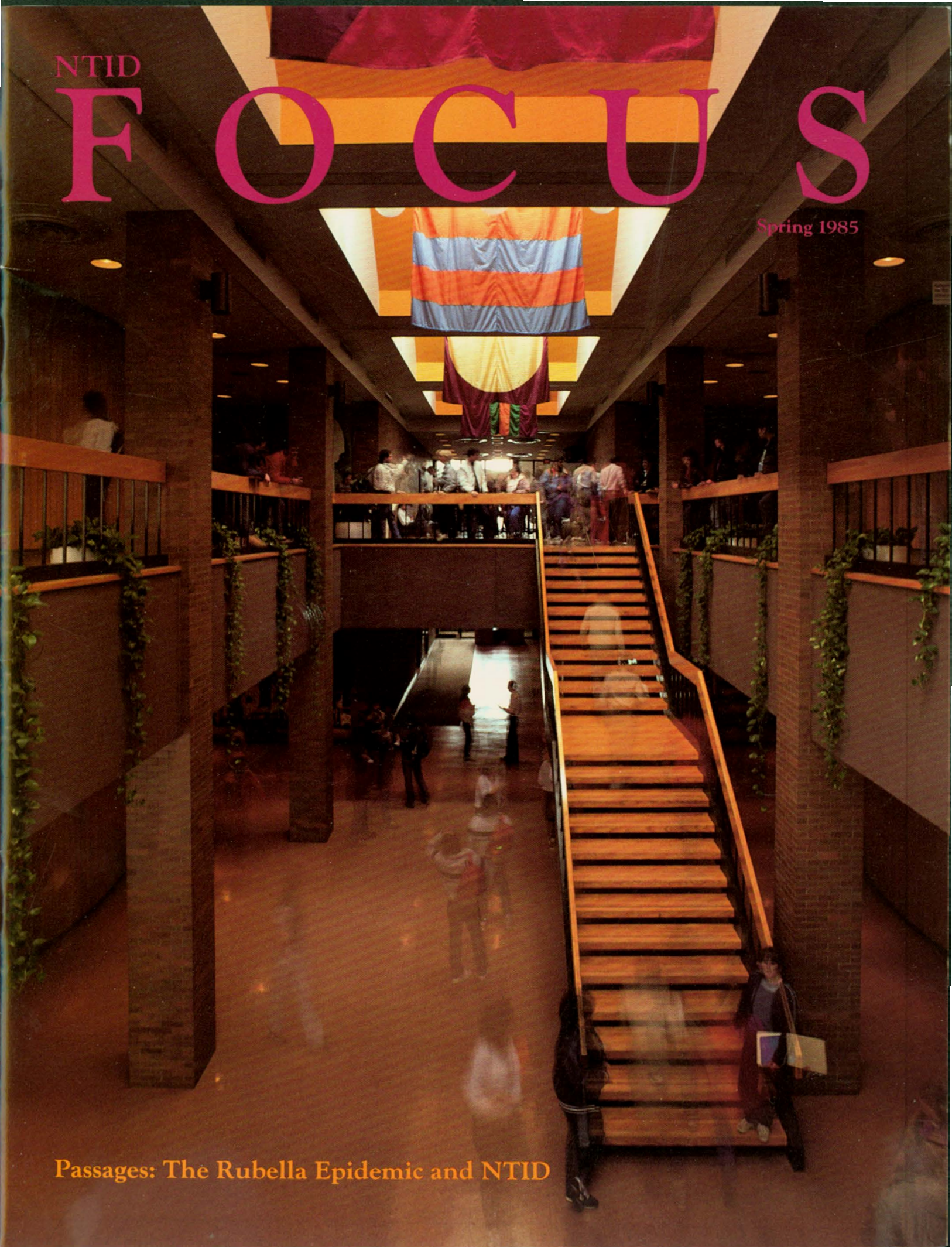
NTID

FOCUS

Spring 1985



Passages: The Rubella Epidemic and NTID


Rainbow
GiftWrap
World
Paper

NTID
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Publication of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf
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About the cover...

Students from the 1963-65 rubella epidemic are passing through NTID in record numbers. A report on the Institute's response to the epidemic appears on p. 3. (Photograph by John Danicic)

◀ ***Bookstore of the '80s*** *"Campus Connections," RIT's new bookstore designed by New Jersey-based architect Ken White, opened in January. The 16,800-square-foot store features, in addition to traditional supplies, a poster frame shop, boutiques, a computer store, and a clothing section. (Photograph by A. Sue Weisler)*

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Meeting the Challenge

From the Director's Desk

In 1980, a group of physicians, educators, and rehabilitation specialists from around the country gathered at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) for a formal conference devoted to the issue of the 1963-65 rubella epidemic.

In my address to that group, I made note of "... the thousands of adolescent youngsters who live today with congenital rubella and its various manifestations. Each has a name and a family. Each has emotions and intellect. Each also has a future. For some, this future is bleak; for others, it is full of promise. In large measure, we are their future."

Five years later, those students of whom we spoke are entering colleges around the country in record numbers. NTID's current enrollment of more than 1,300 students is the largest since the Institute opened its doors in 1968.

NTID's plans for making room for students deafened by rubella began several years ago. They included adding more faculty members, building a new academic facility, and intensifying job placement strategies for graduates. A report on these and other ways in which NTID is addressing the "rubella bulge" appears on p. 3.

Several other stories in this issue of *NTID Focus* also have worldwide appeal, including a profile of Olympic gold medal winner Jeff Float, who visited RIT in October for Homecoming festivities. He shared with enthusiastic audiences his experiences as a hearing-impaired athlete, including his participation in the 1977 World Games for the Deaf.

Alumnus William Eiffler has spent nearly two years in Quito, Ecuador, where he has been on assignment with the Peace Corps. Eiffler, whose story appears on p. 6, received two awards recently for his work on behalf of the deaf citizens of Ecuador.

Faculty member Paul Taylor recently returned from a sabbatical in Derby, England, during which he established a computer program for The Royal School for the Deaf. Taylor shares his experience on p. 18.

Closer to home, this issue contains two features that are directly related to the classroom. "Becoming Better Teachers" (p. 23) details the efforts made by RIT faculty members to serve hearing-impaired students enrolled in classes in the other colleges at RIT; "It's Never Too Late to Learn" relates the experiences of two students—Stella Johnston and Pat Irr—who share the distinction of being NTID's oldest students. You will find their stories on p. 27.

NTID's assistant and associate deans are an important bridge between faculty members and the administration. Their job is to communicate the thoughts and goals of both their teaching colleagues and those in administrative posts at the Institute. An in-depth interview with this group appears on p. 9.

Last, a profile on Staff Resource Center Specialist Audrey Ritter explains why NTID is respected worldwide as a source of information on deafness and the education of deaf persons. Ritter's talents and experience are an important reason for this reputation.

You will note, also, a special insert in this issue of *Focus* on "The Balance of Career Education and Liberal Arts," authored by RIT President M. Richard Rose. This marks the first of a five-part series by Dr. Rose that is designed to better inform *Focus* readers about RIT and how both hearing and hearing-impaired students benefit from NTID's presence on the RIT campus. We welcome Dr. Rose's insights.

William E. Castle

R · U · B · E · L · L · A

A Report

By Ann Kanter

Rubella epidemics usually occurred in seven to 10-year cycles, so the epidemic of 1963-65 had been anticipated.

What no one had imagined were the proportions it would assume. Records do not exist for rubella as a cause of deafness before 1941, because it was only then that Dr. N. M. Gregg, an Australian physician, discovered the link between pregnant women who contracted the infection and congenital defects later noted in children of those pregnancies.

