forms the backbone of NTID's fundamental mission.

Current NAG member Dr. Frank Withrow, director of NASA's Classroom of the Future at Wheeling Jesuit University, Wheeling, West Virginia, was one of the original HEW program officers overseeing NTID, Gallaudet, and other similarly funded programs. Withrow attended many early NAG meetings and followed early development closely.

"In the beginning, NTID had to fight for its place in the sun," remembers Withrow. "NAG served two purposes: it brought outsiders in to guide NTID, and members of the group became 'evangelists' for the concept of NTID. NAG to this day remains a push/pull, internal/external resource for NTID."

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, former state coordinator of services for deaf people under the Division of Rehabilitation Services, Utah State Board of Education, and president of the National Association of the Deaf



NAG, circa 1972 Front row (left to right): Robert Behnke, Dr. Gustave Rathe, Hettie Shumway, Dr. Ralph Tyler, Dr. Robert Sanderson, Frank Sullivan, and Dr. June Miller. Back row (left to right): Edward Rose, W. Dexter Douglass, Dr. Frank Withrow, (unidentified), and Dr. Richard Thompson.



Leaders confer Dr. Robert Davila, vice president for NTID, and current NAG chair Dr. Olga Welch, professor and director of Educational Interpreting for the Deaf, Rehabilitation and Deafness Unit, University of Tennessee, find a quiet moment to chat between NAG meetings at NTID.

from 1964–1968, was a NAG member from 1971–1977.

“One of the issues was always trying to squeeze more funds out of the Congress,” says Sanderson, “and the underlying problem of competition for students with other schools, but it didn’t matter. We knew that a national program of technical education for deaf students was in the best interest of everyone involved.

“I still adhere to the NTID concept today—it’s a top-flight school,” adds Sanderson.

By 1980, NTID was soaring. The college had grown from 71 students in 1968 to 940 in 1980. In just over a decade NTID had served more than 3,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Frisina stepped aside as NTID director to lead RIT’s institutional advancement programs. NTID’s first dean, Dr. William Castle, was already three years into his directorship of the college. Castle, under the watchful eye of NAG, set the pace for NTID into the 1980s and beyond.

At a college-wide mini-convention in 1980, Castle, representatives of NAG, and NTID faculty and staff outlined five broad initiatives for NTID to address. They included: productive employment of graduates, expansion of NTID’s national role, development of academic foundations programs, increasing deaf student opportunities to enter other RIT colleges, and a strengthening of creative arts programs at RIT and NTID.

“There were some who were skeptical that the promise [of NTID’s mission] could not or would not be fulfilled,” said Castle in 1981 for *FOCUS* magazine. “There were also many who were determined that no obstacle would interfere with the full achievement of that promise. Among the latter were the members of the NAB [and NAG].”

NTID’s national position was bolstered in 1982 by the college’s leadership at a national conference hosted by NTID on the RIT campus. The conference was

called to address issues surrounding postsecondary educational opportunities for some 6,000 high school graduates born deaf or hard of hearing between 1963–1965 as a result of a worldwide rubella epidemic. The so-called ‘rubella bulge’ set NTID on the fast track and defined the direction of the college until the early 1990s.

In the fall of 1990, NTID began a two-year, community-wide, collaborative strategic planning effort to assess the college’s mission and priorities toward development of a shared vision of the institution into the next century.

NAG members, principally because of their advisory role, were not members of the strategic planning committee (SPC) as faculty, staff, alums, and students were. Dr. Bonnie Meath-Lang, professor and artistic director for cultural and creative studies at NTID, was chair of the SPC from 1990–1992. She recalls NAG’s involvement in strategic planning for NTID.

“NAG focused particularly on the research for the identification of issues and directions that they, by virtue of the membership, were well-equipped to address,” says Meath-Lang. “The NAG therefore had direct participation in the external scanning, identification of strategic issues, and reflection of the values of NTID. The group managed to have a very active role while preserving their advisory integrity.”

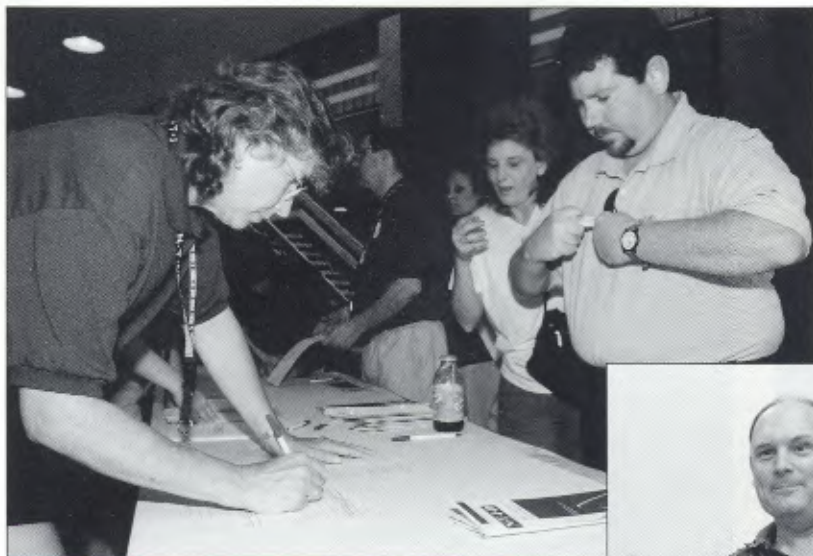
Withrow is reflective of NAG’s influence on NTID’s past, present, and future.

“Today, NTID is more mature,” says Withrow. “NAG is able to support the internal leadership and still serve as an outside force to let others know what NTID does, how it benefits the world, and that it is a valuable source of skilled workers for the 21st century.”

The National Advisory Group is as much a part of NTID’s 30-year tradition of technical education excellence as its thousands of successfully employed deaf and hard-of-hearing graduates. ■

NTID's 30th Anniversary Alumni Reunion

"Then and Now . . . Renewing Our Memories"



Enter and sign in please. Elissa Olsen (SVP '74) ('80), left, assists alum David Smith (SVP '80) ('85) through a well-organized reunion registration area.



Give back to NTID. Dr. Albert Simone, president of RIT, reminds alumni that they are the greatest owners and source of pride for NTID. "Your chance to give back [through NTID's alumni campaign] is now for students who will follow in your footsteps," said Simone.

Dynamic speaker. Michael Schwartz, visiting professor and special assistant to the vice president for NTID, educates alumni on accessibility in the workplace.



July 15-19, 1998



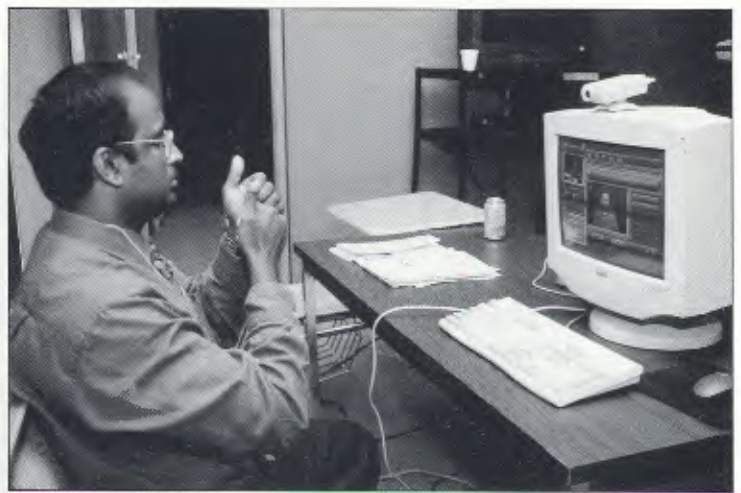
Awesome! Team '80s (front, left to right): Michael Krajnak (SVP '82) ('89), Nancy Gray (SVP '86) ('94), Patricia Friedlaender (SVP '84), Cindy Millard (SVP '89) ('96), and Lea Moynihan (SVP '87) ('92) (not pictured) crush the competition during SVP Trivia Contest, one of the most popular events during the reunion. Barbara Ray Holcomb (SVP '71) ('74), rear, was trivia master.



