

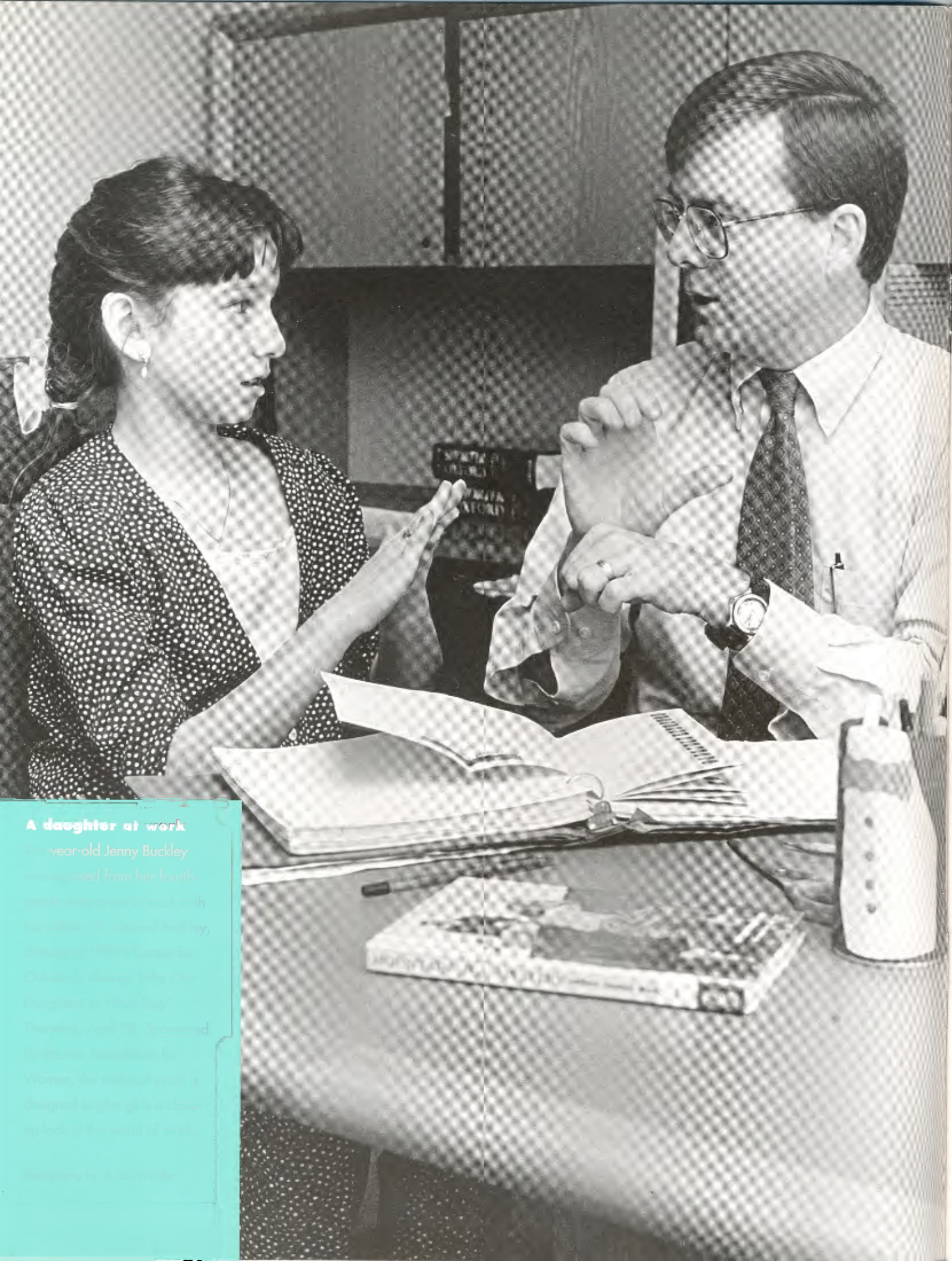
S U M M E R 1 9 9 4

FOCUS

NTID

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





A daughter at work

Ten-year-old Jenny Buckley was excused from her fourth-grade class to go to work with her father, Dr. David Buckley, director of NIH's Center for Outcomes, during "Take Our Daughters to Work Day" Thursday, April 20. Sponsored by the Ms. Foundation for Women, the national event is designed to give girls a closer-up look at the world of work.

Photography by A. Sue Weiler

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State of body, state of mind



ABOUT THE COVER

International opportunities abound in the national Fulbright Grant Program, which counts three NTID faculty members among its ranks. For a closer look at these world travelers, see "Scholarly Destinations" on page 14.

Cover photography by
A. Sue Weisler

FOCUS NTID

FOCUS is published by the Marketing Communications Department at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York.

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The views expressed in guest columns do not necessarily reflect the position of NTID or FOCUS magazine.

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

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

My annual State of the Institute Address, delivered to NTID community members in January, reflected upon many of the themes that have become familiar to those who work and study at the Institute as well as to those who are familiar with NTID through our various publications. Among those themes, which are addressed in this issue of *FOCUS*, are the continuing advancement of affirmative action goals, the increased impact of NTID nationally and internationally through outreach efforts, and the progress we are making in implementing our strategic plan.

Faithful readers of *FOCUS* know that enhancing the recruitment and retention of students as well as faculty and staff members who are deaf or members of minority groups has been an Institute priority since 1985. While the growth in the numbers of NTID's deaf and minority student and employee populations is gratifying, it's even more satisfying to get to know the individuals who make up NTID's increasingly diverse community.

You'll meet some of these individuals through "Back to (the head of the) Class," which begins on page 9. The proof that NTID prepares its students well for meaningful careers is no more evident than with these deaf RIT graduates who have returned to NTID classrooms to teach the students of today. (You will meet other deaf RIT graduates and read their reflections on their careers in "Great Expectations" on page 19.)

Through educational outreach programs, the Institute is reaching out to the students of tomorrow.

"Taking the First Step," on page 22, describes NTID's efforts to create a series of videotapes for hearing parents of young deaf children. The videos assure parents, who often are unprepared to face the challenges of raising a deaf child, that they are not alone and emphasize the importance of early intervention.

NTID is collaborating internally as well as with external organizations. The Dean's Student Leadership Advisory Group, comprising student leaders from a number of campus organizations, has been implemented to encourage student participation in Institute decision making and to increase administrators' awareness of student concerns and goals. This group is but one example of the Institute's focus on collaboration and shared governance as we work to implement strategic planning principles. Read about this important group in "A Chance to Be Heard" on page 12.

Finally, I must mention with pride one additional story. "Scholarly Destinations," on page 14, discusses the experiences of three NTID faculty members who over the past three years have earned prestigious Fulbright awards, which allow scholars to pursue educational objectives abroad. Any college would proudly boast such a scholarly achievement. That three of our faculty members have so recently received these stipends is indicative of the quality educational opportunities that NTID provides both students and faculty members.

William E. Castle

Dr. William E. Castle

AROUND THE QUAD

Open house provides a glimpse of college life



A closer look Above, Paula Schroth, left, and Xiu Kwan, both of Bradford, Massachusetts, compare notes; right, Jennifer Smith, third-year ophthalmic optical finishing technology student, demonstrates lab equipment to visitors.

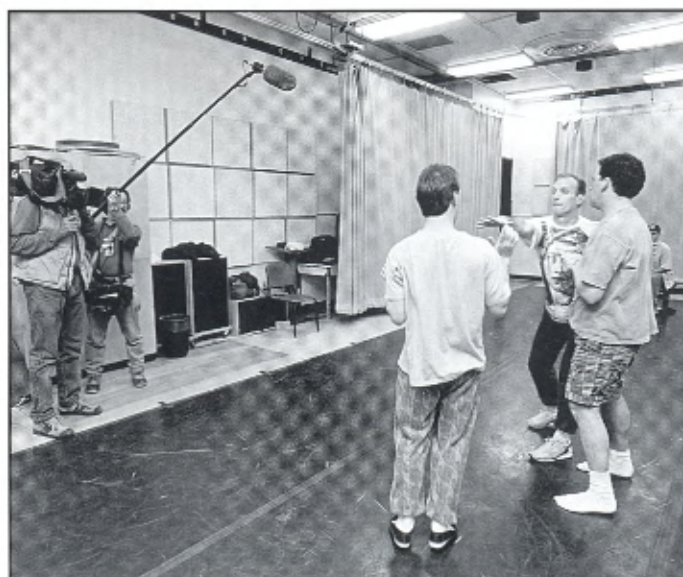


Hosted by the department of recruitment and admissions, the daylong event featured exhibits, demonstrations and workshops presented by staff and faculty members and students representing NTID's technical programs, class observations, a student panel, parent seminars, and campus tours. In addition, visitors had ample opportunity to meet with faculty members and financial aid representatives as well as current students.

"This open house provided a wonderful opportunity for students and parents to learn more about NTID and its programs and to gather information first-hand," says Shirley Baker,

admissions counselor and coordinator of the event. "The event also helped prospective students gain insight into campus life and how NTID can meet their needs. We hope to make it an annual event."

In April, about 500 people attended NTID's first open house for prospective students and their parents, high school teachers and guidance counselors, program directors, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and other support personnel from throughout the United States and Canada.



A dream come true Dennis Webster, Michael Thomas, and Scotty Zwicker rehearse a scene from the RIT Dance Company's adaptation of *Cinderella* while a production crew films for the *CBS News Sunday Morning* program.

CBS news program features NTID

NTID's performing arts programs were featured in a segment of the *CBS News Sunday Morning* program, hosted by Charles Kuralt, January 30.

The segment featured performances by Sunshine Too (NTID's traveling theater outreach group of three deaf and three hearing performers) and rehearsals for the February production of *Steel Magnolias* as well as the RIT Dance

Company's April production of *Cinderella*, choreographed and directed by Michael Thomas, artist-in-residence in the performing arts department. Also in the spotlight were practices of NTID musical groups as well as footage of campus life.

Students George Gdovichin of Pittsburgh and Scotty Zwicker and Kim Brown, both of Rochester, were featured on the program.

NEWSMAKERS

Dr. Shirley Allen, associate professor in the general education instruction department, received Quota International's Seventeenth District Woman of the Year Award in October.

Barbara Fox, assistant professor in the liberal arts support department, joined the board of advisors of the New York Foundation for the Arts in January. Fox will be involved in policy development and direction and also will be responsible for nominating panelists to award grants to individual artists.

Rochester (New York) School for the Deaf named Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, associate dean for student affairs, president of its board of directors in January. Hurwitz is the first deaf person to hold that position.

Vicki Hurwitz, developmental educational specialist in the student life department, was elected to a four-year term as vice president of Deaf Women United at its fifth national conference in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in October.

