

SPRING 2000

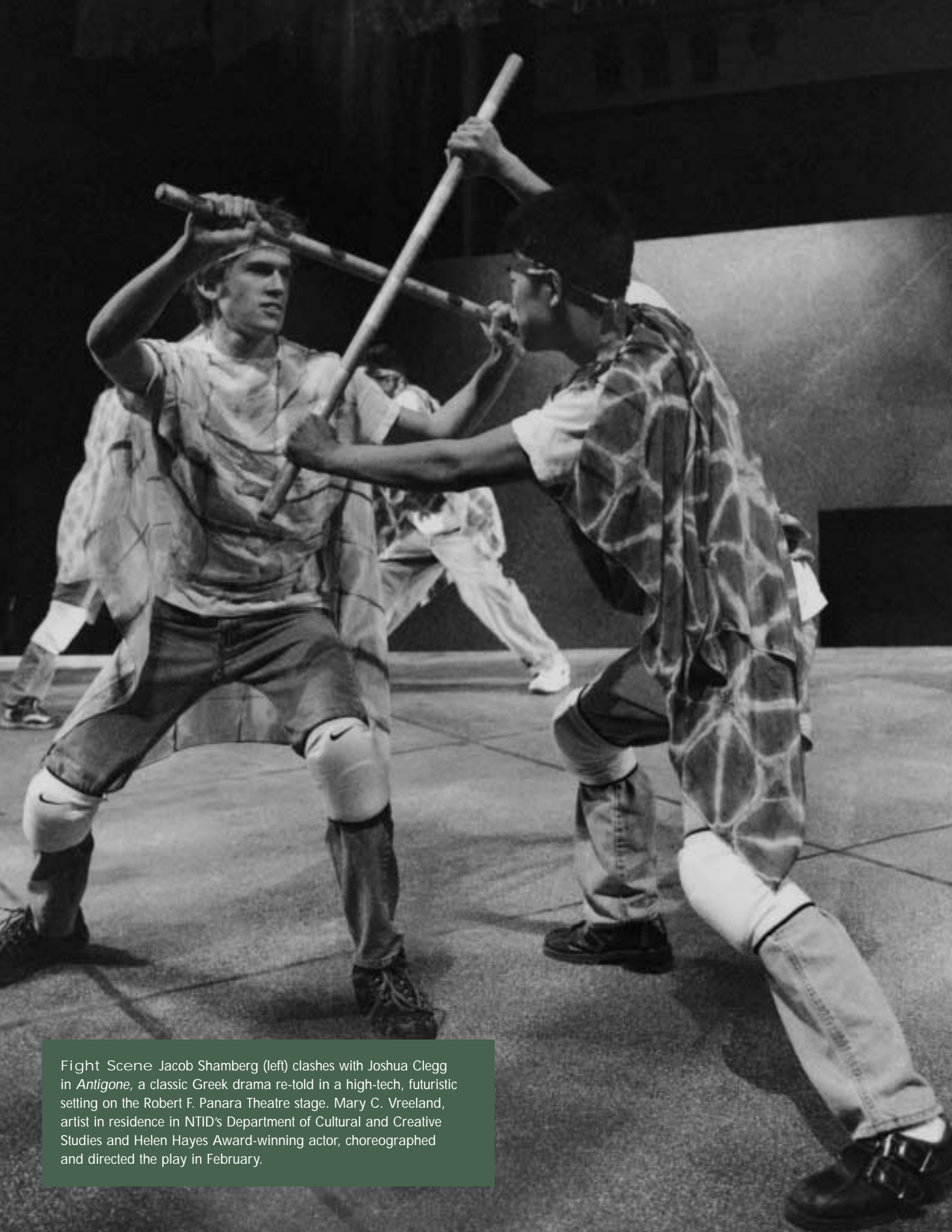
# FOCUS

NTID

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



Art at NTID



Fight Scene Jacob Shamberg (left) clashes with Joshua Clegg in *Antigone*, a classic Greek drama re-told in a high-tech, futuristic setting on the Robert F. Panara Theatre stage. Mary C. Vreeland, artist in residence in NTID's Department of Cultural and Creative Studies and Helen Hayes Award-winning actor, choreographed and directed the play in February.

S P R I N G 2 0 0 0

# FOCUS

## NTID

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



### ABOUT THE COVER

This painting, *Art No. 2*, by alumnus Chuck Baird, is the second in Baird's "Art" series. It was included in a special NTID Switzer Gallery show in February (see pp. 13-16). Of this self-portrait, Baird explains, "Art is my whole life. When I sign 'art,' a ray of light represents the ray of hope. Those flying objects in front of myself represent my various mediums." (The cover image has been slightly cropped.)

### FEATURES

- 4** The Best of the Best: NTID's Eisenhart Award winners
- 9** Owing Achievement: Qualities of successful mainstream deaf RIT students
- 13** Elements of a Culture: Visions by Deaf Artists

### DEPARTMENTS

- 2** Bob's Bulletin: Supporting the Arts
- 8** Alumni Profile: Angela Officer
- 17** Profiles in College
- 21** Partners in Communication: Interpreters at RIT
- 25** Counselors: Guideposts for the college journey
- 28** Alumni Profile: David Pierce

# FOCUS

NTID

## Editor

Kathryn L. Schmitz

## Writers

Karen E. Black  
 Pamela L. Carmichael  
 Frank A. Kruppenbacher  
 Susan L. Murad

## Art Director

Colleen Clarke,  
 RIT University Publications

## Graphic Designer

Urvashi Patel,  
 RIT University Publications

## Photography

A. Sue Weisler—IFC, pp. 3–5, 9–12,  
 17–21, 23–25, 27  
 Mark Benjamin—pp. 7–8, 25–27

*FOCUS* is published by the Marketing Communications Department at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York. The views expressed in guest columns do not necessarily reflect the position of NTID or *FOCUS* magazine.

*RIT will admit and hire men and women, veterans, and persons with disabilities of any race, creed, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, or marital status, in compliance with all appropriate legislation.*

## Marketing Communications

(716) 475-6906 (voice or TTY)  
 (716) 475-5623 (fax)  
 NTIDMC@rit.edu (e-mail)  
 www.rit.edu/NTID (World Wide Web)

## Recruitment and Admissions

(716) 475-6700 (voice or TTY)  
 (716) 475-2696 (fax)  
 place4u@rit.edu (e-mail)

## The NTID Foundation

(716) 475-6836 (voice or TTY)  
 (716) 475-5949 (fax)  
 NTIDFDN@rit.edu  
 www.rit.edu/~940www/DEV/NTID  
 (World Wide Web)

# Supporting the Arts

In 1974, when the main physical facility for NTID—the LBJ building—was being designed, Dr. Robert Frisina, NTID's first director, was asked why a theater was included in those plans given that NTID was conceived primarily as a technical college. His response was that we must provide students with a well-rounded education, including personal and social development and communication skills. He felt—rightfully so—that the cultural arts and technology are not mutually exclusive, that they are critical elements of a postsecondary curriculum.

This belief underlies all of our work at NTID today. We enable students to study in outstanding state-of-the-art technical and professional education programs, complemented by a strong arts and sciences curriculum, that prepares them to live and work in the mainstream of a rapidly changing global community and enhances their interest and skill to pursue lifelong learning. Since the Institute's inception, we have offered students the opportunity to become involved with the arts, both visual and theatrical.

Our performing arts program, including the Sunshine Too! touring theatre troupe, is renowned for its integration of deaf and hearing performers. The performances and associated activities offered by this program have been an outstanding complement to our technical curriculum, giving our students the

chance to develop other skills and become well-rounded individuals.

In addition to boasting the first such performing arts program of its kind in a technical university, I'm very pleased to announce that we soon will boast an arts center that will be the world's showcase of art by deaf artists, of which NTID already holds a significant collection.

Thanks to a \$2.5 million leadership gift and the support of Joseph and Helen Dyer, generous friends and benefactors of NTID, we will build a state-of-the-art arts center to house our valuable collection of works by deaf artists within the LBJ building. This center, which will be called the Joseph F. and Helen C. Dyer Arts Center, will house and display artwork. It also will provide facilities for art-related educational activities, such as lectures and demonstrations, and serve as a multi-use facility within the heart of NTID's principal building.

Our benefactors, Joe and Helen Dyer, are wonderful people, perfect ambassadors for NTID's mission to provide a well-rounded education for our students. Both are deaf college graduates. Their accomplishment is all the more remarkable for the fact that they completed college in a time when very few deaf people did and that they did so as mainstreamed students without any support or access services at all. Joe attended the New Jersey Institute of Technology in the 1930s and



**Artist's rendering** This drawing represents a preliminary concept of the planned Joseph F. and Helen C. Dyer Arts Center.

became an engineer for a pharmaceutical company. Helen's father was a Midwestern farmer who moved to New York City to become a stockbroker and who developed an appreciation for art, which he passed on to his daughter. Helen herself took some art courses and has done paintings of her own. Her home is adorned with several paintings and framed embroidery work that attest to her considerable talents.

By providing the leading gift for this project at the world's foremost college for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the Dyers are setting an outstanding example for all of us and leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

We hope to begin construction of the 7,000-square-foot center during the summer of 2000. The center will house specialized gallery space, provide for the archival and restoration needs of the NTID collection, and offer space for special events where RIT will host dignitaries and special guests.

A few of the deaf artists with works in our collection include Morris Broderson, Frances Carlberg King, Chuck Baird, Jim Canning, and Susan Dupor, many of them

RIT alumni. NTID's large collection of works by deaf artists also includes many from internationally known artists, such as Eiichi Mitsui and Sander Blondeel.

The work of several of these artists was featured this past February in a special traveling art exhibit shown in NTID's Switzer Gallery. In the center pages of this issue of FOCUS magazine, you can enjoy full-color photographs of artwork by the RIT-affiliated artists who participated in this show. We are proud of our alumni and their continued artistic vision.

Of course, we are also proud of Joe and Helen Dyer, and we thank them for their generosity and for ensuring that the work of contemporary deaf artists will continue to inspire deaf artists of the future for generations to come.



**Discussing art** Dr. Robert Davila, vice president for NTID, left, chats with Joyce Song, fifth-year graphic design student from Minneapolis, Minn., and Shane Feldman, fourth-year professional and technical communication student from Rockville, Md., in NTID's Switzer Gallery.