Statistics are not readily available for the numbers of children affected by the epidemic of 1957-58, because it did not achieve the proportions nor receive the attention demanded by the 1963-65 epidemic. Before the latter burned itself out, it had spread throughout Europe, the Orient, Latin America, Mexico, and Canada, as well as the United States.

In the United States alone, it deafened 8,000 children and struck another 4,000 with both deafness and blindness. The number of children affected worldwide may reach the hundreds of thousands, according to Dr. William Castle, director of NTID at RIT.

The magnitude of the epidemic, however, was not fully appreciated until 1965, when the first infants of infected mothers began to be diagnosed as deaf.

By the late 1960s, elementary and secondary schools for deaf students were experiencing doublings of applications; and, to absorb all these children, a flurry of building began.

Anticipating the difficulties of accommodating these children when they reached college age, NTID in 1980 co-sponsored a three-day conference, "Deafness and Rubella."* National in scope, the meeting brought together specialists in the fields of deaf education

*Other sponsoring organizations were the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association, the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, Gallaudet College, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Education.

and vocational rehabilitation to plan needed services for "rubella generation" students as they approached adulthood.

NTID's plans for an increased number of students included a new academic structure, the Hugh L. Carey Building.

Containing 68 offices, 10 general purpose classrooms, and seven laboratories, the building was completed in September 1983, ahead of schedule and under budget. In conjunction with the already existing Lyndon Baines Johnson Building, the Carey Building was designed to help accommodate a total population of between 1,150 and 1,250 deaf students. During this academic year, that number rose to as high as 1,319, requiring creative contingency planning.

Tightening government appropriations for NTID came at the same time that enrollment was expected to increase dramatically; and NTID, as well as all federally sponsored programs, faced level funding or cutbacks. It soon became evident that early plans would require some drastic changes.

One was in the number of students the Institute could serve; another was in the planned increase in full-time teaching staff. Original plans to provide for a student population of 1,500 were cut to 1,250. Instead of serving the increased number of students caused by the rubella epidemic over a two-year period, plans were made to serve them over a three to four-year span.

Additional instructors were limited to 50, hired either on an adjunct or a visiting basis for a three to five-year period.

To bolster the limited number of new employees, personnel from NTID's research and support services areas pitched in as instructors, and regular faculty members were reimbursed for taking on increased teaching loads.

Another change necessitated by the budget crunch—and made in conjunction with Gallaudet College—was a gradual increase in tuition, which is being implemented over a three to four year period.

Thus, although faced with decreased government allocations, NTID has been able, by limiting the number of incoming students and increasing tuition, to maintain the college's established standards.

Although there was initial concern during the planning stages over the number of students who might have multiple handicaps from rubella and the additional services they might require, this concern turned out to be unfounded.

"While more of these students admitted to NTID have congenital vision or cardiac defects, some of those defects have been surgically corrected or appear not to interfere with the students' daily activities," says Dr. Ross Stuckless, director of Integrative Research and architect of the Rubella Conference and NTID's rubella planning. "Repeated tests have shown that rubella-deafened students are virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the NTID population," he adds.

"For deafness, however, the only cure is prevention," says Dr. Stuckless, "and one good outcome of the 1963-65 epidemic was the concern that led to an effective vaccine against rubella."

Dr. Stuckless credits members of the medical profession who developed the vaccine and the immunization program, whereby every state in the nation makes rubella immunization a prerequisite to school enrollment. Although Canada has a similar program, he notes, many other countries do not.

"By the turn of the century," says Dr. Stuckless, "there should be 20,000 fewer handicapped children throughout the world, virtually none deafened by rubella, all because of vaccination efforts. The combination of the drop in the number of congenitally deaf children, plus the recent drop in the birthrate of the general population, will therefore produce fewer potential NTID students."

NTID, however, will try to maintain student enrollment at slightly above the 1983 pre-rubella level. While traditional sources of NTID students probably will not produce these numbers, the college will accomplish its objectives by developing new recruiting strategies and capitalizing on existing strengths in career education.

"The next challenge," says Dr. Castle, "will be to find new and different ways to have an impact on what happens to young deaf people before they come to NTID. This will be the challenge of the 1990s and must obviously include renewal of institutional efforts in training, research, outreach, and information dissemination."

NTID has an unprecedented number of students about to graduate and seek employment. Planning for this group began more than five years ago, according to Harriette Royer, manager of NTID's National Center on Employment of the Deaf (NCED).

Another accommodation that NCED has made to the rubella generation is the addition of one full- and one part-time career opportunity advisor to its staff, and an increase in the number of students served by advisors already on board.

"The higher enrollment coupled with an increase in required co-op programs significantly increased the number of placements to 273 this year," says Royer, adding that more than 115 co-op students were visited personally by NTID staff members.

She anticipates this demand to continue, or possibly to increase. "NCED's response," she says, "will be to provide the same quality service as in the past, but to a larger number of students."

"The next challenge will be to find new and different ways to have an impact on what happens to young deaf people before they come to NTID."—Dr. William Castle

"One of the strategies developed was the Community Support System, which places adjunct staff members in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles—cities where large numbers of NTID students find co-op jobs," she says. "These adjuncts conduct training programs for employers who haven't hired deaf employees previously. They are on site to organize students, help with adjustment problems, and do follow ups."

With students securing co-op placements nationwide, follow-ups traditionally have been conducted via telephone or mail. The Community Support System provides an additional "personal" support to students and employers.

The increased numbers of students produced by the "rubella bulge," combined with smaller than anticipated budget allocations, challenged NTID's creative abilities to its fullest. The Institute has met the challenge and is preparing thousands of young deaf people for productive lives.

William Eiffler

PEACE CORPS

Award Winner

Volunteer of the Year
William Eiffler accepts an award as Outstanding Peace Corps Volunteer of 1984 from Peace Corps Director Loret Miller Ruppe.

By Ann Kanter

When the Peace Corps flew William Eiffler from Quito, Ecuador, to Washington, D.C., they didn't tell him why he was going. Only after he arrived did he learn the reason for his trip: to attend a special reception and receive two Peace Corps awards.

In May 1984, Eiffler was one of six persons to receive an Outstanding Peace Corps Volunteer Award, and he was the sole recipient of the Michael Fedor Memorial Award, which honors a disabled volunteer working in Latin America who exemplifies the Peace Corps' goal of promoting world peace and understanding. (Fedor was a blind Peace Corps volunteer who was instrumental in establishing Ecuador's first Special Olympics.)

"If there is any single reason for my receiving these awards," says Eiffler, "it is for helping other [Peace Corps] volunteers to understand about deafness."

An RIT alumnus with concentrations in Computer Science and Social Work, Eiffler joined the Peace Corps in June 1983. That was a year after his original decision to join—which had been in-

spired when he learned that the Peace Corps was recruiting volunteers to work with deaf people in the Philippine Islands.

Eiffler, 26, began to lose his hearing after a bout with spinal meningitis when he was 6. Following his convalescence, he received tutoring to bring him up to date on the schoolwork he had missed while in the hospital, and when the next term began, he returned to his former class.

His hearing continued to deteriorate until, by the age of 13, he required a hearing aid, a "catastrophe" to this young man who did not consider himself "deaf" and did not want to be "different."

But he *was* different from his hearing classmates, and a family move from Salem, Oregon, to Scio, though a distance of only 50 miles, separated him from the grade school friends who knew and understood him. A new peer group, combined with his communication problems, made high school years difficult for Eiffler. Not by choice, he became a loner.

The dark cloud of his solitude, however, had a silver lining. He discovered Landmark Books, large type adventure stories that stimulated his interest in reading, an area that had always been difficult for him. In retrospect, he says that the books were simplistic, but he still exults at the change they made in his life.