Karen Kimmel, visiting assistant professor in the liberal arts support department, and Marsha Young, instructional developer in the Center for Research, Teaching, and Learning, introduced a pilot distance learning course, "English Composition for Deaf Learners," during the spring semester at Rochester School for the Deaf. An RIT Provost Productivity Grant supported initial development of the course and materials. The course is a prerequisite to RIT liberal arts courses.

Dr. Harry Lang, research associate in the educational research and development department, and Robert Menchel, assistant professor in the physics and technical mathematics department, each received a 1993-94 Ronald D. Dodge Faculty Development Grant, a \$1,000 award given annually since 1986 by the Dodge family of Rochester to support RIT faculty members for a variety of academic and research projects related to the education of deaf students. Lang will examine perceptions of the learning process by deaf students and their teachers. Menchel will look at the role of college professors and support personnel in college classes that include deaf students.

Photographs by Antonio Toscano, associate professor in the photo/media technologies department, were part of a 25th anniversary exhibit at the Galleria D'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Bergamo, Italy, last summer. Toscano's photographs, which are part of a series representing Little Italy in Brooklyn, New York, are now among the gallery's permanent collection.

In October, three NTID faculty members conducted presentations and workshops at the conference of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. Larry Quinsland, associate professor in the office of faculty and staff development, presented "Workshop for New Developers" with Dr. Dee Fink of the University of Oklahoma. Quinsland and Dr. Gary Long, associate professor in the educational research and development department, conducted a pre-conference workshop, "Faculty Consultant as Counselor: Issues and Techniques." In addition, Keith Mousley, assistant professor in the physics and technical mathematics department, and Quinsland presented "Faculty Consultants Forum," in which fellow faculty consultants presented and analyzed cases of cultural conflict.

Foundations of support



Sasakawa scholars Karl Reddy, far left, from South Africa, and Sindile Mhlanga, far right, from Zimbabwe, are NTID's first two international students to receive Sasakawa scholarships. NTID Director William Castle, second from left, and Kozo Tomabechi of the Sasakawa Foundation Board of Directors presented the awards in March.

NTID received major scholarship support from several foundations and individuals this year. Overall giving to NTID this year has exceeded \$2.8 million.

The Ryoichi Sasakawa Endowment Fund, which was established last summer through a generous donation of \$1 million by the Sasakawa Foundation of Tokyo, Japan, received a second \$1 million gift in March to support international deaf students from developing countries at RIT.

In addition, two new scholarships were created this year. Allen and Gloria Gopen established their named scholarship fund to support students in good academic standing, and Dr. William E. Castle, director of NTID and RIT vice president for government relations, and his wife, Diane, professor in the audiology department, created the Dr. Genji Murai Endowment Fund to support international interests of NTID.

This year, gifts were made to the following scholarships: \$10,000 from Maxine Forman to the Maurice and Maxine Forman Scholarship Fund; \$15,000 from Mildred Hall to the Mildred F. Hall Scholarship Fund; \$10,000 from Mr. and Mrs. Milton Ohringer to the Milton H. and Ray B. Ohringer Scholarship Fund and the Florence L. Ohringer Art Scholarship Fund; \$10,000 from the Jephson Educational Trust to support performing arts scholarships; \$7,500 from Mr. and Mrs. Roland Garlinghouse to the Garlinghouse Endowment; \$5,000 from Edgar Sargent to the Elizabeth Dunlap Sargent Memorial Scholarship Fund; and \$2,000 from Sara Kuhnert to the Sara L. Kuhnert Scholarship Fund.

NTID now has 42 scholarship funds that assist students in financial need and recognize academic excellence. This year, students received more than \$185,000 in awards.



Account of life Camille Jeter and Robert DeMayo were among cast members of the National Theatre of the Deaf to bring *Under Milk Wood* to life.

Reality and fantasy mix *Under Milk Wood*

The Tony Award-winning National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) presented two performances of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* in March in the Robert F. Panara Theatre.

The 26-year-old company from Chester, Connecticut, provided audience members with a humorous keyhole-peek at life in a small Welsh fishing village. The play, which has been

presented throughout the country, has been praised as one of the most direct, funny, and loving accounts of what it is like to be alive.

David Hays, NTD's founding artistic director, says that *Under Milk Wood* is perfectly suited to the company's unique dramatic style, which blends sign language with spoken words.

NCE hosts employer network seminar

NTID's Center on Employment (NCE) hosted a two-day seminar in January to get feedback from employers on the skills and training they seek from NTID co-op students and graduates and to offer employers an opportunity to interview and recruit students.

The event, which took place on campus, included a panel discussion by employers of co-op students, tours of the Hugh L. Carey and Lyndon Baines Johnson buildings, and oppor-

tunities to meet and network with NTID faculty members.

Participant Rick Marchewka, manager of Integrated Systems Solutions Corporation, an IBM services company in Rochester, received a recognition award from NCE for his ongoing commitment to hire NTID students, provide host sites for NCE workshops, and support opportunities for others in his organization to learn communication strategies to better work with employees who are deaf.

Bowling for dollars

Fifty-eight students and 98 faculty and staff members squared off in good humor during NTID's sixth annual bowling tournament in February. The event, which this year benefitted NTID's Robert F. Panara Scholarship Fund, raised \$750.

The winning team, "Second Act," included Karen Courtney, Donna Lange, and Paul Taylor, all of the applied computer technology department; Daniel Pike of the business occupations department; and James Biser of the business/computer science support department.

ASL Lecture Series focuses on diversity

Members of the deaf community who view American Sign Language (ASL) from an ethnic perspective were presenters during the 1993-94 ASL Lecture Series, titled "ASL and Diversity." The five presentations, which were made between February and May, addressed such topics as ASL and the African-American identity and ASL in the context

of Hispanic culture. Yutaka Osugi, doctoral candidate in linguistics at the University of Rochester, New York, kicked off the series February 11 with a presentation titled "ASL is beautiful; JSL [Japanese Sign Language] is also beautiful."

The annual series shares information about ASL with community members, among them educators, researchers, and curriculum developers.

The high road

by Kathryn Schmitz

If travelers in Western New York find some roads particularly well designed or easy to drive on, they might applaud Elizabeth Corker, who graduated in 1992 with an AAS degree in civil engineering technology. As an engineering technician with Rochester's Bergmann Associates, Engineers, Architects, Surveyors P.C., Corker has helped design several roads in Rochester and Corning, a city 90 miles south of Rochester.

The 33-year-old Illinois native picked civil engineering as a way to combine her computer technology aptitude with her love for the outdoors.

"I've always wanted to work outdoors," says Corker. "At NTID, when I was trying to find a career that would pay well, I saw a poster of a civil engineering graduate who was working outside. I took the opportunity to explore that career and discovered that it was a perfect way to begin."

Corker recognizes that she needs additional training before she can become a project engineer and assume responsibility for the actual construction of projects. For now, she supports the design of projects with her drafting skills, computations, and problem-solving techniques.



Elizabeth Corker

With design notes from company engineers, Corker uses computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) technology to prepare working drawings from survey and inspection notes. She also prepares plans, profiles, cross sections, and supporting tables and details for the road construction projects on which she works.

"I'm learning many new things," says Corker. "My training from NTID really helps. Learning from the NTID professors who are engineers themselves helped me understand the civil engineering field. Courses such as surveying and mapping gave me the background I need for my job now, and I enjoyed those courses because they were held outdoors even in the winter when it was freezing.

"Sometimes I feel as if I'm asking unnecessary questions on the job, but the people I work with think they're good questions, so I'm becoming more confident," she adds.

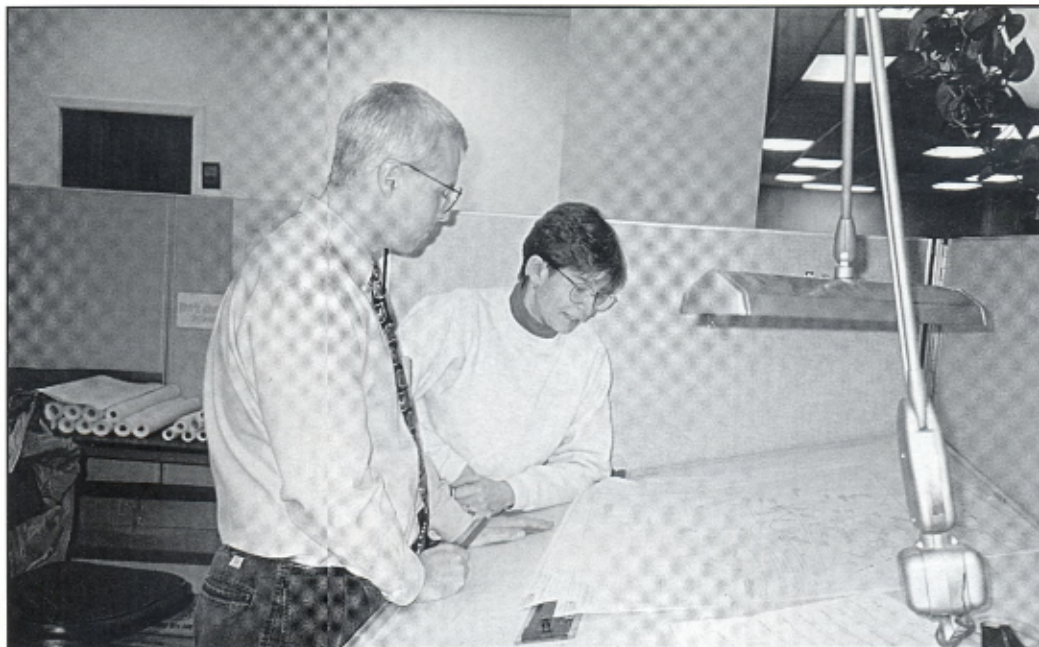
The first deaf person hired by Bergmann Associates, Corker joined the company in May 1992 to work on a new expressway the company was designing in Corning.

"Beth fit the job description," says Dennis Judson, senior transportation designer and Corker's supervisor. "The position required someone with a computer background and basic knowledge of civil engineering, and we knew she had all of the qualifications because of her NTID education.

"We hired her for the Corning project," he adds, "and we retained her after it was completed because we like what she does. She's earned her right to be here."

Corker's original responsibility was to develop the cross sections of the proposed highway, calculate the quantity of earth that had to be moved, and prepare plans and drawings.

After the Corning project ended, she asked for the opportunity to move from manual



Mapping out the next stage Corker consults with supervisor Dennis Judson about her CADD drawing.

"My training from NTID really helps. Learning from the NTID professors who are engineers themselves helped me understand the civil engineering field."

drafting to CADD. Her expanded responsibilities now include working with three of the company's six engineers rather than just one.

Judson supports Corker and her colleagues, ensuring that all employees understand their assignments.

"I just give guidance and let people do their work," says Judson, "and if they make mistakes, I let them learn. I don't treat Beth any differently."

Corker takes pride in pulling her share of the load on company projects, working as a member of a team. She also enjoys working independently and does that well, as Denny Burdick, fellow engineering technician, observes.