# The Best of the Best: NTID's Eisenhart Award winners

by Kathryn L. Schmitz



**Outstanding teachers** Standing from left to right, rear, Robert Panara, James Mallory, B. Edward Cain, Harry Lang, Marilyn Mitchell, Donald Beil, Donna Gustina, and Joan Carr. Seated, center row, Lorna Mittelman, Paul Peterson, Lynette Finton, Mary Lou Basile, and Paula Grcevic. Seated, front row, Maria Shustorovich, Jack Slutzky, Peter Haggerty, Beverly Price DeNard, Lawrence Mothersell, and Julie Cammeron. Not pictured: Robert Keiffer and Edward Scouten.

**C**ommitment. Enthusiasm. Knowledge. These are a few of the qualities shared by recipients of RIT's Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching, especially the 22 award-winning NTID faculty members, five of whom are deaf.

Teaching excellence has been formally recognized at RIT since 1965, when the Awards for Outstanding Teaching were established by a generous bequest that created the M.

Herbert and Elsa Bausch Eisenhart Endowment Fund. The late M. Herbert Eisenhart, former president and board chairman of Bausch & Lomb, Inc., was a member of RIT's Board of Trustees for more than 50 years and was the recipient of the RIT Founders Award in 1971. The scope of the awards program was broadened in 1967 to include Distinguished Young Teachers. The program was further expanded in 1975 to better recognize the diversified educational nature of

RIT by providing a maximum of four awards, going to faculty members from the various educational disciplines at RIT.

Although the program has changed, the reasons behind the awards have not: to encourage the professional growth and development of RIT faculty and to specifically recognize those members of the academic body who contribute most to enhance student learning. The Eisenhart Awards for Outstanding Teaching have

served to spotlight the activities and accomplishments of a number of exceptional faculty members at RIT.

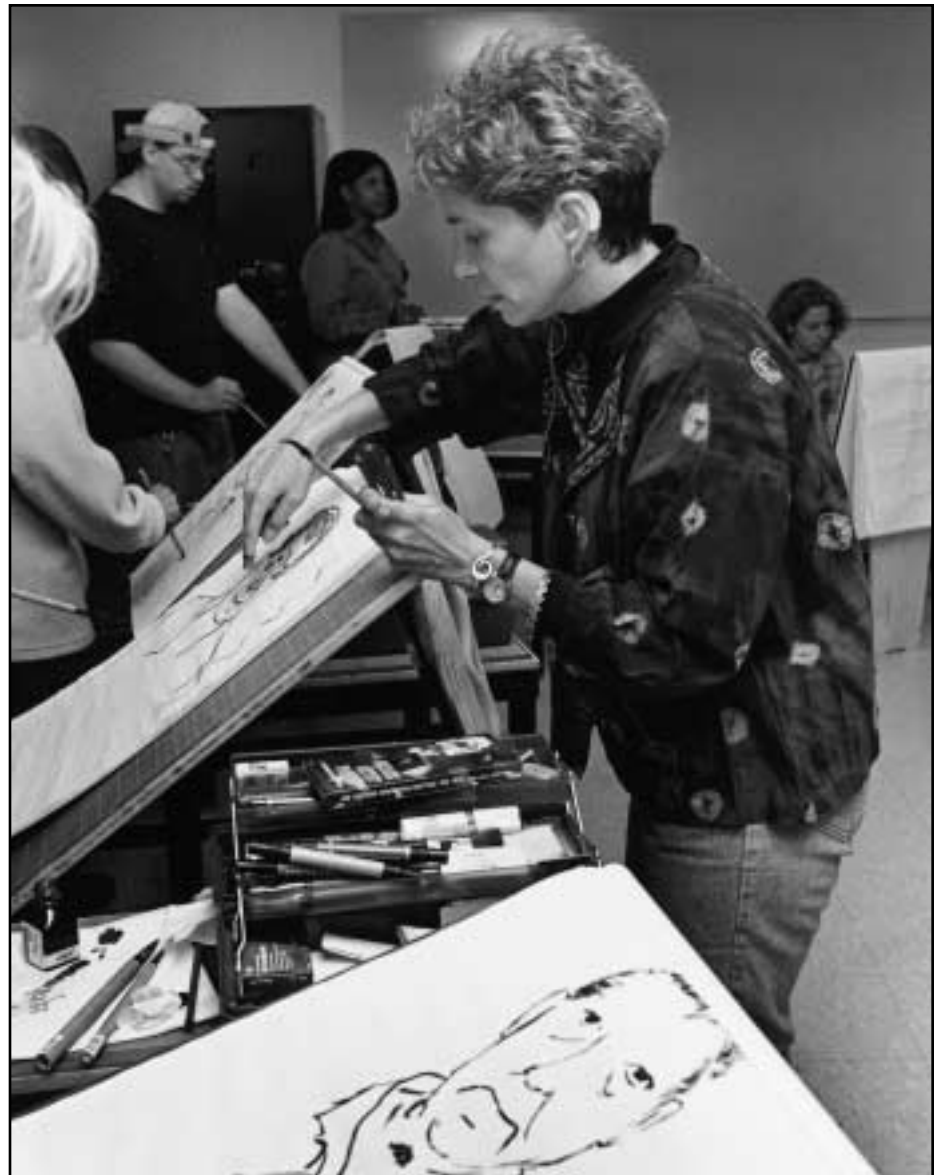
In particular, NTID's Eisenhart Award recipients have brought to the classroom relevant and often unusual experiences. Some have changed careers to teach at NTID. James Mallory, associate professor in NTID's Applied Computer Technology Department, left Mobil Chemical to teach computer technology and engineering to deaf students. Peter Haggerty, assistant professor in NTID's English Department, left a career as a newspaper editor and reporter to teach English at NTID, bringing with him his 1960s idealism. Mary Lou Basile, associate professor in NTID's Business Careers Department, began her NTID career teaching sign language communication and then switched to general business and office technologies. Jack Slutzky, retired associate professor in NTID's Imaging Arts and Sciences Support Department and father of a deaf son, came to NTID with experience in minor-league baseball, advertising, and multi-media. Lynette Finton, assistant professor in NTID's American Sign Language and Interpreter Education Department and married to a deaf man, began her career at NTID as an interpreter and later became a professor of educational interpreting. Robert Keiffer, associate professor in NTID's Construction Technologies Department, has maintained his professional engineering certification and his engineering practice throughout his teaching career at NTID.

Others simply knew they wanted to teach. Joan Carr, associate professor in NTID's Science and Mathematics Department, helped her friends with their math homework in the cafeteria during high school and decided she wanted to teach college mathematics. Donald Beil, professor in NTID's Applied Computer Technology Department, knew he wanted to be a teacher when he was in Somalia, East Africa, as a Peace Corps volunteer. Maria Shustorovich, assistant professor in NTID's Science and Mathematics Department, taught high

school mathematics in Moscow for 15 years before emigrating to the United States in 1977, when she learned English. Lorna Mittelman, assistant professor in RIT's Learning Development Center and single mother, was in search of a livelihood when she took a few deaf education courses, started learning sign language, and became immersed in educating deaf students.

Still others came to NTID through personal connections or experiences. Dr. Harry Lang, professor in NTID's Department of Research, became deaf at age 15, which motivated him to go

to college and later develop innovative strategies for teaching science to deaf students. Donna Gustina, coordinator of NTID's Office of Communication Assessment Services and the first deaf woman selected for an Eisenhart Award, didn't meet another deaf person or learn sign language until she was at Nazareth College of Rochester and heard about NTID. Paul Peterson, who has a deaf brother, taught at the American School for the Deaf before arriving at NTID to become famous for his dramatic sign language communication skills in his mathematics classroom. Robert Panara,



**Showing by example** Paula Grcevic shows a student how to use a brush and ink to execute a line drawing of a model in her figure drawing class.

the first deaf recipient of the Eisenhart Award, came to NTID from Gallaudet University as RIT's first deaf instructor and brought with him a deep love for poetry, both performing and writing. Marilyn Mitchell, assistant professor in NTID's American Sign Language and Interpreter Education Department, learned sign language so she could communicate with her brother- and sister-in-law.

## Commitment

In the field of teaching, commitment is that virtue of setting and keeping a promise to students of working to enhance their learning. Good teachers generally are interested in assuring a productive learning experience for their students.

NTID teachers in particular have embraced the special challenges of reaching their deaf and hard-of-hearing students. From 1972-76, Julie Cammeron, the first woman faculty member from NTID to receive the Eisenhart award, had two jobs. During the day, she taught full time. In the evenings, she went on to her second job as the only RIT faculty member to live in the residence halls for four years. In this role, she set up and managed the General Education Learning Center and did all crisis intervention for NTID students who had problems during evening or weekend hours. Cammeron, now associate professor in NTID's Cultural and Creative Studies Department, remembers her four years in the dorms with pride.

"More than 25 years later, I still hear from the students I helped when I lived in the dorms," she says. "It's a great feeling to know that students haven't forgotten."

Later, Cammeron designed and implemented the NTID Special Speaker Series program that brought a number of notable personalities to campus, including Mikhail Baryshnikov, Peter Jennings, and Louise Fletcher.

"The series was a real morale booster for both students and faculty alike," she explains. "It put us on the

## NTID Recipients of the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching

1970-71	Lawrence Mothersell†§
1974-75	Robert F. Panara*†
1975-76	Loy Golladay*‡
1977-78	Edward Scouten†
1978-79	Julie J. Cammeron
1979-80	B. Edward Cain
1980-81	Beverly J. Price DeNard
1981-82	Jack Slutzky†
1982-83	Harry G. Lang*
1983-84	Donna Gustina*
1985-86	Peter Haggerty
1986-87	Maria Shustorovich
1988-89	Paul Peterson†
1989-90	Robert Keiffer
1991-92	Paula Grcevic*
1992-93	Lorna Mittelman
1993-94	Marilyn Mitchell
1994-95	Joan Carr
1995-96	Lynette Finton
1996-97	Donald Beil
1997-98	Mary Lou Basile
1998-99	James Mallory

\* Deaf

† Retired

‡ Deceased

§ Distinguished Young Teacher

map by bringing attention to the important work we were doing to develop this unique college."

Cammeron, who now is in her 28th year at NTID, still loves teaching. "It's a rare gift to find your niche and still enjoy it after all these years."

In his 25th year at NTID, Beil also finds teaching still worthwhile.

"I am fortunate to work at a place where I have wonderful students, great colleagues, and the resources to try new things," he says. "I hope that my students see and feel my love of learning and of computing. It is my responsibility to nurture their abilities, to expand their interests, and to sustain their enthusiasm."