When he finished high school, he still thought of himself as a "hearing person" and enrolled at Oregon Institute of Technology. In his third year, an incident occurred that put things into perspective.

He and two roommates were taking a computer class together, and he spent "countless hours" helping them to understand the programs and their concepts. When final grades arrived, Eiffler's roommates received B's while he got a C.

"I was devastated," he says, "and for the first time, I realized that my hearing problem was hampering my education."

Despite this realization, it took the urging of friends to get Eiffler to seek professional help. He went to a speech-reading therapist, who was also a teacher of Signed English.

"It was the first time in years that I had been able to sit down and talk to another human being," says Eiffler. "It made me want to teach sign language to everyone I knew!"

ECUADOR

Breathtaking heights
The Andes Mountains form a backdrop for everyday activities in Ecuador.

The teacher told Eiffler about NTID, and Eiffler sent off an application, fully expecting to be rejected "because I thought you had to be really *deaf* and/or having trouble in school to be admitted —and I was convinced that I didn't fit into either category."

Nevertheless, Eiffler was accepted and, in the fall of 1978, he arrived at NTID.

"Never had I imagined that there could be so many deaf people in one place," he says. "Never could I have imagined that I could learn so much and begin to understand myself and others so rapidly as when I first arrived on campus and started learning to communicate with sign language. My personal life took off immediately!

"Not until I had the services of a note-taker and interpreter did I realize how much I had missed in the classroom without them. Although I couldn't take full advantage of the interpreter until my signing skills improved, the notes were an immediate help, and the combined support helped me go from straight C's to straight A's!

"Although everything looked rosy for me," he continues, "I kept thinking of the other 'Williams' out there who needed the same type of help that I had. For that reason more than any other, I decided to get a bachelor's degree in Social Work as well as in Computer Science."

He graduated with his B.S. in Social Work in May 1982 and stayed on to complete his work toward the Computer Science degree. Before he could do that, however, he heard about the Peace Corps program and decided to enlist. When his first two applications drew no response, he contacted the Washington office, only to learn that they were no longer recruiting for the Philippines program. "That news hit me like a ton of bricks," he says.

He discovered, however, that there were openings for special education volunteers in Ecuador. Despite his disappointment over the Philippines, he decided to go, and in June 1983, he and a group of other volunteers flew to Ecuador, where they spent the next three months learning Spanish, studying Ecuadoran culture, and learning about their upcoming assignments.

Cultural differences aside, Quito's mountainous location on the Equator required an adjustment. The air is often deceptively cool, causing inexperienced "gringos" to get severe sunburns. The city of 900,000 people is two miles up in the Andes Mountains, which "does some funny things to your oxygen system," says Eiffler. "For a day or two, you have

some trouble breathing, and you really can't exercise for about three weeks."

Learning a new language, however, was no problem. "Spanish is not difficult for a deaf person to learn," says Eiffler. "The spelling is consistent—most words are spelled just as they sound."

During the training period, the volunteers lived with Ecuadoran families, which gave them a chance to practice their Spanish, as well as get an inside view of middle-class family life.

Eiffler's "family" consisted of a deaf mother and father, two deaf sons, a deaf daughter-in-law, two hearing sons, and a baby. The family was well off by Ecuadoran standards, says Eiffler; their apartment had all the major appliances except a washing machine and dryer—rare items in Ecuador, where it is cheaper to hire a laundress. The family owned a car and was saving to buy a house.

During his training period, Eiffler spent a week acclimating himself to his future work site—Sociedad de Sordos Adultos (Society of Deaf Adults), a one-time soccer club that has become a center for adult education for deaf people.

Most members are in their teens and 20s, with a few in their 30s, says Eiffler. Although not Ecuador's largest organization for deaf people, he says that Sociedad is the most active. In March 1983, it received a $69,000 grant from the Inter-America Federation, with which it has established a theater for the deaf. The grant money also is being used to set up a video library and create sign language books.

After his training, Eiffler moved into an apartment with three other volunteers.

"We really were a cross section of ethnic/cultural minorities," he says. "A deaf man, a blind woman, a Puerto Rican, and a Jew. What a soup!" His blind roommate was the only one who knew sign language, he says, adding that they all eventually learned enough to communicate.

Like most buildings in Quito, their apartment boasts modern plumbing, although it does not have a television set and only recently acquired a refrigerator.

Eiffler says that he and his roommates live on a "typical Ecuadoran diet, which consists mainly of rice topped off with an occasional banana or yuca, a starchy tuber."

To avoid parasitic diseases, water used for drinking or food preparation must be boiled, and many vegetables must be soaked in an iodine solution.

One of the positive features of Ecuadoran life for Eiffler is the movies. "We get all the pictures released in the United States," he says, "plus the ones from Brazil—all subtitled in Spanish. This means I can go to the movies with my friends without needing someone to interpret."

Eiffler's job was to teach Spanish to deaf people. "Not only did I have to teach them Spanish," he says, "but I had to teach them sign language as well. I soon realized that a sign language book was really needed."

Using "The Joy of Signing" and "A Basic Course in Manual Communication" as models, Eiffler, who says "I can't even draw a straight line with a ruler," set out to design a sign language manual that would serve the deaf Ecuadorans as well as the hearing American volunteers. He drew about 450 signs and then eliminated 200 because "they weren't good enough." The job took nearly four months.

Figuring that a computer could save time and effort on the project, he wrote a grant proposal to Apple Computers, Inc. He is still awaiting word from the company.

An additional advantage to using a computer, he says, is that it could also be used to transmit Ecuadoran signs to other Latin American countries.

This is necessary, says Eiffler, because while most Latin American nations have sign languages, few school systems use them. "Few teachers have training in deaf education," he says, "and hardly any know sign language."

This, despite the fact that, according to a government estimate, there are 54,000 deaf Ecuadorans in a population of nine million.

"Of those 54,000, half are below the age of 16, which means a large number of them should be in school. However, only about 1,000 deaf children attend school," he says.

Where are the other 26,000?

"For the most part," he says, "they are hidden at home. In Latin America, deafness, like all handicaps, is viewed as a shameful burden. It makes our work all the harder."

Most deaf Ecuadorans who want jobs find them, says Eiffler, although many do manual labor or factory work and receive lower pay than hearing workers—even those with less experience and time on the job. The few in white collar positions usually have their jobs because of family members in the field.

Because of this situation, Eiffler is trying to help Sociedad members set up small businesses of their own. He is teaching them silk screening, and they are offering for sale some T-shirts screen printed with the Eduadoran manual alphabet.

Despite the hardships of life in Ecuador, Eiffler is glad he joined the Peace Corps. His tour of duty ends in August 1985, and his immediate plans depend upon the acquisition of the grant and the progress of his project to computerize the sign language book.

"If I can't get the funds or equipment," he says, "I'll probably leave. Otherwise, I'll stay until the project is completed.

"If I can't get the project started here," he adds, "I'll take it back to the States and use my own funds to get it rolling." (Peace Corps volunteers do not receive a salary, he explains, but in addition to a monthly living allowance of $125, they also get a "special readjustment allowance fund," which for the 27 months he's spent with the Corps, amounts to nearly $5,000.)

Before heading for the States, Eiffler plans to tour Latin America, meeting with deaf people in the various countries. After that, he wants to return home and learn Chinese so that he can visit deaf schools in the Far East.

"Why Chinese?" he asks, then answers his own question. "Because it is used by more than one quarter of the world's population."