"She can block everything out and really concentrate," says Burdick, adding, "She's a quick learner, always ready to try things."

As an example, Corker cites her quick self-instruction on the company's CADD computer system.

"I just referred to the instructions and practiced using the tutorial guide for a day or so," she says, "and then I started drawing project details on the computer."

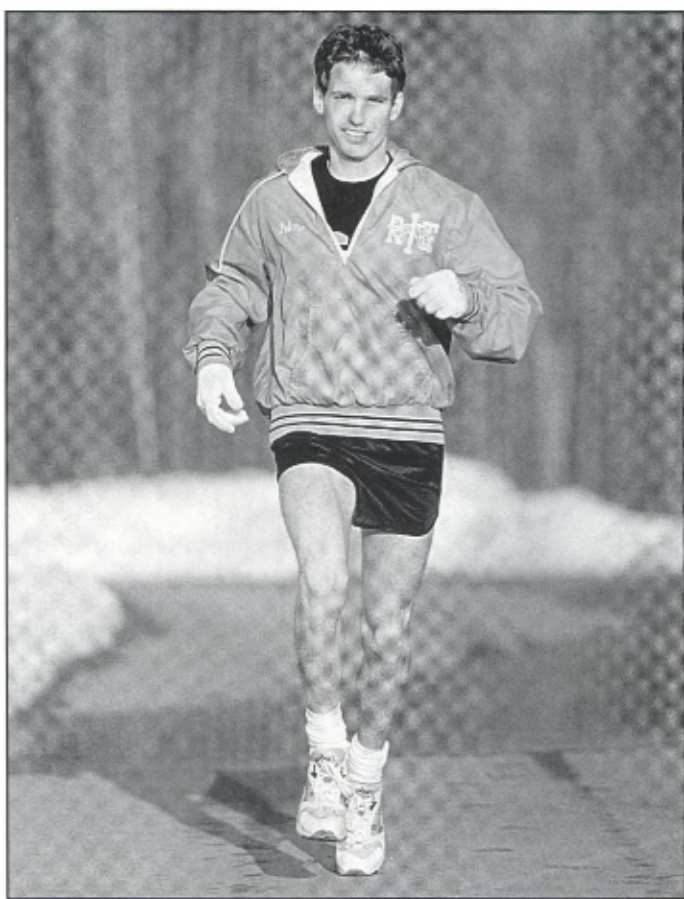
The company recognized Corker in November 1992 for her hard work and progress by naming her Employee of the Month and engraving her name on a plaque in the office entrance.

Corker's road to success with Bergmann Associates includes plans to pursue two career goals: to return to college to earn her bachelor's degree in civil engineering and to take classes in environmental engineering.

"I'm not exactly sure where I'll be in the future," she says, "but I do know I want to develop my skills so that I can have a positive effect on the environment and help preserve what we have now." ■

Going the distance

by Kathleen S. Smith



Greg Coughlan

Greg Coughlan's artistic future lies with his hands, but it's his feet that have brought him this far.

The three-time All-American runner, who is studying graphic design, has covered thousands of miles since coming to NTID five years ago.

"I was just a small-town boy from Massachusetts," he recalls. "RIT seemed like such a big place to me...."

But Coughlan, whose older sister, Elaine, was an RIT student when he enrolled, adjusted well to college life, and he thrived in the demanding world of college athletics.

He came with impressive credentials from Duxbury High School, where he was a three-time captain of the cross-country and basketball teams, played ice hockey and baseball, and wrestled. He had set numerous school running records.

Peter Todd, Coughlan's track and cross-country coach at RIT, recalls that Coughlan's success came from "an unbelievable amount" of hard work.

"We've had a lot of great runners at RIT over the past 30 years, but none can match Greg's four trips to the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] championships."

At the NCAAAs, Coughlan placed 20th in the Division III Cross-Country Championship. He won fifth place in the 5,000 meters at the winter 1993 NCAA Indoor Championship and set an RIT record in the process. Coughlan also was All-American in the outdoor 5,000 meters.

He continued his streak at the Summer 1993 World Games for the Deaf in Bulgaria, winning gold medals in the 5,000 meters, 10,000 meters, and marathon.

Coughlan's athletic as well as academic accomplishments haven't gone unnoticed on campus. He was named RIT co-senior men's athlete of the year

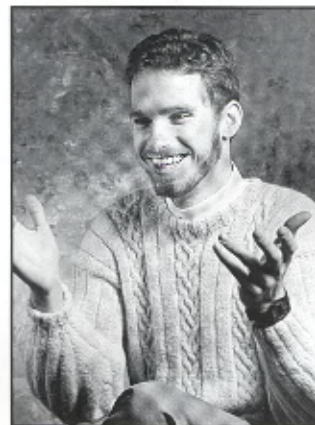
in 1993. He also won the Ellingson Award for academic excellence in 1992.

"My schedule was pretty stressful," he says of combining the rigors of his academic program with a grueling training regimen.

Coughlan, 24, completed his collegiate eligibility (each athlete is allowed to compete for four years) in 1993. He still runs to keep in shape—"mostly on weekends"—but finds his schedule full completing the requirements for his bachelor's degree program in graphic design. He plans to graduate in 1995 and look for a job, possibly in the advertising field.

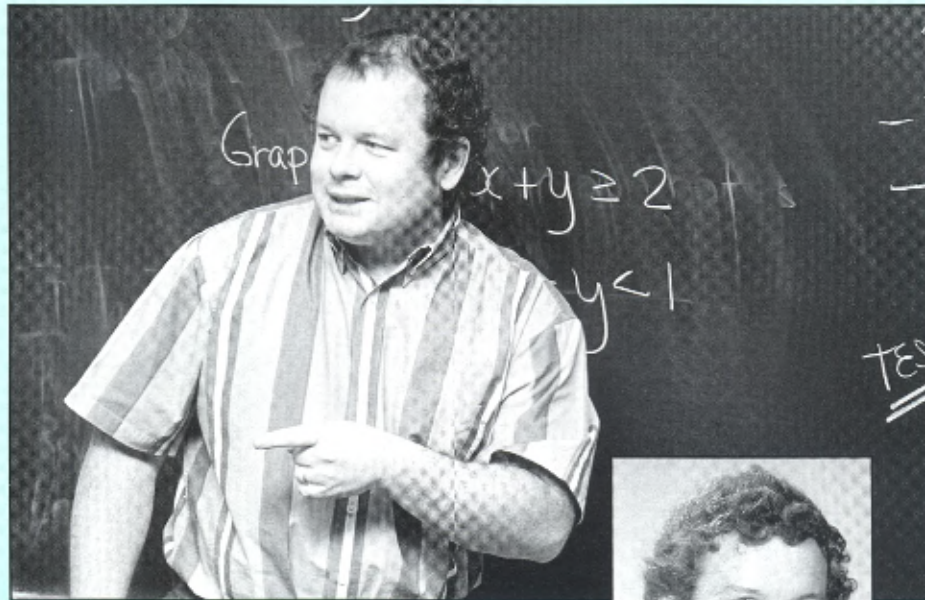
As might be expected, he draws a parallel between running and his career aspirations in graphic design.

"Both are deadline oriented, and you have to work hard to meet those important deadlines," he says. "And when you're finished, you feel good." ■



Back to (the head of the) Class

by Pamela Seabon



Still adding it up Keith Mousley makes a point during class; inset, Mousley as a math student in the late 1970s.



They know their way around the halls and classrooms of NTID. They have an immediate and easy rapport with students, and they obviously have a special commitment to teaching at NTID.

Who are they?

They are NTID graduates who, increasingly in recent years, are returning to the Institute not to learn, but to teach. Last November, during NTID's 25th anniversary convocation, several of those graduates who now hold professional positions at NTID participated in a panel discussion titled "The Great Mandella: Students Returning as Faculty."

For these graduates, the panel offered a chance to reflect on what they've accomplished, where they've been, and where they're going.

Dr. Larry Quinsland, panel organizer and moderator and associate professor in the office of faculty and staff development, says, "These professionals represent skilled, competent, caring individuals who not only share their professional talents, but their personal experiences as well."

"Here's my chance to give something back to my alma mater."

Quinsland, who has been at NTID for 19 years, recalls how Dr. William Castle, director of NTID and RIT vice president for government relations, prophesied two decades ago that students "were the teachers of tomorrow."

"We're preparing our students now to come back as professionals," Castle had noted, and Quinsland says, "His projection could not have been more accurate."

Keith Mousley, assistant professor in the physics and technical mathematics department, is one such graduate who shared his experiences as one of the convocation panelists.

"A wonderful feeling came over me when I learned that I had gotten a job at NTID," says Mousley, who graduated from RIT's mathematics program in 1980. "I felt a certain connection to and pride in the Institute. I thought, 'Here's my chance to give something back to my alma mater.'"

Armed with technical skills, business savvy, and awareness of the communication needs of RIT's deaf students, Mousley and other returning graduates offer "significant benefits to the Institute," according to Quinsland.

"These employees serve as role models who understand Deaf culture and heritage," he says.



All the right moves John ("J.T.") Reid, right, talks with student Tim Albert, president of NTID's Ebony Club; inset, Reid during his college wrestling days.

John ("J.T.") Reid, admissions counselor in the recruitment and admissions department, saw some of those traits in his friend, Dr. Shirley Allen.

"She was incredible," Reid says of Allen, associate professor in the general education instruction department. "She was my role model and my advocate."

Today, Reid, 1979 social work graduate, gives rather than gets that attention. He, along with other graduates-turned-professionals, represents a new breed of university professional.

Twenty-five years ago, most of NTID's faculty members were hearing people spirited away from industrial careers to "take a chance" at a new institute. Most had never had any contact with deaf individuals, nor did they have much teaching experience.

What they had was practical experience in the technical programs that NTID offered. Once hired, they began taking sign language classes and learned strategies for teaching deaf students.

By the mid-'70s, however, it became apparent that the Institute required

more than instructors with technical expertise and a willingness to learn sign language. The Institute needed more professionals who are deaf themselves.

Elissa Olsen is such a professional. The 1980 computer systems graduate worked for 13 years at General Motors/EDS (Electronic Data Systems) before becoming a visiting instructor in the department of applied computer technology last fall.

"Nothing thrills me more than to know that my students completely understand the information I've taught



A wealth of experience Elissa Olsen worked for 13 years in industry before returning to teach at NTID; inset, Olsen as a computer systems student in the late 1970s.

in class," says Olsen, who began teaching at NTID as an adjunct professor in 1986. "It's an invigorating feeling to know that what I have to offer is being processed and appreciated by others."

Like Mousley, Olsen believes that students respect her familiarity with the pressures of college life and her Deaf cultural upbringing. She often shares personal experiences with students.

Olsen, whose parents and siblings are deaf, is a native American Sign Language (ASL) user with a strong appreciation of her deaf heritage. She attended a residential school where she had both deaf and hearing teachers.