For his ongoing commitment to the

understanding, sensitivity, and respect for the interests of deaf faculty and staff members and the needs of deaf students in and out of the classroom, Beil received the 1996 Award of Excellence from NTID's Deaf Professional Group.

A deaf instructor who finds each student unique, Paula Grcevic, associate professor in NTID's Applied Art and Computer Graphics Department, left New York City, a hotbed of creativity for artists, to teach deaf students how to find their own creativity. She refers to her students as "sparklers," the fireworks that throw off sparks while burning, and strives to find ways for them to articulate, learn, and develop their own artistic style.

"Sparklers have their own identity and are magical within the universe," she explains. "Students' minds are the same."

## Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm for their students, their subject matter, their teaching environment, and their profession is a common trait in the best teachers, and NTID award winners have shown themselves to be especially enthusiastic. Carr, for example, developed an appreciation for the complexities of mathematics in high school.

"What I love about math is its logical nature and the way it enables us to condense an idea into a few little symbols," she explains. "I let my students know that they are capable of solving mathematical problems, and when they occasionally express a negative attitude toward mathematics, I address that. I try to get them to look at their math work as they might a piece of artwork. Just as they wouldn't expect a novice artist's work to hang in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, my students understand that developing advanced mathematical skills can take time."

Basile has been a guiding force to her students, constantly seeking new ways to motivate, encourage, inspire, and reach out to them.





**Using new technology** Julie Cammeron, left, teaches her Making a Difference: A Social Science Perspective class in the Smart Classroom of the NTID Learning Center, enabling her students to access course material on a website designed specifically for her course.

“Students know when you’re wasting their time,” she says. “They need to understand that you’re on their side—that you’re going to be there to support and foster their learning. I try to set the stage as to why we’re covering the material in the course by asking them questions about their own lives and experiences. I tell my students ‘I’m not going on the job with you, so you have to learn to figure out some things for yourselves.’”

Mitchell sees the classroom as a place where students gain new skills and knowledge and learn about themselves as people. With a sense of pride and accomplishment, she shares her students’ successes and finds it exciting to watch them become confident in their skills.

“I remember my teachers who encouraged open communication and who clearly wanted students to feel and be successful,” she says. “That’s what I want to give back to my students.”

## Knowledge

A teacher can only be as effective as his or her body of knowledge. Continually learning and understanding new concepts plays a large role in the ongoing effectiveness of a teacher, and such continuing education is critical at a technical institution like NTID.

“Keeping up with technology is exciting and challenging because it changes at light speed,” says Mallory, who has authored and copyrighted software and publications on topics ranging from artificial intelligence to distance learning instruction to general trends in technology.

In his research, Lang has found that deaf students perceive “knowledge of course content” as the most important characteristic of an effective teacher.

“We can be proud of the fact that RIT has a long history of hiring faculty with content expertise and keeping

them current in their fields through professional development opportunities,” says Lang.

Other faculty members, like Finton, are trailblazers in their respective fields.

“Because the field of interpreting education is relatively young, I’m always trying new ideas,” says Finton. “Many are from students, who energize me.”

Like NTID itself, NTID’s Eisenhart winners have been a pioneering group of individuals who have grown and adapted to the needs of their students. The Eisenhart Awards simply recognize their outstanding teaching; NTID students benefit from that teaching every day.

# Angela Officer

by Karen E. Black



**A**ngela Officer is a person who commands attention when she walks in a room. One can't help but take note of the confidence in her walk and her smile. She gained this confidence through supportive parents, her educational experiences and a lot of hard work.

And for Officer, the expression "hard work pays off" is true.

Born in 1964 in Louisiana, Officer's deafness was confirmed at age 14 months. She attended private sessions at the onset, followed by the Louisville Deaf Oral Program, Central Institute for the Deaf, and a mainstream high school. She then received her bachelor of fine arts degree in graphic design at RIT.

"I was fortunate to have the experiences of attending an oral school, then a hearing high school, and then RIT, where I learned to

sign," she says. "I realize how grateful I am that my parents gave me all these opportunities. I think it's very important that deaf children not be limited to one way of communicating."

Officer chose RIT because of the mainstream environment, its excellent reputation, and state-of-the-art technology majors.

"RIT is well known worldwide for being one of the best graphic design schools," Officer explains. "At the same time, it offers interpreting services, theater, and a place where everyone can understand both hearing and deaf worlds. How could I say no to this wonderful opportunity that offers everything at one place?"

She says her experience selling art supplies at the RIT bookstore provided an environment where she could be comfortable and at the same gain confidence by learning to interact with both hearing and deaf students before facing the real world of work.

After she graduated, Officer took her first "real world" job as a graphic designer in Washington, D.C. "While this job provided me with tremendous learning experiences, it didn't provide the fulfillment I was looking for," Officer says. So in 1991, she resigned and took a position with Sprint and

has been enjoying fulfillment and increased responsibility there ever since.

As a Senior Federal Program Manager, Officer manages new projects and enhancements for Sprint's Government Systems Division Federal Relay Service. She manages multi-departmental functions across many organizations to ensure the Federal Relay Service program achieves successful results. She manages the project team from start to finish to ensure complete, successful, cost-effective and on-time delivery.

As editor-in-chief for Sprint's Government Systems Division's two external publications, Officer was also responsible for overhauling the Division's two newsletters, producing a more contemporary look and improving the content. She also developed a web site for *Relay Today* and *Sprint Solutions*. Her publications have received high praise from throughout the company.

"Even when I have to face a roomful of executives who are gathered to review my latest design for *Sprint Solutions* and *Relay Today*, I feel confident," Officer says, "That's because I received, in large part, excellent leadership training from NTID.

"NTID was a turning point in my life," Officer explains. "I learned more about myself and it was there where I had wonderful opportunities to learn academically and socially."

Aside from her demanding job, Officer is very active in the community and has a long list of awards, including The National Business and Disability Council's Silver Employee of the Year Award in 1999 for exemplifying the council's philosophy that qualified people with disabilities make significant contributions to their employers. She was also named the 1996 Quota International Deaf Woman of the Year because of her commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those who are in need. Her most recent honor is to be named RIT's 2000 Distinguished Alumni for NTID.

"The goal is not to be a superwoman," she explains. "No one can do it all. Maintain a balance in your life and prioritize your goals in each category like family and work and recreation." But, Officer advises, check in regularly to make sure you're on track.

"Like my dad always said, 'If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there.'"

# Owning Achievement:

## Qualities of successful mainstream deaf RIT students

by Susan L. Murad



**A**uthor and internationally respected business leadership authority Stephen Covey first gave the world his method of achieving success in work and at home when he published *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*® in 1990. Nearly 10 years and 10 million copies later, the book continues to be a bestseller, and the 7 Habits have become the mantra of many successful business people, improving their productivity, time management, positive thinking, planning, and more.

Do Covey's 7 Habits translate from the laptop-carrying, frequent-flyer crowd to fit the lives of deaf students? A look into how a number of successful mainstreamed deaf students at RIT use the 7 Habits provides a glimpse into their dedication,

motivation, and determination, and how they provide inspiration to all who know them.

### Research says...

Research on traits of successful deaf students at NTID and RIT point out a number of common characteristics that also fit the 7 Habits model. According to Dr. Susan Foster and Dr. Gary Long of NTID's Department of Research, the most successful deaf students are those who are adept at managing information and resources.

"The most effective students are those who take possession of the material presented and the variety of access services available and synthesize them by what we call 'digesting and controlling' the information and their environment," says Foster. "This starts early in life for students as they move on the continuum of shifting control

and responsibility that begins in kindergarten, where all academic and social activities are managed by the teacher, to college life where students assume primary responsibility for learning.

"By the time they get to college, students are responsible for reaching out and taking the information delivered by the instructor. For deaf students in mainstreamed classes, there may not always be an instructor who is accommodating their specific needs. The students who are successful recognize this and make the necessary adjustments."

Long agrees. "Successful deaf students are well aware that they must advocate for themselves," he explains. "It is so easy to become 'invisible' as a deaf student in a mainstreamed classroom, particularly one with a large number of students.

“Deaf students, in order to be successful, transform the information from class and mesh it with existing information. They put it into a structure that works for them, making it uniquely their own. That’s what we mean by ‘owning’ the topic.”

While Foster and Long’s current research focuses on deaf students in mainstream college classes, they also noted that there are deaf students in NTID classes demonstrating these skills and transferring them to mainstream programs at the other colleges of RIT or ultimately entering the work world.

### **Habit #1: Be Proactive® – take responsibility**

“I think the number one indicator for success as a deaf college student is a grand desire ‘to know,’” says Sidonie Roepke, assistant professor in NTID’s Imaging Arts and Sciences Support Department. “This means not only knowing what the student needs in order to be proactive, but also the approach that parents and elementary teachers have used as well. Somewhere in the students’ formative years,



**A clear vision for the future** Genevieve Bresett works on a circuit board in an electrical engineering technology lab.

someone needed to teach and instill a love of reading and curiosity about the world around them.”

Debra Fromm Fera, CSW, ACSW, assistant professor and coordinator of field instruction in RIT’s Department of Social Work, sees this proactive habit in action with her most successful students who are required to work 600-hour internships in community settings.

“The purpose of the internship is to provide students with an opportunity to develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge they need to have as part of their professional identity,” she says. “For deaf students – who make up one half of our program – the process of learning to negotiate for themselves, adapting to professional work environments outside of the college, and demonstrating their abilities to meet professional learning objectives are all characteristics that suggest success after graduation. A proactive attitude is necessary to make all of this happen.”

### **Habit #2: Begin With the End in Mind® – create a vision for life**

“This habit could become an RIT motto,” says Roepke, “especially for mainstreamed deaf students since all majors are very specific in their goals and outcomes.”

Using Covey’s interpretation, people who are goal oriented can see themselves living not only for today, but allowing their goals to drive the day-to-day activities of their lives. One such goal-oriented person is Genevieve Bresett.

“My goals for the future are to earn a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering technology, possibly go for my master’s degree, and cycle across Canada,” says Bresett, a third-year electrical engineering technology student in RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology from Belleville, Ontario, Canada. “Those are not my only goals, but they are the ones at the front of my mind now. I constantly add to and re-evaluate my goals and how I am achieving them.”