A Conversation

With NTID's Associate and Assistant Deans

By Emily Andreano

The comprehensive nature of NTID's academic program dictates a more complex administrative infrastructure than might commonly be found within one college at a university. The Institute's Career Development Program administration includes Dr. Bruce Halverson, assistant dean, Division of General Education; Dr. Alan Hurwitz, associate dean, Division of Educational Support Services; Dr. Ronald Kelly, acting assistant dean, Communication Programs; Dr. Christine Licata, assistant dean, School of Business Careers; Dr. Thomas Raco, assistant dean, School of Visual Communication Careers; and Marie Raman, assistant dean, School of Science and Engineering Careers.

As the principal liaison between NTID teaching and research faculty and the administration, their positions afford them a unique vantage point from which to view the Institute; **Focus** ***asked them to share that perspective.***

Focus: Do you see yourselves primarily as faculty or administrators? What's your view of the difference between the two?

Raco: If there were a category known as administrative faculty, that would probably offer a close definition of how I view myself. I identify with the faculty role and feel that my primary assignment is to provide administrative support to the goals of the school and Institute.

Hurwitz: I view myself as an academic leader who is responsible for promoting dialogue among faculty and staff members on issues and concerns related to curriculum, instruction, teaching, and research. As an academic administrator, I am responsible for establishing a working collaboration with faculty and staff members within an academic unit and across organizational lines to accomplish whatever is necessary to meet student needs in class and in extracurricular activities. A faculty member may be directly involved in educational activities, in academic leadership, or in administration as it relates to needs of students, faculty, and staff members in an academic environment.

Focus: Any differences of opinion?

Raman: Not a difference of opinion, but a desire to indicate that I feel very much part of the faculty because I belonged to the faculty for a long time. Moving into an administrative role simply means I'm in a better position to advocate for the faculty. The additional responsibility of being part of an administrative leadership team is of great importance. I think that having been a member of the faculty makes me more aware of faculty concerns.

Focus: What do you mean by a leadership team?

Raman: My formal title is assistant dean and director of a school, as opposed to simply director. The additional role was added so that the directors would be acting in an advisory capacity to the Institute dean and his staff.

Kelly: I have seen myself always as a faculty member for the last 18 years. In this particular position, we have an expanded responsibility which involves a variety of perspectives. I am strongly committed to faculty governance of academic matters, and I think others here are as well.

Focus: What about the other side of the coin? You consider yourself an advocate for the faculty, but won't there be times when you'll be called upon to execute the wishes of the dean or act on his behalf?

Halverson: I think we always are acting on behalf of our faculty. The dean may have wishes, but let us hope that those wishes are not contrary to what is in the best interest of the faculty and that the two constituencies are always going for the same goal or moving in the same direction.

Focus: What if you're caught in a squeeze and the faculty is advocating for something and the dean or the director has clearly indicated to you that for fiscal or other reasons, this is impossible; with whom do you side?

Hurwitz: I would expect that we will not have to take sides or defend one to the other. Each academic administrator is responsible for looking at a larger picture, and helping others to gain a better understanding of the educational, economic, and political implications for decisions that must be made.

Raco: I don't think it is a question of siding. I think it is a question of sorting out the rationale and articulating that rationale to the rest of the Institute. In a sense, we become a bridge to carry an understanding about the issues from one side to the other.

Focus: Let's talk about the role of the dean—a new person recently has been appointed to the job. Perhaps this is a chance for all of you to step in and help structure that office; perhaps not. How do you envision the dean's relationship with you and with the faculty?

Halverson: We'd like the dean to feel that we are all members of a team working toward common goals. Our faculty members have different perspectives—we bring them together and share them and try to formulate a plan for the common good. We are a consistent voice representing the interests of the faculty.

Licata: It's important that we also try to help faculty and department chairpersons keep the total institutional picture in mind, rather than only the departmental or school perspective. A key factor in working with the dean will be for us to continue to view problems on an institutional level. The next few years are going to be important to the Institute, and the decisions that we make will affect all of our lives significantly.

Raman: ***"...moving into an administrative role simply means I'm in a better position to advocate for the faculty."***

Focus: Are you speaking of the prospect of institutional retrenchment, as the so-called "rubella bulge" students phase out of NTID?

Licata: I am talking about the potential for declining enrollment and how we might address it.

Focus: Has this group already started talking and thinking about it?

Raman: Within my school in particular, we have a number of adjunct and part-time faculty members who temporarily have assumed visiting professorships. That status will have to change within the next three years. How the change is accomplished is going to be very important.

Focus: Will there be any alternative to returning these full-time people to their original part-time status?

Halverson: It will be a topic of discussion for all of us over the next few years. Who knows, at this time, in what direction the Institute may go? We are going to come together with the dean and director of NTID, the provost and president of RIT, and work to plan for the future.

Focus: *Speaking of directions in which the Institute may go, it seems we are again talking about outreach as one possible avenue. Should that occur, what impact will it make on your individual schools? How do you feel about the fact that NTID may begin to try to reach high school students or institute some form of continuing education?*

Hurwitz: NTID is a model educational institution and is looked to for leadership in curriculum development, instruction, teacher training, and research by many schools and educational agencies all over the world. It has not been feasible in the past for NTID to go full speed ahead with its outreach obligation because of its pressing demands to meet the needs of its current students. It will be an excellent opportunity for our faculty and staff members to share their knowledge, expertise, and products with external publics.

Raco: Clearly there are several possibilities for the 1990s. The categories mentioned are

Halverson: *"We are leaders on some issues; we are clearly followers on others."*

ones that we certainly have talked about, if not formally, at least informally. The notion of continuing education for our graduates as well as for other adult deaf persons in the larger community has been considered, but we have not activated a plan. I suspect that with the incredible technological changes occurring in industry, we most certainly need to address continuing education as a reasonable option for the future. Our graduates and other adult deaf persons are limited in educational options available to them for retooling or upgrading their skills, and we should be ready to respond to this need.

Halverson: The idea of outreach is something that we practice here daily in many ways. Faculty members spend a great deal of their time in an outreach way. We are simply looking at some additional opportunities that we've not yet fully utilized.

Focus: *Let's turn now to the subject of curriculum. What do you feel are the greatest instructional problems facing you in your individual schools?*

Raman: I would say that the greatest difficulty our students are facing now is meeting the requirements to enter some of the liberal arts courses. They seem to find it more and more difficult to complete their associate degree requirements.

Focus: *What are you doing to address that problem?*

Raman: We have agreed to propose another degree option: the Associate in Occupational Studies (A.O.S.) degree.

Halverson: We also have developed bridging courses in English to help students develop sufficient skills to be able to complete the English composition course, so that we have two positive tracks. The first is to help students who have what we might call Basic Skills and are able to get an A.A.S. or a B.S. degree. For those who have the cognitive skills, but don't necessarily have the English skills and can't acquire them within the time that they are here, we are trying to develop another choice that will allow them to develop their technical discipline to the maximum.

Focus: *And that other choice is the A.O.S. degree option?*

Halverson: Right.

Focus: *Will that be an option available to all students here?*

Raman: We are talking about this option becoming available in several programs. It's not clear yet in which particular programs. We are exploring whether these students can be placed after graduation.

Focus: *How is that determined?*

Raman: Through market surveys that are being conducted to assess whether there are similar degrees in the country, especially in those states from which we recruit students. The surveys are looking into available employment opportunities that require such a degree.

Focus: *Who is conducting those surveys?*

Raman: The research is being conducted by NTID's Division of Career Opportunities. Our National Advisory Group, which has ties with industry, can also help us in our assessment.

Halverson: We are looking specifically at students who will receive diplomas rather than A.A.S. degrees. We think that the upgrading of their degree would be beneficial to them, and we believe that this would be an attractive option or addition for them when they seek employment.