Here we go again! NTID Alumni Relations Administrator David Staehle (SVP '75) ('78) kicks off the 30th anniversary alumni reunion at welcoming ceremonies in NTID's Robert F. Panara Theatre.



Power chat (left to right) Linda Nelson ('73), NTID Alumni Association (NTIDAA) past president and 1998 NTIDAA Outstanding Alum; Dr. Robert Davila, vice president for NTID; Colleen Daviton ('83), 1998 Distinguished Alum; and Sharaine Rawlinson, current NTIDAA president (SVP '77) ('81), chat during the NTID alumni reunion BBQ dinner.



2-dimensional communication Karunya Samuel, supervisor of ASL Translation Services for Birnbaum Interpreting Services (BIS), demonstrates video relay interpreting. BIS is owned by RIT alum David Birnbaum ('70).



Hands on Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, dean for NTID, right, reunites with alum Robert Blumenau ('72), left, who is now legally blind.



Repeat after me ... Dr. Robert Davila (left), vice president for NTID, proudly administers the oath of office to newly elected NTID Alumni Association officers (left to right) Sharaine Rawlinson (SVP '77) ('81), David Strom (SVP '81) ('84), Cynthia Rohlin ('70), and Howard Mann ('74).



Special thanks to outgoing charter alumni association officers (left to right) Linda Nelson ('73), Vicki Hurwitz ('83), Kevin Nolan ('71), Fred Hartman (SVP '78) ('84), and Howard Mann ('74) (William McGee ('82), not pictured), who are recognized for their pioneering efforts.



Stocking up Alums purchase NTID/RIT gear at Campus Connections table. Books, videos, and other deafness-related items were featured by other vendors.



He's a classic Sam Holcomb (SVP '74) ('77) treats alums, families, and friends at closing ceremonies to famous ASL stories and deaf culture tales with the assistance of his wife Barbara Ray Holcomb (SVP '71) ('74).



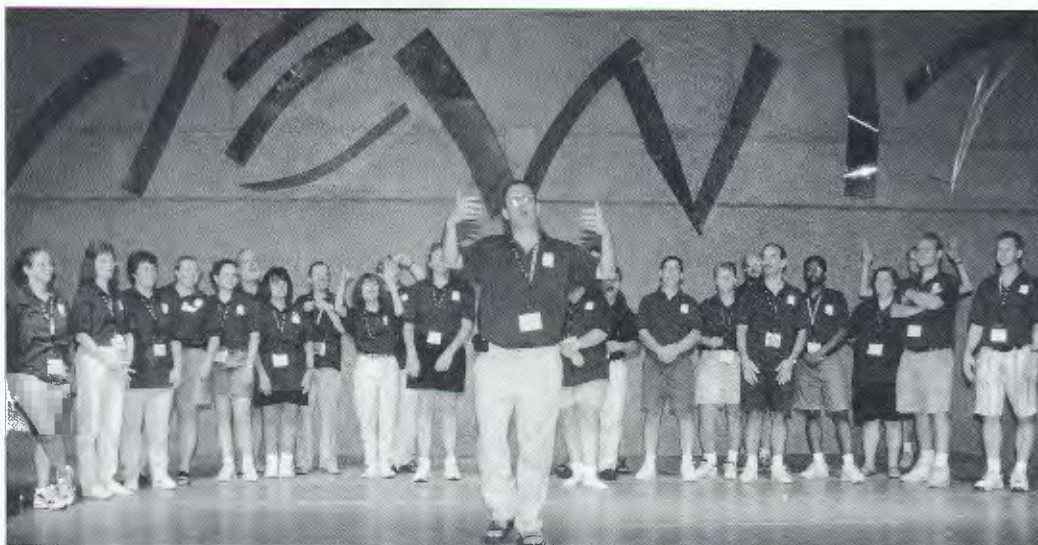
Among friends Dr. James DeCaro (center), former dean for NTID, and wife Pat DeCaro (right) are at home with NTID alumni, families, and friends. DeCaro received special recognition from the NTID Alumni Association for his years of service as both teacher and administrator. "Students and alumni are the fundamental reasons why NTID and I are here," said DeCaro.



From the heart Robert Panara (right) is presented the first NTID Alumni Association honorary lifetime membership award by Linda Nelson ('73), (left), and Kevin Nolan ('71) (center). "Now I am an alum of two colleges," said Panara, "but my heart belongs to NTID."



Surprise, Bob! Alumni, during closing ceremonies, surprise Dr. Robert Davila, who celebrated his birthday during NTID's 30th anniversary alumni reunion.



The power of teamwork David Staehle (SVP '75) ('78), NTID alumni relations administrator (front, center), thanks the reunion organizing committee for a job well done, during closing ceremonies in RIT's Student Alumni Union.



High Five! Brenda, 2, daughter of Thomas (SVP '73) ('76) and Carla (Crist) Nedved (SVP '79) ('82), salutes alumni kids attending the reunion.



Rosa Lee Gallimore

Rosa Lee Gallimore

Rosa Lee Gallimore, 22, has been writing poetry since she was 11 years old.

"Poetry is like art to me," she says. "I like moving words around and seeing how far my mind can go. It's a good release from school. I'll write poems between classes and make myself feel better, and then I can concentrate more on my studies."

In addition to her social work studies, Rosa Lee served as the host for NTID's "Chatting About..." talk show program, in which she facilitated informal (and often heated) discussions on sensitive issues.

"I wanted real dialogue between the people who know the issue and others who want to know more about it," she says. "I wanted students who normally wouldn't participate to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts."

Growing up in Indianapolis, Indiana, in a family with deaf parents and one deaf brother and one hearing brother, she's well aware of cultural diversity and related issues.



Diane Cinney

Diane Cinney

A social work student from Saratoga Springs, New York, Diane Cinney is one of those students who are involved in a variety of activities with a variety of groups. She has served on various planning committees of the NTID Student Congress, and she is active in her sorority, Sigma Sigma Sigma, serving as Panhellenic representative.

Diane, 21, also served as a student sports advocate for two years and developed her leadership skills.

"At first I wasn't much of a leader," she explains. "As a student sports advocate, I was forced to be assertive, and I learned more about interacting with people. When I became coordinator of the student sports advocates, I was able to set up programs that benefited more people, such as teaching the staff some sign language, and got more students involved."

"I love being involved," she says with a smile. "It keeps me busy and out of trouble."

Sandy Costa

The only female student in NTID's computer integrated machining technology program during last academic year, Sandy Costa, 21, loves her field.

"I never thought of being a machinist," she says. "I thought about being an artist and a hairdresser, but when I sampled CIMT during SVP [Summer Vestibule Program], I fell in love with it."

Sandy, from Newark, New Jersey, much prefers working in the labs over sitting in the classroom and listening to lectures. In addition to her full academic load, she works an average of 32 hours per week at a local machine shop, taking great pride and satisfaction in making parts without mistakes.

"I like working with my hands," she says. "I want to finish my AOS [Associate of Occupational Science] degree because it will help me find better jobs more easily. Plus, I know my parents want me to finish the degree."



Sandy Costa

Mark Sullivan

Dressed in T-shirt, shorts and sandals, Mark Sullivan, 21, is a prototypical "California Guy."

Mark, whose parents and brother are deaf, is a third-year information technology student at RIT who was mainstreamed at University High School in Irvine, California.

Mark's campus activities during the 1997-98 academic year included chairing the NTID 'Star Search' talent event, running for vice-president of the NTID Student Congress, and membership in Kappa Phi Theta. He also has been a member of two American water polo teams at the World Games for the Deaf, in 1993 in Bulgaria, winning gold, and 1997 in Denmark, earning silver.