### **Habit #3: First Things First® – respect commitments and prioritize**

“Putting First Things First shows a level of maturity on the part of a student to be able to prioritize,” Roepke says. “Time management is a key to success as an RIT student, but this time management needs to include not only time for classes and assignments, but also extracurricular activities and socializing – all important aspects in making the most of the RIT environment.”

Bresett agrees. “I spend a lot of time studying for my courses, and I try to network with my peers for studying opportunities, labs, and projects,” she says. “But I do make it a point to take enough time out for myself over the course of a week to go swimming, read, play guitar, spend time with friends, and do other things that aren’t related to school. This helps me maintain a good perspective on things – especially during exam time!”

“I also use motivational phrases, famous sayings, and inspirational pictures posted all over my room,” she adds. “Sometimes, I’ll ask my roommate to tell me that everything is going to be OK or for suggestions on how to handle frustrations that pop up.”

### **Habit #4: Think Win-Win® – work and live to benefit everyone**

According to Covey, it is easy to be swept up in the idea of winning in today’s competitive world. By Thinking Win-Win, the successful person no longer sees others as the enemy. This attitude leads people to a higher level of cooperation. One example of the Win-Win philosophy is used by Brian Mayer.

“I have never shut out anyone in my life,” explains Mayer, a fourth-year information technology student in RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology from St. Paul, Minn. “I’ve always had friends – both hearing and deaf – and I’ve always felt comfortable using an interpreter in the classroom.



**Making it count** Brian Mayer and friend Daniel Millikin, seen in reflection, share encouragement while working with weights in the RIT Student Life Center.

The experiences I have with hearing people has afforded me the opportunity to be patient when it comes to helping hearing people learn and understand sign language.

“I maintain an assertive, energetic attitude, and I think people like that. Assertiveness helps me to talk to people I don’t know. Being energetic enables me to not only succeed in academics, but in other areas such as my social life. I’ve developed projects outside of class assignments to have the opportunity to work with others, gain experience, and build my résumé.”

In elementary school, Mayer’s father was a member of the coaching staff on nearly all of the athletic teams he participated in, which also gave him a sense of how to Think Win-Win.

“My father encouraged me to participate in a variety of sports, and my mother was a member of the board at the preschool where I was enrolled,” he says. “They learned sign language immediately after my older sister was diagnosed as being deaf, and they taught me that everything I do and learn can have a positive effect on others.”

As president of Kappa Phi Theta fraternity, Mayer continues his Win-Win philosophy by working closely with the members of the Inter-Greek Council, planning social and community service events.

## Habit #5: Seek First to Understand...Then to Be Understood®

For Jane Jackson, assistant professor in NTID’s Science and Engineering Support Department, habits four and five are closely linked – and very important.

“Communication via the written word, be it through writing technical reports, sending e-mail, or other methods, is critical to the success of any engineer,” says Jackson. “Students who love the technical courses sometimes resist taking the required writing courses, so we are constantly trying to impress upon them just how important good written communication skills are in today’s world. The successful student sees these skills as a means of understanding and being understood and embraces the idea of improving communication both in and out of the classroom.”

“I make the most of what the interpreter can do for me to improve communication,” says Mayer. “Students need to be aware of what interpreters do to create a more effective unit between the two. I talk to my interpreters and get to know them. I want them to know me as well so that when we’re in the classroom we are understanding each other.”

“Another important habit for student success is persistence,” Jackson says. “Students who are tenacious and who never give up are the ones I know will be successful no matter what obstacles they face. These are the students who will immediately let you know if an interpreter doesn’t show up or if the class notes aren’t adequate and who will persist in trying to contact an instructor even if their office hours don’t fit the student’s schedule. Persistent students will continue to work on a difficult engineering problem or will seek help rather than just give up.”

“When I’m working on a particularly difficult engineering problem,” explains Bresett, “I take a ‘time out’ and think about what I’ve learned in the past that may be similar to this problem. Then I start applying those ideas, and eventually I get the solution. If that doesn’t work, then I go to the professor or to the support department. I never give up because I know that eventually I’ll get the problem solved!”

## Habit #6: Synergize® – come together with creativity and cooperation

Dr. Bruce Austin, professor and chairperson of RIT’s Professional and Technical Communication Department, points to two students in his program, Julie Bourne of Walkersville, Md., and Norma Moran of Las Vegas, Nev., as being on the top of his list in terms of possessing the qualities that make a successful mainstreamed student.

“In each case, Julie and Norma display a clear sense of direction for projects,” Austin says. “They know that they must wrestle with an idea and get a clear, firm grip of the concept and a plan for the direction they want to take. They are highly motivated to succeed not simply for the sake of success alone, but because they have a passionate desire to learn.”

“Both students are willing to put in the time and energy necessary to

achieve their goals. They can explain what it is they're 'about' clearly to others so that teachers and fellow students can share their vision. Norma and Julie possess enthusiasm for their projects, and, because they're well versed in the subject and enthusiastic about it, their interest is contagious. These students are successful because they are eager to learn and have a desire to 'own' the subject. They refuse to allow anything to stop them."

"The support I receive here makes me feel more secure in myself, and that leads me to do my best," says Moran. "That eagerness and willingness to explore beyond the classroom led me to become involved in the NTID/RIT community, which in turn makes me a better student and more well-rounded person. I believe that motivation plus willingness plus involvement equals success. It works for me!"

"There are those whose jaws would drop if I told them that one-third of the RIT communication majors are deaf," Austin says. "But it's all about changing the way people think about what communication is and how it's delivered. These students are goal directed; have a high level of interest,



**A winning formula** For Norma Moran, motivation + willingness + involvement = success.



**Keeping sharp** Julie Bourne, right, explains a concept to Dr. Bruce Austin, center, as interpreter Deborah McQuinn voices for her.

ambition, and follow-up; and display superior skills – they also happen to be deaf. They connect with people using their talent, energy, and enthusiasm."

### Habit #7: Sharpen the Saw® – continual improvement of skills

Julie Bourne lives the seventh and final habit every day – continually improving her skills and in the process creating even greater opportunities for her success after leaving RIT. The fourth-year professional and technical communication student is involved in a variety of activities that create opportunities for personal growth and development. She is editor-in-chief of *THE VIEW*, NTID's student-run newspaper, a member of RIT's College of Liberal Arts student advisory board, student worker for the Nathaniel Rochester Society, webmaster for the NTID Student Life Team, and member of Alpha Sigma Theta sorority.

"Working with all of these groups helps me to apply all that I learn in my major," she says. "I consider my outside activities as much of a learning experience as those in the classroom.

"I have three older sisters, one who is deaf, and I learned from them that education is the most important thing. They have all graduated from

good colleges, and while they were in school, it was their number one priority. They provided the model for me, and I'm following in their footsteps. I know how important it is to be genuinely interested in what's going on in the world around me and to develop and maintain relationships."

Bourne completed a cooperative experience last summer at MacFadden and Associates in Silver Spring, Md., and hopes one day to work for a large public relations firm in a technology-related area, such as information technology or software development.

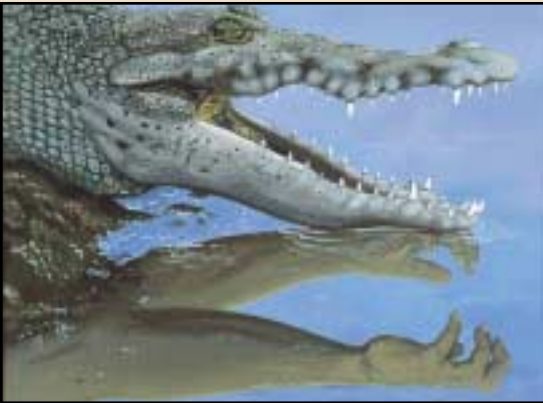
"I'm not afraid to give my opinion on things," she says. "Challenge me! I like that! I'm interested in growing, and I apply everything I learn to everything I do."

Bourne, Bresett, Mayer, Moran, and many others are among a large number of highly accomplished deaf students enrolled at NTID and RIT. They possess the ability to see all of life as education and an opportunity to continually grow.

Dr. Susan Foster sums up by saying, "Successful deaf students see themselves as being in charge of their learning."

*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, the title and each Habit, are trademarks of Franklin Covey Co. Used with permission. All rights reserved. For more information, visit [www.franklincovey.com](http://www.franklincovey.com).*

# Elements of a Culture:



Chuck Baird *Crocodile Dundee*, 1992, acrylic, 24x30 (This image has been slightly cropped)



Paul Johnston *Poetic Hand 1*, 1998, watercolor, 22x29



Susan Dupor *Family Dog*, 1991, acrylic on canvas, 56x57 (This image has been slightly cropped)

## Visions by Deaf Artists

by Frank A. Kruppenbacher

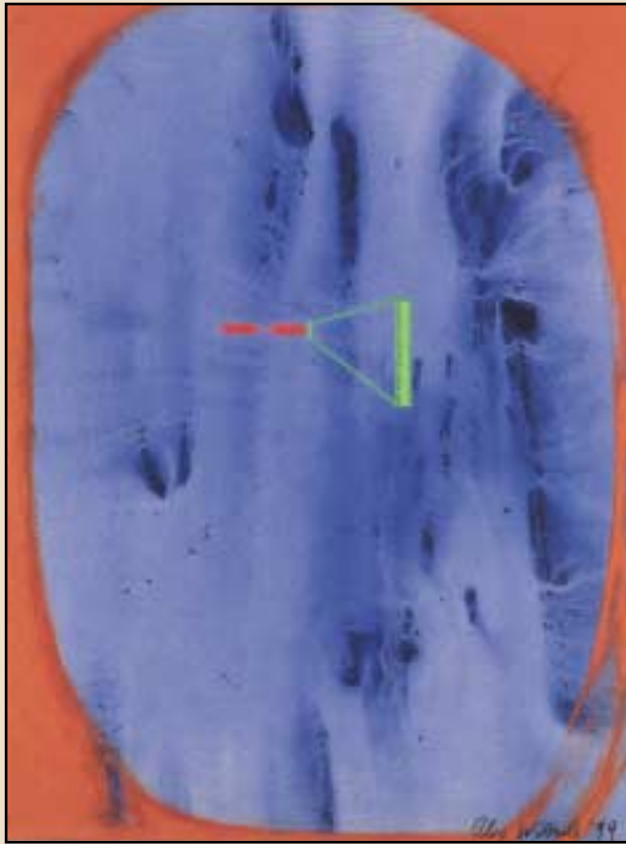
The work of four graduates, one former student, and one current student of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) was the highlight of the national Touring Exhibit of Deaf Culture Art, exhibited at NTID's Switzer Gallery in February.