Focus: *It sounds, then, as though there will be no connection between the Basic Skills program you are developing and the A.O.S. degree.*

Licata: In our school, we think that perhaps one will lead to the other. The reason we have put more energy into Basic Skills efforts at this time is because we have felt that we wanted to be able to identify the skills we felt were necessary for entering and succeeding in a major, and subsequently on the job and in life before we talked about another degree option.

Focus: *You all seem to be taking a proactive role in the formulation of the Basic Skills project. Would you define your roles as primarily those of leadership, that is, interpreting or making policy, or of representation, that is, facilitating the flow of information between faculty and administration?*

Halverson: My job is creating an environment where the faculty profits—where they can do their best work. Sometimes that means I identify issues and try to bring some kind of focus to them. At other times, faculty members identify issues and ask me to help solve them. In still other situations, faculty members solve them, then bring them to me, we discuss them, and they go forward. So we are facilitators in that sense. We are leaders on some issues; we are clearly followers on others.

Raco: We also need to make sure that students are getting the very best they can in terms of educational opportunities. In some ways, we serve as a moving buffer among the students, faculty, and the upper administration.

Focus: *So you're saying it's more representation than interpretation or policy making?*

Raco: Well, no—it's a combination of representation, articulation, definition, and policy making. We make policies within our own schools; we also help to shape policy within Career Development Programs, and we influence policy beyond those two.

Focus: *How do you think that your faculty members view you, more as representatives or as policy makers?*

Kelly: We have responsibilities to the Institute and we have responsibilities to the faculty. How we balance these often involves a very complex set of personal and political issues, as well as what I consider Institute obligations. Clearly, we have to provide a process for the faculty to give recommendations. But we also have an important voice in that process. I believe we are perceived as a combination of representative and leader pertinent to the management process.

Focus: *Your answers indicate that you interact with many people in your jobs. Because of that, do you see your areas as mini-colleges in themselves?*

Halverson: I clearly do, because we have a whole range of services and educational components. We're serving students in every way—from where they live, to their physical education, to their liberal arts component, to their general education requirements.

Hurwitz: My division is a support to the three technical schools and other divisions. We have educational research faculty and a staff of interpreters who provide support services to teaching faculty and students in all colleges of RIT. Our researchers work very closely with classroom instructors to carry out teaching and learning research and development projects. They assist several departments in carrying out their self-study/evaluation projects as they relate to curriculum, instruction, teaching, and support service needs of students and faculty. All researchers are involved in teaching courses to deaf students and in some cases, provide tutoring support to deaf students. Interpreters work with the support faculty and teaching faculty to ensure full communication accessibility for deaf students in regular classrooms and in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Raman: I look at the School of Science and Engineering Careers as one of several mini-colleges within the larger Institute. It also houses an important department that provides mathematics instruction to most of our students.

Kelly: Communication Programs does not offer a degree; we provide support to the degree programs. Thus, in terms of purpose —no, we are not a college. But I think in terms of number of faculty, the type of activities, and number of students, there are many similarities.

Focus: *You have spoken about the similarities of working here to working at other colleges. We are always talking about NTID being unique; is there anything unique about working here?*

Raco: There seems to be a greater intensity here, with a definite preoccupation with goals, curriculum development, and placement. Because we are a technical institution, our mission may be more focused and our goal more exact. Less rhetoric occurs; everything we do is toward a goal, toward the notion of preparing our students for the world of work. My experience at a small liberal arts college was associated with the pursuit of learning for learning's sake. There was less of a focus on goals. I should temper that statement with a recognition that over the past 16 years, the situation has changed substantially. Many colleges now are re-examining their goals for the future, making an effort to tie them to practical ends for their students. Consequently, RIT is not necessarily as unique as it used to be, because more universities are starting to copy the things we do best.

Raman: What is somewhat unique is that we are accountable to the federal government and, consequently, to the nation. That reporting process is not necessarily present in other colleges.

Focus: *Do any of you wish you didn't have to participate in that reporting process?*

Hurwitz: It is a necessary part of our administrative responsibilities. We are held accountable for the programs and services that are provided to deaf students at RIT. NTID has made excellent efforts to streamline reporting activities. I remember when we had

to submit monthly and quarterly reports, because at that time, the federal government required them. Now we are not so burdened with the reporting requirements, which allows us to focus more of our time on quality leadership and academic programming.

Licata: What's special about working here is that even though we do have a clearly defined mission and a national responsibility, the available facilities and resources with which we can make this happen are tremendous when contrasted with the restraints that other institutions face—even those that have a mission to prepare students for the world of work. Working here is a breath of fresh air in the rather constricted higher education environment.

Focus: Do you think we acquire our government funding easily these days?

Licata: No, I am not saying that we are acquiring funding easily; I'm just suggesting that people who are securing the funding are doing the job that needs to be done, and that the resources that are made available for us to work with give us the tools that we need to do our jobs effectively. I don't think, generally speaking, that other institutions have these resources in the same degree.

Focus: Are you all satisfied that within the context of preparing our students for the world of work that we are serving the academic function that a college is supposed to serve as well?

Halverson: That question indicates that we are not performing an academic function when we are preparing the students for the world of work. That's not the case. What we do is academic. One might ask if we are giving our students enough of a liberal arts, general education background to prepare them for that part of their lives that does not deal exclusively with work. That's a different question.

Focus: Well?

Halverson: I believe we are preparing our people academically.

Hurwitz: NTID is doing an outstanding job in preparing deaf students for a wide range of employment in the world of work. Before I came to NTID in 1970, there were only a handful of deaf engineers and technicians throughout the nation. Today, there are scores of deaf engineers who are employed successfully, not to mention many others in applied science, arts, business, and technological fields that deaf people have been entering since the creation of NTID in 1967. We must be careful not to become complacent with our accomplishments, and allow rapid technological changes to trickle away from our grasp. We continue to strive for improvements in curriculum and instruction as we progress.

Raco: *"RIT is graduating a number of hearing students who have developed an understanding of deafness and who will take that sensitivity with them in their professional lives."*

Kelly: There are many myths about what is academic and what are basic academic requirements. And I think all of us—at least everyone I know in the program I work for—clearly appreciate the notion of learning for the value of learning. That's the joy of being a member of an academic community. But the unique thing we have here—and I don't speak just for the Communication Programs—is that we are a focused institution preparing students for the world of work, and our efforts can make a substantive difference for students.

Raman: It seems to me you are asking also whether we are preparing students for all aspects of life once they graduate—whether we are graduating well-rounded students. We make an effort toward that; however, students have very little time to take advantage of all available resources for broadening their horizons. The curriculum is highly structured. Within that greater structure, we make an effort to encourage students to participate in many activities that are not strictly connected to their studies—such as theater, music, and similar exciting activities that are available.

Focus: Do you have negative feelings about our structured approach?

Raman: Yes, somewhat. It would be desirable to allow students more flexibility in terms of structuring their own program, but that requires the luxury of time, which many students don't have, financially or otherwise.

Focus: Isn't it possible to build that time into the students' schedules?

Raco: Our hearing-impaired students have more aspects to their programming than just about any other students I've encountered. It's primarily due to the phenomena surrounding their deafness. As a consequence, in some cases, more than half their credit hours in any given quarter could be dedicated to non-technical courses. I'm not making a value judgment as to whether that's good or bad. Many students are just stacked to the ceiling with learning experiences on a quarterly basis. I've had many students who are not enrolled in the Visual Communication program come to me over the years asking if they could take a course. Our curriculum is structured to serve the major, so when we sit down with the student to look at where there might be space in the schedule, there is just not enough. Some students have a reasonable schedule of credit hours, but they aren't always the ones who want more.