"I can't wait until 2001, when the Games are in Rome," he says.

What does the future hold? "It's like water polo," Mark says, "I'll have to get into the water and swim around first. Then I'll know where to go."

Mark has a simple philosophy: "Life is like art, and you are the artist," he says. "You design your own life, but remember to have fun while you're at it!"

Marcus Sylvester

Marcus Sylvester, 24, from Houston, Texas, has the world by the tail, and he's not letting go.

The fourth-year NTID applied computer technology and first-year business marketing student in RIT's College of Business will graduate with his associate of applied science degree in 1999 and a head start toward completion of his bachelor's degree in 2001.

"I came to NTID's Explore Your Future program while I was in high school where I learned how to set goals for myself," says Marcus, past-president of NTID's Ebony Club.

He hopes to go into business for himself some day in addition to pursuing a law degree in his spare time. He hasn't decided yet what he'll do after college, but he has plenty of ideas.

"I'd like to own a video rental or clothes store," says Marcus, "or perhaps run a community service agency for young people who want to learn how to work with computers."

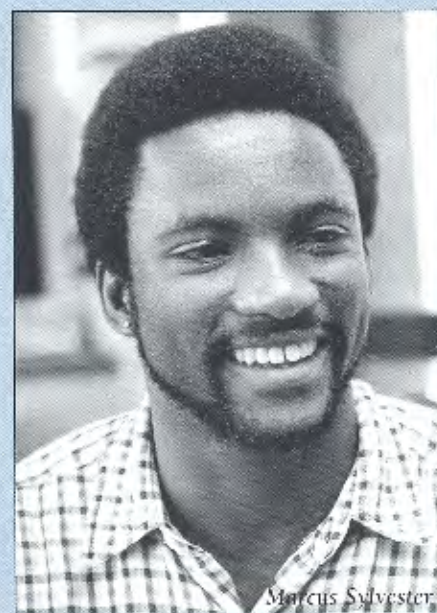
John Meusel

Communicating across international borders presents no barrier for 22-year-old John Meusel, third-year applied computer technology student from Stratford, Ontario, Canada.

"I keep in touch with my parents using an interactive e-mail software called Eudora Professional," says John. "It is a natural outgrowth of the interest I have had in computers since I was 12 and really makes keeping in touch with my folks quite easy and inexpensive."

John hopes to get a job working in the area of developing e-mail or World Wide Web applications after graduation. To demonstrate his skills, he has developed his own web page (<http://www.rit.edu/~jpm2669>). The page provides current information about his activities and interests as well as a link to his on-line résumé. A special aspect of his résumé is that it contains a link to a page about hiring deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals.

The banner on John's e-mail communications reads, "PC and WEB are my wives!" reflecting their importance to him.





Mary Essex

Mary Essex

If your experience using the telephone in New England isn't meeting your access needs, call Mary Essex, 1984 social work graduate. Mary, 36, staff manager for the Bell Atlantic Center for Customers with Disabilities, works with service representatives to provide a telephone environment in which customers can communicate freely and comfortably.

"My social work studies gave me great understanding of how to work with people," says Mary. "Although my degree is in social work, I started as a computer science major and took many business courses at RIT, all of which provided me with the technical knowledge to learn the telephony infrastructure."

Mary credits the RIT environment for giving her the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities and to interact with deaf and hearing people.

"Being at RIT showed me that I could do whatever I wanted to do," says Mary. "My career changes as I see my skills change because my learning hasn't stopped and I continue to see opportunities."



Kim Brown Kurz

Kim Brown Kurz

Kim Brown Kurz, 28, has a favorite quote: "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars." The Lincoln, Nebraska, native has done just that. After attending NTID's Summer Vestibule Program in 1988, she went on to earn her bachelor of science degree in social work in 1993 and master of science degree in career and human resource development in 1995 at RIT.

Now Kim is the educational specialist at Johnson County Community College (JCCC) in Overland Park, Kansas, where she

resides with her husband, Christopher Kurz, a deaf 1995 applied mathematics graduate of RIT.

"The courses at RIT prepared me for my position at JCCC," she says. "My internship and paraprofessional experiences introduced me to this field and were invaluable in shaping my abilities to work with our students, their parents, and professionals working with them."

By providing workshops, technical assistance, and consultation for educational services, Kim helps deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their parents, teachers, and counselors throughout a 15-state region in the midwest shoot for the moon.

Robert L. Cagle, Jr.

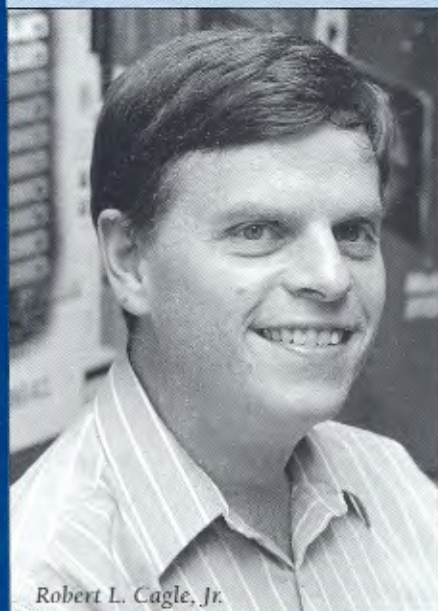
Robert Cagle found himself at a crossroads in 1993. Due to those all-too-familiar words—"downsizing" and "corporate restructuring"—Robert was laid off twice that year.

"I learned how to market myself at NTID," says the 42-year-old Portland, Oregon, native who earned an associate degree in electromechanical technology at NTID in 1978 and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering technology from RIT's College of Engineering in 1982.

"The self-discipline in learning to analyze problems and find solutions helped me succeed in college," he explains. "I never could have predicted how much I would call on those same tools when I was laid off."

The tools did not fail him. Robert found work quickly and has been the manufacturing/test engineer at ORMEC Systems Corporation in Rochester, New York, for five years.

Robert counts being involved in the NTID Student Congress, play productions, and socializing among his many positive college experiences.



Robert L. Cagle, Jr.

Rick and Renee Postl

Meet the Postls—Rick, 25, Renee (Limanek), 27, and their daughter Katarina Rose, born March 15, 1998.

Renee earned her bachelor of science degree in social work in 1993 and her master of science degree in career and human resource development in 1995, both from RIT. She works as Human Resource Manager for Wisconsin Telecommunications Relay System in Madison.

Chicago native Rick, a 1995 RIT Social Work graduate, is Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Coordinator for students at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he hopes to complete his graduate studies in continuing and vocational education in 1999.

"Students must never forget that their experiences at NTID are some of the best times of their lives," says Rick. "It would be ridiculous not to stay until graduation."

"NTID and RIT prepared us well," adds Renee. "Students at NTID now, and those to come, need to understand that the world owes them nothing but will benefit greatly from their leadership."

Colleen Daviton

1998 NTID Distinguished Alumnus Colleen Daviton, 43, likens her growth while at NTID and beyond to that of towering sequoia redwood trees native to her Northern California home.

"NTID and RIT contributed to my success and development, like a seed being planted," says Colleen.

Colleen received her associate of applied science degree in medical laboratory technology from NTID in 1977 and her bachelor of science degree in biology from RIT's College of Science in 1983.

Since that time, Colleen has been clinical technologist for University of Rochester Medical Center, Strong Memorial Hospital, in Rochester, New York, where she performs histological preparations and assists pathologists in trimming specimens, preparation of special stains, and autopsy sectioning.

"Today's students need to know that it takes more than knowing the books to get by in the working world," says Colleen. "By getting involved with college life activities and learning how to work with other people, I further fostered the growth of a seed planted in me at NTID 25 years ago."