Coming to NTID for college was a cultural awakening for her. She was surprised at the variety of communication methods used and soon came to believe that as long as people communicate with one another, methods don't matter.

She sees much of that variety in today's NTID classrooms.

"Our students come from mainstream environments as well as from residential schools where different communication strategies are used," she says. "I see it as my responsibility to adjust to the communication needs of the students. I am willing to do all that it takes to ensure that my students learn."

"My students know that I care about and want only the best for them," she

"Nothing thrills me more than to know that my students completely understand the information I've taught in class."

adds. "I often remind them that they have options and control over whatever they choose to do."

Dorothy Wilkins, assistant professor in the Center for Sign Language and Interpreting Education, shares Olsen's feelings.

"Students are more outspoken and aware of their rights and take more responsibility for their education," says Wilkins, 1978 medical laboratory technology graduate. "That's the biggest difference I see between students of 10 to 15 years ago and those of today."

Wilkins believes that NTID's early students were more "passive" and required and expected guidance from

faculty and staff members. She reasons that because the Institute was so new, students were not sure what was required to achieve a successful college education. They relied on faculty and counselors to tell them what program of study suited them best as well as which courses to take.

However, she believes that today's students are more confident and take more control over their education. They know their rights as students and expect them to be honored.

"I feel good about how seriously students take their education," Wilkins says. "They are proud, confident, competent, and committed individuals who understand the importance of an education and what it takes to succeed in life."

"I'm happy to be a part of their education."



"Happy to be a part of their education...."
Dorothy Wilkins teaches a sign language class; inset, Wilkins as an NTID student.



Student advisory group offers **A Chance to Be Heard**

by Deborah R. Waltzer



Talking it out Students Alok Doshi, left, and Karl Reddy, far right, watch as Robert Rice makes a point during an advisory group meeting.

Pepperoni pizza and sodas aren't the only items on the menu during meetings of the Dean's Student Leadership Advisory Group. A healthy serving of stimulating dialogue about campus issues provides the group's participants with food for thought as well.

Composed of NTID administrators and student leaders, this new group has met monthly since its inception last November to discuss campus concerns, including communication requirements

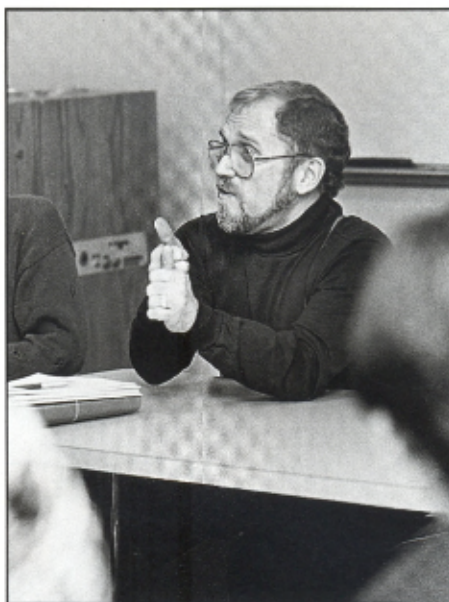
for faculty members, TTY accessibility on campus, the Institute's attempt to balance technical and liberal arts course requirements, and modifications to the Institute's financial reporting system.

Meetings are attended by leaders of student organizations, including NTID's Student Congress (NSC), Asian Deaf Club, Bible Believers' Club, and Ebony Club as well as five sororities and fraternities. In addition, a representative from each of NTID's seven center-based student advisory committees attends meetings.

"The advisory group is one mechanism we're using to ensure that we maintain a continuing dialogue with students, in this instance through elected student leaders," says Dr. James DeCaro, NTID dean, who convenes the group with Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, associate dean for student affairs. "Our students are incredibly bright and articulate, and we need to listen to what they have to say."

Participation in the group "gives students an opportunity to develop their

Let's work together Dean James DeCaro convenes the advisory group as a way to foster ongoing two-way communication between students and administrators.



leadership skills as they address critical issues that affect their well-being," says Hurwitz.

Robert Rice, coordinator of the department of human development's student development educator program and one of the more outspoken student participants, sees additional benefits.

"This group has the potential to become the true political voice of students," says Rice, fourth-year business management student. "Not only does it offer an ideal opportunity to work with NTID's administrators, but participation fosters collaboration and unity among its student members as well. By realizing that we're all student leaders from the same Institute, and not from segregated organizations, the bond among us becomes strengthened."

As with any newly formed organization, the advisory group's members are getting to know one another. While students and administrators currently sit on opposite sides of the conference table, that likely will change as both parties become better acquainted. And while consistent attendance among student leaders was shaky during the first few gatherings, it improved at subsequent meetings.

During the mid-March meeting, four members of RIT's strategic planning executive committee were on hand to listen to concerns of deaf students who are enrolled in RIT's seven other colleges. Four major issues—difficulty of transfer from NTID to another RIT college, lack of awareness of Deaf culture by RIT faculty and staff members, the need to improve interactions with hearing faculty members, and classroom

communication accessibility strategies—were discussed.

According to the eight student leaders present at the meeting, some problems faced by cross-registered students, who currently comprise more than 30 percent of the deaf student body, include too few classroom interpreters, faculty and staff members' lack of understanding about the use of TTYs and telephone relay services, and formidable paperwork and testing hurdles for enrolling in RIT baccalaureate programs.

While brainstorming solutions to these problems, the group envisioned real-time captioning for classroom lectures, expanded interpreting coverage, comfortable communication with instructors, and state-of-the-art technology in all classrooms.

Dr. Thomas Plough, RIT executive vice president and provost, was invited to attend a follow-up meeting with the advisory group two weeks later to continue the discussion.

"I feel that our administrators are listening to us, because they make the effort to bring campus decision makers to our meetings," says Erin Esposito, second-year professional and technical communications student and student development educator. "They all seem to be concerned and are taking our thoughts into account."

Numerous agenda items—suggested by both students and administrators—will fill the student advisory group's plate for the months ahead: curriculum modifications, ease of transferring academic credits from NTID to other RIT programs, communication accessibility, and building renovations. While student leaders and administrators don't always see eye-to-eye on every issue, all agree that formation of the group is an important step in the right direction.

"I believe that our administrators pay a lot of attention to us and answer our questions to the best of their knowledge," says Christine Rodas, vice president of the Bible Believers' Club and first-year educational interpreting student, who, like other student leaders, solicits input on issues from her fellow club members.

At the end of a recent meeting, as DeCaro grabbed a slice of pizza while racing out the door to another meeting, he paused to reflect about working closely with students to create a better NTID.

"These students are fantastic," said DeCaro. "Participating in this advisory group is one way of making sure that we know what's on their minds."

"I believe that many of us sincerely want to see improvements within NTID," notes Rice, "but if people decide to be lazy and sleep instead, they won't get anything done. We all have to pinch ourselves awake and get involved in order to make NTID an even better place." ■



Three NTID Fulbright fellows are world travelers with

SCHOLARLY DESTINATIONS

by Kathleen S. Smith

■ ■ ■ memories From left: Dr. Simon Carmel receives a bag of candy from a Russian friend during one of his visits to that country; Dr. Jeffrey Porter and son, Glenn, pose in front of Yorkminster Abbey in England; and Dr. John-Allen Payne addresses a college class in Veliko Tmovo, Bulgaria.



Their reasons for applying were varied, their destinations spanned the globe, and their lengths of stay ranged from three months to two years. What NTID faculty members Drs. Simon Carmel, John-Allen Payne, and Jeffrey Porter have in common is the internationally respected Fulbright Grant Program, which allows 2,000 U.S. recipients yearly to travel abroad to work toward increasing mutual understanding between people of the United States and those of other countries.

Carmel, assistant professor in the general education instruction department, left in June to spend six months in the Russian cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg; Kiev, Ukraine; and Minsk, Republic of Belarus, researching cultural characteristics of deaf people in that part of the world.

Payne, associate professor in the English department, spent two academic years—September 1991 to June 1993—teaching at the Cyril and Methodius University in Veliko Trnovo, Bulgaria.

Porter, associate professor in the liberal arts support department, spent three months in 1992 in York, England, where he compared how the University of York serves its disabled student population with how RIT works with a similar student group.

Can you be ready to go in two weeks?

Dr. John-Allen Payne applied to the Fulbright program in early 1990 after seeing a job announcement for the Bulgarian teaching job in a Fulbright

publication. Having previously visited Bulgaria three times, and surmising that fewer people might compete for the position because English is not widely spoken in that country, Payne sent in his proposal.

A year and a half later, in September 1991, he received a formal invitation to teach American literature at the Bulgarian university, leaving him but two weeks to wrap up his work at NTID, move to Bulgaria, and prepare to teach 120 students.

When he arrived, he learned—25 minutes before his first lecture—that his assignment had been changed and that he was to teach stylistics and rhetoric.

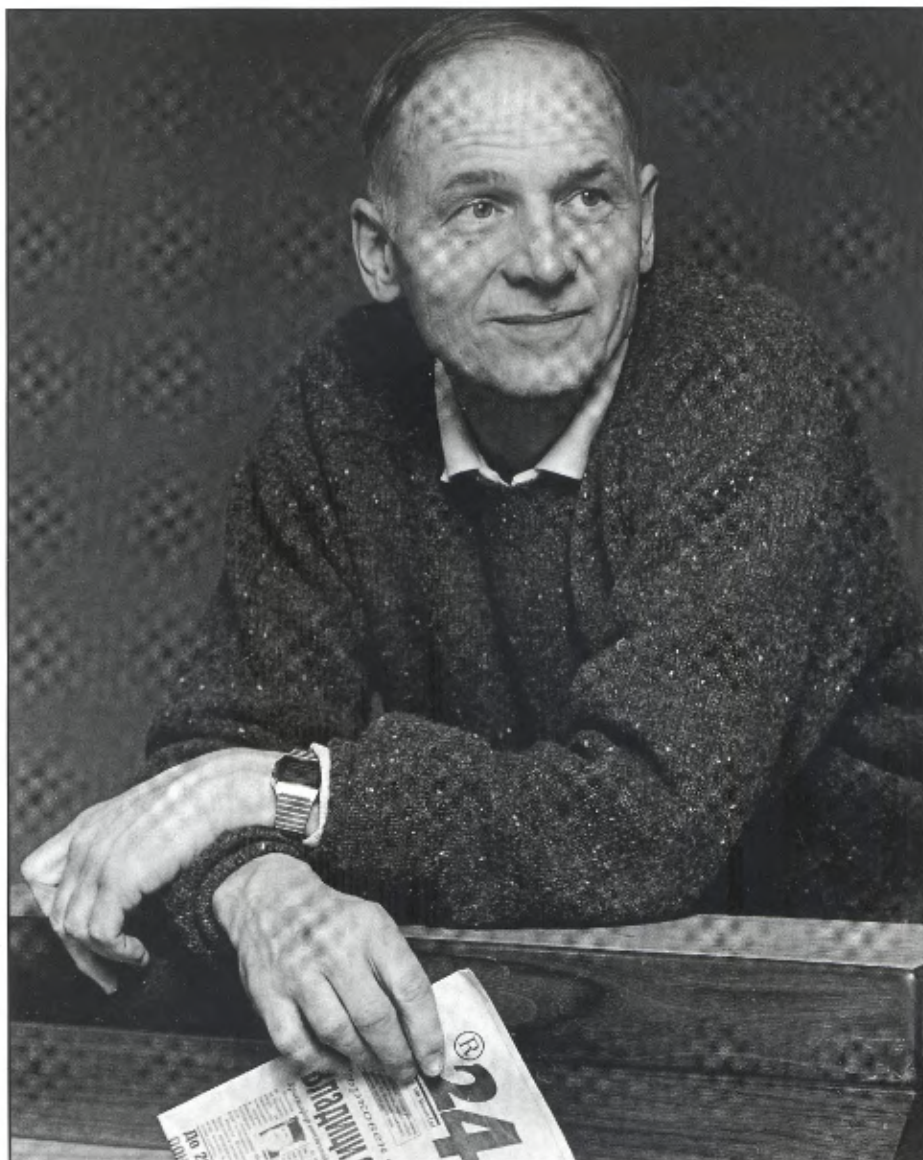
"I pretended that I was in total control," he recalls of that first class meeting, "but inside, I felt quite insecure because of the sudden program change."