Deaf artists affiliated with RIT in the exhibition included graduates Chuck Baird, '74; Susan Dupor, '89; Paul Johnston, SVP'72, '78; and Sandi Inches Vasnick, '93. Also displaying artworks were Alex Wilhite, SVP'80, and Irene Bartok, a career exploration student at NTID planning to attend RIT's two-year program in Digital Design and Interactive Media.

The body of works by all 16 American deaf artists demonstrated a variety of styles and media covering a period from 1972–1999. Artworks focused on the theme of the deaf experience and were on display at NTID from February 1-27, 2000. The exhibit opened in Seattle, Wash., during October 1999. Other stops on the tour include Miami, Fla.; St. Paul, Minn.; Boston, Mass.; Lexington, Ky.; and San Jose, Calif.

The juried exhibition was made possible by the collaboration of the artists and a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to Northeastern University, Boston, with additional funding from Northeastern University Trustees Chet Krentzman and Stanley Young. The touring exhibit was co-directed by Brenda Schertz, SVP'82, adjunct instructor of deaf studies at Northeastern University.

This special 4-page insert of *FOCUS* presents images of artworks by these deaf RIT artists from the exhibition. It showcases the vitality of NTID technical and RIT professional programs, the skills they develop, and the expression of thought and emotion they bring out in individuals.



Alex Wilhite *Red Sea*, 1999, acrylic on canvas, 24x18



Irene Bartok *Handstone-Divine Power*, 1996, photograph, 18x20



*"My years of experience in traveling throughout the world guide my inspiration about the value of color, which changes every hour in every day. My perception of color is the value of the three primary colors changing into varieties of colors. I am deeply interested in combining hard-edge paintings into action, which flows into optical colors."*

— Alex Wilhite

Alex Wilhite, born deaf, attended NTID from 1980–1985. He went on to earn his bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of North Alabama and his master of fine arts degree from the Pratt Institute. Wilhite is currently a full-time art teacher for adults with developmental disabilities at the Enrichment Center, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Wilhite resides in Siler City, North Carolina.



*"When I take pictures, it keeps my world in balance and keeps me in touch with nature. Fashion is illusion: nature is reality. In these pictures, the nature and architecture remain silent, and their essence is revealed more powerfully."*

— Irene Bartok

Irene Bartok, presently a resident of New York City, was born in Venice, Italy, and grew up in Paris, where she obtained her degree in fashion design from the Private School of Professional Studies. Bartok, a career exploration studies student at NTID, plans to attend RIT's two-year program in Digital Design and Interactive Media.





**Paul Johnston** *Red Sea*, 1999, acrylic on canvas, 24x18  
(This image has been slightly cropped)



**Sandi Inches Vasnick** *Silence*, 1989, batik, 21x16



*"I consider myself a semi-abstract artist. My works are, at times, expressions both of my identity as an American and a deaf individual living a bicultural experience. As hearing people appreciate the beauty of music, so do deaf people appreciate and respect the beauty of sign language and the pleasure of the visual arts."*

— Paul Johnston

In 1978 Paul Johnston, born deaf and raised in Los Angeles, California, became the first deaf student to receive a bachelor of fine arts degree in furniture design and woodworking from RIT. Johnston currently teaches several courses at Gallaudet University, including experimental drawing and sculpture.



*"All of my art is, of course, somehow influenced by my being a deaf woman. Visual communication is so important to me. My artwork is related to the world of visual communication through themes both personal and evocative. In art, all is possible without being able to hear."*

— Sandi Inches Vasnick

Sandi Inches Vasnick, born deaf in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, attended RIT, earning her master of science for teachers in art education degree in 1993. She resides in Phoenix, Arizona, and since 1994 has been working at the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf as an art and computer teacher and drama coach.



Susan Dupor / Interesting Hamster, 1993, oil on masonite, 49x49.5



Chuck Baird Heart, 1999, mixed media, 14x17



*"I am constantly exploring my identity as a deaf woman. There were moments through my art when I vented my emotions, and others when I wanted to celebrate the uniqueness of Deaf culture and seek the ironies of being deaf in a hearing world."*

— Susan Dupor

Susan Dupor was born deaf and grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. In 1987, she enrolled in RIT's illustration program through NTID and later transferred to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she earned her bachelor of fine arts degree. She earned a master of science degree in deaf education and art education from the University of Rochester and NTID Joint Educational Specialist Program (since replaced by NTID's Master of Science in Secondary Education program). She taught at NTID for three years and now teaches art at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. Dupor resides in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.



*"I no longer paint what people would like to see. I paint for myself. It is about my own experience, my love of ASL, and pride in our deaf heritage. I sometimes create works that have no particular relation to the deaf."*

— Chuck Baird

Chuck Baird, born deaf in Kansas City, Missouri, received his bachelor of fine arts in painting from RIT in 1974. He now lives in Phoenix, Arizona, and travels often to lead art workshops for deaf children at schools, summer camps, and at art festivals, and sometimes performs in Equity theaters with short run plays.



Jessica Sandle

### Jessica Sandle

When Jessica Sandle decided to pursue an associate degree in interpreting, she knew she was making the right choice. She had already earned a bachelor's degree at Houghton College and a master's degree at Canisius College. Yet to become a skilled teacher of deaf students, she wanted the kind of intensive training provided by the American Sign Language-Interpreting Education program at NTID.

"I felt that to be an effective teacher of deaf students, I would need more experience," says the 24-year-old Westfield, N.Y., native and winner of NTID's Alice Beardsley scholarship for interpreting. "I came to NTID because it was the best place to increase my skills."

For Jessica, enrolling in the program has led to self-discovery and something more – the knowledge that a kindred spirit was at NTID before her – the college's first interpreter, Alice Beardsley.

"Becoming the Alice Beardsley Scholar brings along with it a higher level of accomplishment to live up to. Through this program I am becoming the best teacher I can be," says Jessica.



Robert Bedrosian

### Robert Bedrosian

Robert Bedrosian lives by the words of poet Robert Frost, "The best way out is always through." For this 29-year-old native of Waltham, Mass., facing challenges head on brought success as a graduate of NTID's applied computer technology program and now as a second-year information technology student in RIT's College of Applied Science and Technology.

"The best thing about the program is that it is very challenging," he says. "The more challenged I am, the more motivated I become to learn and get projects finished."

Robert has approached his

cooperative work experiences at TIAA/CREF and Langley Research Center with the same "take charge" philosophy as he has his studies.

Last summer, Robert worked in the RIT computer labs helping a delegation of Hungarian teachers to learn technology to bring back to their country.

After graduating with his bachelor's degree from RIT, Robert plans to work in network administration or software development. He plans to earn his master's degree part-time and thinks a Ph.D. is also in his future.

### Cecily Coleman

Cecily Coleman likes to help people. As a teenager, she befriended an 80-year-old man, easing the isolation he experienced as the only deaf resident in his group home. She also spent summers working at a children's camp. Now the 20-year-old from Albany, N.Y., is studying to be a school psychologist.

"Kids are the most vulnerable people in our society," she explains. "I want to help deaf children because there aren't many people who can sign and are qualified to help them."

Now in her second year, Cecily chose to pursue her goals at RIT because she likes the diverse campus population.

"RIT is one of the few universities that has a college for deaf and hard-of-hearing students," she says. "This campus is a model for the real world. People can be different here and still be accepted."

Although busy with her studies, Cecily travels home frequently to visit her younger brother and her mother who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

She plans to pursue a master's degree in psychology and eventually a Ph.D., but when asked about her goals, Cecily's answer is simple.

"I want to make sure that my mom and brother are okay," she says. "And I want to help people, especially children."



Cecily Coleman



Jonah Carino

## Jonah Carino

Jonah Carino believes that it's important to "follow your heart and go for it." That philosophy made it easy for the 18-year-old to leave his home in Kailua, Hawaii, to study at NTID.

"I wanted to go to a technological college," he says. "NTID is the best for many reasons. It's well known for computer technology and the excellent support services for deaf students."

Jonah has not yet decided on a major, but he plans to apply to NTID's Applied Computer

Technology program.

"I like learning different computer systems, analyzing problems, and fixing them," explains the first-year student, who someday would like to start his own business developing better computer technology.

When he's not in class, Jonah spends time on the computer, keeping in touch with family and friends in Hawaii. He's also active with the NTID Student Congress and as a member of the Asian Deaf Club and Hispanic Deaf Club.

"There are many opportunities here for personal growth," he says. "Learning teamwork and leadership skills is important. I'm meeting a lot of different people and having great experiences."

## Patti Canne

Patti Canne of Rochester – wife, mother of four hearing children, and first-year student in NTID's Healthcare Billing and Coding Technology program – knows that doing it all takes family support.

"My kids are so excited about me being in school," says the 36-year-old Binghamton, N.Y., native. "They are very interested in what their mommy is doing."

"In the morning before I take a test, they give me hugs, and say 'good luck.' Then they want to see my scores."

In addition to supportive children, Patti's husband, George, a 1982 NTID graduate whom she met when they were students at Rochester School for the Deaf (RSD), is a source of encouragement.



Patti Canne



Bobby Cox

"Whenever I feel that I can't do it, he says 'Yes, you can,'" she explains. "My goal is to graduate and find a job within the healthcare billing and coding field. Who knows? Someday I may even become a teacher in that field."

## Bobby Cox

Hailing from Salt Lake City, Utah, Bobby Cox, 19, attended mainstream elementary school in Simi Valley, California, and middle through high school in Olympia, Washington.

"I went to a gifted student class every week in Simi Valley," says Bobby. "The teacher there and my parents were always very supportive. They encouraged me to do whatever satisfied me."

Bobby is most proud of his involvement during high school in Future Business Leaders of America as state reporter/historian. He advises deaf and hard-of-hearing students to take as many advanced-level classes they can while in high school to prepare for college and ultimately their career.

"Computer science is my major right now, but I am currently evaluating a possible change to imaging science or computer engineering," says Bobby.

After college he hopes to work toward starting his own computer company while pursuing personal interests.

"Eventually I want to be financially independent," says Bobby. "I don't want to have to worry about money every day. I'd like to follow my interests, which include improving the lives of others through charitable giving."

## Qing Quan

Defining the fast track – that’s what first-year ACT student Qing Quan, 26, who comes to America and NTID from Beijing, China, is doing.