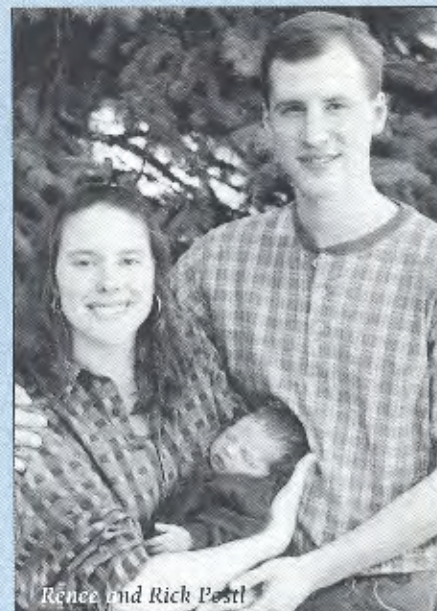
Benjamin David Lessig, D.O.

"I am just following what has become a family tradition," says Benjamin Lessig, whose father and grandfather are osteopathic physicians. Benjamin graduated from RIT's College of Science with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry in 1992 and attended Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He received his doctor of osteopathy degree in June 1996 and is in family practice residency at Christ Hospital in Jersey City, New Jersey.

The 28-year-old New Jersey native chose RIT because of the high rankings it received in the 1987 *U.S. News and World Report* College Special, its cooperative education program, and its excellent support services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

As a student, Benjamin was active in campus affairs, founding the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity, which became fully chartered by RIT in 1996.

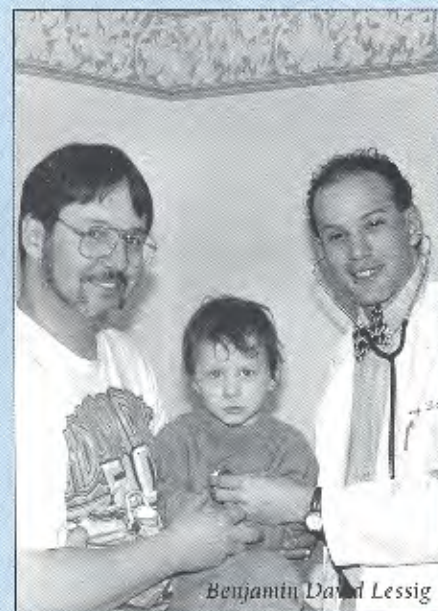
"The key to becoming a successful person in the world is being yourself, raising your standards, and being willing to alter your beliefs," says Benjamin. ■



Renee and Rick Postl



Colleen Daviton



Benjamin David Lessig

More Than Just Money:

Financial aid at NTID helps students cope with the cost of college

by Susan L. Murad

Patricia Simmons is a proud woman. The Bradenton, Florida, mother of five children and four stepchildren can now refer to her son, John, as “my son, the college student.” John, the only deaf child in the family and the first to go to college, is a first-year applied accounting student at NTID, and he knows whom he has to thank for being here.

“My mother is the reason I’m here,” says John, who hopes to work as an accountant in Miami after graduating. “She fought for many years to make it happen. It was extremely important to her that I come to college at NTID.”

“I feel so strongly about John attending NTID because his educational needs are being addressed, and he is succeeding in his academic pursuits,” Simmons says. “It makes a big difference for John to have professors who understand him. His grade point average has improved, and he feels he can do anything!”

According to Susan Austin, NTID student financial services coordinator,

Simmons was adamant that her son attend NTID. She talked to everyone—teachers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, school counselors—even going to visit her state and federal representatives to ask for help.

Simmons’ perseverance has paid off. John is using a variety of funding sources to help with his tuition, including a PELL grant, Parsons Emergency Loan, NTID grant-in-aid, NTID endowed scholarships, Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI), parental contribution, and a federal student loan.

“The funding for John to come here was made possible by the people at NTID,” Simmons says. “NTID went the extra mile for John, and words are inadequate to express the appreciation I feel. During my visit to the college, I met many wonderful, supportive, and understanding people who were so willing to help.

“NTID opened its doors to John in spite of the financial difficulties and hardships he was experiencing and continues to work to overcome. Yes, there has been a great deal



Portrait of pride Patricia Simmons, left, poses with her son John.

of adversity. However, the prize of John completing his college education is of greater magnitude than the struggle it takes to get to the finish line.”

Many students like John Simmons and Sherry Monz, a second-year imaging technology student from Wellsville, New York, find that they must piece their financial aid package

together in order to stay in school, much like a patchwork quilt.

“An increasing number of students are finding they have to creatively finance their college education,” Austin says. “As budget cuts have occurred at the federal and state levels, funding to all social services, including vocational rehabilitation

and supplemental social security, have decreased."

Sherry Monz is utilizing a variety of financial sources such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Parsons Emergency Loan, NTID Foundation Scholarship, NTID grant-in-aid, PELL grant, New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), a federal student loan, and some parental contribution.

Last academic year both of Sherry's parents were in college as well—her father was in his last year at Elmira College in Elmira, New York, studying electromechanical systems, and her mother is a psychology-human development major at Jamestown Community College in Olean, New York. Her older brother was also considering attending college, which would spread the family resources even thinner.

Monz now has a part-time job as a secretarial assistant at the Northeast Technical Assistance Center on the RIT campus to help contribute to paying for college.

"I'm still trying to balance staying here with the financial support that is available," she says. "I know that I'll find a way and manage. I feel that being here is worth the struggle, and I won't give up easily. Life is full of obstacles, and coming to a college with the reputation of NTID and RIT is a good challenge."

The financial aid gap widens for students who arrive at NTID needing preparation courses. As these students work to earn a diploma or associate



Earning money for college Sherry Monz, left, discusses her secretarial assistant duties with Sherlea Dony, program assistant, Northeast Technical Assistance Center.

degree, then transfer to a bachelor's degree program in one of the other colleges of RIT, they often discover that they have reached the limit of federal and RIT financial aid.

"Many students find that just as they can begin to see

For some of these students, NTID can provide progress grants. The grants apply only to tuition and fees and are available for the final academic quarter to students with at least a 2.75 grade point average. In the past two years,

Louisiana, a recent graduate of NTID's Imaging Technology program, now a student life counselor at Maryland School for the Deaf in Columbia.

"I found out that Vocational Rehabilitation was going to stop supporting me, and I really didn't know what to do," Albert says.

"The progress grant helped me a lot. I was able to stay in school and graduate as a result of having the grant, working as a resident advisor, and receiving a Visual Communication Scholarship Award. Now that I have graduated, I plan to get a degree in counseling and help other deaf young people achieve their goals."

"The importance of scholarships based on financial need is increasing," Kathleen Martin, senior development officer of The NTID Foundation, says. "We want to give students the opportunity to prove

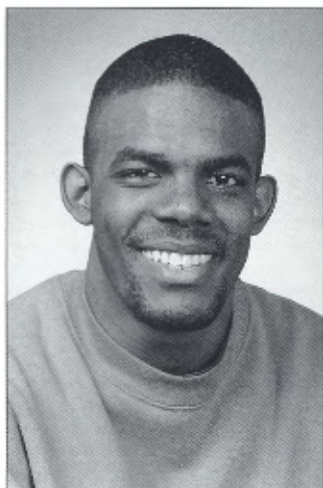
"We need to learn, just like everyone else. Money should not be the reason people leave college. If they don't want to work hard, that's one thing, but if they're willing to do what it takes to succeed at a school like RIT, then a lack of money should not keep them from living their dreams."

—Sherry Monz

the bachelor's degree as a reality, they are faced with the loss of financial assistance and the very real possibility that they will not be able to finish," Austin says.

NTID has awarded approximately 15 progress grants, enabling students to complete their degrees.

One such student is Tim Albert of New Orleans,



Tim Albert

themselves and to experience the type of education that can only be found at NTID."

As a result, an increasing number of the 56 endowed scholarships currently administered by the foundation are designated specifically for financial need.