Outside of class, Payne immersed himself in learning Bulgarian, which he says proved "gratifying" when Bulgarians responded to his efforts.

Payne lived in a top-floor apartment in Veliko Trnovo that offered "a breathtaking view of the Balkan mountain range." His accommodations were luxurious by Bulgarian standards: he had a washing machine, refrigerator, electric stove, central heat, indoor toilet, shower, television, and telephone.

The latter proved almost unnecessary, since many of his Bulgarian friends did not have telephones and instead frequently just dropped by.

Payne, used to the rigidity of planning his "day, week, and month in advance," had to adapt to this in order to have friends.



Pleasant memories Payne, shown here with a Bulgarian newspaper, recalls with fondness the two years he spent teaching abroad.

"I never quite cured myself of checking my little black appointment book," he jokes. "Friends would wait for me to take it out and then convulse with laughter."

Payne found many professional challenges with his Bulgarian students. For example, as soon as he said that he would be "democratic" and not keep attendance, half of his students simply stopped attending class.

"Democracy was a shock for them," he notes. "To them, it seemed to mean the right to do exactly as they pleased without accepting ultimate responsibility for their actions."

Students also were intensely competitive, which seemed to hinder them from cooperating with each other fully during class discussions.

"But on the whole," Payne notes, "Bulgarian students proved extremely intelligent and knowledgeable about my language and culture. And they were warm and hospitable almost to a fault."

One special highlight of his stay was the opportunity to visit two Bulgarian schools for deaf students. Normally, visitors are not allowed into these schools, but because Payne teaches deaf students in the United States, an exception was made.

"Each school seemed to have its own preferred communication method—one used sign language, another finger-spelling only," Payne notes. "At a trade school for teenagers, students were being trained for only two occupations—furniture making for men and textile making for women."

Payne hopes that the contacts he made at those schools might someday result in some Bulgarian teachers coming to NTID as interns. Currently there is no system in place for training teachers of deaf children in Bulgaria.

"Professionally, I may have brought back more from the experience abroad than I actually gave," Payne acknowledges. "I was afforded opportunities for growth, such as attending courses in linguistics and Eastern European stylistics, observing teaching styles at the university and at schools for deaf students, and engaging in months of editing work for a Bulgarian publishing company. I think all of this has given me new ideas, a new perspective, and new flexibility in teaching."

Everyone should break out of a routine

Dr. Jeffrey Porter believes, tongue in cheek, that persistence is more important than intelligence.

When his first proposal for a Fulbright grant was turned down years ago, he waited a few years and tried again in early 1992. This time, submitting a research proposal to the UK/USA Administrative Exchange Program, an arm of the Fulbright program that accepts no more than three applicants per year, Porter hit the jackpot. His proposal—to spend three months researching how the University of York, England,

Seeing eye to eye Porter worked closely with Marie Giardino of RIT's office of special services on the RIT half of the research project that he conducted in England.

works with its disabled student population as compared to how RIT deals with similar challenges—was accepted.

Soon Porter and his family were on their way to England. After they moved into a small home in the “magnificent” medieval town of York, Porter, his wife, Mary Jo, and their son, Glenn, settled in for an adventurous three months.

Porter chose to do his research at the University of York because of its reputation in British education circles for providing quality services to students who are disabled. Before he left for England, Porter conducted the U.S. half of his study, working closely with RIT's office of special services, which provides academic and personal support for students who are disabled.

Using an information-gathering strategy that relied heavily on “a lot of reading and a lot of talking” with educators at York, Porter attempted to compare not only the services offered to students with disabilities but the notion itself of what being disabled means.

The conventional definition of “disability” as it relates to education, says Porter, is that it “is something that lives in the student.” He contends instead that it is created by ineffective interaction between teacher and student.

“If you agree with this alternative view,” he says, “then you believe that the teacher has a responsibility to adapt instruction to the specific characteristics of an individual student in supporting that student's educational progress.”

He draws the analogy of a blind student in an appropriate educational setting—i.e., one in which the teacher is trained and prepared to address the student's individual learning characteristics. In such a setting, contends



Porter, the student is not “disabled” in the conventional sense of the word.

All of this relates to the view, widely held in England, that, “The essence of education is what happens among the *professor*, the *discipline*, and the *student*.”

Cluttering that essential relationship with specialized counselors and extensive support systems of specialists for students who have different educational needs is not a popular idea in England, says Porter.

He remembers with awe how the provost of the University of York, which has one counselor serving the needs of more than 3,000 students, was reluctant to hire a second.

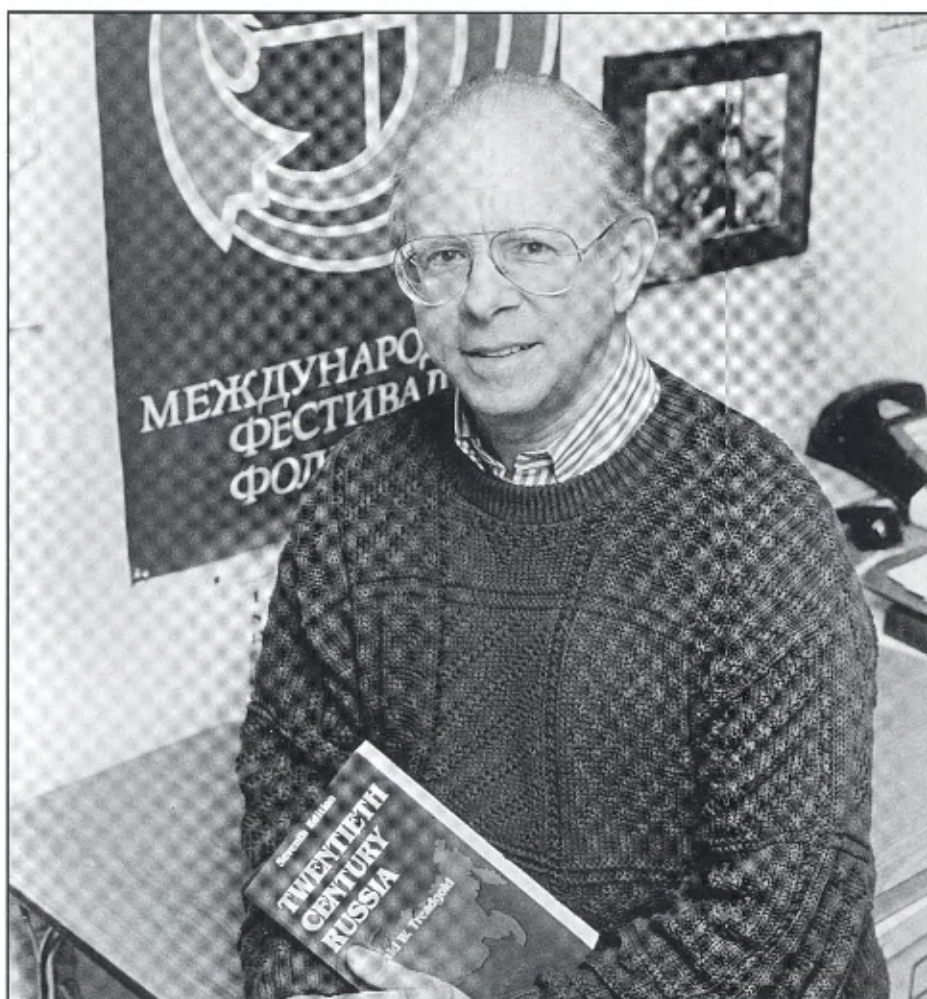
“He thought it would diminish the commitment of teachers to their students to have another counselor,” Porter says, noting that York professors were astounded to learn of RIT's extensive system of specialized support for students.

But it is also true, Porter adds, that students must be high achievers (i.e., conceptual, articulate, analytical) to be accepted into the U.K. university system.

While Porter does not see a day soon when RIT would not need its office of special services, he does agree that, “We need to get better at working directly with students who have individual learning differences, without creating arbitrary categories of ‘disabled’ and ‘abled’ and without creating specialized roles that dilute the primary relationship between teacher and student.

“We need to actively develop ourselves...into not only discipline experts, but versatile and innovative teachers as well.”

Porter has submitted his comparative analysis both to RIT's office of special services (which has fed the report into RIT's strategic planning process) and to the University of York.



A lifelong dream Carmel's office is filled with posters, books, and other memorabilia from his trips to Russia.

Getting back to his roots

For Dr. Simon Carmel, the decision to apply for a Fulbright grant to study in Russia was easy. Carmel has been interested in Russian history for years; his grandparents and great-grandparents are from Lithuania (part of the former Czarist Russia). Carmel taught himself some "very basic Russian" in high school, and he has visited the country once already.

Therefore, his proposal—to study the lifestyles, sign language, and values of the deaf community of this population—was a natural outgrowth of what he calls "a curiosity" about Russia and its people.

What made his proposal a bit unusual was the fact that only one other deaf person had ever received a Fulbright grant. (Angel Ramos, former director of Gallaudet University's Southwest

Regional Center, spent two months in Colombia last year.)

Carmel was persistent in achieving his goal.

"I decided to go to the Fulbright program office in Washington, D.C., to discuss my proposal in person," Carmel says. "I wanted to see the barrier broken so that other deaf applicants would receive equal opportunities abroad."

Carmel asked to see the program manager. When told that the man was too busy, Carmel pressed "for 15 minutes of his time" and got it.