Focus: We've spoken a bit about the RIT curriculum; what efforts are we making to provide more opportunities for our hearing-impaired students at the other colleges of RIT?

Halverson: We have been making a concerted effort to increase the opportunities for our students in the English composition course in the College of Liberal Arts, which will then allow and encourage them to take more courses in the other colleges. We are piloting a project now which we hope will help.

Hurwitz: Staff interpreters have played a crucial role in enhancing a positive working climate between deaf and hearing counterparts on the campus. Without interpreters, many, if not all, deaf students would not have made it in the other colleges of RIT. Also, in the campus-wide student activities, we see many deaf students interacting with hearing students with the help of support services.

Raco: We continue to be faced with problems, such as a scheduling system that is relatively rigid. The difficulty is in being able to make a substantial impact on the scheduling process within each individual college in such a way that we would be able to be more efficient in the use of our resources, such as interpreters. And we still have a way to go in terms of faculty and colleges generally understanding the nature of this institution and learning styles associated with deafness.

Focus: *Whose responsibility is it to promote that understanding?*

Raco: All of ours. Initially, RIT as a university made a commitment to bring NTID to this campus. I don't think that commitment should in any way change—it remains a commitment on the part of the entire Institute. It's not one that is assigned only to the president or to faculty members who have hearing-impaired students.

Focus: *Do any of you have specific goals or recommendations for any segment of the RIT community toward improving that understanding? What about the hearing students in the other colleges? Do you have any interaction with them that would lead you to believe that they are either facilitating or impeding the process of cross registration?*

Raman: In those instances where hearing students are involved extensively with our hearing-impaired students, there are wonderful relationships. I feel strongly that RIT is graduating a number of hearing students who have developed an understanding of deafness and who will take that sensitivity with them in their professional lives.

Focus: *Are there similar examples of positive interaction?*

Halverson: Members of RIT's Division of Student Affairs are eager to support our students in activities. They want to have interpreters; they want to have their programs successful for all students. They have Barry Culhane, a former NTID associate dean, as assistant vice president for Campus Life.

Raco: We also have a cadre of people in the trenches who are truly the unsung heroes of this cause. Support faculty members face tremendous challenges daily in terms of students who need a great deal of support services in order to get through each day in a mainstreamed environment, and work with faculty members who continue to have difficulty in reaching hearing-impaired students with the necessary information. We have tutor/notetakers in the classroom who sometimes meet later with teachers and tutor the students; they are important resources who do a lot to enhance integration.

Halverson: There are many individual faculty members in each of the different colleges who have been very helpful to us. They are supportive, sensitive teachers, and we are successful in part because of their efforts. In addition, the Creative Arts Program is an RIT program that has been active and supportive—it's really been a model in action.

Raco: The NTID Theatre has done a lot to bring people from other parts of the campus to our environment, and into a cultural awareness by virtue of going to plays. They are then exposed to deafness in a different way than normally. That is one of the most successful strategies we have for orientation to deafness—what it is and is not.

Focus: *Are there any academic programs into which students can cross register where they couldn't previously?*

Raco: Yes. In 1969 or 1970, it was assumed that deaf students would never have access to our woodworking program in the College of Fine and Applied Arts. There was a tremendous fear for the students' safety; it was assumed that if you could not hear you probably would injure yourself on a table saw, plane, or whatever. Over the last 15 years, we've had several graduates come out of that program, some of whom are written up in national craft magazines as recognized professional craftspeople. That's a significant change that was caused by two things: the

Hurwitz: *"I sincerely believe that NTID is doing an outstanding job in preparing deaf students for a wide range of employment."*

work of our support faculty, and the conviction on the part of the dean of that college, Bob Johnston, that his programs were going to be accessible to deaf students come hell or high water. He pursued that philosophy across all the programs.

Licata: Our problem is not accessibility to programs, but success in those programs, and in finding ways to further ensure such success. Our challenge is to track our students in cross-registered programs to see if any patterns or trends emerge relative to who succeeds and relative to the factors surrounding success. Once we know this, we can plan as a school to better ready students for the cross registration environment. While the numbers of cross-registered students in Business and Computer Science programs have increased significantly in the last few years, the numbers of students completing these programs has not increased proportionately.

Raman: In some instances, we have a problem not of accessibility, but of preparedness for those programs. We will be piloting a bridging course to prepare students to enter the calculus sequence that is required in many of the majors. There are also two exciting new programs in which we have hearing-impaired students—biotechnology in the College of Science, and computer technology in the College of Applied Science and Technology. The biotechnology program uses living organisms in industrial processes; computer technology is a blending of the "hardware" of electrical engineering technology and the "software" of computer science.

Halverson: Another area is in social work, where a concentration in deafness has been added because of the success of deaf students.

Focus: *It seems many of you have had some very positive experiences since arriving here. What attracted you in the first place?*

Hurwitz: I have wanted to teach deaf students since I was a small child. I was talked out of it by my parents, who are deaf themselves—they tried to convince me that there were better jobs. I happened to be strong in mathematics and science, so I pursued my studies in these fields. I had a deaf uncle who was a successful drafter for a private company; he prompted me to pursue a career in drafting and engineering. After completing my college education in electrical engineering at Washington University in St. Louis in 1965, I still wanted to teach deaf students. I applied to Gallaudet College for graduate study in mathematics education; but the program was still in development. In 1968, I learned about NTID and thought, 'What a fine opportunity to combine my technological skills with my longstanding dream of teaching deaf students.' I applied for employment, but received the wrong materials from NTID; they sent me an application for admission! I dropped the idea of teaching until 1970, when I re-applied to NTID. I arrived in September 1970 as an educational specialist for deaf students majoring in engineering and applied science programs. This is my 15th year at NTID and these have been the best years of my life.

Halverson: I'd been at traditional colleges and state university departments of theater arts for a number of years in an administrative capacity. I'd met [Professor] Bob Panara once—he and I worked together for a year—but I knew nothing about deafness. A job as chairperson of the theater department opened here and I said to myself, 'You only live once. You're in the theater, you like new and different things—maybe you should look at that.' I did and was excited by the potential for working in an area that I felt had enormous opportunity for someone with my interesrs.

Focus: *You described yourself as being in the theater. You're not necessarily anymore, at least not on a day-to-day basis. How does that feel?*

Halverson: The major difficulty is trying to keep up with my professional discipline, which is the theater, and to acquire and

Kelly: *"...we are a focused institution that is preparing students for the world of work —and our efforts can make a substantive difference for students."*

Licata: *"What's special about working here is that even though we do have a clearly defined mission and a national responsibility, the facilities with which we can make this happen are tremendous..."*

improve educational administrative knowledge and skills. I'm as enthusiastic about my new job as I was with the theater, so the place continues to excite me professionally, but I know that my discipline is theater and I cannot let that go.

Licata: I spent 12 years working in different educational settings before coming here, beginning in a secondary school teaching position and working into three admininstrative college posts, none of which was remotely connected with deafness. While I was at [Rochester's] Monroe Community College, I became aware of a chairperson position at NTID. When I was interviewed, it was really the students and faculty members who intrigued me. I spent almost two days interviewing with faculty, meeting with students, and observing classes, and after that experience, some of the excitement of earlier days in the classroom was rekindled. I knew there were risks involved in making such a move, but the challenge, attraction, and potential I saw of working with faculty and students to achieve well-defined goals seemed worth the risk.

Focus: What is your particular field of interest?

Licata: Business administration.