Qing lost her hearing at age 3 from a high fever. Her parents and only brother are hearing and live in China.

“My parents worked to place me into a hearing school environment,” says Qing, “because they felt it would help my communication and academic skills.”

Always ahead of her class, Qing graduated from high school one year early. She excelled in art and mathematics, frequently scoring within the top three of students in numerous competitions. After completing high school, Qing, then 16, was accepted as the youngest student at Changchun University, located in Northeast China. In 1992 she graduated with an associate’s degree in arts and handcrafts. Her success has been documented by television media across China and in “The Work Manual of Hearing Schools Enrolling Deaf Students,” a publication for Chinese educators.

“It is very difficult, in my opinion, for Chinese students, especially Chinese deaf students, to enter American universities,” says Qing. “I have some difficulties understanding English, but I believe I will overcome this. It is my great honor to attend RIT, so I want to study hard, get good grades, and return to my country to teach advanced technologies to deaf students in China.”

## Stacy Bick

Since Stacy Bick last year became the first deaf woman to graduate from RIT with a bachelor of fine arts degree in film/video/animation, she has added to her list of accomplishments in her typical fashion: with endless enthusiastic energy.

Two days before graduation, she learned she was a recipient of the 1999 NTID Outstanding Student award. A few weeks later, she was teaching a video production workshop for NTID’s Explore Your Future summer programs. Stacy, 24, then received the first Milton H. and Ray B. Ohringer

Scholarship, which she is applying toward a unique RIT master of science degree in the Cross-Disciplinary Professional Studies program.

This program enables students to design the courses around their desired occupation. Her goal is to train film/video employers and employees about improving production quality via teamwork, use of advanced multimedia software, and understanding how to provide a more accessible environment for deaf people.

She’s also working as a teacher assistant, tutor, and researcher for NTID’s Applied Art and Computer Graphic Arts program.

Stacy says she has overcome her obstacles through positive attitude, confidence, team spirit, and ambition. “Deaf people need these qualities to have the ability to market themselves in the light they wish to be seen,” she says. “I’ve also acquired the ability to accept the responsibility to alter others’ false judgments.”

## Amy Baxter

Amy Baxter was captain of her high school volleyball team for three years, two of which she was selected most valuable player. Now a member of the RIT women’s volleyball team, Amy turned down a full athletic scholarship from another college to come to RIT.

“I wanted to study at RIT because it has a good reputation and because of the deaf community here,” explains the 18-year-old from San Antonio, Texas. “Cross-registered students really have a unique opportunity here.”

Still in her first year at RIT, Amy has not yet decided on a major. She is interested in the medical field and computers and would like to pursue a major involving both.

After completing her bachelor’s degree, Amy plans to go to graduate school. She also hopes to play professional beach volleyball and travel the world.

For now, she’s enjoying her college experience.

“This is a great environment,” she says. “Both the deaf and hearing communities are together in one place, and I’m meeting people from all over.”



Qing Quan



Stacy Bick



Amy Baxter



Albaro Cisneros

## Albaro Cisneros

Mainstreamed through eighth grade, computer integrated manufacturing technology student Albaro Cisneros attended a high school for deaf students near his native Chicago, Illinois. While there Albaro participated in competitive sports including track and field and basketball, and he was running back for the school's football team.

"I loved it," says Albaro. "We worked hard at being a good team, and we played hard too. We were all very much like a family."

Albaro, 21, is the youngest of three siblings. His older sister is hearing. He shares a special kinship with his older brother, who is deaf and is studying for a career in physical education. The brothers often teamed up for fishing, a favorite pastime they shared with their father – until one tragic day.

"When I was 10 my father drowned while fishing," says Albaro. "My father was gone. Out of respect for him I stopped fishing."

Only recently has Albaro returned to fishing with his brother.

"We'd like to think that our father is proud of his two sons," says Albaro. "We are back into fishing - something our father taught us and always enjoyed himself. And we are both following our dreams through college into successful careers."



Jerod Updike

## Jerod Updike

Jerod Updike, 19, put off going to college for one year after graduating from the Alaska School for the Deaf in 1998.

"I wasn't mature enough for college," the Fairbanks, Alaska, native says.

During that year before college, Jerod, now a first-year applied accounting student, worked at two grocery stores, averaging 80 hours a week.

"I worked so much to keep busy," he explains. "With one job, I would have had more time to spend my money. Also, the jobs were low level, so I needed to work more hours to get more money."

Jerod credits his parents' flexibility with helping him develop his maturity



Christopher Lai

before he arrived at NTID this past fall.

"My parents let me make mistakes while I was still at home," he says. "Sometimes I would party too much and miss work. I started to realize that I wouldn't get promoted if I made those mistakes, so I changed my behavior."

At NTID, Jerod enjoys the mix of hearing and deaf students and has already made many friends. He also looks forward to graduating from college and finding a challenging job.

## Christopher Lai

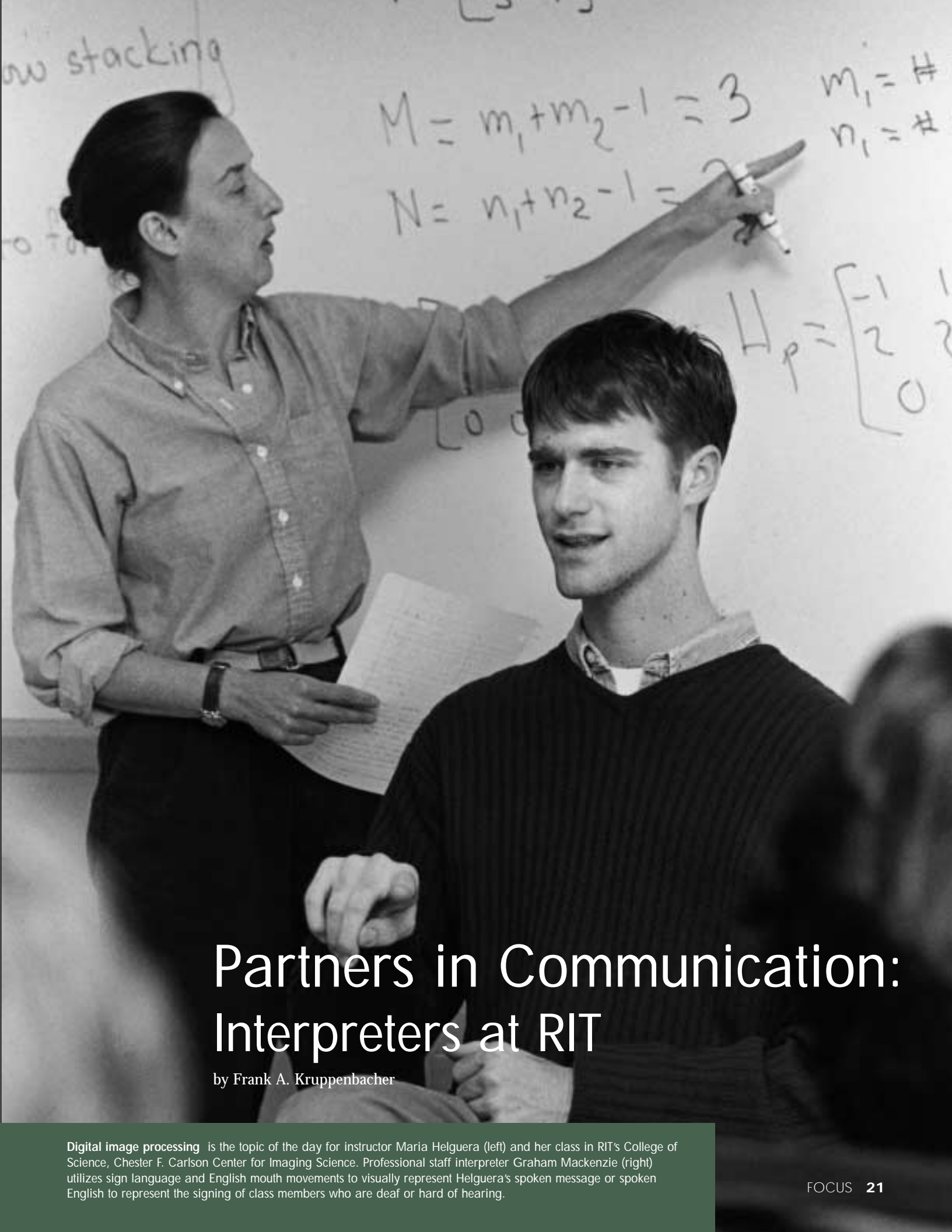
A firm believer in total immersion for the best learning experience, Christopher Lai, 25, first became involved with American Sign Language (ASL) and deaf culture at the University of Rochester. While immersed in his double major there (biology and psychology), Christopher took an ASL class.

"I fell in love with the culture and the language," he says. He now is a second-year educational interpreting student at NTID.

Born Chinese in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), Vietnam, Christopher immigrated to Rochester at age 5 with his family. Knowing no English and speaking only Cantonese Chinese, he then enrolled in public school. As someone who was one of the few Asians in his school and who was trying to learn English, he can relate to the feeling of isolation and the struggle to communicate that many deaf people experience.

"I was very focused on learning English," he says. "I ignored the fact that I was different because I wanted to blend in and didn't want to have an accent."

Now Christopher can boast of fluency in Cantonese, English, and ASL, and he plans to seek an interpreting job when he completes his NTID degree.



# Partners in Communication: Interpreters at RIT

by Frank A. Kruppenbacher

**Digital image processing** is the topic of the day for instructor Maria Helguera (left) and her class in RIT's College of Science, Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science. Professional staff interpreter Graham Mackenzie (right) utilizes sign language and English mouth movements to visually represent Helguera's spoken message or spoken English to represent the signing of class members who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**W**hen I transferred to RIT, it was like an instant heaven. I could request interpreters who used ASL or English signs. I found the classes challenging and fun and the professors friendly and open to deaf students. I've used interpreters before coming to RIT, but I'd never had any with such great skills and knowledge of deaf culture! I truly understood what was going on in my classes for the first time in my life. RIT's interpreters are great. What a wonderful world!

Diane Cinney, 4th year NTID-supported multidisciplinary studies student in the College of Applied Science and Technology at RIT

## Consider the American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter

Sign language interpreters listen to verbal messages and, through handshapes and movements, facial expressions, and fingerspelled words, translate these messages into signs incorporating features of ASL and English.