Noting during the discussion that the man had some books in Russian in the office, Carmel began speaking Russian to him.

"That convinced him," Carmel beams. "He was so delighted to have some conversations with me in Russian."

Carmel's choice of research fits his personality well, for he always has been interested in cultures and their nuances.

In 1965, Carmel was an official Russian Sign Language interpreter for Russian deaf athletes and officials at the summer World Games for the Deaf, which were held in Washington, D.C. Two years later, he founded the U.S. Deaf Ski Team and traveled throughout Europe as leader of the team and as an international Alpine ski technical director for the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf. During his travels, he befriended many Russian people.

In 1988, he visited Moscow for the first International Folklore Festival as part of the Smithsonian Folklife Programs group. He again served as a Russian Sign Language interpreter and also presented lectures on deaf folklore and culture in Russian Sign Language.

When Carmel returned to Russia this summer to begin his Fulbright research project, he took with him a laptop computer to interview Russians, report his observations daily, and keep in touch with colleagues in the United States.

Says Carmel of his research expectations: "I'd like to help open doors to more ethnographic studies of deaf communities around the world. In addition, I want to write guidelines for both deaf and hearing anthropologists and other fieldworkers to study such communities." ■

Great Expectations

Reflections on the NTID College Experience

by Kathryn Schmitz

After years of feeling socially and academically left out during high school, many NTID graduates feel as if they were making up for lost time while they “discovered themselves” at the Institute. In a panel discussion during NTID’s 25th anniversary convocation last November, several graduates talked about how their college experiences influenced their career decisions and adult lives.

Kevin Nolan, 1971 business graduate and guidance counselor and coordinator of alumni affairs at Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts, describes himself as having been “very naive” in high school.

“I kept everything to myself and depended on books to get me through, but it wasn’t enough,” says Nolan, who attended a mainstream high school. “People didn’t understand about deafness, and there weren’t support services. I was reluctant to speak up because I didn’t want to disappoint or upset anyone, so I missed everything. When I came to NTID, I felt at home.”

For Nolan, a member of NTID’s first class of students, and several of the panelists, the NTID experience was a turning point in their lives. It provided opportunities for them to socialize with other deaf people and to “find themselves,” as William McGee, 1982 accounting graduate who recently was promoted to branch chief in the internal review office of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Columbus, Ohio, learned.

“I came to RIT and discovered myself,” says McGee, who attended Ohio State University for one year and passed his classes by learning from books, but left



Manager in the making Douglas Matchett, left: “I’ve trained other employees and contributed to making decisions. Now I’d like a management-level position because I know I’m qualified.”



Giving others a hand up Fred Hartman: "I'm satisfied with my career. Other deaf people where I work aren't satisfied, and I try to help them not underestimate their career growth."

college without graduating because he felt isolated. After working for one year in the mail room of a bank, he learned about NTID from a high school teacher.

"The programs and support services were great," he explains. "Now I realize that never again will I be able to live, work, play, struggle, and interact with so many people like myself from all over the country."

Community and communication often go hand in hand, especially for NTID graduates like McGee and Fred Hartman, 1984 business graduate and Social Security Administration systems analyst in Baltimore, Maryland, whose involvement with sign language at NTID helped him feel a sense of community.

"Before I came to NTID, I pretended I was hearing because I was oral," says Hartman. "Now I feel a special pride in the deaf world. I learned to appreciate ASL [American Sign Language]; NTID was the place where I first discovered the language. Now I teach ASL part time at several colleges in Baltimore."

Douglas Matchett, who graduated with an AAS degree in civil engineering technology in 1983 and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1989, also learned firsthand about how similar communication styles foster a sense of community at NTID.

"I didn't know sign language when I first arrived at NTID," says Matchett, construction inspector for the Monroe County (New York) Department of Environmental Services, "so at first I felt left out, but I found a few others in the same boat and made friends and socialized. I didn't realize how much I'd missed in life before I arrived at NTID. I learned faster here than in high school."

Matchett attended Washington State University for two years and did not do well because he felt "lost" in the environment there. He left college to become a carpenter, but when he realized he needed a degree for career advancement, he came to NTID.

"If not for NTID, I wouldn't be as successful as I am today," he says.

Several panelists indicated that the opportunity to become involved in extracurricular activities at the Institute enabled them to develop leadership skills and self-confidence that they find useful today.

During his student days, Nolan was involved with theater productions, a fraternity, student government, and special events and since has held posts with numerous organizations and committees.

"My greatest achievement was being elected city councilman for Northampton in 1986," says Nolan, who currently is member-at-large of the NTID Alumni Association and a former member of NTID's National Advisory Group (NAG).

McGee's organized community involvement began after graduation. At NTID he spent his time studying, socializing, playing sports, and serving as business manager for the yearbook in his senior year. McGee now is on the board of directors for the Deaf Services Center in Columbus, the advisory board on Deafness and Hearing Impairment, State of Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, and the committee for the 1994 National Deaf Senior Citizen Conference. He also is treasurer of the NTID Alumni Association.

Hartman, vice president of the NTID Alumni Association, was very active during his college years, serving for two years as member-at-large of the NTID Student Congress and participating in a fraternity.

"I really developed my leadership skills at NTID," he says.

Matchett, currently a NAG member, was a resident advisor for two years at NTID, during which time he also was involved with a campus group that provided workshops about deaf people throughout the Rochester community.

A bright future William McGee: "NTID gave me the skills to do what I've done and the confidence to do more."

After graduating from the Institute, most of the panelists found jobs related to their fields of study and encountered some of their original communication challenges in their new work environments. They found, however, that their college experience had given them skills to help cope with those challenges and to excel in their careers.

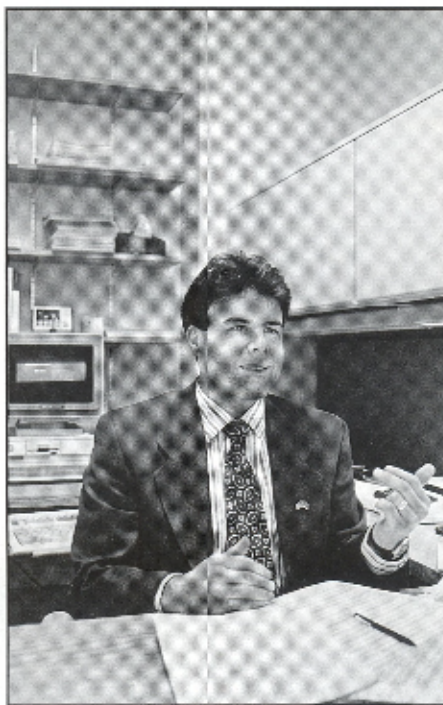
"My co-op [cooperative work] experience taught me what the accounting field is really like," says McGee, whose agency has 4,000 employees, 36 of whom are deaf. "Because the world of business conducts meetings on a moment's notice, I can't always plan ahead for an interpreter, and the meeting can't wait. I'm working on getting my own interpreter to go to those meetings with me."

Matchett took the initiative to investigate various technologies to address on-the-job communication concerns. He now conducts business over the telephone by using several techniques, including an alphanumeric vibrating pager, two-way radio to respond to the pager, and TTY and cellular phone as well as the Voice CarryOver feature with the telecommunication relay service to respond to voice telephone calls.

Nolan's co-op experience helped him determine factors important for his job satisfaction and ultimately encouraged him to change careers.

"I worked as an auditor on co-op," says Nolan. "I sat and stared at four walls and the clock. I was very restless and realized that I prefer to be around people. I decided to leave business and become a teacher of the deaf."

Hartman has remained in the field that he studied, and one skill that has been particularly useful to him at work is his assertiveness, a skill he developed in his leadership roles at NTID. When



others attempt to take away opportunities for him to accomplish tasks, he speaks up for himself.

"Sometimes when I have a problem, a co-worker might try to take over my work instead of giving me the couple of words I need to clarify the situation," says Hartman, "but I just explain what I need to know and end up doing the work myself."

"During meetings," he adds, "I don't say, 'I feel lost,' I say, 'You lost me.'"

As a result of the skills and self-confidence he developed at NTID, Hartman has achieved a high-level position in his career and is proud of his accomplishments. He enjoys the responsibilities and workplace benefits with his agency, where he monitors, reviews, and analyzes computer systems.

"I'm satisfied with my career," says Hartman. "I've plateaued, and that's OK for now. Other deaf people where I work aren't satisfied, and I try to help them not underestimate their career growth. We find ways to get training and move up."

McGee achieved his management position after several previous applications.

"I let my bosses know I was ready for management," says McGee, who now is a certified public accountant. "I was waiting for that opening, and I've been working on my master's degree. I have the credentials."

In 1988, McGee was named an Outstanding Federal Employee in recognition of his excellent work, which he credits to skills he obtained in college.

"My skills helped me to not only go out and get a job," he says, "but also to excel at what I do."

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to prove myself at another level and possibly open some doors for other people."

Matchett, who has taken on more responsibility during the four and a half years he has worked as a construction inspector, also seeks a management position and plans to begin an MBA program.

"I've trained other employees and contributed to making decisions," he says. "Now I'd like a management-level position because I know I'm qualified."

All of these graduates derive satisfaction from life after college in different ways, some through their career aspirations, others through community involvement. All agree that NTID was the place where they became aware of and confident in their ability to take control of their lives and address the challenges they face as deaf people in a predominantly hearing world.

"The fact that I recognize the barriers I've overcome in the past and still face today is positive, not negative," says McGee, "because I want to remove or reduce those barriers. NTID gave me the skills to do what I've done and the confidence to do more." ■

Taking the first step

by Beth M. Pessin

When Randy and Carla Wilkerson learned that their then 7-month-old daughter, Heather, is deaf, they felt angry, guilty, uncertain, and frustrated.

These are not uncommon feelings among parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

"Ninety-five percent of all deaf children in the United States have hearing parents, the majority of whom have had no previous contact with a person who is deaf," says Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien, professor in NTID's English department. O'Brien is project leader of the Educational Outreach Parent Project, which develops informational products and presents workshops to educate parents of deaf children as well as teachers, counselors, and other support personnel.

To let parents know that they aren't alone and that a variety of educational, communication, and counseling options is available, NTID's educational outreach department teamed up with the Maryland State School for the Deaf to produce *The First Step*, a 25-minute videotape that shares experiences, concerns, and issues that are

Lights, camera, action! As project leader of the Educational Outreach Parent Project, Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien directed the development of *The First Step* videotape.



common to parents who have deaf or hard-of-hearing children.

The Wilkersons of Waldorf, Maryland, a small town of 10,000 in the southern part of the state, are among the four families who share their stories in the videotape.

Like many other parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Wilkersons, with assistance from professionals, designed their own map to locate and determine the most appropriate services for their daughter's audiological, communication, and social needs. Finding their way included twists and turns, detours, and even some dead ends. So when an opportunity presented itself for the Wilkersons to help educate other parents, they gladly agreed.