The newest and largest of these is a \$250,000 commitment by the Louis S. and Molly B. Wolk Foundation of Rochester, New York, designed to help students with financial need bridge the gap and complete their education at NTID.

"The Wolk commitment represents one of the most meaningful types of scholarship funds—one tied to academic progress and financial need," Martin says. "Students who are running out of vocational rehabilitation support and who have persevered in an extremely tough academic environment may need extra time to get to the finish line. This scholarship commitment ensures that they can make it."

Currently, funds such as the William Randolph Hearst Scholarship Endowment for Minority

Students, Ryoichi Sasakawa Scholarship, NTID Foundation Scholarship, Milton and Ray Ohringer Scholarship, and Robert F. Panara Scholarship Fund reinforce NTID's commitment to not only admitting qualified deaf and hard-of-hearing students, but helping them to graduate as well.

"There is incredible academic and personal value in coming to NTID," Martin says. "The uniqueness of the opportunity is one that should not be denied any qualified deaf or hard-of-hearing student."

The hold on tuition rates for the past two years is one very important method that helps students complete their education affordably.

"NTID has worked diligently to keep tuition at an affordable level," Dr. James DeCaro, former dean of NTID, says. "The current two-year hold is equivalent to a \$1,500 scholarship for each student, considering

the increase in the cost of living."

Scholarship, financial assistance, and affordable tuition are all factors that can be pointed to by the staff of NTID's Department of Recruitment and Admissions as having a positive influence on the many students who apply to the college.

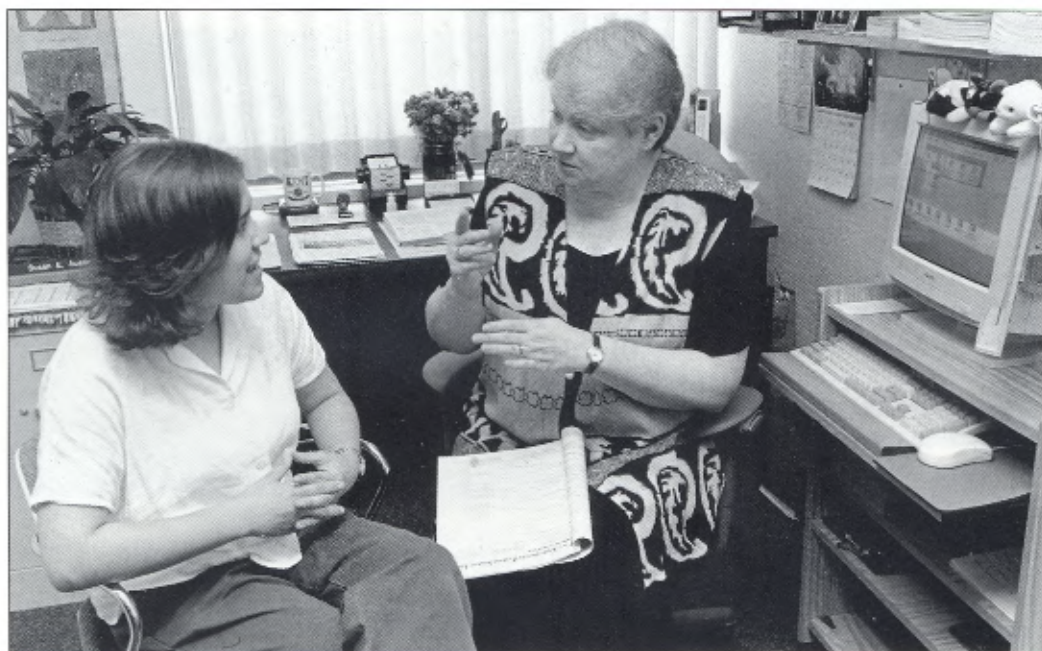
"When we meet with parents, some are unsure if they can afford to send their children to college," Dianne Brooks, director of NTID's Department of Recruitment and Admissions, says. "We are quick to point out that RIT offers an incredible array of financial aid options. When we show parents ways that their children can attend NTID or another college of RIT, they are surprised and pleased. Very often, a good financial aid award package keeps us competitive with a local community college in the student's home state.

"Not only do we get to tell students about the

state-of-the-art education and support services at NTID, we can also help them find the way to make it an affordable choice."

The ability to provide deaf and hard-of-hearing students with a high-quality educational experience is at the core of NTID's mission. Helping students find ways to stay financially in the game has become a focus of the college as well.

"Sometimes other students say that they may have to leave because they can't find the money to stay here," Monz says. "I just don't understand how that can happen. We need to learn, just like everyone else. Money should not be the reason people leave college. If they don't want to work hard, that's one thing, but if they're willing to do what it takes to succeed at a school like RIT, then a lack of money should not keep them from living their dreams." ■



Money talks Sue Austin, right, discusses financial aid with Katherine Groves of Woodstock, Vermont.

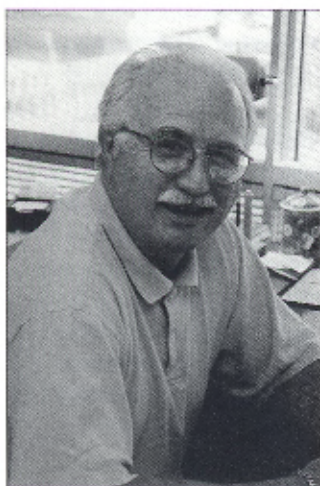
A Conversation About the Mission, Goals, and Future of Giving at NTID

by Susan L. Murad

As NTID embarks on its 30th year of educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students, it also enters its second decade of building a comprehensive private giving program for the college. Eager to augment and diversify financial support to the college, members of The NTID Foundation Board of Directors gathered to set strategies that will carry the foundation into the next century.

FOCUS was able to catch up with seven of these dedicated advocates to ask their thoughts on their work with The NTID Foundation. Those we spoke to are Gracie Coleman, vice president of Operations Support, Lucent Technologies; Sidney Landman, chief operating officer, Xerox Engineering Systems, Xerox Corporation; Lawrence Oberlies, vice president and trust administration manager, Marine Midland Bank, N.A.; Jane Ratcliffe Pulver, trustee, RIT; Cynthia Walker, consultant, Positive Image; George D. Webb II,

principal, William M. Mercer Inc.; and Elizabeth "Cookie" Williams, owner, Liz's Ceramic Studio and Liz-Bet's Boutique.



George Webb

FOCUS: What is it about NTID that makes it a volunteer priority for you?

George Webb: My viewpoint is that of a parent with a deaf son. What are his [career] chances, and what is the likelihood that I can increase the richness of his life? I'm involved

because I believe that NTID offers young people who are deaf and hard of hearing the opportunity to participate fully in the world to the best level of their expectations.

Jane Pulver: I see the foundation as the backbone of the institution. Without it, there could be serious financial problems that would prevent students from coming to NTID. That is why it is so important for me to serve on this board.

Cynthia Walker: I also come with a parent's point of view. I love the respect and honor given the students at NTID. They are treated with a deep respect for who they are as individuals and the capabilities they bring to the world. That is one thing that has kept me active.

Sid Landman: I visited NTID and became fascinated and captivated by the work that is being done, the quality with which it is being done, and the benefit

for the deaf student population. That is what has maintained my interest.

Gracie Coleman: First, I am very impressed by the above average success rate of our graduates. And, the caliber of people like [Vice President] Bob [Davila] and [former Dean] Jim [DeCaro] is so impressive. The commitment to excellence of the faculty, students, and administration is the reason I am here and why I stay.



Jane Pulver



Cynthia Walker

FOCUS: *What distinguishes NTID in your mind and makes it worthy of private investment?*

Landman: The work here is very important. The benefit is very real, and for the dollars invested there are tangible outcomes in trained, productive members of society who, without the work that is done at NTID, would be less productive both to themselves and society. That ability to measure a return that is real and visible makes it easy to consider investing in NTID.