The sign language interpreter may also translate or voice into spoken English the signing of a deaf or hard-of-hearing individual whose speech is not understandable to some listeners.

While performing these services, interpreters lead a precarious existence.

To some consumers, interpreters are vital conveyers of information enabling communication between people who do not share the same language or culture, and, as such, their services are the object of deep appreciation. In the view of others, interpreters are seen as an unwanted crutch in communication, causing a sense of resentment or frustration among deaf or hearing individuals with whom they work.

"Interpreters are a very visible indicator of a mostly invisible human condition — deafness," says Liza Marshall, manager for RIT's Department of Interpreting Services (DIS). "While deaf or hearing individuals are generally grateful for the services interpreters provide,



**On the spot** RIT professional staff interpreter Karen Finch (left) provides interpreting services for a campus panel discussion in 1976.

some wish they didn't have to depend on interpreters to facilitate their communication."

RIT is home to 104 interpreters — 98 of whom work as full-time professional staff interpreters. This concentration of interpreters may very well represent the largest such staff of its kind known to exist in the world.

Last year DIS covered 97 percent, or nearly 85,000 hours, of interpreting services requested at RIT.

Approximately 80 percent of services are rendered in classroom and lab settings. Student activities and faculty, staff, and administration interpreting account for the remaining 20 percent. The annual budget for interpreting services at RIT approaches \$6 million.

## From none to one

RIT did not always have more than 100 professional staff interpreters. In fact, deaf individuals attended RIT decades before the establishment of NTID and without any

formalized educational access and support services.

From at least the 1940s through the mid- to late-1960s, several resourceful and technically minded deaf people attended RIT. For them Gallaudet University, the only college for deaf students of the time, was not an option. They sought a higher level of technical training in printing, photography, and the arts. Without support from professional interpreters, trained notetakers, or specialized tutors, deaf individuals took classes at RIT, then a small but growing college in downtown Rochester, N.Y. One, John Ratcliffe, entered RIT in 1951.

"There were three of us, all from Rochester School for the Deaf (RSD)," says Ratcliffe. "RIT had no special help for us, no deaf awareness, and did not try to accommodate us in any special way. We had to scramble to solve our own problems. I would have welcomed the services of an interpreter."

Despite the odds, Ratcliffe persisted and graduated in 1953. Others like



him graduated from RIT as well.

Before the early beginnings of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in 1964, so-called interpreting into and from ASL was largely a voluntary activity. Hearing individuals with knowledge of sign language — among them children of deaf adults, teachers of deaf students, and local clergy — were some of this nation's first interpreters.

RIT's first interpreter was Alice Beardsley. Born hearing, Beardsley became deaf at age 5. She graduated from RSD and as an adult underwent surgery that restored her hearing. During the summer of 1966 she was asked to interpret for the National Advisory Board, the body that selected RIT as the site for NTID. When she accepted the assignment Beardsley was working as a sales director for a gift wrapping printing company.

"This was my chance of a lifetime," said Beardsley. "My previous job gave me no contact with deaf individuals, nor did it use my talent as an interpreter.

"One thing I remember as an interpreter was constantly being interrupted by students to ask if I was deaf. I let them know about my past and why I signed so much like a deaf person."

Despite becoming deaf again in 1975, the result of a second ear operation, Beardsley continued at NTID as an interpreter and educational interpreting training specialist until she retired in 1988. Beardsley died in 1997.

RIT opened its doors to NTID's first group of students during the fall of 1968. Carol Patrie learned of NTID's beginnings from her parents while she was a student at the State University of New York in Geneseo. Patrie's parents were deaf, and her father taught at RSD. She responded to the need for interpreters at RIT by suspending her studies to join a small contingent of individuals providing interpreting during NTID's inaugural year.

"Interpreting was just as new to those of us providing the service as it was to the students at that time," says Patrie, now a professor in the department of ASL, Linguistics, and

Interpretation at Gallaudet University. "The interpreters and the students were very close — all we had were each other. If there were problems, we worked them out together."

## Interpreting at RIT today

Since the time of Ratcliffe, Beardsley, and Patrie, interpreting has evolved. The combination of laws to assure accessibility, the establishment of RID, and NTID's growth and successes have transformed interpreting into a legitimate profession.

"It's a great time because the growth is shared," says Marshall. "The maturing of DIS at RIT has paralleled the evolution of the deaf community and the professionalizing of the service of interpreting for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people. Our challenge is great, and the university creatively tries to meet the demand.

Expectations regarding the quality of

our services continue to rise as we work to satisfy the demand for interpreting services at RIT."

Laurie Bowe joined RIT's professional interpreting staff in 1999 after working in the elementary school setting for three years. According to Bowe, working with young children presents complexities that don't necessarily arise when working with adults in college.

"My role is considerably different here than it was in elementary school," explains Bowe. "In elementary school, interpreters become language models for students. Also, elementary students are still learning how to work with interpreters and advocate for themselves. Dependence issues sometimes arise from the fact that students are isolated and have one interpreter all day, every day, all year long.



**Focus of attention** Professional staff interpreter Yolanda Butler sits near the presenter to help students for whom she interprets to follow the action in class.

“It’s a great time because the growth is shared,” says Marshall. “The maturing of DIS at RIT has paralleled the evolution of the deaf community and the professionalizing of the service of interpreting for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people. Our challenge is great, and the university creatively tries to meet the demand. Expectations regarding the quality of our services continue to rise as we work to satisfy the demand for interpreting services at RIT.”

“By contrast,” continues Bowe, “at the college level, students come with language skills firmly intact and also already have the skills to work with an interpreter and advocate for themselves. In this environment, students have access to so many people to communicate with directly that dependency issues should not arise. My role here is much more straightforward interpreting.”

Like Bowe, RIT professional staff interpreter Frank Coppola entered the field interpreting in an elementary school setting. Coppola, who took up interpreting because he couldn’t find a job in his college major of architecture, says that he liked working with the students. Since he chose a deafness-related career, the work enhanced his relationship with his parents, who are both deaf.

“I love this language so much,” says Coppola, who has been interpreting for 18 years. “I enjoy the diversity and the challenge of trying to do something that is seemingly impossible. I love learning new things and being exposed to new ideas.”

Sign language interpreting is invariably enlightening — opening locked doors and lighting dark rooms through access to language and understanding. No one knows or sees this better than RIT professional staff interpreter Billie Ridout.

“Dear to me is the moment I see understanding written in the facial expressions of my consumers,” says Ridout, who has been interpreting for 10 years. “And I’m not talking about deaf or hard-of-hearing consumers. Most dear to me is the opportunity to facilitate the enlightenment of the hearing world by interpreting the profound wisdom and razor sharp wit of deaf individuals. I enjoy interpreting for people who are passionate about life and what they have to say.”

Ridout’s colleague Randy Thress, professional staff interpreter at RIT since 1996, shares this point of view as well.

“The attitude of the interpreter is just as important, if not more so, in the whole process,” says Thress. “No matter what I do, some people have more demands and less satisfaction. Others have fewer demands and are completely satisfied. The choices are to bemoan the inevitable or embrace the moment and enjoy the ride. I choose the latter and harvest the rewards.”

Debra Cooper, professional staff interpreter at RIT since 1994, knows all too well the rewards interpreting can bring.

“In 1997 I went to the Galapagos Islands to interpret for a student in RIT’s College of Science attending a program there,” says Cooper. “That’s just one of many incredible experiences. I’ve been a vital part of surgeries, births, and deaths. I have, through interpreting, learned so much about life.”

Risk of injury is ever present in the field of sign language interpreting. DIS requires each staff interpreter to attend in-service training related to cumulative trauma disorders (CTD) often associated with interpreting. Interpreters at RIT also have access to fitness facilities at RIT. Interpreting schedules are designed to reduce risk

of injury. Most interpreters at RIT interpret 20 hours a week. Team interpreting, with two or more interpreters per assignment may be utilized when jobs last more than two hours.

“This is a service provided by human beings to satisfy human needs,” says Marshall. “In the past, interpreters gave willingly and ignored the aches, pains, and stressors. We lost several talented and dedicated individuals to CTD. NTID studied the problem and instituted interventions. Our comprehensive program of prevention and management of CTD has paid off with reduced incidence of work related disabilities and lost work time.”

Challenges remain. Education, according to Robert Barrett, still needs to happen on everyone’s part — interpreters and consumers. Barrett interpreted at RIT for 25 years before joining NTID’s educational interpreting program as an instructor.

“There are simply not enough people, money, or hours in the day,” says Barrett, “to satisfy every request for interpreting services. With the quantity of demands placed on DIS, RIT is providing the best quality of interpreting services of any place in the country.”

Sign language interpreters and their place at RIT, in no small measure, underscore the vital importance of NTID’s existence — to provide qualified deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals with access to higher education opportunities leading to equal participation in the mainstream and meaningful employment in technical and professional careers.

Success depends on quality instruction riding on clear channels of communication. The sign language interpreter and consumer are equal and separate partners — each giving and taking parts of the message along the continual ether of life and learning.



Lee Twyman, chairperson of the NTID Counseling Services Department

# Counselors: Guideposts for the college journey

by Pamela L. Carmichael

*“All of us, at certain moments of our lives, need to take advice and to receive help from other people.”*

*Alexis Carrel, 1912 Nobel Prize winner*

The college years represent a major transition in life as young people become more independent, taking responsibility for themselves and making decisions about their future. While college students are encouraged to become more self-reliant, the road to independence is not one they must or even should walk alone. All students benefit from some measure of guidance and support as they journey through their college years and into the world to pursue their dreams.

For students at NTID, guidance and support is available from counselors and advisors with a variety of areas of expertise. These dedicated, trained professionals use their skills to reach out to a diverse campus population, empowering students to master the challenges they face, maximize their potential, and achieve their goals.

“Education does not occur in a vacuum,” says Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, Dean for NTID. “Of course we offer academic support for our students, but we don’t limit ourselves only to academic concerns; we are also mindful of other aspects of our students’ lives. Social, emotional, and physical issues all have an impact on a student’s performance. We try to look at the student as a whole, offering support and assistance for whatever issues they may be challenged with. Using this holistic approach, we are better able to help our students achieve success, both academically and personally.”

## Promoting educational success

Upon entry to the college, every student has access to a professional counselor who plays an important role in helping students to maximize their educational opportunities. Last year, the NTID Counseling Services Department provided more than 9,500 hours of counseling and advising to students.

