

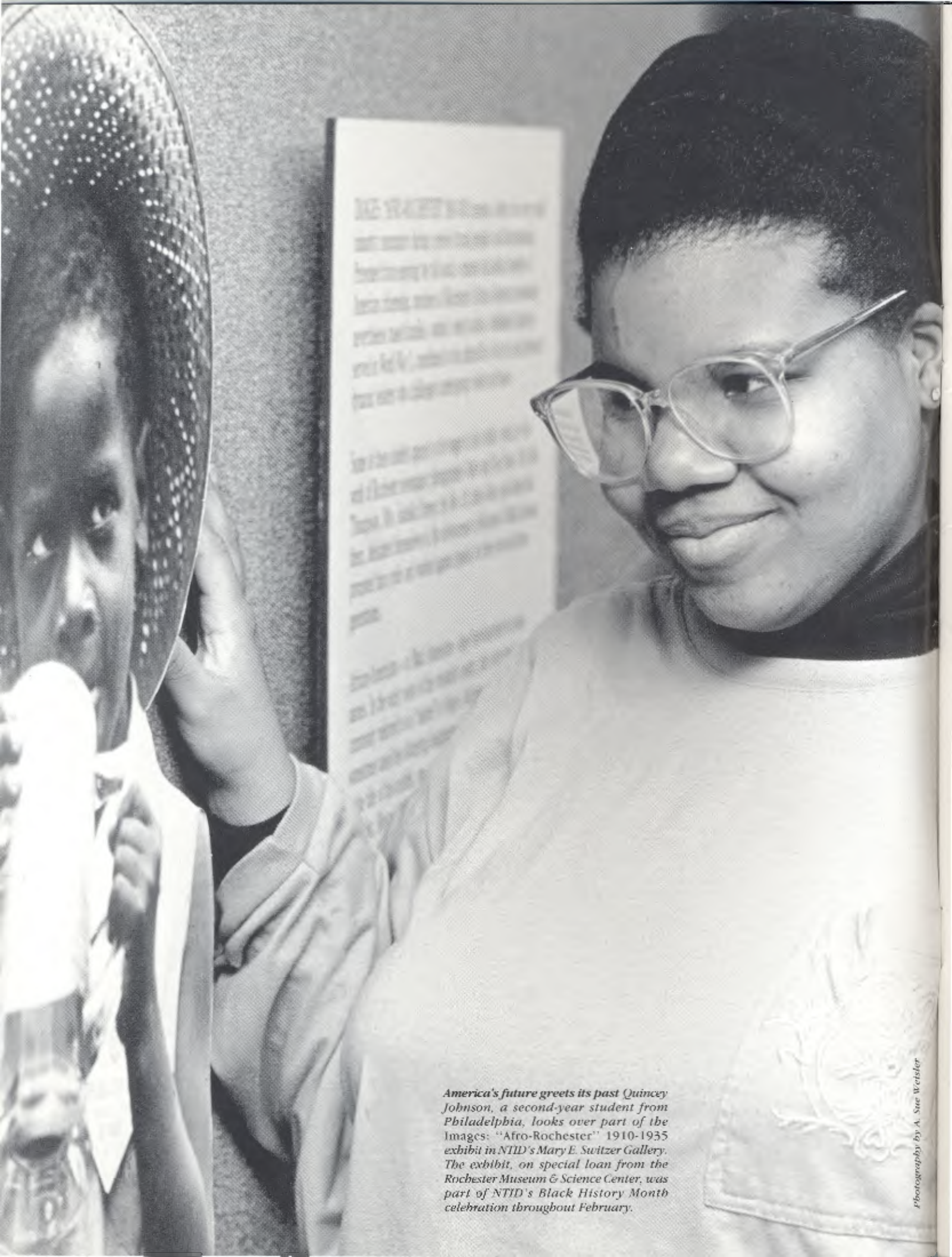
NTID

FOCUS

WINTER/SPRING 1991



Signs of trouble, p. 11



America's future greets its past Quincy Johnson, a second-year student from Philadelphia, looks over part of the Images: "Afro-Rochester" 1910-1935 exhibit in NTID's Mary E. Switzer Gallery. The exhibit, on special loan from the Rochester Museum & Science Center, was part of NTID's Black History Month celebration throughout February.

Photography by A. Sue Weisler

FOCUS

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About the cover This black-and-white multiple-image photograph of hands forming the sign for "interpret" represents the hazard that repetitive motion injury can mean for professionals in the interpreting field as well as students in mainstream classrooms. During the past three years, the disorder has forced some interpreters to leave the field, all RIT interpreters to reduce their signing workloads, and a few students to do without the benefit of this vital support service. (Cover photography by A. Sue Weisler.)

This material was produced through an agreement between Rochester Institute of Technology and the U.S. Department of Education.

Signs of Concern

Throughout NTID's 22-year history, educational sign language interpreting has played an integral role in the Institute's mission to provide deaf people with access to education in a mainstream environment. Today, the profession and NTID's mission face a grave concern.

Repetitive motion injury has emerged as a significant occupational hazard within the interpreting profession as well as within several other fields. The disorder, a variety of inflammations of the hands, arms, and shoulders caused by repetitive motions, can result in permanent disability and is the single most frequently reported work-related injury in the country. A substantial number of interpreters at RIT have felt the impact of this injury, and so have many students.

More than half of RIT's interpreting staff members have been affected by the disorder. Half of those have been either completely or partially disabled; others have had to reduce their workloads because of related pain. The loss of interpreting personnel combined with Institute efforts to diminish the risk of additional employees becoming afflicted—by reducing the number of actual interpreting hours each staff member works—led to a decline in the number of classroom interpreting service hours provided. Last year, an unprecedented 17 percent of RIT classes for which support had been requested were without interpreting services.

Interpreters, administrators, personnel representatives, and researchers have been working together to address the problems created by repetitive motion injury. A special campus task

force was convened in late 1989 and established two immediate goals: to address the short-term objective of preventing more such injuries among interpreters and to assist those interpreters already injured.

The Institute has contracted with the Center for Occupational Rehabilitation of the University of Rochester Medical Center to conduct studies designed to learn more about how to prevent future injuries caused by the disorder and to recommend possible solutions for already injured interpreters.

To find out more about repetitive motion injury and to learn how the Institute has responded to the consequences of this occupational and educational hazard, read "Repetitive Motion Injury," which begins on page 11. Addressing this issue will continue to be a priority for RIT for two reasons: to diminish the serious physiological effects and professional loss that interpreting staff members may face and to continue to enhance the educational opportunities of deaf students by allowing them, largely through the provision of interpreting services, access to mainstream classrooms.

William E. Castle

Dr. William E. Castle



As the AIDS crisis touches the lives of an increasing number of people—including friends, family members, and companions of some 94,000 Americans who have died from the disease as of September 1990—the sense of urgency to increase awareness also rises.

In the deaf community, both in Rochester, New York, and nationwide, this urgency has been keenly felt. When details about AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome—were beginning to be publicized in the early 1980s, the information was geared to a hearing audience, and consequently much of it did not reach the deaf community.

“Much of the literature about AIDS is printed in English and Spanish,” says Leslie Greer, adjunct faculty member in NTID’s sign communication department. “Those aren’t appropriate ways to communicate with ASL [American Sign Language] users, so these people may not clearly understand the messages,” adds Greer, who uses ASL to communicate.

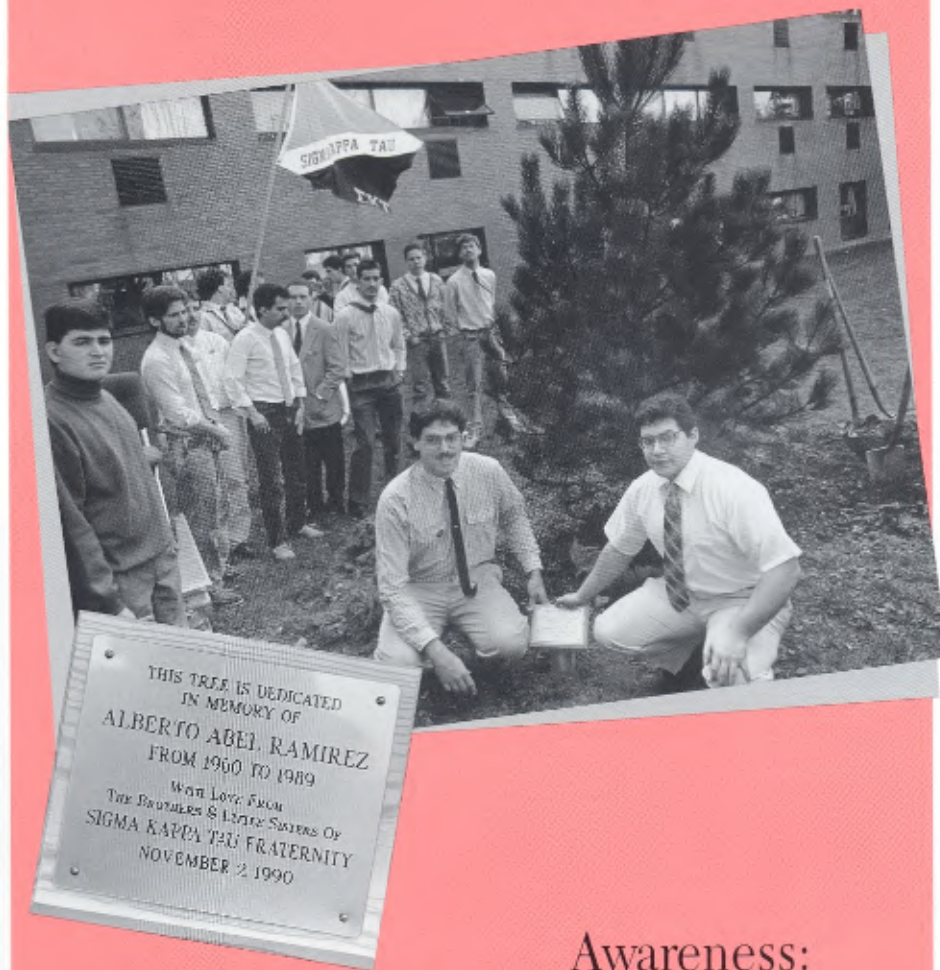
Greer, a certified medical laboratory technician, formerly worked in a Long Island, New York, hospital, where she saw firsthand the physical and emotional impacts of the disease. It was there that she decided to become more involved in educating the deaf community about AIDS, an affliction in which a virus attacks the body’s immune system, leaving victims susceptible to infections and cancers.

To determine how much deaf people know about AIDS as well as their attitudes toward people with AIDS, Greer designed an awareness questionnaire in 1988 for Rochester’s deaf community. Results indicated that many of the respondents were not adequately informed and misconceptions were common.

Nationally, organizations such as AIDS Education for the Deaf, a program administered by the Greater Los Angeles Council on Deafness, Inc., and the Deaf AIDS Project in New York City are beginning to narrow this information gap. These organizations prepare materials specifically targeted to deaf people; inform other health organizations about deaf culture; have TDD-accessible hotlines; and offer interpreting and referral services as well as advocate and provide support for deaf people who test positive for HIV (human immunodeficiency virus, from which AIDS can result) or who have AIDS.

AIDS IN DEAF SOCIETY

by Beth M. Pessin



Awareness: It Could Be a Matter of Life or Death

Memorial tree Christopher Wagner, vice president of Sigma Kappa Tau fraternity, kneeling left, and Paulino Patino Jr., 1990 RIT accounting graduate, right, gather with fellow fraternity members at a tree planting ceremony in memory of their friend Alberto Ramirez, a deaf RIT graduate who died in 1989 from AIDS-related complications.

The Deaf AIDS Core Group was organized in the summer of 1989 to address the needs of the Rochester deaf community. David Long, a 1986 graduate of NTID's medical laboratory technology program, is president of the six-member group.

"Some members are receiving training in HIV and AIDS counseling to help with making presentations," he says. "We are also planning to work with other AIDS agencies to teach them about deaf culture."

RIT also has increased efforts to educate deaf students about AIDS. During this school year, such efforts have included an NTID performing arts department production about AIDS; AIDS Awareness Week, organized by Sigma Kappa Tau (Σ KT) fraternity; and special speaker presentations by former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and Jeanne White, mother of nationally recognized spokesperson Ryan White who died last April from AIDS-related complications. All events were accessible to both deaf and hearing audiences.

"I'm encouraged by the changes that are taking place," says Kevin DeWindt, community educator/volunteer coordinator for RIT's Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf (SAISD)/Volunteers in Prevention Promoting Education, Encouragement, Resource, and Support (VIP PEERS) programs. "It's just the beginning though; a lot more work needs to be done."

Part of the problem, says DeWindt, is that health education presentations typically are designed by hearing people. Without awareness of and sensitivity to deaf culture, such educational efforts may not be suitable for deaf people.

DeWindt and Greer, both of whom have attended workshops on AIDS education, also are members of the non-profit Deaf AIDS Core Group.

"We are concentrating on breaking the communication barrier by teaching agencies about deaf culture and sensitizing them to deafness," says Greer.

Through SAISD/VIP PEERS, DeWindt, who is deaf, presents preventive education classes about drug and alcohol use to students on campus and recently wrote a manual instructing health educators how to teach similar classes to deaf people.

He says that during the class on alcohol use there often is a discussion related to HIV and AIDS.

"First we discuss how alcohol can affect emotional, mental, and physical behavior, which can mean, in certain situations, that an individual may use poor judgment and may forget about safe sex," he says. "From there we get into a discussion about exactly what safe sex is and how lack of it relates to the HIV virus—and who can get it."

Although such candid discussions can make students uncomfortable initially, once the topic is open, notes DeWindt, there are a lot of questions.

Creating such a forum for discussion is one key to education, according to DeWindt.

Through the classes he presents and in talking with students, DeWindt has found, similar to Greer's 1988 survey results, that misunderstandings about the disease, how it can be transmitted, and who can get it still exist.

"Some students believe that all 'gay' people get AIDS and that 'straight' people can't get it," he explains. "That tells me that not enough education is taking place."