Larry Oberlies: I would agree with Sid. In this age of privatization we are grateful that the U.S. government—the taxpayers—established NTID 30 years ago. Based on its success, it is only reasonable now to look to the private sector, particularly business and industry, because of the obvious benefits of trained people coming out of NTID.

Webb: Sid and Larry are correct. NTID produces a valuable resource that private industry can use and also produces a consumer that is going to use products and send money into the private sector. [NTID produces] graduates [who] are able to earn discretionary income to spend rather than someone who the public will need to support.

Cookie Williams: NTID sets an example for the rest of the world to follow by providing excellent educational services to young deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

FOCUS: *What in your mind is unique about this board?*

Walker: We are very diversified. We come from a broad range of areas and activities and across a broad sector of society. There is a good balance and respect for one another.



Sid Landman

Webb: Along with diversification, many members lend a very practical business approach to what we do. But regardless of background, it's a very action-oriented "let's get things done" group.

Pulver: We are a dedicated group of men, women, deaf, hearing, alumni, and parents. We are from business and the private sector.

Coleman: The diversity of this group is unique. The fact that the board represents such a cross-section of walks of life makes us richer. Each person's contributions benefit the board as a whole.

FOCUS: *Do you see the role of the foundation as a support or leadership function? Is it both?*

Landman: The foundation acts as a support arm for NTID to provide a means of helping secure funding, some guidance, and some input. At times, that may cause us to take some roles of leadership. But by and large, I believe we are a support function.

Williams: I would agree. We are a support, but in doing that we are also an advisor to the college leadership. We would be remiss if we didn't give advice on things that can help the institute in the ability to raise funds.

Walker: I feel our role is both. It swings back and forth, but we all work in partnership. I see it as a cooperative effort and a coming together as a big team.



Gracie Coleman

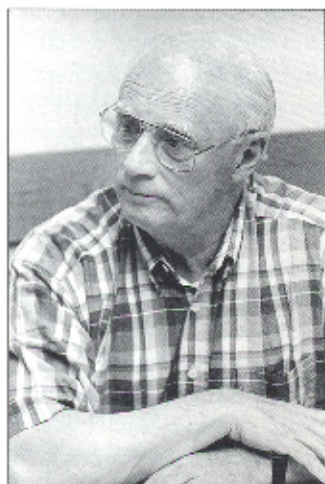
Oberlies: I lean towards the support factor more than the leadership. I would certainly look to the leadership of NTID to tell the board members their needs and problems. We can then lend our support, advice, counsel, and direction.

FOCUS: *What are your goals for the foundation?*

Oberlies: To generate more interest and support for NTID among my Rochester neighbors—foundations, corporations, and individuals. To continue to get the good word out among people who perhaps don't appreciate what we have right here in our own backyard.

Pulver: My goal for the foundation is to be there to help raise the funds that will keep the institute growing and providing the benefits that it gives to an ever-growing student body.

Walker: The population of deaf and hard-of-hearing students is very widespread and diverse, and, in addition to assisting with fund raising, my goal is to attract qualified students and let them know how wonderful NTID really is.



Larry Oberlies

Coleman: My goal is to finish the campaign! I would like to see us achieve or exceed our campaign goal of \$10 million and to continue the high quality of support we have been able to secure.

FOCUS: *What is the one contribution to the foundation that you feel most proud of?*

Pulver: I am proud that my husband and I established an endowed scholarship for deaf students who are enrolled in other colleges at RIT. I am also proud to be one of the original NTID Foundation board members.

Webb: Working with Sprint and helping bring in money for the Learning Center. I am also pleased to give feedback to leadership in terms of my impression of the institution.

Landman: The contribution that I am most proud of has to do with a number of actions to open doors at Xerox which have led to specific benefits to students and to the institution in working on developing new programs in its curriculum.

Walker: I had an opportunity to introduce a contributor to the foundation. To know the difficulties with which she entered the workforce and her life struggle makes her contribution to the NTID foundation very rewarding—it came from the heart!

Oberlies: I was happy to assist in the successful solicitation of grants from the Fred and Floyd Wilmott Foundation to help with renovations of the Panara Theater and the Glen and Maude Wyman-Potter Foundation to assist the International Center for Hearing and Speech Research.

Coleman: It is hard for me to separate individual contributions, but I am proud of being able to make a large number of TTYs available to NTID.



Cookie Williams

Williams: I was pleased to donate funds that replaced the curtains in the Panara Theatre. I am also proud of the new performing arts scholarship I recently established.

FOCUS: *What are your long-range views of private support for NTID?*

Oberlies: Support has to be on two fronts: accessibility for people who are affected by hearing loss and awareness by companies who have deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers. I would still favor support from the government if funds are available because it is money well spent.

Coleman: Another way for us to garner support is to show how we've helped ourselves. That's where private and public support goes hand-in-hand. When government sees that industry considers NTID a good investment, we benefit from both.

Webb: The future of private support should be bright as long as NTID continues its openness, responsiveness, and relevance to private industry. There needs to be partnership with industry. The government has invested in NTID to produce qualified people who earn money—it's time to leverage our success with the private sector.

Landman: Private support will continue to grow in importance for the institution. With the linkages we have developed with business—not just with corporate foundations, but through employment—we are continuing to get more interest from business as it relates to the employable people that we graduate. The key word for me is balance. There has got to be a balance between private and public support. NTID is a great public investment in education that makes deaf and hard-of-hearing people more employable productive citizens. It is a great private investment for the same reason. ■

Perception and Cognition— The Foundation of Learning

by Gerard G. Walter



Planning ahead Vince Samar, left, and Ila Parasnis discuss possible responses to a test for identifying attention deficit disorder.

NTID has been conducting research along a broad spectrum of issues related to perception of the environment and how structuring that environment affects the learning process for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"Perception of the world is a complex process requiring the brain to impose a structure on our

sensory input, a structure which does not necessarily exist in the physical scene," says Dr. Vince Samar, associate professor in NTID's Department of Applied Language and Cognition Research. "The process of creating the structures to organize our sensory world is called cognition and is an important component in learning."

We rely on our senses to provide information about the world around us. Most of the time, our senses seem to give us quite an accurate copy of this world, and we seldom question the accuracy of that information except in philosophical discussions about reality.

"All other issues aside, there is little doubt that severe to profound hearing losses usually affect the

nature of children's experiences with the world and their language, social, and cognitive development," says Dr. Marc Marschark, director of NTID's Center for Research Teaching and Learning.

A major consequence of deafness is that one of the primary modalities for acquisition of sensory information—hearing—is greatly altered, making it difficult to process communication sounds, especially human speech. By default, vision becomes the alternative modality for the acquisition and processing of communication information. The impact of this modality shift for the processing of information presented in the learning environment is not completely understood.

Research in this area can lead to development of methods for presenting information to deaf and hard-of-hearing students and to the development of effective strategies to assist deaf and hard-of-hearing students in processing verbal information.

The International Center for Hearing and Speech Research, a joint project between RIT's NTID and the

University of Rochester, Strong Medical Center, is investigating how the speech signal is processed.

"The long-term goal of the research program is to describe in detail how speech signals are processed from the first level of the auditory system, the ear, to the highest level of the auditory system where perception occurs, the cerebral cortex," says Dr. Robert Frisina, director of the International Center and past director of NTID.

The acoustic makeup of speech sounds is typically complex with amplitude and frequencies that change rapidly in time. To date, much progress has been made in the understanding of how nerve cells of the 8th cranial nerve, the acoustic nerve, encode some of these components of speech sounds.

"How the central auditory system processes the salient features of communication sounds, such as speech, is of primary interest in our research," says Frisina.

One of the center's goals is to systematically determine the means by which complex stimuli, such as speech, are processed in the central nervous system. Experimentation with animals and neural network computer modeling are being used to collect data in this area.