“We get to know students as soon after they arrive here as possible, and we work to build close relationships with them,” says Lee Twyman, chairperson of the department.

“Because we develop strong relationships, students feel comfortable coming to us with all types of concerns.”

The department provides comprehensive personal and career counseling, as well as academic advising to students. Counselors are also prepared to offer support to the student community in the event of a crisis on campus. They are located within the students’ academic environment to provide ready access to the students and faculty; all are fluent in sign language and are nationally certified.

Students, especially those in their first year at NTID, meet regularly with



**Exploring the options** Counselor Sara Kersting (right foreground) leads a freshman Career Exploration Seminar class in the NTID Career Resource and Testing Center.



**Researching opportunities** Career resource specialist Jane Bolduc (left) consults with Nicholas Dendanto, first-year applied computer technology student from Bloomingburg, N.Y., in the NTID Career Resource and Testing Center.

their counselor to discuss appropriate course sequencing, program options, and electives. Students develop an individualized academic plan through discussions with their counselor, in collaboration with faculty and department chairpersons. The advising process helps students to understand academic policies and procedures and assists them in successfully negotiating the course registration process.

NTID faculty counselors also help students develop academic success strategies such as study skills and time management. By helping students to understand the assets and liabilities of their particular learning style, counselors can show students how to improve their learning effectiveness.

“Everything we do is very student-focused,” says Twyman. “We stay current on new counseling approaches and creative ways of dealing with issues that affect student success.”

Members of the NTID Counseling Services Department also teach Freshman Seminar, a required course for all students enrolled in NTID programs and for most programs in the other colleges of RIT. Freshman Seminar is designed to orient students to RIT and their specific college and major as well as build a sense of

community and connectedness among students and faculty in the program.

The course places importance on honest and open sharing of opinions, participating in group discussion and activities, and working together as a team. Special areas of emphasis include facilitation of self-awareness, teaching students problem-solving and decision-making skills, and helping students adjust to college life, both academically and socially.

### Supporting career development

In keeping with NTID’s mission to prepare deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals for work in the mainstream of a rapidly changing global community, the NTID Counseling Services Department provides career assessment services, which help students determine their aptitudes and career interests, career maturity, work values, and psychological type and temperament. A valuable resource in this effort is the Career Resource and Testing Center (CRTC), which houses a wealth of information including print, video, and computer-based career development materials. With the assistance of counseling faculty

member and CRTC coordinator, Jane Bolduc, students can complete self-assessments and research career opportunities and then work with their individual counselor to interpret that information and incorporate it into their academic plans.

Once students have declared a major, they also receive career-related support from the employment specialists in the NTID Center on Employment (NCE). All students enrolled in programs of study at NTID are required to complete at least one cooperative (co-op) work experience. NCE employment specialists are instrumental in helping students prepare for and find co-op placements as well as jobs after graduation from college.

“The services we offer students run the gamut from assistance with résumé writing to developing successful job search and interviewing techniques,” says Liz Ewell, associate director of NCE. “Our goal is to enable students to find jobs appropriate for their education and skills.”

### Improving mental and emotional well-being

Because student concerns often go beyond academic and career issues, campus counselors also provide individual personal counseling to help students with issues such as adjustment to college, concerns with roommates or others, difficult relationships, self-esteem, sexuality, and sexual identity concerns. Students who want help with personal issues can receive individual personal counseling with their assigned department counselor at NTID, or they can go to the RIT Counseling Center, which has eleven counselors, four of whom are fluent in sign language and have extensive experience working with the deaf community.

“We are fortunate on this campus because our counselors are uniquely qualified to assist deaf students with the personal and emotional issues that can impact their well-being and academic performance,” says Donna Rubin, associate director of the RIT

Counseling Center. “Many colleges do not have counselors with the experience and skills necessary to work effectively with deaf and hard-of-hearing students.”

The staff at the RIT Counseling Center works with students on a variety of issues from relationship problems to eating disorders and major psychiatric illness. When necessary, counselors refer students to the RIT psychiatrist or network with services in the greater Rochester community to most effectively meet individual student needs.

“We’re here to promote and support student success by providing access to the mental health services students need,” says Rubin. “That’s what we’re all about, helping students succeed.”

For some students, individual counseling is the most effective way to deal with their concerns, but others prefer to take advantage of a variety of support group activities on campus. The RIT Counseling Center offers group therapy for, among others, adult children of alcoholics, survivors of sexual abuse, people with eating disorders, or those dealing with grief and loss.

## Substance abuse

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students with drug or alcohol problems can get



**Counselors in the classroom** Lee Twyman, chairperson of the NTID Counseling Services Department (left), works with students in a Freshman Seminar class.

help from Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf (SAISD), which offers short-term needs assessment and coordinates referrals to the appropriate services. Established in 1979 on the RIT campus, SAISD is the first and longest-standing drug and alcohol information, prevention, and referral service in the United States designed specifically for deaf individuals.

“We’re here to assist with early identification of substance abuse problems so we can help students before the problem interferes with their ability to stay in school and be

successful,” says Karen Steitler, first director of SAISD. “Many colleges do not have substance abuse intervention services specifically for deaf students, but on this campus, help is here for students if they need it.”

## Succeeding together

NTID is committed to providing the tools students need to successfully navigate the exciting and rigorous journey that is college. Faculty and staff are trained to identify individuals in need of extra support and refer those students for counseling services. The RIT Residence Life staff and members of the NTID Student Life Team also monitor students, encouraging those who might be struggling with issues of any kind to seek assistance.

“We have assembled a tremendous set of resources for our students,” says Hurwitz. “These talented professionals are dedicated to recognizing our students’ needs and providing the support to help them achieve their goals.”

### Editor’s Note:

For more information on counseling at NTID, visit the following pages on our website:

NTID Counseling Services Department,

[www.rit.edu/~489www/](http://www.rit.edu/~489www/)

RIT Counseling Center, [www.rit.edu/~361www/](http://www.rit.edu/~361www/)

SAISD, [www.isc.rit.edu/~257www/](http://www.isc.rit.edu/~257www/)



**Sounding board** Katherine Groves, fourth-year biomedical photographic communication student from Woodstock, Vt. (left), meets with NTID counselor Dr. J. Matt Searls in the RIT Counseling Center.

# David Pierce

by Karen E. Black



David Pierce, right, with Kyle O'Dell, traffic manager

Sometimes parents have no idea the impact a toy can have on a child.

When 5-year-old David Pierce received a toy Kenner Easy Show Movie Projector and 8 mm film cartridges, little did his family know that it would inspire young David to become a TV producer.

At age 8, Pierce picked up an 8 mm movie camera at a garage sale and captured all his family's home movies, rarely letting his father touch the camera.

"I knew my calling was to get into movies because my love for films never waned as I grew up," Pierce says. "I started amassing a large collection of films and projectors, and as time went by I broke into video in 1982 with my first Betamax video recorder and rented a video camera to shoot videos."

Today, Pierce's collection includes more than 2,500 films in various formats.

A native of Grand Island, N.Y., Pierce is the only deaf person in his family. He attended a public high school where he was one of the first two deaf graduates from the newly formed mainstream program there.

After graduation, he headed straight to RIT. "I didn't consider any other college because RIT was known as number one in photography. The support services available were simply a positive complement," he says.

By becoming involved with NTID's Student Television Network, Pierce learned how to function on a team. "This was a critical part of my education because the television business is very team oriented," he says.

During his college years, Pierce developed his own video production company with a partner. After he earned his associate of applied science degree in media technologies, Pierce moved to Los Angeles to work for one of his clients, Silent Network. Two years later, Silent Network was sold to Texas investors. Pierce moved to San Antonio to join them in the founding of America's Disability Channel. Silent Network and America's Disability Channel both evolved into the national

multimedia company, KALEIDOSCOPE Network, Inc., which has a reach in nearly every market in the country.

Pierce is humble about the long list of awards, recognitions and honors he's earned. But the one he's most proud of is the Barbara Jordan Award for Best Documentary, named after the recipient of the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom. His documentary, *Portrait of a Deaf Irish-American: Terrence James O'Rourke*, a prominent deaf author and publisher, was first shown at the President's Committee on People with Disabilities convention, and then broadcast nationally. Pierce also invented an editing technique for cutting video to audio by editors with hearing losses, now known as the Pierce Method. He was also named one of the Top 10 People in 1997 by *Hearing Health* magazine.

Pierce now serves as vice president of programming and operations at KALEIDOSCOPE Network, Inc., which offers information and entertainment on major health concerns and disabilities through broadcast and cable television, network radio, print, and the Internet.

He is active in the National Cable Television Association, the National

Association of the Deaf, the Closed Captioning Task Force of the National Cable Television Association, and serves as a mentor for Computer Technologies for the Physically Disabled Business Advisory Council Mentor Program.

Pierce also serves on NTID's National Advisory Group (NAG), because of his deep interest in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing people. "Looking back at my own education, I was fortunate to have received the level of quality education that I did," he says. "Because I have a firsthand viewpoint on what components of that education could be improved for future generations, I can share that as a NAG member."

Pierce is rarely seen without a smile. Laid back and always positive, Pierce says that excellence is an essential quality that he strives for. "Doing the very best you can each day of your life and staying in focus helps move things along without the risk of stagnancy," he explains. "Life is short, and the world is always changing, so one needs to adapt and go with the flow. Trust that those changes will be positive."

## *Silent Homage*

---

(A Tribute to Interpreters)

The moving lips speak voicelessly – but hark:  
The winging words fly from your fluttering hands;  
And each, who dwells in silence, understands  
How Dawn, the rosy-fingered, burns the dark  
From shadow-worlds wherein the teeming brain  
Lay, like a captive, in a dungeon-cell;  
Your magic bursts the iron citadel,  
And breaks the lock, and brings light again!

Dear friend, how empty, vain and commonplace  
Must seem this gratitude we offer you;  
Yet now we render homage, as your due,  
Remembering your patience, love and grace –  
With twining fingers as you blithely go,  
Daily, to fell our Walls of Jericho

Loy E. Golladay (1914-1999)  
NTID's first Professor Emeritus



**Rochester Institute of Technology**  
National Technical Institute for the Deaf  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Building  
52 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623-5604

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Rochester, NY  
Permit 626

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



**Art as expression** These paintings by alumna Susan Dupor, *Delavan, Wisconsin, 1891, 1999*, oil on masonite, were featured in an NTID Switzer Gallery show in February. See the article on pp. 13–16.