RIT's Σ KT fraternity members know all too well that everyone is susceptible to becoming infected with HIV. The fraternity was hit hard in November 1989 when a good friend and fellow

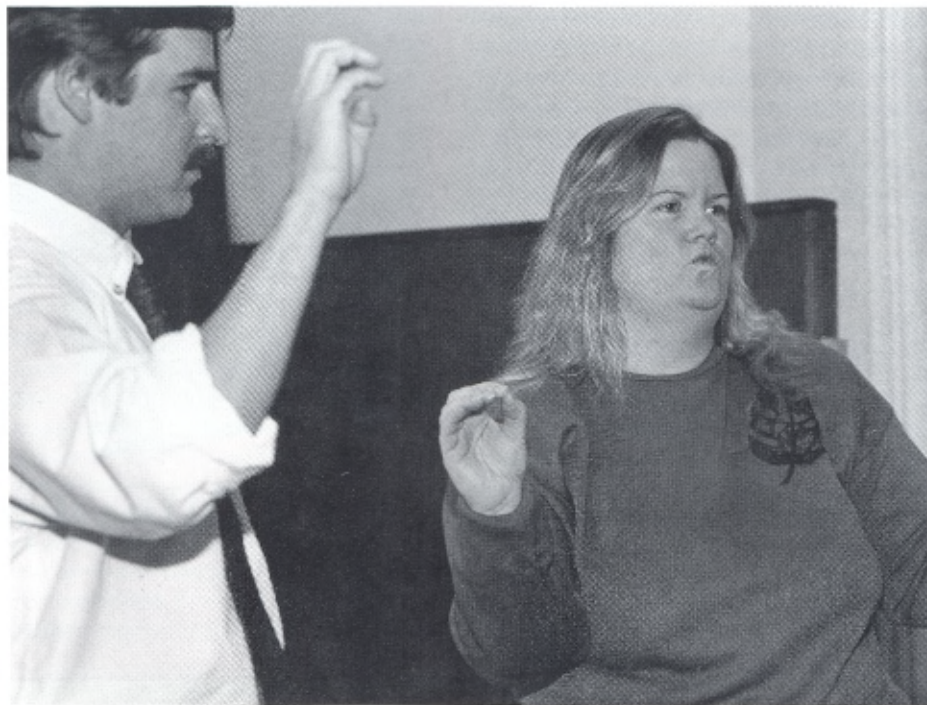
member, Alberto Ramirez, who graduated from NTID in 1983 with an associate degree in applied accounting, died from AIDS-related complications. The disease became real to the fraternity members; it no longer was something they read about, something that happened to other people.

Through Ramirez, who became infected with HIV from a tainted blood transfusion in the fall of 1983, Σ KT members learned about the causes and effects of AIDS.

Throughout his illness, Ramirez traveled back and forth from his home state of Texas to Rochester.

"At first, some of the members were nervous about Alberto's visits to Rochester because they really didn't know about AIDS," says Paulino Patino Jr., a Σ KT member and Ramirez's long-time friend. "But Alberto explained that it's OK to hug or shake hands and that the disease isn't spread by using the same dishes, and they felt more comfortable."

Ramirez, who was pursuing a bachelor's degree from RIT's College of Business until his illness forced him to leave after the 1986-87 academic year, didn't learn about the disease himself until after he was diagnosed in



In their own language AIDS educators Kevin DeWindt, community educator/volunteer coordinator for RIT's Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf/Volunteers in Prevention Promoting Education, Encouragement, Resource, and Support, and Leslie Greer, adjunct faculty member in NTID's sign communication department, present an AIDS awareness workshop in American Sign Language to deaf students.

the fall of 1987 and attended an AIDS peer support group. He was determined, however, that others be informed. Two months before his death, Ramirez requested, via a videotape, that his fraternity brothers educate deaf people about the disease. The videotape, titled *Alberto's Journey with AIDS*, presents Ramirez's feelings about the disease and his desire to bring more focus to the issue.

"The tape is good for both deaf and hearing people because it was produced in sign and voice," says Patino, who received an associate degree and bachelor of science degree in accounting from RIT in 1984 and 1990 respectively.

Fraternity members were emotionally moved by Ramirez's death. The loss motivated them to take action, and as a result, they planned AIDS Awareness Week, which took place October 29-November 4 at RIT.

"The fraternity members demonstrated great support for one of their members," says Ellie Rosenfield, chairperson of NTID's human development department, who assisted the group in planning activities. "They could have shunned Alberto, but instead they were supportive. Their leadership has been inspiring. They made a pledge that they would work to educate others about AIDS, and AIDS Awareness Week was their way of carrying through on that promise."

"We felt we had to do something to honor Alberto," says Christopher Wagner, vice president of ΣKT, who coordinated many of the activities planned throughout the week.

ΣKT hopes to make AIDS Awareness Week an annual event. This year's activities included a Quilt for AIDS Project, in which students and faculty and staff members as well as individuals from the community created designs on pre-cut fabric squares in memory of loved ones who had died from AIDS; a tree planting in Ramirez's memory; a dodgeball tournament held to raise funds for the San Antonio Tavern Guild AIDS Foundation, which supported Ramirez during his illness; and panel discussions by people with AIDS and people who have loved ones with the disease.

"Anyone can get the disease, so everyone should know how to prevent it," says Wagner.

Rosenfield concurs. "We must keep reminding students that AIDS is a deadly disease. We also must stress the importance of prevention."

A mother's perspective on AIDS

On a warm spring day last year, just as signs of new life were beginning to show, 18-year-old Ryan White died from complications related to AIDS.

Ryan, a hemophiliac who contracted the human immunodeficiency virus (AIDS represents the most severe form of HIV infection) in the early 1980s from a tainted blood transfusion, had become an internationally known AIDS spokesperson during his fight to attend public school in Kokomo, Indiana.

During his 5 1/2-year battle with AIDS, which diminishes the body's immune system, Ryan devoted much of his energy to informing people and helping to dispel misconceptions about the disease.

"Ryan taught people about AIDS," says his mother, Jeanne White, who addressed students and faculty and staff members in November as part of NTID's Special Speaker Series. "Before Ryan humanized the disease and brought people together by generating publicity about AIDS, people had many misconceptions about how the disease is transmitted.

"He broke the ice," White continues. "Many attitudinal changes have taken place since the disease first became known. Our family was supportive, but it was more difficult for friends and community members to accept some-

one who had the disease."

That was in the early 1980s, when information about AIDS was first publicized.

"The situation is different now," says White. "In the past, people didn't want to learn about or become involved with AIDS unless they knew someone who

had it. Through media coverage, everyone seemed to know Ryan. When he died, it was as though everybody had lost someone to AIDS."

Since her son's death last April, White has devoted much time to AIDS causes such as the national AIDS Quilt Project, a memorial to people who have died from the disease. She has made presentations about AIDS to various organi-

zations across the country and also has worked with Sen. Edward Kennedy's staff to get a federal appropriation for the Ryan White Emergency AIDS bill, designed to provide better health care for AIDS patients.

Ryan's legacy lives on even after his death. A book about his life, titled *Ryan White: My Own Story*, was scheduled to be released in March. White completed the children's book that her son started writing in September 1989.

"Ryan wanted to make a difference," says White. "He wanted other kids with AIDS to be accepted, so that they wouldn't have to go through what he did."





A human tragedy on stage NTID's 1990-91 theater season opened with a production of *Adam and the Experts*, a play about the emotional effects of AIDS on those who are ill as well as their friends and loved ones. In this scene, Adam (played by fourth-year student Robert Schleifer), left, confronts his dying friend, Eddie (third-year student John Miller), center, with the help of his "alter ego" (first-year student Brian Sturgis), right.

Patino, who watched his friend's health deteriorate over a two-year period, was a member of the panel that presented a discussion titled "My Friend Has AIDS."

Patino related his experience of caring for Ramirez when his friend visited Rochester. "Alberto didn't want to lose contact with the people he loved," says Patino. "He never missed a fraternity banquet."

Ramirez visited Rochester for the last time in August 1989. When Patino and his girlfriend went to pick Ramirez up from the airport, they were shocked to see his skeleton-like figure.

Because he was so weak, it was difficult for Ramirez to care for himself. Patino cooked for Ramirez, helped bathe him, changed his clothes, and took care of his medical needs.

"I wasn't afraid of getting the virus," says Patino. "I got information from RIT health services on how to be safe, and I also used common sense."

Watching his friend deteriorate was an emotionally painful experience, Patino says, and after Ramirez died he was depressed for a long time and

struggled to finish his studies. Now he is beginning to get his strength and interest in activities back.

"Alberto was a friendly and understanding person," says Patino. "We all miss him."

The emotional effects on individuals with AIDS as well as their friends, family members, and companions was the focus of the play *Adam and the Experts*, which opened NTID's 1990-91 theater season. It was the first time the performing arts department had brought such a contemporary and emotional issue to stage.

"We thought it was important to deal with this issue and disseminate information in an open and honest way," explains James Graves, chairperson of the performing arts department and director of the production. "We wanted to create a forum for discussion at RIT and in Rochester, especially within the deaf community. Until people become more educated and open about AIDS, attitudes will be hard to change."

DeWindt saw the production as a stepping stone for opening discussion in the deaf community about the importance of accepting others as they are.

"Often, if a person is HIV-positive or has full-blown AIDS, people will stay away, and that should not happen," says DeWindt. "The most important thing that person needs is support."

Adam and the Experts, written by New York playwright Victor Bumbalo, presented a hard-hitting look at the AIDS crisis. It was first performed off-Broadway in 1989. The NTID production represented the first time it was presented simultaneously for both hearing and deaf audiences.

"The play helped sensitize people to the issue," says Graves. "It made people aware of the depth of pain this disease brings to the person with AIDS as well as to that person's survivors."

Graves was attracted to this production because he felt that others would easily identify with the play's characters.

"It's about mechanisms people use to cope when faced with the loss of a loved one," he says.

"This play was about a real situation and relationships among people and the importance of accepting others," adds Robert Schleifer, a fourth-year RIT fine arts and photography student, who portrayed Adam in the production.

Schleifer, who has performed in several NTID performing arts productions, says he particularly was interested in this play because it dealt with a current and important issue.

"The play provided education about AIDS," says Schleifer. "It happened to have a focus on gay culture, but the emphasis was on the disease."

"It was a way to share knowledge and explain the ramifications of the disease," adds Graves.

Although the production addressed a serious and emotional issue, it did so, in part, by providing comic relief, which, Graves explains, can be part of a coping response to pain and suffering.

"Different people find different ways of coping," he notes. "It is important to find a balance of emotional responses. Survivors must go on living."



Education: the best defense against AIDS

The best defense against AIDS is education, former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop told the more than 400 students and faculty and staff members who attended his November presentation, "Sex, Drugs, AIDS, and the College Student."

Creating greater awareness about the disease, for which there currently is no cure, and promoting preventive measures are keys to limiting the spread of AIDS, according to Koop, who was RIT's 1990 John Wiley Jones lecturer.

He advocates early preventive education efforts; the earlier education efforts begin, the more likely they are to succeed, he believes. Sex education should start with toddlers, Koop adds, and education about drugs and smoking should begin when children start school.

"The only weapon [against the spread of AIDS] we now have is education, more education, and more education."

The virus was first recognized in this country in 1981 when previously

healthy homosexual men began being admitted to hospitals with a rare type of pneumonia—pneumocystis carinii pneumonia.

Since then, AIDS has mushroomed and still is spreading in this country and throughout the world. It now is spreading most rapidly among intravenous drug users.

"It's a deadly virus, and it's reaching further and further into our society every day. The great unknown is how many people carry the virus," says Koop. "The virus can live in the body for at least 10 years before infection shows up; this means that it has been in the community much longer than when it first erupted in 1981.

"It's a tragic disease; almost half of all the people discovered with AIDS last year have since died."

A vaccine is being tested, Koop says, but it probably will not be available during this decade.

Graves, who lost his 11-year companion to the disease several years ago, says it has taken him a long time to accept humor as a coping mechanism for addressing his grief and loss. He points out that it is one way to put people at ease and often can promote discussion.

"AIDS is a tough issue because it is a disease that primarily has, until recently, attacked a community that already is seen with strikes against it," says Graves, referring to some people's negative attitude toward gay people.

"However," he adds, "educational efforts can pay off because they open people's minds."

DeWindt agrees. "There is a problem with attitudes," he says. "People don't think AIDS is a serious problem until they get accurate information about it and its effects."

Until open, candid discussion and education take place, misconceptions and misunderstandings about the disease will prevail, he adds.

"I don't want to see deaf people dying from AIDS because of a lack of education about the disease," says DeWindt. "I cherish the deaf community, and I want the culture to continue."



Editor's note: *The National AIDS TTY Hotline is a toll-free information service that answers questions about AIDS prevention, testing, and treatment; where to get help; and many other topics. The number is 1-800-243-7889 (1-800-AIDS-TTY). The hotline employs deaf information specialists who can communicate with callers who use ASL, Signed English, or Spanish.*

The Deaf AIDS Project, 129 W. 20th Street, New York, New York, provides education, advocacy, information, and referral services. The TDD number is (212) 645-7470.

AIDS Education for the Deaf, administered by the Greater Los Angeles Council on Deafness, recently expanded services to provide information on a nationwide level. The TDD number is (213) 654-5822.

No slowpoke in the water, Amira Gumby, second-year photo/media technologies student, is the top freestyle swimmer on RIT's women's team. She's maturing almost as fast as she swims.

Her success is special to some who are familiar with her background.

"She surprised me more than other students," says Carl Moore, visiting career development counselor in the visual communications counseling services department, "because she comes from the inner city of Philadelphia and became a swimming star. I'm amazed at how she managed to become such a fine swimmer using city recreational facilities."

Deborah Stephens, a middle-school teacher in Philadelphia, notes that Gumby's early success in swimming helped boost her self-esteem while giving her a social outlet and an opportunity to feel needed.

"I think that Amira's swimming helps her realize that she needs to plan and prioritize her goals," says Stephens, who became Gumby's "second mother" and helped her through adolescence. "When I met her, she was doing all right academically, but I think I made her realize that she needs to have higher expectations of herself and do much better."