Another area of research in cognition at NTID involves exploration of the way in which deaf individuals represent sound-related information in memory and how they organize their world. Marschark and his colleagues are studying both knowledge of objects

in the real world and the ways in which they represent phonological information during reading. Results from these experiments showed that deaf individuals have mental representations of sound information that are functionally equivalent to those of hearing individuals. However, findings that deaf persons take relatively longer to make judgments about both loudness and number magnitude has led to additional studies in this area.

"If deaf students require longer time to make relative

application or transfer of learned skills to new problem situations. The studies to date have shown that students' problem solving performance can be improved through teacher modeling of the analytical process. The teacher modeling strategy involved a step-by-step analytical approach with detailed explanation in sign language, spoken, and written form. Results from this applied research have implications for providing mathematical problem solving experiences for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Because deaf people rely primarily on their vision to interact with the world, they may use different strategies for processing information. The teaching-learning process can be effectively enhanced with optimal use of the visual modality by focusing on visually based teaching-learning strategies.

judgments of magnitude, it would have significant implications for understanding their mathematics skills and possible academic challenges in that domain," says Marschark.

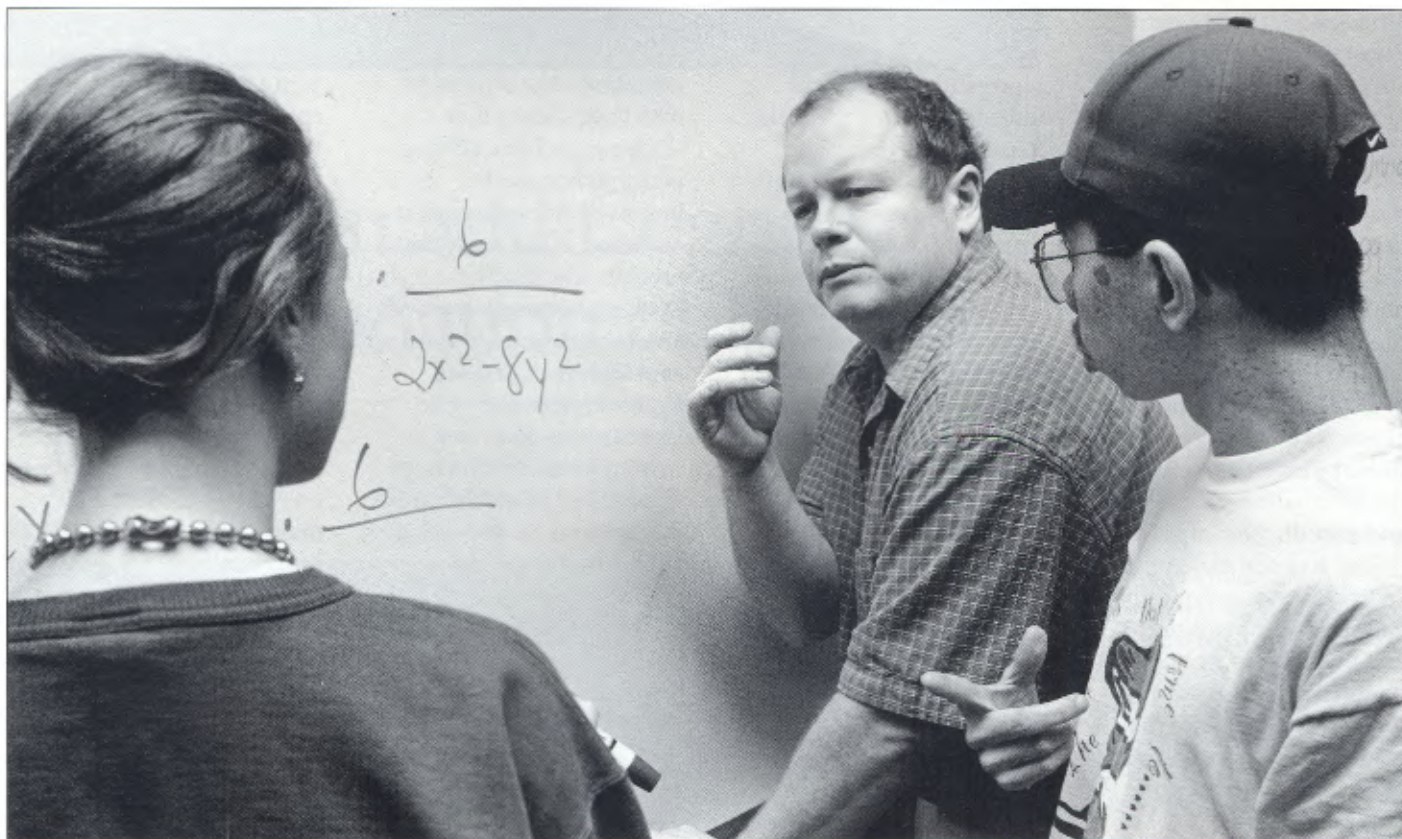
Dr. Ron Kelly, chairperson of NTID's Department of Educational and Career Research, and Keith Mousley, assistant professor in NTID's Department of Science and Mathematics, are investigating the usefulness of various instructional strategies for improving students' analytical problem solving skills and the

Because deaf people rely primarily on their vision to interact with the world, they may use different strategies for processing information. The teaching-learning process can be effectively enhanced with optimal use of the visual modality by focusing on visually based teaching-learning strategies. Dr. Ila Parasnis, associate professor in NTID's Department of Applied Language and Cognition Research, has conducted several studies to understand the use of the visual modality by deaf

people and whether deafness and the use of American Sign Language lead to enhancement of any specific visual spatial skills. Knowledge about how deaf persons process visual information has implications for understanding how they remember sign-communicated or written information.

Great advances have been made in diagnosis and treatment of children with learning disabilities, but no one knows for sure how many deaf and hard-of-hearing children have a specific learning disability (LD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD). We do know that the primary exogenous causes of deafness, including maternal rubella, Rh incompatibility, meningitis, anoxia, complications of prematurity, and cytomegalovirus infections, are also causes of LD and ADD. It is, therefore, common sense to acknowledge that LD and ADD are also likely to be common disabilities within the deaf population. Teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing children have suspected the existence of learning disabilities in significant numbers of their pupils for a long time.

"Adequate diagnosis of LD in deaf students has been a problem for many years because the English language characteristics associated with LD in the hearing population are the same kinds of English language characteristics that many deaf students exhibit generally," says Dr. Gerald Berent, chairperson of NTID's Department of Applied Language and Cognition Research.



Modeling for students Keith Mousley, center, shows two students how to solve a mathematical problem.

Valid and reliable diagnostic procedures are necessary to accurately assess the incidence and type of learning disabilities that arise in the deaf student population and to serve as a basis for the provision of special accommodations for these students. Researchers Samar, Parasnis, and Berent are developing a proposal to study the major factors that distinguish deaf students with LD from deaf students without LD.

Recent research has revealed that individuals with specific reading disability have a specific deficit in the early stages of visual information processing. One project underway at NTID assesses the utility of measures of visual control sensitivity for the identification of specific

reading disability in deaf readers. The results of this research will help to find a way to identify students who have an English language learning disability without depending on the English language to do the assessment. Findings will help researchers to formulate specific ideas about the nature of the language learning problem that deaf students face when they have a learning disability.

Another study is underway at NTID to validate the use of the Test of Variables of Attention (T.O.V.A.) for use with deaf persons. This is a computerized test for identifying students who have ADD.

"This research will tell us what behavior is normal on the T.O.V.A. for deaf students and what behavior suggests ADD. We will then be able

to use the T.O.V.A. to help diagnose ADD in deaf individuals," says Parasnis.