"When [hearing] parents first find out that their child is deaf or hard of hearing, they often feel overwhelmed and isolated," says Dr. Ruth Howell, director of the Family Education/Early Intervention Program at the Maryland State School for the Deaf.

"Time after time, parents have said to me, 'I wish that I'd had someone to talk with when I started gathering information and learning about options for my child,'" says Howell, who has worked with more than 500 families, including the Wilkersons, over the 22 years that she has worked at the Maryland school.

Some of the issues the videotape addresses include the impact of early intervention strategies, the effect on the family of having a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, parents' expectations, integrating a deaf child into the community, and the importance of introducing deaf children to their peers.

"This type of early intervention is important because what happens in the beginning sets the stage for how families interact with their deaf child," says O'Brien, who served as project coordinator of *The First Step*.



Sharing their story Randy and Carla Wilkerson, with children Heather and Randy Jr., are among the four families who appear in the videotape.

The First Step is intended for parents of children from birth to age 5 as well as for those who provide support services for children who are deaf, including organizations for parents of deaf children, speech and hearing clinics, and school personnel and social workers who may not have had exposure to deaf people. The first in a planned series, the videotape is particularly beneficial for in-home use by those families who have limited opportunities to meet with others in similar situations.

"Parents in the videotape candidly express their feelings about learning that their child is deaf, its impact on the family, and how early intervention was beneficial," says O'Brien, a hearing daughter of deaf parents whose career as an educator of both deaf children and their families has spanned three decades.

"The tape helps parents recognize that there are other families going through the same experience and that there are strategies they can use to

become proactive for the child," says Howell, who conducted the interviews and wrote the narration for the tape.

"There's no one typical story," she adds. "Families come from different educational, economic, and cultural backgrounds, and we tried to represent that variety in the tape. The common bond that families share, however, is that they have a child who is deaf or hard of hearing."

The tape focuses mainly on families who are using sign language along with speech and auditory training communication modes with their deaf child. A companion tape is being developed that will emphasize other communication strategies to give parents a broader range of information from which to make choices for their child. In addition, to ensure access to both English- and Spanish-speaking families, the tapes will be available with open captions in both languages.

"The tape is beneficial because it presents information

in a nonthreatening way, which is important for families who are not yet ready to interact and share their stories with others," says Howell. "It really is a conduit for beginning discussions; families need to do that before they can confront the issue and move ahead."

The First Step and its companion videotape will lay the groundwork for successive tapes that NTID will develop to provide information and resources to help parents assist their deaf adolescent through the transitions of junior and senior high school and college and career planning. NTID's expertise gained through research and career preparation and job placement efforts as well as such programs as Explore Your Future, which introduces college life to high school juniors, and the Summer Vestibule Program, a career-sampling experience for high school graduates entering NTID, lends itself to such outreach efforts.

Future tapes will be designed as stand-alone products or to be used in conjunction with the "Career Planning and Transition Issues for Deaf Adolescents" workshop, a project recently developed through a collaborative effort between NTID's Educational Outreach Parent Project and Project NEEDS (Networking Educational Evaluations and Development of Services), a California State Grant project serving 66 school districts in San Diego/Imperial County.

As in *The First Step*, future tapes will feature families telling their own stories in relation to the issues being addressed.

"Parents need to see that their deaf child will have many of the same options as hearing children," says O'Brien. "We want to show them that deaf people are leading successful lives in a broad array of careers." ■

Dream weaver

by Deborah R. Waltzer



Patricia Tracy

Across the street from Manhattan's venerable New York Public Library, down the block from a crusty vendor hawking falafel, and up 13 floors to a West 40th Street fabric showroom bursting with cloth samples and spools of yarn, weaver Patricia Tracy, 1989 RIT textiles graduate, perches at her 16-harness computerized loom.

Employed since graduation in the decorative fabrics division of Fox-Wells, Tracy weaves fabric samples for apparel, wall coverings, draperies, and upholstery, which then are shipped to parent company Doran Textiles' mills in Shelby, North Carolina, for mass production. Such garments and household goods eventually reach the public via stores such as The Limited, JC Penney Company Inc., and Sears Roebuck and Company.

Technology and the ancient craft of weaving are combined in Tracy's diminutive office as an IBM personal computer directs the vertical movement of her loom's harnesses. Yarn warp and weft merge as Tracy throws her shuttle horizontally to the rhythm of the rising and falling harnesses.

No doubt for continual inspiration, a cardboard sign bearing the division's mission statement—"Sample: Our Future Starts Here"—looms large on her cubicle's northern wall.

Tracy's interest in weaving had its start in her teen years.

"When I was 16 years old, I received a scholarship to study drawing at the Pennsylvania Governor's School of Performing Arts," says the Lansdale, Pennsylvania, native. "But when I observed the textiles classes, I was intrigued and begged my teachers to let me study weaving as well."

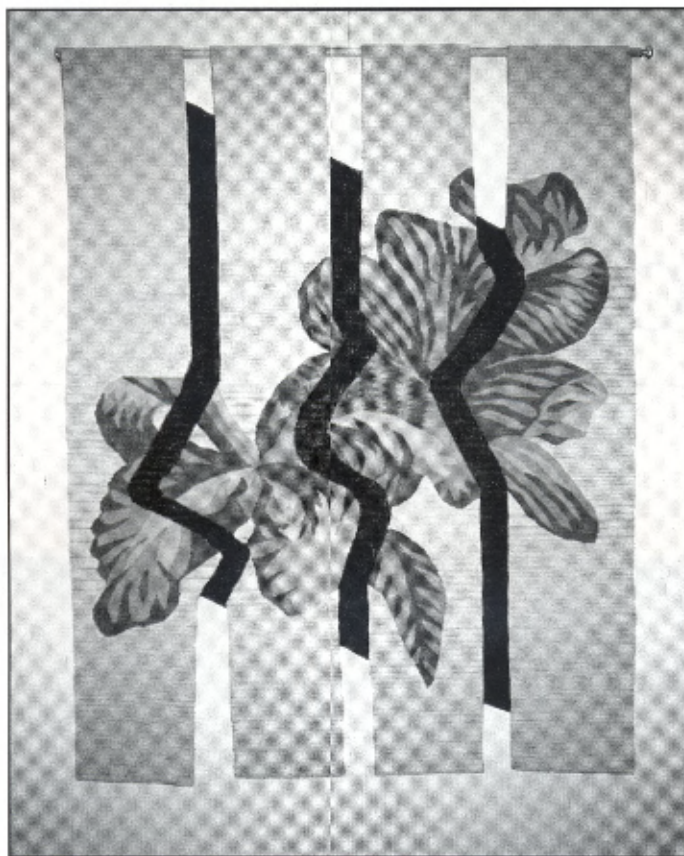
A few years later, engaged and wanting to marry right away, Tracy enrolled in RIT's textiles program, hoping to speed through the coursework. The engagement didn't last, but her motivation did.

"I ended up with a bachelor's degree and no man," she laughs, "and I haven't regretted it for a moment!"

Remembered by Donald Bujnowski, chairperson of RIT's textiles department, as an "aggressive and hardworking student," Tracy, 31, has pursued her textiles career in earnest.

In an effort to augment her RIT degree, Tracy matriculated in the spring of 1993 into an accelerated two-year bachelor's degree program in production management and textiles at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). Currently, she is studying statistical analysis and principles of accounting to better understand price-quoting techniques.

"I'd like to develop my customer relations skills," she says. "Currently, Fox-Wells' stylists meet with our customers to discuss product specifications, then pass the assignment on to me. But with the training in textile marketing and development that I'm acquiring from FIT, I'll soon be able to confer directly with the customers."



"Wild Orchids" Copyright 1993, Patricia A. Tracy

"My dream is to weave fine art tapestries and exhibit them in art galleries."

In the office, Tracy prefers to keep a low profile, occasionally sharing magazine articles about Deaf culture with interested hearing co-workers and supervisors.

While somewhat reserved at work, Tracy saves her more gregarious side for after-hours

socializing with friends from the New York City Civic Association of the Deaf (for which she formerly served as fund-raising chairperson) and the New York Deaf Connection.

In addition to working at Fox-Wells, Tracy is nurturing a free-lance weaving business

from her new condominium in Princeton, New Jersey.

However, she recently turned down an offer to paint silk scarf designs for a licensed agency of the prestigious Christian Dior Company in order to concentrate on weaving tapestries.

"My dream is to weave fine art tapestries and exhibit them in art galleries," says Tracy.

She made her first tapestry while a junior at RIT as a commission for Dr. William Castle, NTID director and RIT vice president for government relations. The multicolored silk art piece currently is displayed in the offices of NTID's department of human development.

Tracy, who stays in touch with her former teacher Bujnowski, is excited to be in an academic environment once again. Accustomed to RIT's myriad educational access services, including interpreters, notetakers, and tutors, Tracy was frustrated by FIT's initial refusal to provide a classroom interpreter. But, aware of her rights as protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Tracy convinced the college to do so.

Her job, free-lance work, school, friends, visits to family members back home, and an addiction for solving cryptogram puzzles keep the threads of Tracy's life tightly woven.

"I'm doing well in New York City," she says, "and getting busier all the time." ■

Editor's note: Since FOCUS went to print, Patricia Tracy has left Fox-Wells and currently is doing free-lance designing.

Aristotle Ogoke

by Kathleen S. Smith

Aristotle (after the famous Greek philosopher) Uchenna (Ibo, a Nigerian language, for "the Father's will") Ogoke is a man whose life for the past 39 years has been an ongoing educational journey.

Three years ago, that journey brought Ogoke, a native of Nigeria, to NTID, where he is assistant professor in the applied computer technology department. He brought with him a wealth of experience from Brown University, where he was a data base administrator and information security officer; Gallaudet University, where he was an institutional research data base coordinator and part-time writer in the public relations office; and the National Association of the Deaf, where he was a research specialist on the Section 504 technical assistance project.

He also brought with him the memories of his own educational trials and triumphs, which undoubtedly helped him shape his ideals and quiet passion for helping others.

At NTID, he has used his extensive networking skills—both on the computer and in person—to coordinate an outreach project whose potential benefits to the Institute as well as to young deaf students in Southern states are far reaching.



Reading between the lines
Aristotle Ogoke pores over a computer sheet, above, and, right, addresses a class of interested computer technology students.



The "Adopt-a-School Project" began in 1992 as Ogoke chatted with Pauline and Lindsay Dunn, friends who were working at the Mississippi School for the Deaf (MSD) in Jackson.

"How many MSD students will you send us this year?" Ogoke asked.

"None," was the reply.

"How many have come to NTID in the past five years?" he persisted.

"One," his friends replied.

Ogoke was stunned. The South historically has been a challenging area for NTID's recruitment efforts. But he didn't realize how equally challenging it was for the students who were trying to overcome "The Three Rs" on their way to college—resources, requirements, and role models.