Throughout high school, Gumby swam on a team whose members were black. She was the team's Most Valuable Player during her freshman and junior years and made the All-Star team her sophomore and junior years.

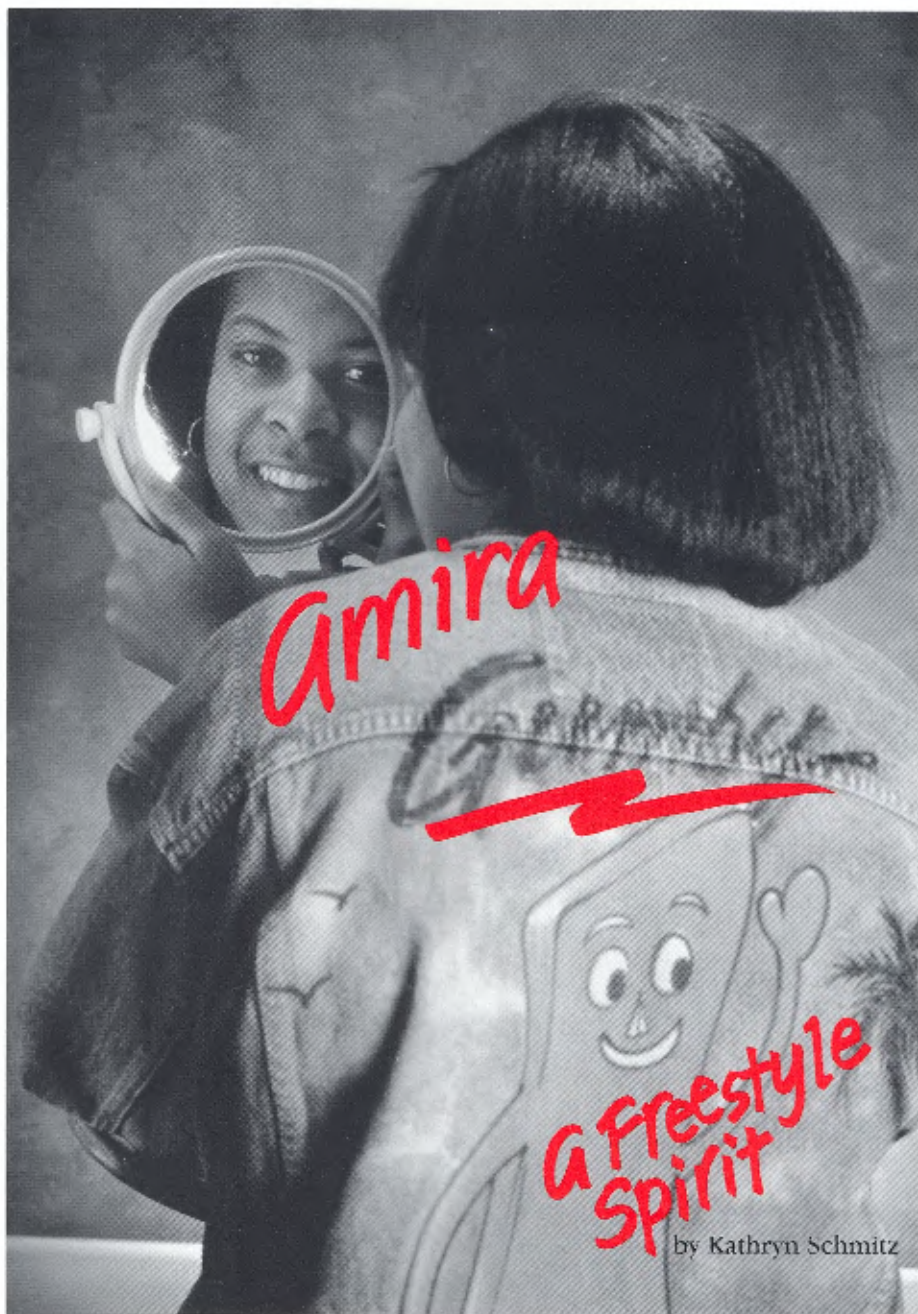
"I liked the team because it was like one big family," says Gumby. "We all encouraged one another."

Making the adjustment to the RIT team, whose members are predominantly white, she concedes, was initially difficult.

"At first I felt weird about being the only black swimmer on the team," explains Gumby. "I wasn't sure I could accept my teammates. I'm basically independent, but I'm working on being part of the team."

Gumby's teammates feel she is an asset because of her winning record; they also are looking for greater team commitment from her.

"She used to isolate herself," says Kim Koenig, team co-captain and third-year applied mathematics student in RIT's College of Applied Science and Technology. "When she gets involved with the group, the team will root for her in the water, which makes everyone



feel good. She has a lot of potential, and she does very well when she decides she wants to."

Gumby now recognizes that her individuality has its advantages.

"Now I like being unique because it's easy for people to notice me in the water," she explains. "They say, 'Hey, she's fast!'"

Gumby's successful competitiveness doesn't mean that she enjoys practice, however.

"The best part about swimming is winning," says Gumby. "I won all my 50-yard freestyle events last year.

"I complain about practicing," she adds. "Sometimes I don't want to swim because I'm tired of it, but I'm addicted to it so I practice."

Gumby practices nearly every day, two hours at a time, and swims 15-18 miles a week. She competes in the 50- and 100-yard freestyles, 100-yard butterfly, and occasionally the 200-yard freestyle and 200-yard individual medley.

Gumby was the only swimmer from RIT to qualify for the 1990 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III Women's Swimming Championships, held last March at Williams College in Massachusetts.

Although she didn't do as well as she had expected, which was to win, her coach believes the experience was good for her.

"Amira is a very good swimmer," says Kathy Robords, RIT's women's swim coach. "She's loaded with talent and could be an All-American if she pushed herself. She swam fast her first year, and now I'm looking for her to set her mind to what she can accomplish in the water and really focus this year."

Regardless of Gumby's talent in the pool, Omobowale Ayorinde, instructor in NTID's photo/media technologies department, is more interested in her learning potential.

"It's nice that she's good at swimming," says Ayorinde, "but that's not why she's at NTID. I try to challenge her on an academic level, and like any good student, she'll respond on that level. She's a real competitor, so one situation feeds the other, which I think is very healthy."

Moore, faculty advisor to NTID's Ebony Club whose meetings Gumby attends, observes that she has become more gregarious.

"She's become more understanding of her hearing loss and how to cope with it," says Moore. "She's better able to identify with others like her."

Gumby became deaf during her teen years. She lost some hearing when, at age 13, she dove into a swimming pool during practice and hit her head, damaging her nervous system. Later, at 15, she lost more of her hearing during practice when she was hit on the head by a teammate doing the butterfly stroke.

At first, she thought nothing of it, but explains, "I woke up the next day, and I was completely deaf. Adjusting to my deafness was really hard. People would forget that I was deaf. My hearing aids help me hear words, but I had to learn to lipread and how to pay attention better."

"Before I came to RIT, I'd never been to a school with deaf people," she adds. "Now I interact with both deaf and hearing people, and I'll sign if I have to, but it's not my nature. Learning sign language takes a lot of time."

Stephens feels that Gumby's exposure to deaf people at RIT will help her adjust to her deafness.

"In Philadelphia, Amira was sheltered from other hearing-impaired students," says Stephens. "Identifying with them was difficult for her. I think being at NTID will prepare her to better adjust to her hearing loss."

While Gumby still struggles at times with becoming a part of the deaf community, she identifies strongly with her Afro-American heritage. Her cultural education began with her father, who celebrates African holidays and gave Amira her name.

"When I read my class list, I recognized the name 'Amira,'" says Ayorinde. "It's a progressive Afro-American name that tells me her parents probably understand themselves from an Afro-centric perspective."

Gumby participates in her cultural heritage through involvement with

RIT's Black Awareness Coordinating Committee (BACC) as well as NTID's Ebony Club.

"I support the clubs," says Gumby. "If swimming didn't take up so much of my time, I'd implement some of my ideas. For example, I suggested at BACC meetings that all black students at RIT, deaf and hearing, get together several times a year. Now there are two separate groups of black students, and I'd like them all to socialize."

Gumby likes to socialize with a variety of people, initiating conversations with strangers by asking questions.



A new record? Seconds after finishing an RIT women's swim team race, Amira Gumby, second-year photo/media technologies student, watches the scoreboard as she anxiously awaits the results.



Dance the night away Gumby gyrates to the beat of music with second-year student Richard Waterman at NTID's Ebony Club celebration of Kwanzaa, an African-American observation of unity.

According to Ayorinde, she also does not hesitate to ask questions or challenge her teachers in class.

"Amira is antsy and impatient," says Ayorinde. "I recognized immediately that I could have problems with her, so I took a strict approach.

"She's smart, quick, and easily bored when other students need things explained that she already understands. When I told her how I perceived her impatience in class, she changed her behavior and became more understanding of other students' needs. I began to see her character develop."

Ayorinde also observes that Gumby's new patience with classmates reflects a growing awareness of deafness, both her own and others'.

"She relates more with hearing culture," says Ayorinde, "but the reality is that she can benefit from NTID's environment, and she has to accept that."

In addition to benefitting from NTID's environment, Gumby also hopes to profit from its programs. She feels that the wave of her future could include a career in television.

"I want to be a camerawoman," says Gumby. "Everything will be done on TV—telephoning, shopping, even learning—and I want to be a part of that.

"I also want to see more black people in front of and behind the camera," she adds.

Gumby plans to earn her associate degree in photo/media technologies, then enroll either in RIT's College of Business or in the film/video program in RIT's College of Fine and Applied Arts.

At age 20, Gumby still has plenty of time to decide. She also has plenty of time to mature.

"I enjoy having her in class," says Ayorinde. "This is a good place for her to find herself. She's like a flower—I like to watch her grow."





♦ REPETITIVE ♦
REPETITIVE
MOTION ♦ INJURY

by Susan Cergol



Sign language interpreters are straining to give students a hand

Imagine being awakened every night with excruciating aches or tingling numbness in your hands and wrists. Imagine reaching for your morning cup of coffee and not having the strength to lift it off the table or wincing with pain when you brush your teeth, get dressed, cook a meal, wash dishes, write a letter, drive a car—anything at all that requires the use of your arms and hands.

Then imagine being forced to abandon a career that you worked many years to establish, and with it a vital connection to colleagues, friends, and loved ones.

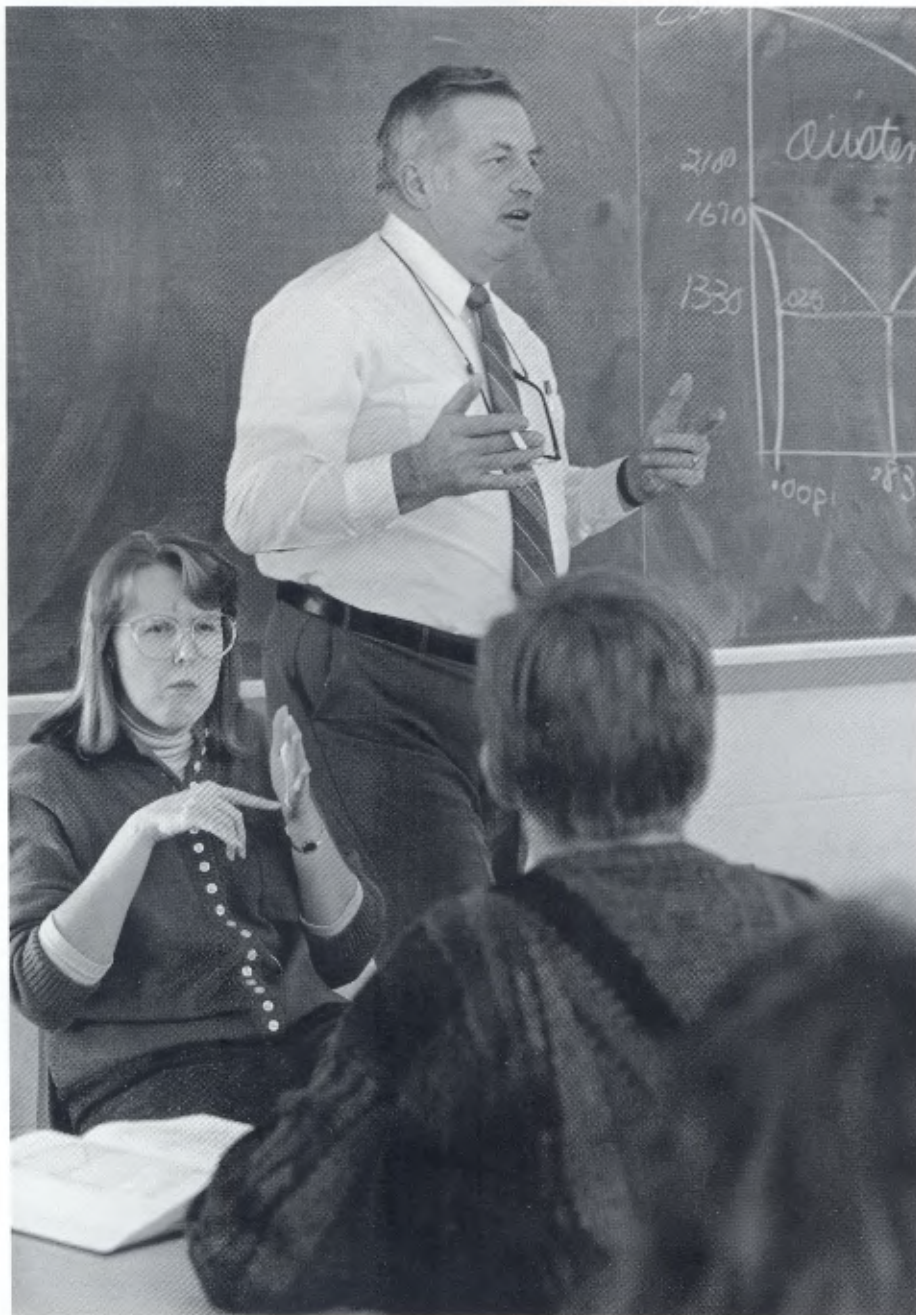
Now you can begin to imagine the plight of RIT sign language interpreters who have been afflicted with repetitive motion injury. Also known as cumulative trauma disorder or overuse syndrome, repetitive motion injury refers to a variety of inflammations of the hands, arms, neck, and shoulders caused by repeated hand and arm motions such as those required for educational interpreting.