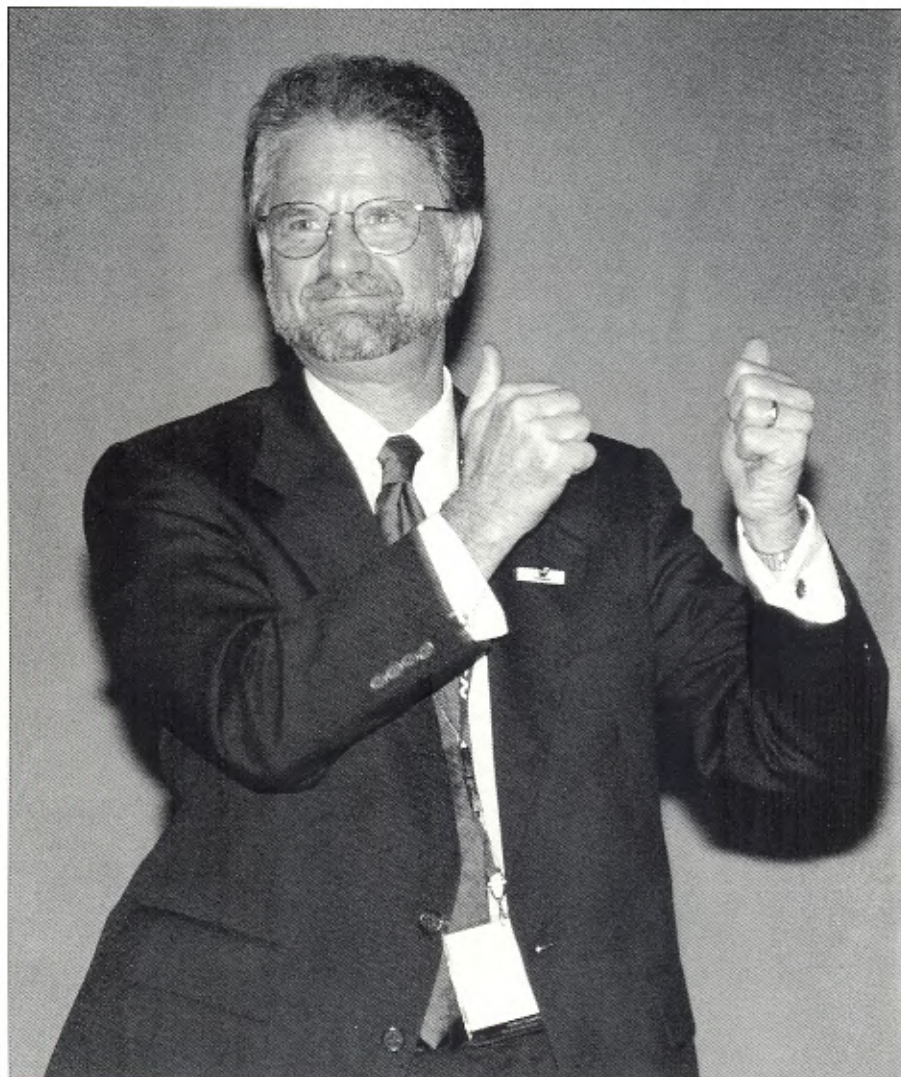
Accurate and early diagnosis of ADD will help students cope with school and social environments through appropriate accommodations and counseling.

"The proper evaluation of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders will permit deaf children access to comprehensive and coordinated accommodations and special education services," says Samar, "including classroom and curricular modifications, study skills training, testing modifications, counseling, and psychostimulant medication."

Although the actual impact of many of these accommodations on

academic performance has rarely been studied quantitatively, limited work shows that certain accommodations commonly provided by universities to LD hearing students, such as special advising and computer laboratories, do significantly improve their academic success. In addition, the development of interactive multimedia to accommodate for language learning disabilities is now a reality.

By better understanding how deaf students perceive their world, NTID can modify the learning environment to accommodate the unique learning needs of deaf students and thus improve the likelihood that an applicant, once admitted, will have a high probability of graduating. ■

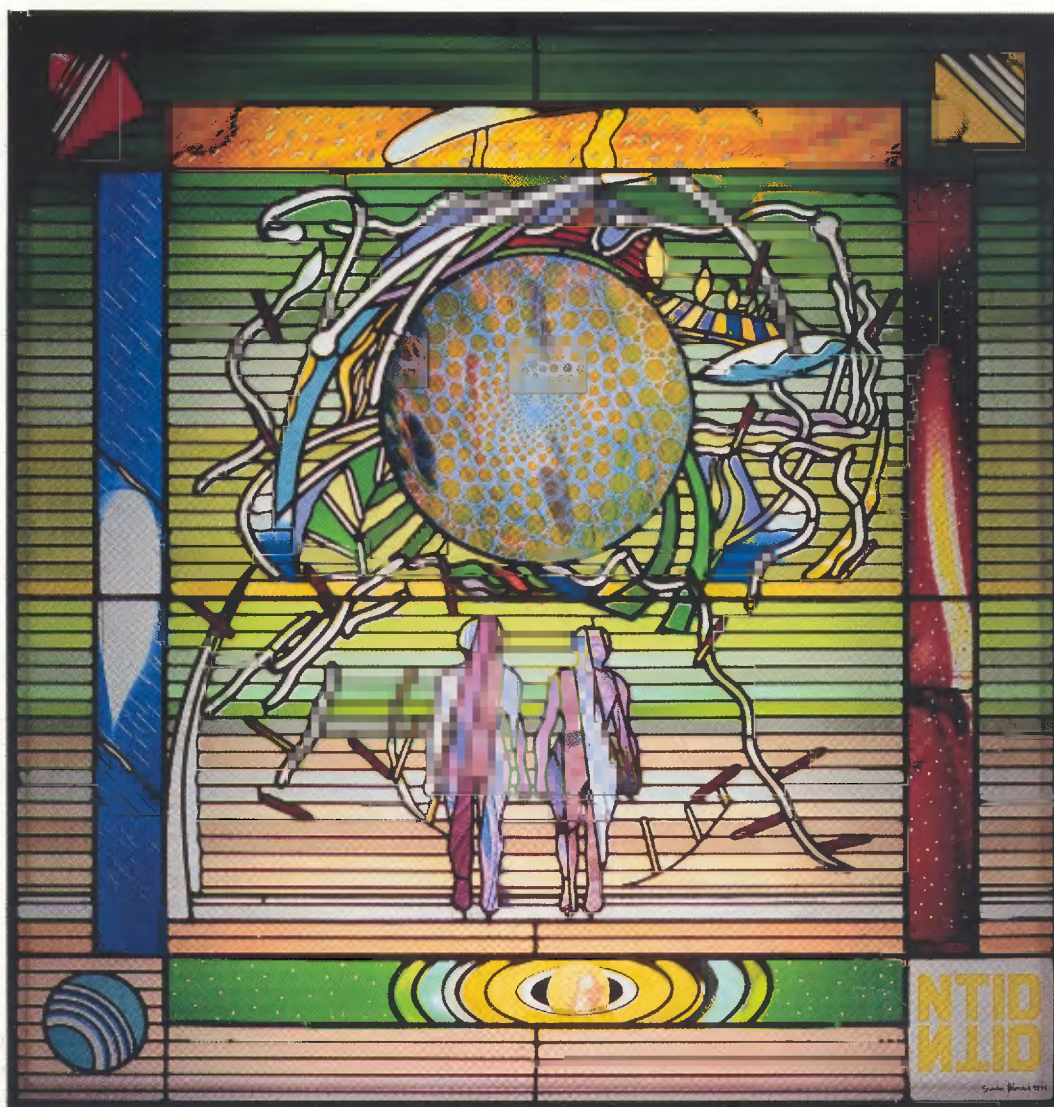


A new era Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, appointed NTID's first deaf dean July 1998, gives the thumbs up to NTID alumni during the 30th anniversary alumni reunion in July.

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"Blindness and Sorrow" This original commissioned stained glass work was created by Sander Blondeel, a professional glass artist who has been active since 1988, and is displayed in NTID's Lyndon Baines Johnson Building.