Realizing that these students "needed to see the possibilities for their futures," Ogoke hatched a plan.

He asked his department chairperson, Dr. Bruce Peterson, to "adopt" MSD in the hopes that some resources and old computer equipment might be donated to the school. Things began happening—on paper, at least—until two key project backers left MSD and the idea was temporarily shelved.

Today, a bit more than a year later, Ogoke is on track again, buoyed by the enthusiasm of new staff members at MSD and the organizational support of numerous NTID colleagues who have embraced the project.

"This project is a wonderful way for NTID to reach out to schools where historically we've had recruiting challenges," says Peterson. "Ari is so interested because he personally understands what it's like to be deaf and not have opportunities."

Indeed, when Ogoke became deaf at age 16 after a bout with spinal meningitis, his life in Nigeria changed dramatically.

He missed two years of school while his parents shuttled him

Why I enjoy teaching: I get a real charge when I see the light of understanding in students' eyes...surpassed only by the feeling I get when they ask a question that suggests they think they have caught me in an error. It shows that they have gotten beyond rote learning and are now thinking.

When I am not working, I: "Check in" with friends and family whom I do not see as often as I would like. I also read for pleasure.

Who has influenced my life the most: My parents, Dora and Robert Ogoke. Hardly a day passes that I do not discover, at some cost, values or habits they have been trying to teach me from Day One. One of the most valuable lessons I learned from them is that the best—and most important—investment is the one we make in people.

People would be surprised to know that: I can still read sheet music and play the electric organ.

The person, living or dead, I'd most like to meet: My paternal grandfather. He was a trader and well-traveled man who spoke several languages. He sent my father to school when few people in my home understood the value of education.

What brought me to NTID: The hope that maybe I could make a difference here as a teacher.

from hospital to hospital, seeking explanations and "cures" for his hearing loss. They checked a state-run school for deaf students, only to learn that it didn't include high school.

Finally, Ogoke learned that his former school legally couldn't deny him an education. He wrote to the principal, requesting permission to return. Two letters went unanswered, so Ogoke showed up in person to plead his case.

"The principal just waved me out of the office," he recalls

sadly. Unbeknownst to him, a friend of Ogoke's father's witnessed this scene and told him about the incident. That same day, the elder Ogoke went to the state department of education and got a retaining order enabling his son to return to school.

"Perhaps my parents needed to see me literally take matters into my own hands for them to understand that I really wanted this [to go back to school]," Ogoke says.

The principal subtly tried to force him out by letting Ogoke

re-enroll in the program of his choice. Although he had missed nearly half of his five-year high school program, he opted to rejoin his original classmates—in essence skipping two and a half years of schooling.

"The principal hoped that I would fail," Ogoke says, "so that I would have to leave school. I surprised him by graduating second in my class of 61—and graduating on time."

After getting rejection letters from a couple of universities ("I was refused admission after they found out I am deaf"), Ogoke discovered Gallaudet University in a magazine and decided to enroll there.

He received dual bachelor's degrees in physics and business administration from Gallaudet in 1978 and a master's degree in computer applications and information systems, also from Gallaudet, in 1980.

He's using all of those skills with the Adopt-a-School project, whose pilot efforts will include a career awareness weekend, the donation of old computer equipment, and a summer camp to be held in Jackson.

"We're targeting students as early as sixth grade," Ogoke says, "and we're going to bring the learning to them. These students need role models."

Is Ogoke himself such a model?

"I don't consider myself one, but I can relate to what these young people see and feel," he admits. "When I became deaf, I had no idea what to expect. At the time, my world was bleak. I want to change that." ■

State of body, state of mind

Reviewed by Peter J. Boulay

Living in the State of Stuck

Dr. Marcia Scherer

Brookline Books, 1993

While reading *Living in the State of Stuck*, by Dr. Marcia Scherer, instructional development and evaluation specialist in NTID's instructional design and evaluation department, I saw a lot of issues relating to the acceptance or denial of using assistive technology. I agree with Dr. Scherer's premise that people's perspectives and expectations will determine the success or failure of their attempts at using assistive technology.

I believe in the idea that independence achieved with the help of assistive technology brings a wealth of self-esteem and self-confidence, and Dr. Scherer's book supports this idea.

Dr. Scherer does a wonderful job of using interviews with seven people to look at the advantages and disadvantages of assistive technology for those with disabilities. The book is structured well; it provides technical information backed up by personal accounts.

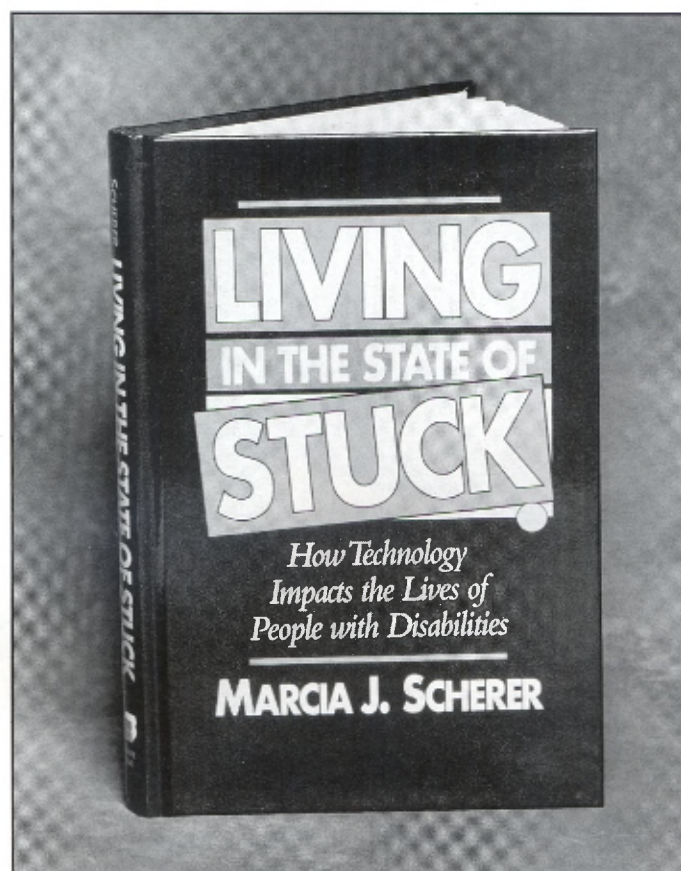
The interviews were important to me because they made the situations believable and understandable. In particular, Butch, a 460-pound paraplegic

who lost the use of his legs in a head-on car collision and then became a cynical recluse, really impressed me with his changed attitude by the end of the book, when he was going out regularly to the local malls using his motorized wheelchair.

In the book, I read a lot of my own thoughts that I had when I started using my brace and my artificial legs. The nervousness, anxiety, and worries about successfully using the devices are very real. It is imperative that the rehabilitation coordinator be caring and sensitive to these issues while gently pushing the client to at least consider using them. Eventually, only the client with the disability can make the decision as to whether or not the device will be used.

As an example, I used to have artificial legs that I could actually walk on. When I was younger, I would wear them to please my parents, but as I grew up, I realized that they were limiting me more than helping. The point is I tried to use them, but the final decision to stop using them was mine.

In conclusion, I recommend this book strongly for anyone in social work or in any field dealing with physical rehabilitation. It provides an excellent way of "stepping into the minds" of people who have had a traumatic accident or are otherwise physically disabled.



The book may help clients see that their feelings are shared by others and that it isn't always a bad thing to say, "No," especially if they aren't emotionally ready to accept the changes in lifestyle that assistive technology can bring. ■

Peter J. Boulay, fourth-year RIT social work student from Pittsford, New York, is a bilateral (below the knees) amputee who uses a motorized wheelchair, an arm brace, and a van modified with hand controls.



Confronting the past, eyeing the future NTID's deaf women's studies course includes learning about the women's rights movement of the 19th century, whose supporters are featured in an exhibit in Seneca Falls, New York, home of the National Women's Hall of Fame. Join us in the upcoming fall issue as *FOCUS* explores deaf women's rich heritage and herstory.

Photography by A. Sue Weisler

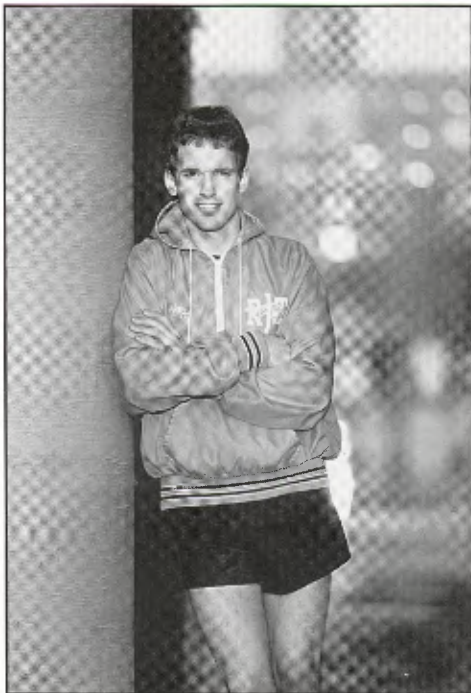


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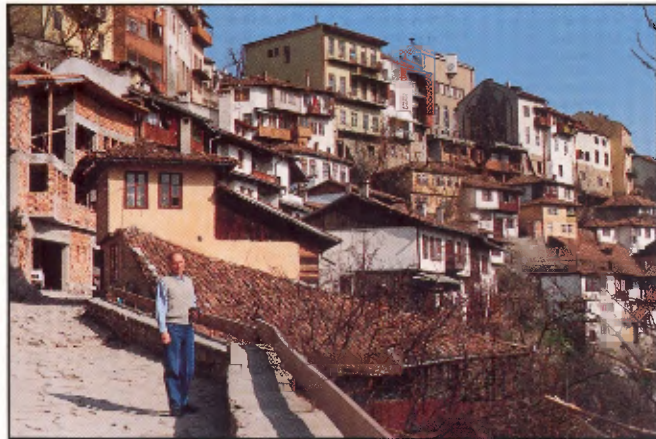
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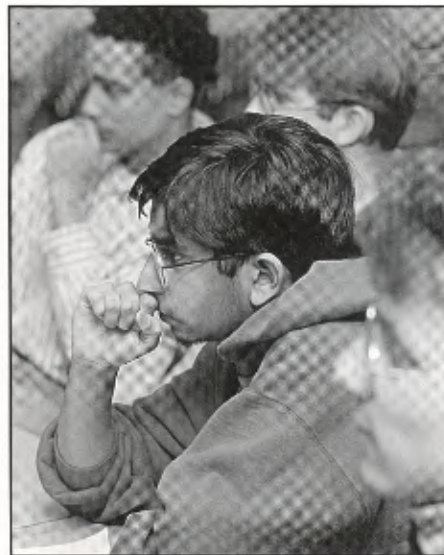
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