Whether it appears as tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, or a number of other ailments that affect the nerves, tendons, and joints of the hands and upper body, repetitive motion injury often results in debilitating pain and can, in extreme cases, lead to permanent nerve damage and disability.

"Many of us have had to give up the dream of interpreting," says Susan Shaw, former RIT interpreter who was injured shortly after she started working at the Institute in 1988. "We've also lost friendships with deaf people who communicate through sign language. I can sign in conversation for about 10 minutes, but after that it becomes too painful."

A significant number of RIT's 65 full- and part-time interpreters, who provide a vital link between the hearing and deaf populations on campus, have been affected by repetitive motion injury. Shaw is one of 14 who have had to leave the profession since 1985; as many as 25 others have experienced related pain and temporary disability.

While many sign language interpreters at RIT and other educational programs across the country have suffered from repetitive motion injury, it is not a problem faced only by those in the interpreting profession. National statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor indicate that the incidence of repetitive motion injury among workers is on the rise and accounts for



Slow and steady recovery Although RIT interpreter Sheila Barden suffers from tendinitis in her elbows and wrists, she has been able to resume her career after taking a six-week leave last year.

**"Many of us have had to give up
the dream of interpreting."**

half of all reported occupational illnesses. More than 115,000 cases of the injury were reported in 1988 (the last year for which figures are available), five times as many as in 1981.

So far, much of the attention about this disorder has focused on people in other occupations, such as professional musicians, keyboard operators, and assembly-line workers. Little has been written specifically about sign language interpreters injured in this way.

"Most people who acquire this kind of injury get it from repeated motion combined with force against some part of the body," explains Liza Orr, director of RIT's department of interpreting services, adding that this description doesn't fit the work of interpreters. "While interpreters do perform repeated motions, they don't push their muscles against anything."

Shaw believes that the reason so many sign language interpreters have been affected by this disorder may be related to the physically demanding nature of the job combined with the high level of stress associated with classroom interpreting. Examining a typical workday for Shaw when she was interpreting in the science and engineering area 25 hours a week illustrates her point.

"I'd start with two straight hours of classroom interpreting, perhaps in mechanical engineering followed by advanced calculus," she says. "By the end of that time, I'd have been processing technical material for two hours without a break—aside from the 10 minutes to walk between classes. My hands and brain would be tired."

Shaw would spend the following hour making phone calls to clarify her next assignment or reviewing technical vocabulary.

The next two-hour block might include an algebra class followed by an on-call assignment, for which Shaw would interpret a class for a sick or vacationing colleague.

"I'd be sent to cover a photography class, for example," she says. "Since I'm not familiar with the technical signs used in that area, I'd have to do a lot of fingerspelling, which is tiring."

"By the end of those two hours, I'd be really fatigued," she says. "On-call assignments are stressful because there's no way to be prepared for the class, and math, of course, involves numbers, formulas, and letters."

Shaw then would spend an hour meeting with department colleagues or eating lunch, followed by one final classroom interpreting hour. Often, at the end of the day, she would attend a two-hour training session to work on voicing, American Sign Language, or other interpreting skills.

"Then I'd drive home with glazed eyes, physically and mentally exhausted," she says.

A large part of that exhaustion, she notes, stems from the enormous amount of mental processing and concentration required to interpret highly technical information. While instructors have opportunities to rest their voices, and students can let their minds wander momentarily when they get tired, interpreters must remain focused throughout the entire class session.

"The process of educational interpreting is quite demanding," agrees David Krohn, a six-year veteran in the department of interpreting services.

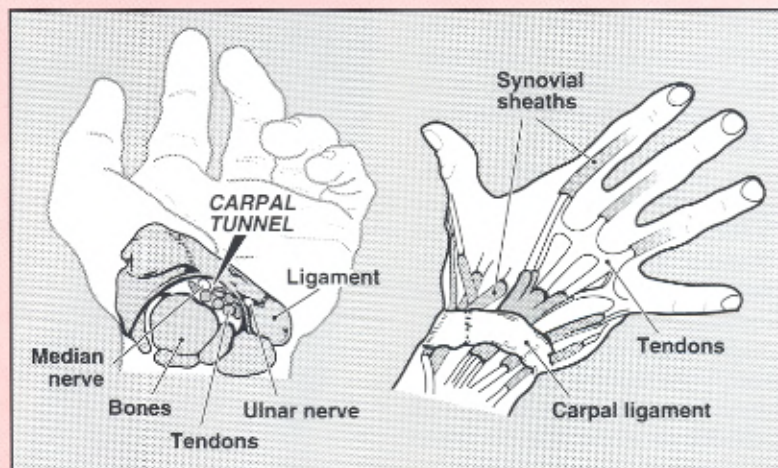
"You must listen to the professor and understand what is being said, then you have to think of the appropriate signs or concepts to make the translation, and then, finally, produce the signs."

"Many teachers tend to speak at a faster rate in class than in normal conversation," Krohn adds, noting that the interpreter generally lags a few sentences behind the speaker. "You're still listening and processing information while you're signing—that's tremendously stressful."

While engaging in physical activity under stress seems to leave interpreters more prone to injury, no one really knows what causes repetitive motion injury nor how to prevent it. In fact, doctors often find it difficult to provide a conclusive diagnosis because there are no definitive tests for certain types of repetitive motion injury.

This lack of information combined with a high level of fear initially led many RIT interpreters who experienced

A pain in the wrist



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Repetitive motion injury in sign language interpreters is associated with repeated hand and arm motions that require muscle strength, endurance, and flexibility. The problem is recognized initially as muscle fatigue and associated pain in the hands, wrists, arms, and shoulders, which can be increased by a heightened level of stress experienced for a highly demanding interpreting assignment.

pain to deny the severity of the problem and avoid seeking medical help.

"When I started to recognize patterns to my pain in September 1988, I thought that I might have a problem, but I wasn't sure what it was," says Shaw. "At that time, people in the interpreting field were just beginning to talk about 'overuse syndrome.' I wasn't going to label my pain as *that* because I knew that could mean the death of my career."

Instead, she tried to solve the problem by changing her personal habits. She stopped doing needlepoint and writing letters and altered her way of cooking to avoid straining her hands. But the pain persisted.

Shaw eventually sought the advice of a doctor, who assured her that she was healthy and needed only to take an occasional pain reliever and perform a few exercises in order to feel better.

"I did the exercises for a while, but the pain just got worse," says Shaw, who, despite her discomfort, continued to interpret full time throughout the remainder of the 1988-89 academic year, believing that the pain would subside during the summer break.

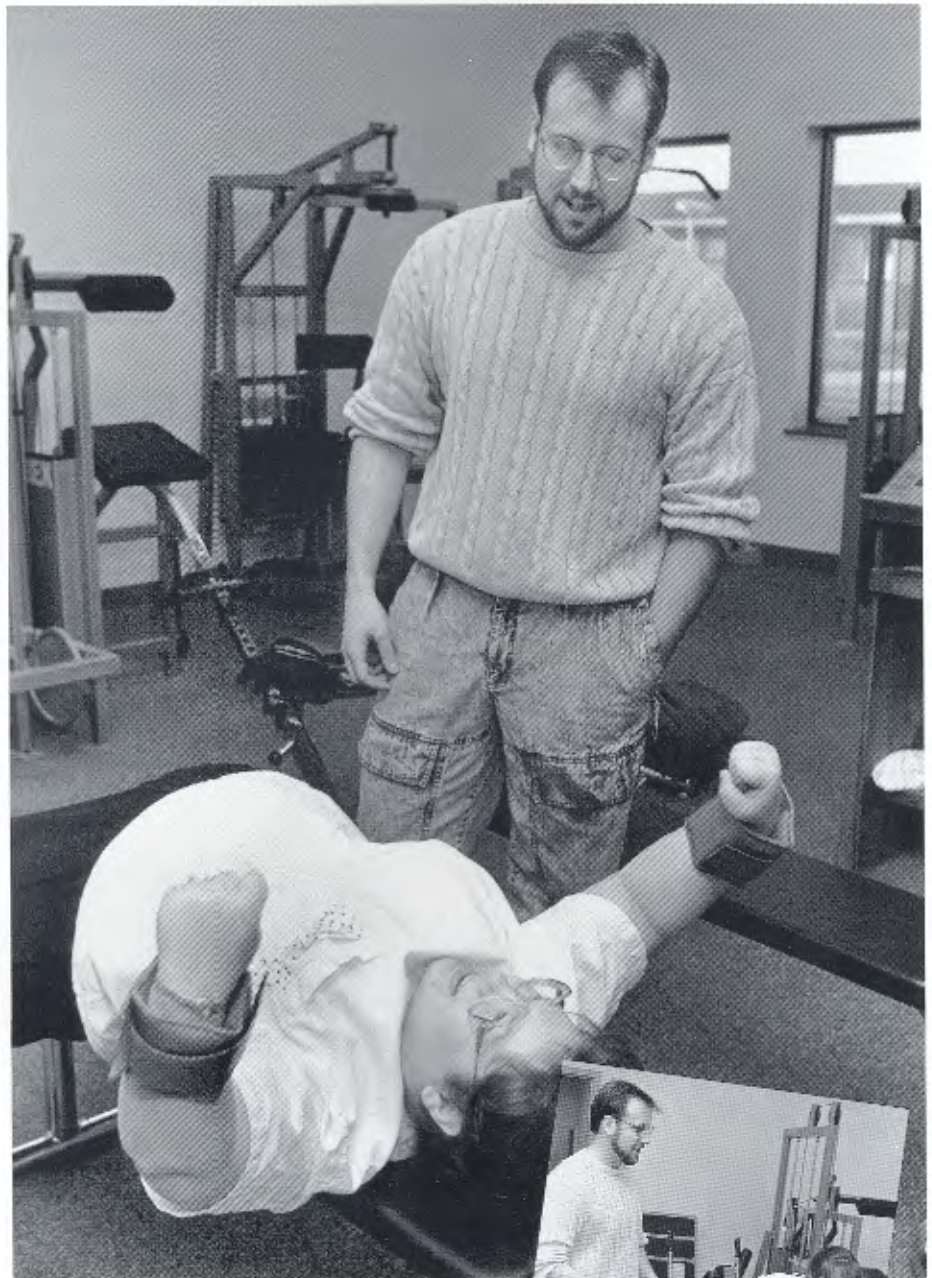
When she returned to work the following fall, however, almost immediately her pain was as severe as it had been the previous spring. On the advice of a second doctor, Shaw took what was supposed to be a temporary leave from work to rest her hands.

Eight weeks later, after the pain did not subside, the only advice her doctor could offer was for Shaw to quit interpreting and find another job. Although some who suffer from repetitive motion injury have found relief from surgery, Shaw has severe tendinitis, which is inoperable.

"I had worked hard to become an interpreter, and that was how I made my living," she says. "The doctor told me that if I were a runner and injured myself that way, he'd suggest that I cut down. But this wasn't something that I did for pleasure—this was my career."

Although Shaw eventually found relief from pain after a third doctor recommended wearing a wrist splint 24 hours a day for six weeks, she never can resume her interpreting career.

Her feelings of loss have been shared by many RIT interpreters affected by repetitive motion injury. In January 1990, more than 300 interpreters, students, and supporters gathered on campus to acknowledge the traumatic effects the injury has had on interpreters' personal and professional lives.



Working it out After becoming afflicted with repetitive motion injury in 1988, Susan Shaw was forced to quit her job as an RIT sign language interpreter and underwent seven weeks of treatment at the Center for

Occupational Rehabilitation of the University of Rochester Medical Center. Her 20-minute workout consisted of a circuit of exercises with physiologist William Armbruster (top and right) followed by a strength/flexibility test with physiologist Paul Hickey (left).

"We all felt an enormous amount of grief," says Shaw, who helped organize the event. "We grieved the loss of our hands, our work, and our hobbies."

In addition to allowing those injured to express their grief, the event helped bring the issue of repetitive motion injury to the attention of the RIT community. Faced with a significant number of injured interpreters and a shortage of interpreting services for deaf students, NTID Dean James DeCaro convened a special task force, established in late 1989, to address the concerns expressed by those affected and to suggest ways of alleviating the problems.

"The Institute needed to respond to what I considered a catastrophic situation," says DeCaro. "These injuries were devastating to the afflicted people as well as to the services that we provide to deaf students on campus."

DeCaro himself underwent surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome in 1988. "There's no question that if you've had an experience yourself, you have a much greater appreciation for it," he says. "But as an administrator, regardless of my own experience, it was my responsibility to find out what was happening and to deal with it."

What was happening, in addition to interpreters being injured on the job, was that students and faculty and staff members at the Institute were not receiving adequate interpreting services.

"There was no guarantee that classes would be interpreted," says William Yuknis, a second-year student in RIT's College of Engineering. "I've been lucky because I've had interpreters for all my classes, but some of my friends were stuck without support services."

Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, associate vice president for outreach and external affairs and associate dean of educational support service programs, is a frequent user of campus interpreting services. He agrees that "the problem of repetitive motion injury among interpreters has had a profound impact on RIT's deaf population."

Hurwitz, who served on the task force, believes that many deaf people at the Institute have become more sensitive to interpreters' needs when requesting services.

"Many of us are trying to understand the problem and want to be part of the solution," he says.

To investigate possible solutions, the task force, composed of NTID administrators, RIT personnel department members, and representatives from the interpreting department—including



In search of solutions NTID administrators, from left, Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, associate vice president for outreach and external affairs and associate dean of educational support service programs; Liza Orr, director of the department of interpreting services; and Dr. James DeCaro, NTID dean, discuss with Dr. Michael Feuerstein, right, director of the Center for Occupational Rehabilitation of the University of Rochester Medical Center, ways that RIT interpreters might lessen the likelihood of developing repetitive motion injury.

Shaw—met weekly from January through May last year. The group's most immediate goals were to suggest ways to prevent further injuries among interpreters, assist those interpreters already injured, and establish ways to meet campus interpreting needs.