Focus: That's somewhat closer to what you are doing on a day-to day basis. Perhaps you don't feel the tug between the two.

Licata: I do, because remaining vital in one's discipline is a full-time job in itself. When the responsibility of administrative tasks is tacked onto that, you can't say, "I'm not going to do that today because I'm going to spend eight hours finding out what's happening on Wall Street." It's a matter of timing. Because we are serving others, we're like firefighters in some respects—on call at all times.

Kelly: I've been in university settings for about 19 years and, with the exception of three years, all of that time pertained to the education of deaf persons. I started out as an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, and then assumed a full-time staff position developing instructional materials for deaf students. Interestingly, I visited NTID in 1968—we had an ongoing relationship with the Media Production area. In 1980 I went to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, which removed me from the field of deafness, since I was working primarily with doctoral students in the area of research. When an opportunity became available at NTID, it presented an exciting challenge. I feel grateful and lucky that I am in this environment. For many people in the field, NTID is a place to which people aspire to come and learn. It's hard not to want to be part of something like that.

Focus: What would you define as your particular area of personal interest?

Kelly I'm interested in cognition and information processing—how people assimilate information and what they do with it in terms of manipulating symbols.

Focus: And how are you finding the business of keeping up with the journals and keeping up with the paperwork?

Kelly: Exhausting, but I think that's true in any institution. It is necessary to remain current with the professional work; the administration is challenging and interesting at this point, but I get my identity from my academic field.

Raco: I date back to 1969 with NTID; prior to that I was responsible for the art education program at Nazareth College in Rochester. When NTID was brand new, I came over to find out how I could help the student teachers with whom I was working learn more about deafness and how to address the particular needs that deaf students might encounter in a high school setting. The reason I came to NTID is that before working at Nazareth, I had taught at a high school on Long Island. When I told my students that I was leaving, a girl in the front of the class started to cry. She later apologized and said that I was the only person in all her classes that she ever really understood. When I asked her why, she pulled back her hair—she wore two hearing aids. The reason she always sat at the front of the classroom was that she could hear and understand me. I sort of tucked that in the back of my head. I went to NTID and asked if someone with expertise in art and deafness could speak with my stu-

The Balance of Career Education and Liberal Arts

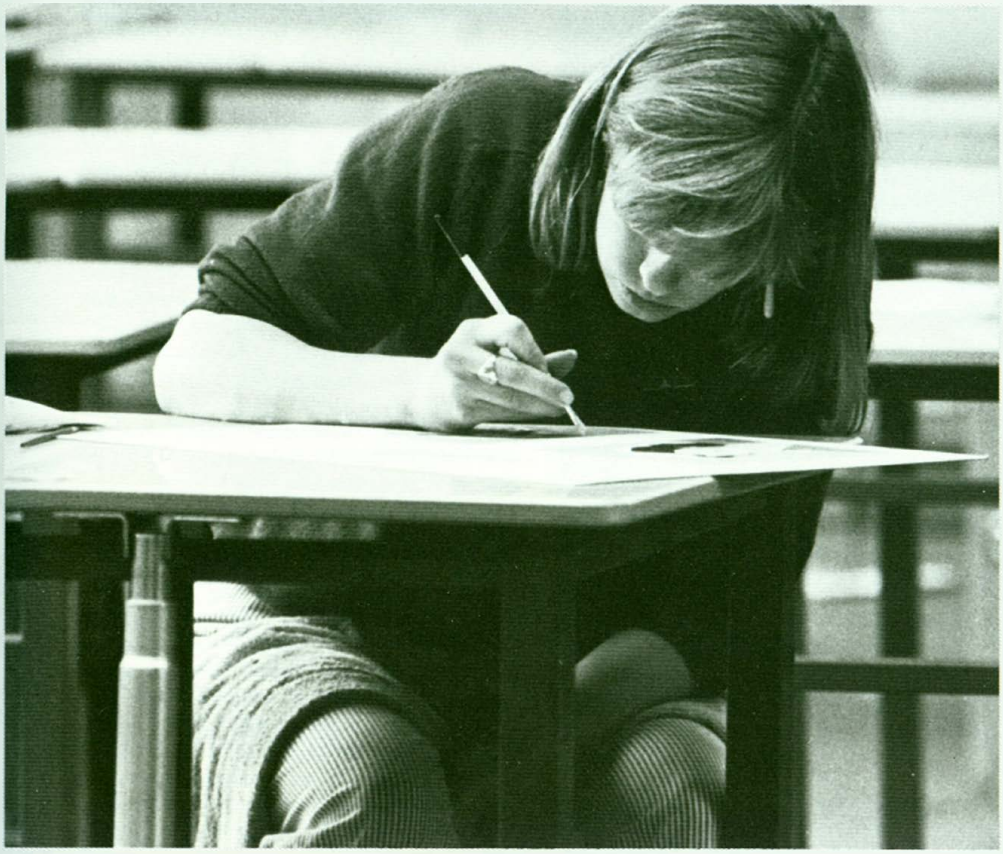
A supplement to *NTID Focus*

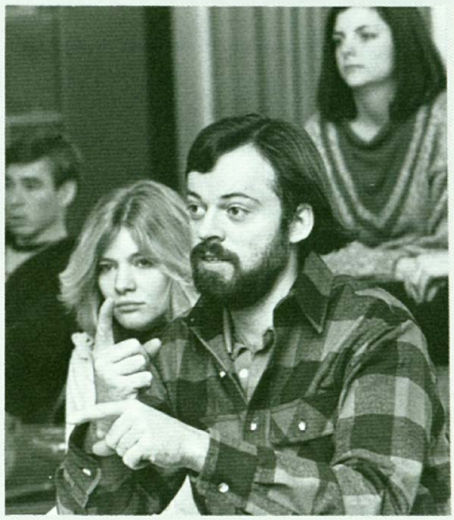
There has been a growing national concern over educational quality seen spreading from schools to colleges. Media stories indicate that pressures for professional or preprofessional training have weakened the colleges' commitment to liberal education. Several reports were cited in support of that thesis, including a study by the National Endowment for the Humanities on the State of Learning in the Humanities in Higher Education.

There is little question that presidents of colleges and universities throughout the nation are struggling with the appropriate mix of programs in career options and the humanities. Many fine institutions have only recently discovered the word career and somehow think that focusing on careers will be the quick fix to avert declining enrollments.

Many institutions of technology with deep roots in career education are now more committed than at any time in their histories to preparing students both to earn a living and to live a life. This is certainly true of students enrolled in The National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT. In fact, the development of personal and technical skills in our deaf students is a primary reason for our superior record of job placement. As educators, we must work diligently to ensure that liberal arts studies are not diluted by career educational demands, particularly in the rapidly changing high technologies.

A present danger is that educators, in following the career fad, could cause some liberal arts careers to lose their distinctiveness.