The first step the task force took was to endorse a recommendation made by the department of interpreting services that the Institute reduce from 25 to 20 the number of actual interpreting hours staff members work each week.

"There is a growing consensus in the interpreting community nationwide that a reasonable weekly workload in the educational setting is 20 hours," explains Orr, who worked as an interpreter and manager at the Institute for 13 years before becoming department director.

This reduction better enables interpreters, who remain full-time employees, to "do what it takes to get the job done," according to Orr. What it takes, she stresses, is adequate time for interpreters to prepare for the day's assignments by familiarizing themselves with the subject matter, as well as time to rest, both physically and psychologically, between assignments.

To help offset the loss of productivity caused by this reduction and better meet the need for interpreting services on campus, 18 additional interpreter positions have been added to the department.

The task force also addressed the concern that RIT interpreters' salaries were not comparable with others in the field. In order to supplement their incomes, many interpreters felt compelled to take on freelance interpreting jobs, which added to their levels of fatigue and stress.

"The administration looked at the marketplace and discovered that RIT's salaries had fallen behind those offered by other employers of sign language interpreters," says DeCaro.

The Institute responded by making immediate salary adjustments, which were put in place late last winter. Additionally, an in-depth market analysis was initiated, and recommendations for further salary modifications are forthcoming.

In addition to these preliminary steps toward reducing the likelihood of future injuries, the task force attempted to provide for the needs of already injured interpreters. This effort, however, was

complicated by the fact that those needs varied greatly among the affected people, who also may have experienced a great deal of anger.

"When I first went out on disability, I was really angry," says Shaw. "At the time, there was nothing the Institute could have done to make me feel better."

DeCaro empathizes with those feelings. "Interpreting is much more than an occupation—it's a lifestyle and a culture," he says. "People become interpreters because they care about working in the deaf community, and when they become injured, they're deprived of an opportunity to interact with people whom they've grown to know and respect. Of course they're going to be angry."

To help those injured cope with such feelings, the task force recommended that the Institute offer crisis intervention counseling through its employee assistance program. Shaw believes that her participation in the program helped her regain a positive outlook.

"I realized that it was valid to be angry at the Institute for not intervening sooner because there were a lot of warning signs along the way," she says.

"But, in fairness, there were a lot of warning signs for me, too, and I didn't know what was happening until it became a crisis for me."

Since a large part of those feelings of anger and confusion stem from the loss of satisfying employment, the task force also recommended the establishment of a retraining and employment program designed to provide an opportunity for those who no longer are able to interpret to receive alternative career training while earning part-time salaries in non-interpreting assignments.

Admittedly, task force members don't yet know whether their efforts will diminish the risk of Institute sign language interpreters becoming afflicted with repetitive motion injury.

"We will continue to struggle with this issue until we resolve it," says DeCaro. He expects additional information to be gained from research being conducted on behalf of the Institute by the Center for Occupational Rehabilitation of the University of Rochester Medical Center, which is developing specific recommendations for how RIT interpreters can lessen the likelihood of developing repetitive motion injury.

Meanwhile, many interpreters have discovered ways to reduce their levels of stress and better prepare themselves for the demands of the job.

Sheila Barden, an RIT interpreter who suffers from tendinitis in her elbows and wrists, gradually built her endurance back up after being out of work for six weeks last year.

"I hadn't realized just how physically demanding interpreting is," she says. "Now I know that I have to keep myself in shape."

On her doctor's recommendation, Barden swims regularly to build upper-body strength. "Doctors say that exercise also reduces stress," she adds. "The two factors are interrelated."

Krohn believes that he has been able to avoid serious injury because of a regular regimen of playing basketball, eating balanced meals, and getting enough sleep.

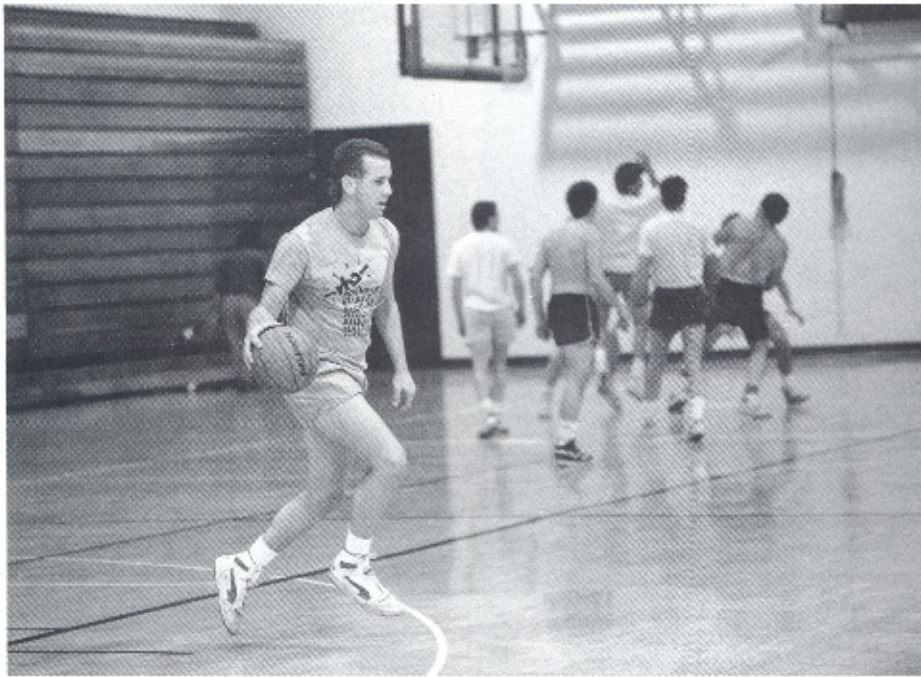
"I try not to let stress build up," he says, adding that the new 20-hour-per-week interpreting load helps considerably.

While the Institute has been praised by many in the RIT community for taking quick action to address the problems caused by repetitive motion injury—and has become highly regarded as a national leader on the issue as it relates to sign language interpreters—Shaw agrees that it's going to be an ongoing issue and hopes that efforts to address interpreters' concerns will continue.

"It's amazing that any employer would move as quickly as RIT did, and I really appreciate what the Institute has done so far," she says. "But as an individual with an uncertain future, the time I spent in pain can never be fully compensated by task force recommendations."

Despite fears about injuring herself again, Shaw continues to investigate alternative career options and hopes to return to the work force in the near future.

"I'm continually getting better," she says. "That's my ray of hope."



A basket a day... David Krohn, a six-year veteran RIT interpreter, plays basketball regularly as part of a diet and exercise regimen designed to reduce the stress of full-time interpreting.

Spring 1991

Dear *Focus* Reader:

Your views are important to us. Please take a few minutes to share them by completing the post card below and returning it to us by June 15.

This brief survey is designed to determine your interests and how well *Focus* magazine meets your needs. Knowing what is important to you will help us determine the future direction of the magazine. Please help us serve you better.

Thank you.

Regards,
The *Focus* Staff



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- Other _____

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- 1-2 3-4 5-7 all

3. Of the articles read (Please rate):

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- ___ Length about right ___ Interesting subject
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Their kind of weather Money rains down on Robert F. Panara Scholarship awardees Bridget Connolly, fourth-year student in RIT's College of Fine and Applied Arts, and Michael Petrus, third-year student in RIT's College of Science.

Dollars for Scholars

Panara Scholarship Fund
endows educations

by Pamela Seabon

When she enrolled at RIT in 1986, it seemed that all odds were against Mavis Lurwick, a single mother of three who also cared for her grandmother.

Lurwick hadn't attended college since 1977, when she left to get married. She'd forgotten the protocol of campus life, had overwhelming responsibilities at home, and worried that she'd never be able to afford a college degree.

Despite these challenges, Lurwick graduated from RIT in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in social work, thanks in part to receiving a Robert F. Panara Scholarship Award in 1988.

"Winning that scholarship was a great surprise, and it gave me the feeling of being recognized for my hard work," says Lurwick. "It was a good morale booster, and it came at a time when I really needed it."

The 3-year-old Panara Scholarship Fund, established to assist students in good academic standing who require financial support, has helped more than 15 students since its inception. Initiated by a \$10,000 private donation, it was the Institute's first endowed scholarship through which donors can make contributions in support of students' education.

As the first such scholarship, it seemed only fitting to name it after Professor Emeritus Robert Panara, RIT's first deaf faculty member.

"Bob's commitment to the deaf population continues to be astronomical," says Dr. James DeCaro, dean of NTID. "He is a pioneer of the Institute—establishing the English department and initiating the department of performing arts, which has grown to be an important part of our students' education."

Panara came to NTID in 1967 from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., where he taught English, literature, and language. A professor of English and drama at NTID for 20 years, Panara's classes were well-known for including dramatic presentations that enlivened discussions of Shakespeare and other literature.

"I had heard that he was a great teacher, so I tried to register for one of his courses," says Michael Petrus, third-year student in RIT's College of Science and winner of a Panara award, "but his class was full. Since that time, he has retired, so I'm pretty much out of luck."

Though Panara retired three years ago, students need not feel unlucky, for the Panara commitment to education continues to inspire deaf students.



There's nothing like a good book Mavis Lurwick, 1989 RIT graduate and sociotherapist at Hillside Children's Center in Rochester, New York, reads and discusses a story with a deaf resident. A Panara scholarship helped finance Lurwick's RIT education.



"I respect and applaud Bob Panara and his work," says Bridget Connolly, fourth-year graphic design student in RIT's College of Fine and Applied Arts. "He does so much for deaf people.

"When I won the scholarship, it really inspired me because Bob is a man of great knowledge, theater, and literature. He's a wonderful role model for deaf students."

Just as students feel honored by receiving an award named after someone they know and respect, Panara feels privileged to share his name with such an important endeavor.

"I am humbly grateful to the original donor," he says. "It's a great feeling to be appreciated and respected by people who care so much as to name an endowment fund after me. It feels even better knowing that such a fund will benefit many deserving students who are in need."

Other than tuition and student fees, the Institute was funded entirely by federal dollars until 1986 when the NTID Federal Endowment Matching Grant Program was established. Through this program, the government matches private gifts made to NTID endowed funds such as the Panara scholarship, the principle of which has grown to \$191,750, making it one of NTID's most important scholarship funds.

Alumni, parents, faculty and staff members, and others who are interested in helping educate deaf students are responsible for the success not only of the Panara fund but of other scholarship programs as well.

The Institute has 30 private endowments, more than half of which benefit first-year students. The Panara Scholarship Fund, however, caters to the needs of returning students; four to six students are awarded between \$500-\$3,000 each year.

Some students are recommended by department chairpersons for the scholarship. Others apply for the scholarship through RIT's financial aid office, which reviews students' financial packages and determines eligibility for assistance. Students' names then are passed on to the dean's office, which makes the final determination of who should receive the awards.

"It's all based on need and academic standing," says Nancy Fabrize, assistant to the dean. "We give a lot of consideration to those students recommended by department chairpersons."



Educator extraordinaire Though he is retired, Professor Emeritus Robert Panara continues to provide learning opportunities for deaf students through the scholarship fund that bears his name.

Dr. Rosemary Saur, chairperson of the department of science and engineering support, submitted Petrus' name.

"Michael is an outstanding student. He works hard and maintains a high grade point average [GPA]," she says. "A student with excellent grades who needs the money is always the right choice."

With a GPA of 3.7, the biotechnology student was delighted to receive the award and says that such awards inspire him to do his best.

"I felt great about it," says Petrus. "This scholarship tells me that I'm doing something right. It says that everyone cares about my education."

The scholarship also helped Jay Jezerski, a 1988 Panara scholar, complete his education. He graduated with an associate degree in printing production technology last year and landed a gratifying job one month later as a metal platemaker at Automatic Graphic Systems in Waldorf, Maryland.

"I really like my job," he says. "I am thankful for the Panara scholarship. Students really need the support."

Joyce Lester, mother of 1989 Panara scholar Todd Lester, can attest to that.

"It wasn't always easy getting support," she says. "Scholarships through school or organizations were based on financial need. It seemed that there was always someone needier than Todd.

"We were surprised and delighted when he got the Panara scholarship," says Lester.

Receiving a Panara award means more, however, than just getting extra money for educational expenses.

"Bob has always encouraged deaf students to do their best," says Connolly.

"I remember seeing Bob on a program for deaf people," she says. "He talked about his childhood—how he became deaf from spinal meningitis. He loved to read. Whenever he saw a new word, he'd look up the meaning, begin to use it, and often challenged his friends with the words to help expand their vocabularies. I do this, too. It helps me become more expressive. It's a great idea for increasing vocabulary."

The scholarship fund established in Panara's name, like his career, is dedicated to the continuation of education.

"The award came at a time when I really needed the money," says Lurwick. "Imagine having to pay a baby sitter, for transportation back and forth, and for books and other supplies.

"The award allowed me to use the money I had saved toward tuition for other responsibilities."

Today, Lurwick is a sociotherapist at Hillside Children's Center in Rochester, New York, working with deaf children in the residential treatment facility. Though she loves her job, she intends to return to RIT for a master's degree in school psychology. She attributes her enthusiasm for education to funds like the Panara scholarship, which encouraged her to continue and let her know that there are awards for people who take their education seriously.

"I will find a way to finance my return," she says. "It is good to know that there are awards to help those of us who really need them."

1ST LOOK AT DEAF WOMEN IMPRESSIONS

Deaf minority women juggle multicultural identities

by Kathryn Schmitz

Like mammals shedding their fur according to the seasons, people often adjust their cultural identities/self-images to adapt to various situations. These adjustments can become complicated when they accommodate multiple self-images, such as those incorporated by deaf women who also belong to a third minority culture.

Dr. Teena Wax, staff chairperson of NTID's department of psychological services, often finds herself relating in completely different ways to other people who are deaf, other women, and other Jewish people as well as to people who are not deaf, female, or Jewish.

When she is among other deaf women, for example, she behaves differently than she does when she enters a synagogue. She uses sign language to communicate with her deaf peers, but not necessarily with her Jewish co-religionists.

"The picture changes every time you enter a different culture," says Wax. "Your identity depends on each situation because different characteristics are important in different situations."

But self-perception is not the only variable in situations in which deaf minority women find themselves among others who are not like them in one way or another. Others' perceptions of them play a role in the outcome of many situations.

When deaf minority women experience discrimination or face obstacles, they sometimes cannot be sure whether the cause is their deafness, race or religion, or gender. Certain indications that one belongs to a minority group, such as gender and race, are obvious; others, such as deafness and religion, are not, obscuring the reasons behind the obstacles.

"Obviously, people see me as a black woman first," says Shirley Allen, associate professor in the general education instruction department. "People don't see my deafness first."

Allen feels that negative responses from strangers usually are directed toward her race.

Other deaf women, like Wax, whose "third minority" is less visible than Allen's, also find that others' perceptions of them is complex. Women

who belong to various minority cultures can never be certain of underlying motives behind situations or obstacles they confront.

Mary Helen Figueroa-Moore, instructor in the sign communication department, once experienced a complex reaction from others. At age 21, she applied for an accounting position with a rehabilitation agency in Austin, Texas. She received a clerk/typist position and was promised an eventual transfer to an accounting position that never materialized. She quit in frustration a year later.

Figueroa-Moore still is not sure whether her transfer was withheld because she is Mexican or because she is deaf.

"Some Texans consider Mexicans inferior. I think I was looked down upon because I'm Mexican and also because I'm deaf," says Figueroa-Moore. "My boss thought that deaf people couldn't learn."

Tawnda Hopkins, who graduated from NTID in 1989 with an associate in applied science degree in office technologies, also has received mixed signals from others at work.

She works as a terminal operator for an insurance agency in Rochester, New York. Hopkins' supervisor initially paired her with the only other black person in her department. Hopkins taught her colleague how to communicate with her, and her colleague trained Hopkins to perform her duties.

Although this collaboration helped Hopkins adjust to a new job, it also resulted in her isolation at work. Other people in the department would ask Hopkins' colleague to pass on information and requests to her rather than ask Hopkins directly, even though she would approach them with her own questions.

"I didn't like that situation," says Hopkins, "so I told my colleague to tell these people to come to me with information. They have to learn to communicate with me."

Hopkins notes that she cannot be sure whether her initial isolation at work resulted from her race or her deafness.

Although they are sometimes uncertain about the reasons for discrimination and obstacles they encounter, Figueroa-Moore and Hopkins join other deaf minority women in citing deafness as the most frequent "justification" of employment obstacles. Research shows that deaf women in particular confront numerous obstacles.

As co-author of a 1982 study, titled "Deaf Women and Double Jeopardy: Challenge for Research and Practice," Wax writes: "Deaf women constitute a unique population whose lives differ significantly from those of both deaf men and hearing women. As a minority within a minority, they must cope with multiple inequities (multiple jeopardies) that are related to this uniqueness. These inequities include lowered educational, vocational, and socioeconomic status as well as attitudinal barriers in the environment, which predispose to sex-role stereotyping, social isolation, and lowered expectations."

Wax herself confronted multiple inequities during graduate school.

While pursuing her doctorate in 1974, she wrote a thesis proposal for a clinical psychology project. After she orally defended her proposal before the review committee, she was told that the proposal was unacceptable because it was not clinical enough. Committee members also told her that they were concerned about her communication ability in clinical situations because of her deafness.

"The irony of this whole situation was that there I was arguing with five people," says Wax. "I was obviously communicating just fine!"

Wax was so disconcerted by her experience that she applied to and was accepted by another university's doctoral program. Rather than transferring to the other university and starting all over, however, she decided to finish her doctorate in the area of research—rather than clinical—psychology.

Wax is fairly certain that she was constrained from pursuing a clinical doctorate because of her deafness, not because her thesis was not clinical enough. She suspects that her status as a woman also may have influenced the department's attitude toward her because she recalls posting flyers in the department advertising a women's rap group she had set up, only to find the word "rap" defaced with an "e" added to the end.

Despite Wax's experience, employment remains the area in which deaf minority women have experienced the most frequent barriers, a situation that those interviewed attribute to their deafness. Deaf people have not seemed to enjoy the same protection under the law against discriminatory hiring practices that women and minority

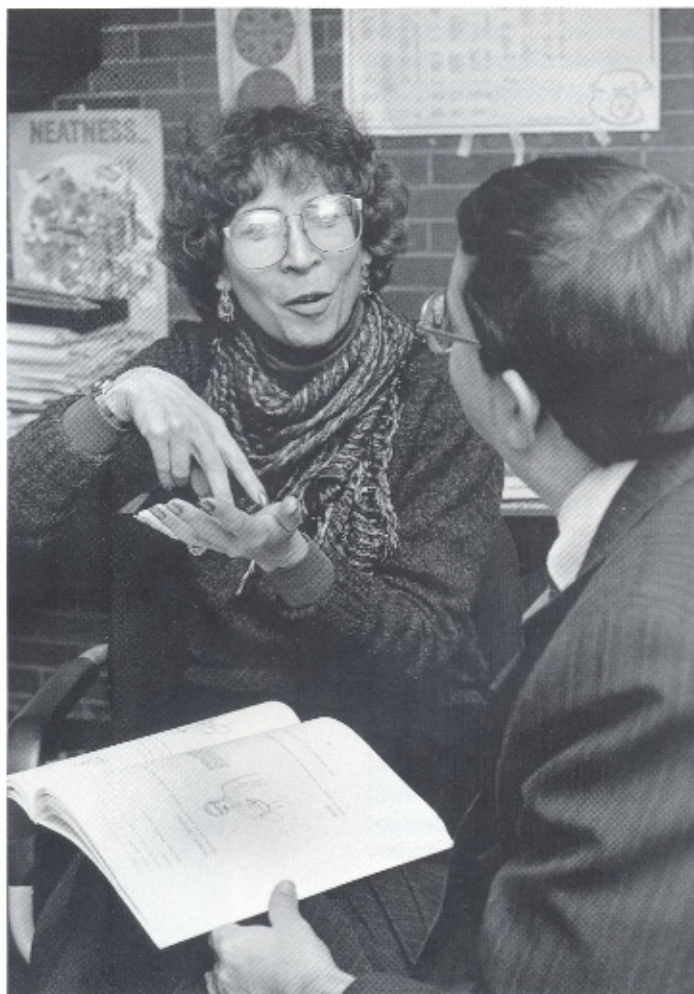
members do under the Civil Rights Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), designed to improve accessibility to employment, government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications to individuals with disabilities, may improve such protection.

Long before passage of the ADA, signed into law this past summer by President George Bush, Vicki Hurwitz, visiting developmental education specialist in the department of human

development, applied for an office position with a public utility company in St. Louis. At the end of her interview, she was told that she would not be hired because her deafness prevented her from speaking on the telephone.

"The job description said absolutely nothing about telephone work," says Hurwitz.

Ronnie Mae Tyson, career opportunities advisor in the department of career outreach and admissions, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in



Dr. Teena Wax

"The picture changes every time you enter a different culture. Your identity depends on each situation because different characteristics are important in different situations."

business administration from RIT in 1984, encountered similar frustration in her attempts as a black deaf woman to find a job in her profession in Florida.

"When I graduated, I was told that my field, marketing, is difficult for deaf people to find jobs in because of all the phone work," she says. "I looked for four years, but couldn't find anything better than a job selling merchandise on a store floor. I remember once using the relay service to respond to a job advertisement and being told that the job was not available to me because of the phone work involved."

Obtaining a good job alone does not prevent other barriers from appearing. Hurwitz recalls working as the only deaf counselor in a social work agency and having her colleagues assume that she was the resident authority on deafness.

"My job description did not include teaching these people about deafness," says Hurwitz, who also is Jewish, "nor did I have time to do that. I felt very 'deaf' there because few people could sign for themselves, which forced me to depend on an interpreter and created a communication barrier. I felt as if I had been hired to be a professional deaf person, not a social worker.

"I consider myself a person first," adds Hurwitz. "I'd rather not be reminded that I'm deaf, which is what happens when I'm the only deaf person in a situation. I can't imagine not working at a place like NTID, where I find the social interaction and sign communication I need to help me not feel 'handicapped.'"

Like Hurwitz, Figueroa-Moore believes in clear communication and self-worth as assets for removing obstacles. She also promotes the importance of higher education as a means of advancement. Most of the women interviewed agree that postsecondary degrees are essential to obtaining more equal treatment.

"I'm independent, assertive, and educated," says Figueroa-Moore. "I'll face up to people, and I also planned for my future. I knew I'd need my education to get ahead."

Figueroa-Moore will finish her bachelor of science degree in deaf culture studies through Empire State College this spring and plans to pursue a master's degree in teaching American Sign Language (ASL) at Western Maryland College.

Hurwitz noticed a marked difference in obtaining jobs after she earned a bachelor of science degree in social work from RIT in 1983.

"Even though it's just a piece of paper," says Hurwitz, "the degree makes getting a job much easier. Before I got my degree, I used to complain a lot about being disqualified from jobs even though I had a lot of volunteer experience. I feel that a lot of places don't give enough credit for experience—they should know that skills

mean as much, if not more, than that piece of paper."

Hurwitz points out that her degree provided validation of her experience, meeting a higher standard that she feels was imposed upon her by others because of her deafness.

Allen agrees that higher education degrees improve opportunities for deaf minority women.

"I hate school," says Allen, who is pursuing a doctorate from the University of Rochester and has a



Mary Helen Figueroa-Moore

"I'm independent, assertive, and educated. I'll face up to people, and I also planned for my future. I knew I'd need my education to get ahead."

master's degree in counseling from Howard University and a bachelor's degree in English literature from Gallaudet University, "but school is a necessity for a black deaf woman who is divorced.

"I don't want to clean someone else's kitchen," Allen adds. "I can clean a kitchen better than anyone else, but no one wants to pay for the dirty work. Education gives me freedom."

Tyson also believes that education provides more opportunities.

"I feel that I'm using my degree to market NTID to prospective students," she explains. "I like to think that my qualifications will help me get other jobs, but I also believe that getting a master's degree will open more doors for me."

In their work with college students, many of these women encourage students to think for themselves and expand their world views. Wax tries to teach them how to manipulate others' perceptions of them.

"I try to help students become aware of how self-perception affects their conduct, which in turn affects how others view them," says Wax. "I tell them that they can look at their minority status in a negative way and feel victimized, or they can change their view of themselves and make it work for them."

Hurwitz takes a more grass-roots approach to advising her students.

"I relate to students because I'm also deaf," says Hurwitz. "I've experienced the same communication barriers. From my experience, deaf students encounter the same communication problems regardless of their gender, religion, or race."

Having lost her hearing at age 20, Allen is sympathetic in a different way to students.

"My job is to make them think," she says. "If these kids don't meet up with some kind of reality while they're in school, what's going to happen when they leave? They need to learn to think for themselves, not depend on their parents or teachers or bosses to tell them what to do and how to deal with problems."

Allen considers herself an individual who is different from other people and who is realistic about others' perceptions of her, something she tries to teach her students.

"'I love everyone' is the biggest lie going," says Allen. "Everyone is not the same, they're not treated the same, and they don't treat everyone else the same."

Hurwitz agrees that society is not homogenous and therefore not always fair, but she asks for the same opportunities as anyone else and does not want to be left out because she is a deaf minority woman.

"We're all human," she says. "Give us a chance."

She also believes that a deaf minority woman does not necessarily have three strikes against her.

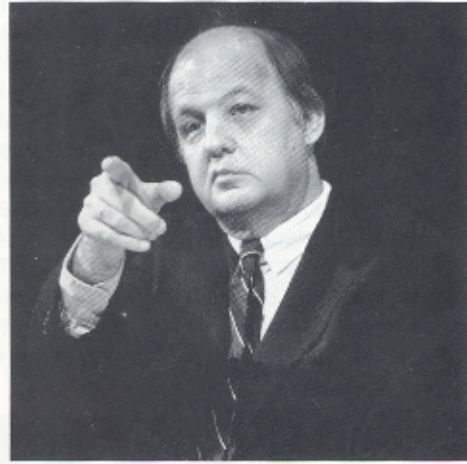
"Now I look at 'triple jeopardy' as a challenge," says Hurwitz. "Times have changed. I feel I can overcome obstacles now because of my experience."



Shirley Allen

"I don't want to clean someone else's kitchen. I can clean a kitchen better than anyone else, but no one wants to pay for the dirty work. Education gives me freedom."





'the Bear' STILL GROWLS

by Deborah R. Waltzer

With humor and
determination,
James Brady
works to disarm
disability

Daniel McClintock, first-year student in RIT's College of Fine and Applied Arts, remembers exactly where he was on March 30, 1981.

"I was in Washington, D.C., with my family, and I was shocked when someone told us that President Reagan had been shot," recalls the Concord, New Hampshire, native.

Nearly 10 years later, McClintock stood among an overflow crowd in NTID's Robert F. Panara Theatre to receive the inspiring message of James Brady, press secretary to former President Ronald Reagan, who was shot in the head and severely wounded during that 1981 presidential assassination attempt.

Following the shooting, Brady worked extensively for eight years with physical and speech therapists to re-learn how to speak, read, and walk. He continues to use a wheelchair for mobility.

McClintock was deeply moved by Brady's speech. "Mr. Brady certainly has courage and strength to go through what he has experienced," he says. "It's a miracle he is alive today."

Brady was invited to speak as part of NTID's Special Speaker Series, coordinated by Julie Cammeron, associate professor in the general education instruction department.

"Brady was a natural choice," says Cammeron, "because he has overcome hardships and adversity. He represents



that wonderful spirit that refuses to give up. It's not just that he's made do with his situation; rather, he has turned lemons into lemonade."

Indeed, turning lemons into lemonade could be an apt slogan for Brady's journey since John Hinckley Jr. shot a bullet from a \$29 handgun into the presidential aide's brain. During the past 10 years, Brady has endured several surgeries, a number of debilitating seizures, and acute pain. Yet his indomitable spirit and keen sense of humor remain unscathed.

Addressing the theatre's audience of more than 500 students and faculty and staff members October 30, the Centralia, Illinois, native described in his soft Midwestern voice how his life was changed in an instant.

"One minute I was pursuing my career as the White House press secretary," Brady said. "I was at the top of my career. I looked forward to each day with enthusiasm. In the twinkling of an eye, it was over. I never thought it would happen to me, but it did."

Physical therapy was excruciatingly painful. "To tell you the truth," he remarked, "there were days when I didn't think the physical 'terrorism' sessions could ever be worth it. But I made up my mind when I began physical therapy that I would do everything the 'terrorists' asked me to do."

When asked by a student if he ever felt like giving up, Brady replied, "Yes, many times, but I promised myself I wouldn't. I stuck in there and took the pain instead." Brady attributes his determination to his "Irish stubbornness."

Brady also spoke about the impact the shooting has had on his son, Scott, who was 2 years old when it occurred.

"Let's put it this way—John Hinckley is not one of Scott's favorite people," Brady said. "He knows that his dad can't go out back and climb trees with him. I try to explain everything to him. Sometimes he understands, and sometimes he doesn't."

Brady still experiences lingering fears as a result of the shooting.

"Loud noises and crowded situations bother me," he noted. "You never know when they're going to draw down and blow you away. At least I don't."

Today, continuing to turn lemons into lemonade, Brady is vice chairman of the National Organization on Disability (NOD), a private, non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. Since joining NOD in March 1989, Brady has delivered 57 speeches and given 23 media interviews about his "Calling on America" campaign, which challenges society to increase its acceptance of the nation's more than 40 million citizens with disabilities.

"Jim Brady has made an enormous contribution to the central objective of this organization, which is to expand the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of American life," says Mark Lewis, NOD's director of communications. "He made an invaluable contribution toward our efforts to win passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] in Congress. He testified before Congress and met with individual members of Congress in support of the act."

Brady's trips to Capitol Hill paid off when Congress voted to pass the ADA last spring; President George Bush signed it into law July 26.

Brady told his NTID audience, "The passage of ADA presents us all with the opportunity to move ahead with our dreams, but it will not guarantee success unless we seize the opportunity ourselves and make it our own."

Brady's words inspired fifth-year accounting student Elizabeth Ruppert.

"He did a great job, and I like his sense of humor," remarked the Toledo, Ohio, native. "He made me feel that he struggles with his handicap like I struggle with mine."

Brady's visit to NTID was filled with numerous one-liners and anecdotes. Referring to his wife's role as national chairperson of Handgun Control, Inc., through which she is advocating a seven-day waiting period to purchase a handgun, Brady quipped, "I told Sarah she could become a table, a couch, or whatever she chose to do, and she chose to become a chair..."

During a luncheon before Brady's speech, Dr. William Castle, director of NTID and vice president for government relations for RIT, who serves on NOD's board of directors with Brady, presented his guest with a ceramic vase made by a student in RIT's College of Fine and Applied Arts. Brady, whose nickname is "The Bear" because of his large frame, remarked, "I can put honey in that!"

And describing the made-for-television movie about his life, which stars actor Beau Bridges and is scheduled to be released this spring, Brady joked, "I wanted actress Susan Anton to play 'Raccoon' [his nickname for Sarah], but the HBO people weren't so hot about that!"

Concluding his address on a more serious note, Brady brought his NTID audience to its feet by asserting: "We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. We cannot make the sun rise, but we can enjoy the warmth of its rays. We cannot always eliminate a disability, but we can choose to accept that which we cannot change and participate fully in life. In the process, we can make America a better place for everyone."



minding their own **BUSINESS**

Self-employed graduates work beyond 9 to 5

by Kathryn Schmitz

For some Institute graduates, the concept of working beyond the call of duty is meaningless—their duty calls 24 hours a day. These graduates are part of a small but growing number of deaf people who run their own businesses.

Although no official statistics are available on the number of deaf RIT graduates who own their businesses, according to Phil Aiello, president of the Deaf Entrepreneurs Council, a national support organization based in Washington, D.C., there are approximately 340 full- and part-time deaf business owners around the country. Aiello suspects, however, that this number underestimates the true population of deaf entrepreneurs.

Whatever their numbers, many Institute graduates have successfully begun a variety of businesses nationwide. Among them are a communications consulting firm in Los Angeles; computer consulting firm and courier service in Calverton and Silver Spring, Maryland; deck building business in Vienna, Virginia; floral shop in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; furniture design studio in San Diego; graphic art/typesetting firm and retail store in Pequot Lakes, Minnesota; gourmet cookie bakery in West Orange, New Jersey; deaf culture magazine in Rochester, New York; optometry shop in Boston; and special equipment distribution service in Chicago.

The owners of these ventures found within themselves many reasons for starting their businesses, but they all share one common quality: a willingness to take risks.



Showing off silkscreened specialties Shirley (Alderman) Sorenson sells sweatshirts and other souvenirs in her shop, Sakakawea Shirt Studio, in Crosslake, Minnesota.

"Statistics on the success and failure rates of small businesses are not encouraging," says Dr. Christine Licata, acting assistant dean for administrative services. "These graduates are special people who accept the risks involved in achieving their dreams."

Shirley (Alderman) Sorenson, who received an associate degree in applied art from NTID in 1982, admits that being completely responsible can be an intimidating prospect, but for her it also is motivating.

"Although I know the security of a steady job is not there for me," says Sorenson, who owns a graphic art/typesetting design firm and retail store, "I call the shots, and I like that most of all."

Like her fellow alumni, rather than worrying unduly about the risks involved, Sorenson stays busy working for her clients.

"I work all hours," she explains. "I do not have a '9-5,' 'weekends off,' 'out for lunch,' 'sorry, come back later' mentality. I am always there for my clients."

Like many self-employed graduates, Sorenson returned to her hometown of Pequot Lakes, Minnesota, to start her business, R-type, in 1986.

"I felt 'deaf' at my previous jobs because I was so isolated," she explains, "You have to remember that Pequot Lakes is out in the boondocks of Minnesota and is not like Rochester, New York, where people are more sensitive to those who are deaf. In my business I don't feel 'deaf' at all because I'm in control, and I always know what's going on."

Working alone, Sorenson does "everything from A to Z." She consults with clients and does design, layout, paste-up, proofreading, and typesetting for the brochures, posters, promotional flyers, magazines, and manuals she creates. She also creates designs for sweatshirts and T-shirts and has them professionally silkscreened.

Wanting a showplace for her designs as well as other artists' creations, Sorenson opened a retail store called Sakakawea Shirt Studio in Crosslake, a nearby tourist town, last spring. The shop occupies 240 square feet in the middle of the town's boardwalk and sells sweatshirts and T-shirts with local artwork as well as her own designs silkscreened, embroidered, and appliquéd on them. As with R-type, she is the sole owner of the shop, which is open from March through November.

"The store is very successful, at least by my standards," she says, "I'm not making millions, but I do have my dream shop."

Each entrepreneur has a personal motivation for taking the risk of starting a business. Some want to make a lot of money, some seek the satisfaction of watching a business grow and operate, some simply take pride in making a superior product and being self-sufficient, and some hope to help other deaf people.

One of those entrepreneurs out to improve the lot of other deaf people in the workplace is Stephen Schultz, who received a bachelor of science degree in business administration from RIT in 1972.

Schultz started a consulting firm, TECHCOM CONSULTANTS, in Los Angeles last October to advise companies on how to address implementation issues arising from passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law last summer by President George Bush.

The ADA is designed to improve accessibility to employment, government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications for individuals with disabilities, and Schultz hopes to aid in its implementation in companies that hire deaf people.

To drum up business for himself as well as to help inform more than 100 representatives from corporations such as IBM and Xerox, he participated in a panel titled "ADA Issues and Answers" last October at the University of California at Los Angeles.

"Companies like Lockheed, Hughes Aircraft, and Xerox can hire me for consultations," says Schultz.

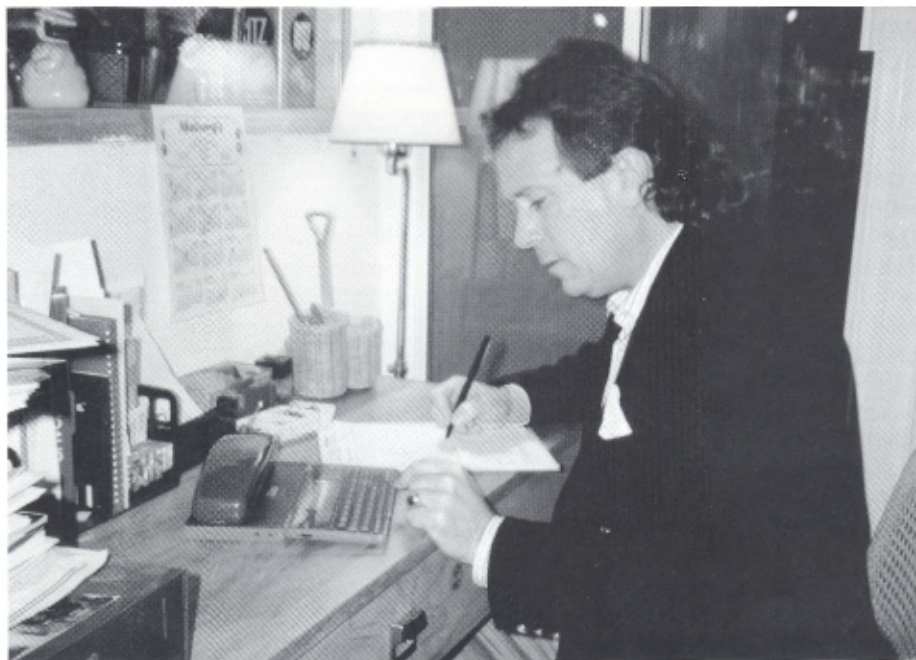
Schultz's extensive experience in the telecommunications field ties in well with his motives for helping companies integrate deaf employees. He formerly was employed by Zicom Technologies, Inc. in Vista, California, as director of marketing. Zicom manufactures telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDDs).

"I always was interested in improving telecommunications in the workplace," says Schultz, "because, as a deaf person, I was frustrated with its limitations."

Mark Feder also is in the business of removing limitations for deaf people by selling specialized equipment. Feder, who received a bachelor of science degree in accounting from RIT's College of Business in 1975, is general manager and founder of the National Catalog House of the Deaf (NCHD) in Chicago. NCHD, founded in 1984, sells flashing clocks and alarm systems, sign language videotapes, telecaption decoders, TDDs, and other equipment that meets the communication and safety needs of deaf people.

Feder's concern for his deaf peers began more than 15 years ago when he served as president of the NTID Student Congress.

"I met all kinds of people during that time," he says. "Now when I travel around the country for my business, I keep in touch with fellow alumni, which I enjoy. They're the big reason I opened



Starting from scratch Stephen Schultz, founder of TECHCOM CONSULTANTS, takes notes from a TDD (telecommunication device for the deaf) telephone call in his home office in Los Angeles.

the business; I want to offer equipment they and other deaf people can use."

The first item Feder sold was a timer clock made by Intermatic.

"I sold more than 8,000 of those clocks," he says, "and that's what got NCHD off the ground."

NCHD was the first and continues to be the largest deaf-run distributor of telecaption decoders, second only to Sears Roebuck & Co. in overall sales. NCHD sold 2,500 Telecaption 4000 decoders in 1989, the first year the model was introduced.

"I don't want to show off," says Feder, "but I am proud to say that NCHD is a big success."

Another big success is David Birnbaum, who received an associate in applied science degree in applied accounting from NTID in 1971. Birnbaum's definition of a successful business is a money-making venture like his own.

Birnbaum is in business to make money. He is president and founder of Union Express, Inc., a courier/messenger service headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, which delivers letters and packages throughout the country.

After 20 years of experience as a computer analyst, Birnbaum became frustrated by his unsuccessful attempts to enter the sales division at IBM, the last company for which he worked. He resigned from IBM with no contingency plans and, to make ends meet, accepted a position as a courier for a messenger company. While working as a courier, Birnbaum developed a clientele and, realizing that he had the sales/marketing personality crucial to starting his own business, formed Union Express in 1986. He plans to open another office in Baltimore later this year.

Birnbaum began as a one-man courier equipped only with a 1985 Chevy Sprint, answering service, pager, circulars to build up sales, and his own ambition. As he acquired clients and contracts, Birnbaum began to hire others to help him make deliveries. He now has three full-time employees, 15 independent contractors (couriers), and 250 subcontractors making more than 200 deliveries a day for Union Express throughout the United States and Canada.

"It was tough the first year," says Birnbaum. "I don't believe in borrowing money, so I decided not to borrow from the Small Business Administration



In the business of accessibility Eileen Smith, executive director of consumer marketing for the National Captioning Institute, presents Mark Feder, general manager and founder of the National Catalog House of the Deaf (NCHD) in Chicago, with an award commending NCHD for its 10-year commitment to making telecaption decoders available to deaf people.

or the banks. I had to work hard and sacrifice a lot."

Fortunately, things have improved for Birnbaum.

"I am doing very well," he explains. "I don't owe anyone anything, but I will admit that cash flow is a big problem because sometimes I'm not paid on time."

Feder also did not borrow money to start NCHD. He began business with a mere \$500 from his savings. He used the money to purchase his initial inventory of timer clocks, TDDs, and decoders; print flyers; and advertise in publications targeted to deaf readers.

Feder started NCHD while working as controller for his father's business, B.E. Atlas Co., a wholesale hardware business in Chicago. There, he continues to manage computer operations, inventory, payables, and payroll. When NCHD became unmanageable in Feder's spare time, he sold the business to his father. Now Feder works 50 hours a week, spending 25 percent of his

time with NCHD and the rest with B.E. Atlas. NCHD has two other employees, a deaf sales manager and a hearing sales representative.

R-type's Sorenson borrowed her start-up money from a local bank that she describes as being wonderful and sympathetic to her needs. Her business has grown by word of mouth, which, she says, is the best way.

"The work I have is all I can handle," she explains. "I have a few steady clients. I also do advertisements for United Way functions. Every year, I typeset a book. Sometimes my former employers will refer work to me when they are overloaded."

Like Sorenson, Roland Oliver runs a business that's growing by word of mouth and handles United Way functions. Oliver, owner of Jet Way Florist in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, also is a data entry processor for Wachovia Bank and Trust. His wife, Sharon, works full time in their floral business, which they established last June. Oliver's father

gave them their financial start, and once the business becomes financially independent, Oliver plans to leave Wachovia to work for himself full time.

The business is off to a good start with a clientele composed of friends and former co-workers. In addition to advertising with flyers and in newspapers, the Olivers and their shop have gained publicity through word of mouth as well as special events. The shop was the official 1990-91 United Way florist serving all Winston-Salem United Way functions.

In Jet Way Florist, Oliver, who received diplomas in two programs—data processing and applied accounting—in 1987, has realized a lifelong dream of having his own business.

“At NTID, I took courses in both programs in order to prepare myself for owning my own business,” says Oliver. “I’ve always wanted my own business. I like working on the business, helping it grow slowly, and being my own boss.”

Oliver and his wife chose the floral business because Sharon loves flowers and can be the creative salesperson while Oliver works on the books and financial aspects of the business as well as helps communicate with their deaf customers.

Sorenson, who shared Oliver’s lifelong dream of owning a shop, decided to be her own boss after losing three jobs.

“I decided to work on my own without worrying about being laid off or having supervisors looking over my shoulder,” she says. “I realize this is not a nice attitude to have, but now I have control over my creativity, and I like this ‘calling’ much better.”

These graduates credit their self-motivation to their collegiate backgrounds at NTID; Schultz and Birnbaum both were members of the first class to enter NTID in 1968.

“Being a pioneer at NTID gave me the opportunity to be a leader,” says Schultz. “I made some big mistakes, but ones that I’ll never forget, and that’s what experience is all about.”

Like Schultz, Birnbaum believes he acquired his self-confidence during his years at NTID.

“There is no question that NTID helped me develop my self-esteem,” he says. “If I were to start all over again, I would still go to NTID because I learned so much and met so many teachers and deaf and hearing friends.”

His time in NTID’s open-communication environment influenced Oliver

to provide service to Winston-Salem’s deaf community.

“Our deaf friends know that they have a place to come for service with no communication limits,” he explains. Both Oliver and his wife know sign language, and the shop is equipped with a TDD.

At the time these graduates attended NTID, no courses on how to start a business were offered. To better prepare students for the option of self-employment, the School of Business Careers now offers a course, titled “Small Business Organization and Management,” that covers every aspect of starting a business. The capstone project for the course requires students to develop a business plan outlining the goals and objectives of their envisioned businesses and addressing issues such as finances, marketing, planning research, and sales.

Dr. William Rudnicki, chairperson of the business occupations department, who developed the course in 1988 with Dr. Harold Farneth, professor in the department, cites the need for such awareness.

“We felt the course should be offered to our students so that they would consider self-employment as a viable alternative,” he says. “In addition, there is not much information available to deaf individuals interested in starting their own businesses, and this course helps fulfill that need.”

The option of self-employment, those interviewed say, is worth the risks and long hours involved. Each is rewarded in different ways, some tangible and some not.

Feder and NCHD were commended at the 1990 National Association of the Deaf convention with a plaque from the National Captioning Institute (NCI). The award applauds NCHD “for its exceptional contribution as an NCI telecaption dealer, thereby making the closed-captioning service accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing people.”

Birnbaum finds ample reward in his independence.

“I work seven days a week, 24 hours a day,” says Birnbaum. “We’re never closed. All that work is worth it, though, because I wouldn’t want to work for anyone but myself.”



Floral cornucopia Roland and Sharon Oliver stand in their floral shop, Jet Way Florist, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



FOCUS On...

David Hazelwood

by Pamela Seabon



New addition Latest Hazelwood family member Anna Louise with mommy, Beth Ann, and daddy, David.

When it comes to dedication and dependability, count on David Hazelwood, assistant professor in NTID's department of photo/media technologies.

"He's the type of guy who will come over to help you fix your car," says colleague Omobowale Ayorinde, instructor in the same department. "You'll get tired and go to bed, but David will persist until that car is fixed."

"I don't know about that," retorts Hazelwood with a laugh. "I just go to work and get things done."

The tenured faculty member and 10-year NTID veteran joined the Institute after his résumé reached Walt Brown, who then was chairperson of the department.

"When you're looking for a job, you list everything that you have done on your résumé," says Hazelwood. "In addition to my work in industry, I had been teaching others how to process negatives, develop film, and other tasks related to the profession, so I put down that I teach."

"Walt called me and said that three faculty positions were available and suggested that I apply. I've been here ever since," he says.

Following graduation from RIT's College of Graphic Arts and Photography in 1976, Hazelwood worked for five years as a senior quality control technician and consultant at companies in Connecticut, North Carolina, and New York City.

"After working in industry for a while and giving thought to Walt's proposition, I decided to take my experiences to the classroom and become a teacher—a crazy one," he chuckles.

"He's a good teacher," says fellow instructor Edward Mineck.

Mineck has taught the custom lab services course with the comical Hazelwood for three years. They begin their days at 8 a.m.; Mineck in the classroom and Hazelwood in the lab.

"He definitely is a morning person," says Mineck. "He comes in and gets to work."

Mineck believes that students receive a thorough education through his and Hazelwood's "team teaching" methods.

"I acquired most of my skills through hands-on experiences, so I am able to understand students' problems from a practical viewpoint," he says. "David's focus has always been on the scientific end of things. He can help students solve problems through math methods, which is far more drudgery for me."

"He is good at fine tuning things. He will verify that something is true by using scientific reasoning."

Science plays an integral role in Hazelwood's life these days. He has six courses and a project to complete before receiving a master's degree in computer science from RIT's College of Applied Science and Technology.

"The photography industry is already going digital," says Hazelwood. "It won't be long before commercial labs do a lot of their work with computers."

"Everything he does already involves 'Charlie,' the computer at home," says his wife, Beth Ann. "He loves working on it. It's his mistress," she laughs.

But Hazelwood reaffirms, "I'm only 37 years old. I don't want an early retirement, so I have to prepare for the digital transition in photography."

Already the computer scholar is being called upon to share his knowledge with colleagues.

"Right now he is transferring a file from WordPerfect to update our printer driver for the Apple LaserWriter Plus," says Jean-Guy Naud, chairperson of the photo/media technologies department.

Naud has another perspective on the serious, yet amusing, Hazelwood. Naud, who has taught at NTID for more than 20 years, first met his colleague when Hazelwood enrolled at the Institute as a student in 1971.

Because of his deafness, Hazelwood, the oldest of six children—three girls and three boys—always had to try harder to keep up socially and academically with his siblings and friends. Deafened at age 5 after a bout with rubella, he grew up in a small town in southern New Jersey and attended public schools where, he says, it was difficult to fit in and challenging to learn.

"There weren't any support services back then," he says, "so I had to pay close attention and take notes at the same time. That was difficult.

"My social life suffered throughout high school. It wasn't easy to pick up the phone to call a girl for a date," he says. "How many girls would want to go out with a guy who had his mom call?"

Things began to look up socially for Hazelwood when he arrived at NTID.

"This is where I met my wife," he says. "Things worked out well."

Beth Ann, who graduated from NTID in 1975 with an associate degree in medical laboratory technology, works as a quality control technologist at the American Red Cross. She says that life with Hazelwood is "no slow day at the office."

"He sure isn't a boring person," she explains. "He keeps things going and is always busy. He is quite handy around the house."

Hazelwood is even more valuable at home now that the couple's first baby, Anna Louise, has arrived. The Hazelwoods knew before her birth, October 19, 1990, what her gender would be, which was reassuring to at least one of them.

"Beth Ann said that if it were a boy, and it turned out like me, she'd shoot herself," says a laughing Hazelwood.

After 15 "wonderful" years of marriage, Hazelwood feels terrific about the new addition to the family.

"We are very happy," he says. "Anna Louise had us walking around like zombies the first couple of months, but she sleeps better now, and so do we."



The big picture Hazelwood, assistant professor in the photo/media technologies department; Thomas Stringfellow, second-year student; and Kimberly Laule, third-year student, discuss how to use a photo enlarger.

Colleagues say that Hazelwood not only loves parenthood, but also is committed to his job and students. He puts himself into his students' shoes and tries to make learning as much fun for them as teaching is for him.

"Hazelwood was a good and responsible student," says Naud, "and these qualities show now that he's a professional."

Students agree that Hazelwood seems to enjoy his work and is a high-spirited instructor.

"He really is a great teacher," says Kimberly Laule, third-year student from San Diego. "He loves to tell jokes and keeps us laughing. He always smiles.

"The only time I've seen him upset is when the machines in the lab break down."

"He never gets angry with us," says Kristin Scheibe, third-year student from Washington, Iowa. "David is nice, honest, and a funny teacher. He has a good sense of humor and is good at explaining things.

"He is very patient with us, even if students are arguing," she says. "He stands there and lets us finish the argument. When we've calmed down, he then discusses the problem with us."

Hazelwood always has time to talk with those who are troubled.

"One important thing I tell students is, 'If you don't like the way something is going in your life, then change it. You're the only one who can.'"



Playing Chess With a Champion

To broaden members' cultural and strategic horizons, the NTID Chess/Backgammon Club sponsored a special visitor, Sergei Salov, the top-ranked deaf Soviet chess champion, in October.

Salov was kept busy during his three-day visit to RIT playing five-minute "lightning" chess matches; six simultaneous games "blind-

folded" (he could not look at the chessboard, but was told each move once and had to remember the board layout); a challenge match with Russell Chauvenet, the top-ranked deaf American chess player; and a tempo tournament-lightning round of 20-minute matches. Dr. Simon Carmel, assistant professor in the general education instruction department, was the club's liaison with Salov.



Cutting the ribbon From left to right, Ron Bitner, member of the board of the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester; Ed Rensi, president of McDonald's USA; Ronald Walker, third-year architectural technology student; Robert Folts, retired member of the Rochester Telephone Pioneers Club; Karen O'Brien, president of the Rochester Telephone Pioneers Club; and Ronald McDonald himself dedicate the newly built playhouse for children staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Rochester, a home away from home for families with children undergoing medical treatment. Walker designed the playhouse, a replica of a medieval castle, as part of a class project last year.

Lyon Lecturer Discusses A Prosperous Career

Farid Bozorgi, 1990 Edmund Lyon Lecturer, brought his commercial expertise to NTID October 22-25. Bozorgi, a 1976 RIT communication design graduate who died December 11, 1990, was senior commercial artist at Lockheed Aeronautical Systems Company in Burbank, California, where he had worked for more than 10 years.

During his NTID visit, Bozorgi presented a series of lectures to students and faculty and staff members, explaining the demands and expectations of a prosperous career in design.

The lectureship was established in 1980 by twin daughters of the late Edmund Lyon, a man dedicated to the education of deaf children. Deaf professionals distinguished in their fields are selected for the lectureship.

NEWSMAKERS

• **Dr. Gerald Bateman**, instructional developer in the instructional design and evaluation department, received a doctorate in May from the University of Rochester. His dissertation was titled "The Political Activity of Adult Deaf Leaders and Their Constituents in Rochester, New York."

• Members of NTID's **instructional television and media services department** (ITV) teamed up with deaf artists across the nation last year to produce an award-winning videotape, *Search for Vision: Deaf Artists in Profile*. The video, which explores the contributions of deaf artists, including several RIT graduates—**Charles Baird**, **Steven DeShetler**, **Kim Hurdelbrink**, and **Wendy Maruyama**—was named Best Educational/Documentary Film of 1990 by the Media Access Office, Inc., a California state agency, in association with the California Governor's Commission for Employment of Disabled Persons and the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. ITV department members who brought the program to life are **William Anilosky**, **David Conyer**, **Marilyn Enders**, **Chris Nuccitelli**, **Christopher Pruszynski**, **Frank Romeo**, **Ruth Verlinde**, and **Paula Zack**. Dr. **Thomas Raco**, assistant dean and director of the School of Visual Communications, served as the program's executive director.

• **Michael Kleper**, professor in the printing production technology department, had his seventh book, *The Illustrated Handbook of Desktop Publishing and Typesetting*, published simultaneously in paperback and Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) formats, signifying a "first" for a book of this type.

• **Dr. Edward Maruggi**, acting chairperson of the industrial technologies department, had his textbook, *Technical Graphics: Electronic Worktext*, published by Merrill Publishing Co., translated into Italian under the title *Techniche Grafiche per la Protezione*.

• NTID's **National Advisory Group** (NAG) welcomed two new members into the fold last fall. **Mildred Oberkotter**, a profoundly deaf, active community volunteer in New York City and graduate student in the School of Social Work at Fordham University, has a strong interest in deaf education. She has served on the boards of directors for both the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and the American Dance Theater of the Deaf. **Frank Steenburgh**, vice president of the systems reprographics marketing division of Xerox Corporation in Rochester, New York, has served on the Marketing Advisory Council at the University of Rochester and as a board member of the Xerox Recreation Association.



Planting for the future Edward Zyats, first-year engineering technology student from Scranton, Pennsylvania, plants shrubbery along the sidewalk at the Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf. Zyats was among more than 170 students in NTID's "Freshman Seminar" classes who helped the club clean up, landscape, and paint its new building last fall. The course is designed to offer entering students opportunities to enhance academic, ethical, intellectual, personal, and social decision-making skills in order to maximize their college experience.



Dear Friends of NTID,

The cornerstone of RIT programs is the goal of preparing students "to earn a living and to live a life." More than 230 programs offered through RIT's nine colleges, including NTID, prepare students to contribute and succeed in professional and technical careers.

This issue of Focus features deaf RIT graduates who have succeeded professionally in a highly unusual manner. The graduates interviewed in "Minding Their Own Business," on page 26, have embraced the risky and self-satisfying venture of owning and operating their own businesses. In addition to discussing financial concerns and entrepreneurial pride, several of these graduates also indicated that the learning and growth opportunities experienced at RIT served as the cornerstones of self-confidence and determination needed to undertake their own businesses.

These graduates exemplify the spirit of "to earn a living and to live a life" and demonstrate the versatility and potential that such a philosophy, supported by strong academic and practical experiences, can mean to students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. R. Rose". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

*Dr. M. Richard Rose
President, RIT*



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

A patchwork of AIDS awareness activities, p. 3.