Dr. M. Richard Rose

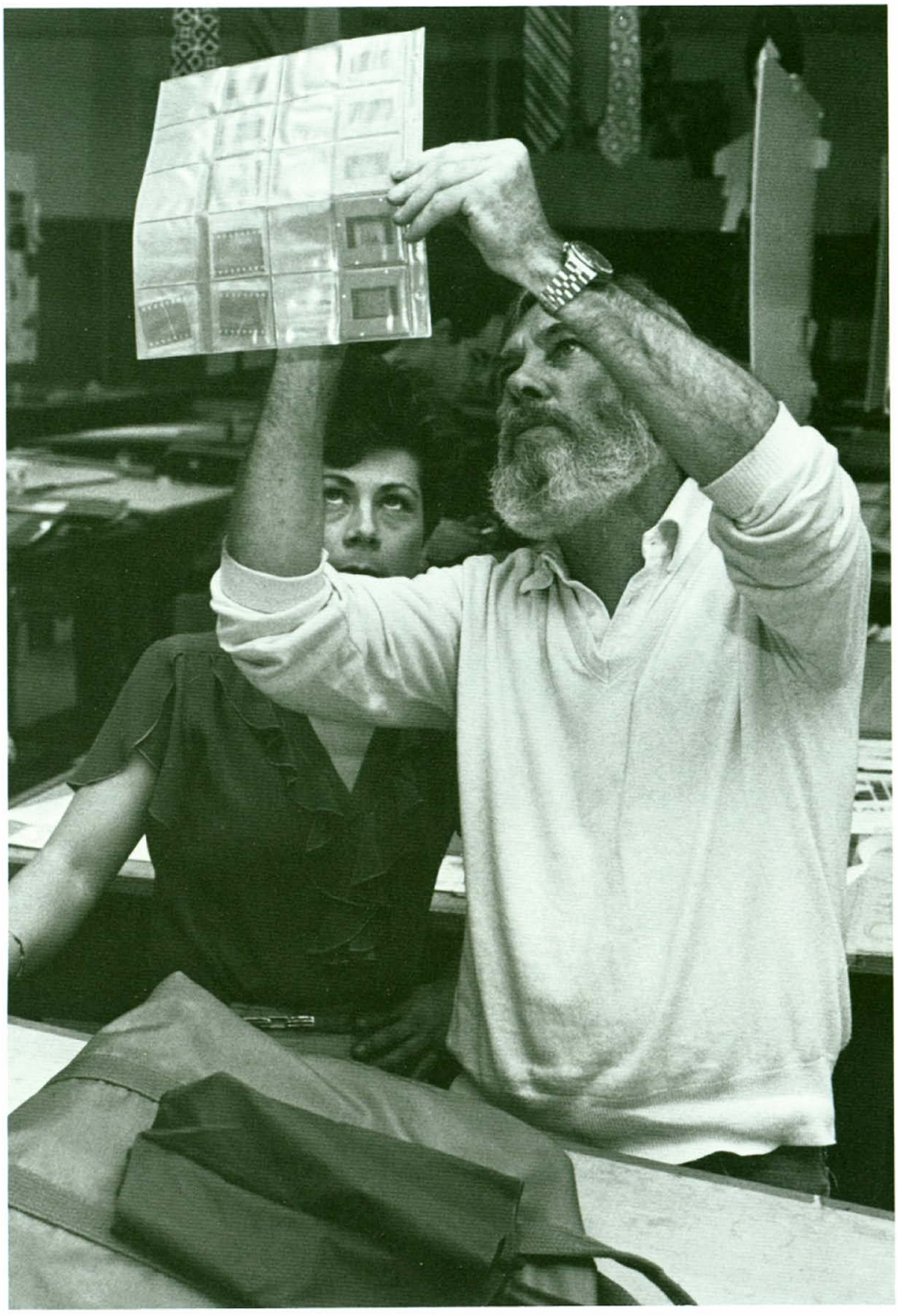
On the other hand, through debate, the balance must be maintained on what is worth learning, what will sustain our graduates, deaf and hearing, over the long haul. However, there is little question that fine arts, history, literature, philosophy and writing skills are essential to developing perspectives on reality.

At RIT, we want our graduates to understand the world so that they respect the past in terms of its impact on the future, and above all, to apply moral authority as they apply technology.

I feel that this country's concern about higher education should be centered not on liberal arts versus career orientation, but on ensuring continued access to the public and private educational sectors through equitable financial incentives and government support, particularly in the education of the handicapped. This would enable the hearing impaired and hearing student to attend the college of choice based on program rather than costs. Colleges and universities that provide comprehensive educational programs to meet the full needs of students will succeed. We are proud of the success of NTID that has been made possible, in part, by the collegiate setting, facilities, equipment and support available through RIT.

M. R. Rose

Dr. M. Richard Rose, President
Rochester Institute of Technology



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dents. Dr. Castle said, "We're brand new and we don't have anybody. Would you be interested in applying for a position?" When I announced to my Nazareth students that I was leaving to go to NTID, a woman in the front of the room got red in the face and just beamed from ear to ear. She said she couldn't believe I was going to NTID. I asked her why and she said, "I'm hearing impaired and I do volunteer tutoring there, and I think it's the most wonderful place in the world." That woman was [now Assistant Professor] Donna Pocobello.

Raman: Things were rather different in my case. I completed an undergraduate degree in mathematics at the University of Puerto Rico and was married to a physicist from India. We traveled to Colombia, South America, and taught at a university there. Then we moved to Algeria on a UNESCO mission, and from North Africa, we came to the United States. When I discovered that NTID was going to be at RIT, I wanted to work with deaf students, even though I had two young children, and I was continuing my education. I was hired to teach mathematics and I have always enjoyed working with deaf students in an environment where we are breaking new ground.

Focus: *Do any of you do any classroom teaching right now?*

Raman: Yes, for me that is very important; I really enjoy working with students, even when it means juggling a very busy schedule.

Focus: *Do you do that because you were pressed into service?*

Raman: No, not at all—because I love to do it.

Focus: *What do the rest of you do to recharge? When you're sitting behind a mountain of paperwork, do any of you wish that you were back in the classroom?*

Halverson: I'm not teaching this year because last year I did two jobs, and this year I'd like to live the year out. But I'd really like to get back into teaching eventually.

Licata: I'm not teaching this year, although I find it hard to say that. It's all in how you define teaching and instruction. This year, there's definitely been a little of both, but in terms of my previous role as department chairperson I interacted with students daily. So even though I may not be in a formal classroom, I have students in my office for one reason or another. I don't see teaching and learning as being limited only to the classroom. There are plenty of opportunities for me to counsel students about their academic lives, interview students who may want to enter a particular business career area, and to interact with students in general. My days have been perfectly full of this kind of interaction.

Kelly: I've been out of full-time teaching for two years, but I feel I'm still actively involved in instructional programs. I'm constantly being involved in discussions and issues concerning curriculum and services to students. I'm more broadly involved in curriculum development and issues concerning direct services to students than when I was teaching full time.

Raco: I taught for the first 12 years full time; then I went to work on my doctorate and I didn't teach for a year and a half. This year I'm not teaching, but I find that every time I get into the classroom, whether it's for visitation purposes or because I'm invited to give a presentation, the adrenalin starts flowing and the juices start pumping. When I experience that, I ask myself, 'What am I doing in administration, when I get such a high being in the classroom?'

Kelly: It's like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Raco: Exactly. I find there is no more pleasant experience than being in the classroom teaching students. You feel you can influence and make an impact. I would never let more than one year go by without teaching at least one course, even if it's one course for one quarter, just to remind myself about the reason why what I do during the day as an administrator is important—that's part of the answer.

Focus: *Clearly, none of you thought that you would end up in your current jobs. But now that you're there, what's the best part?*

Kelly: The people, and I think that goes all the way through NTID at all levels.

Raman: I would second that, and add that I consider it a privilege to be associated with an Institute as unique as NTID.

Raco: In addition to the people, it's the fact that NTID still is "in process" and it's exciting to think that I really have been in on the ground floor of something that has never happened before. I feel that NTID still has a long way to travel. This position excites me because I can be a part of the team that takes it in the direction in which it needs to go.

Hurwitz: I enjoy NTID because it is a place for growth and development. I still teach and love every minute of it. I have been a staff chairperson, department chairperson, office director, division director, and an associate dean. I do not think I could ever become a full-time classroom teacher again, because I enjoy all the varieties of work I have been doing in administration, including some government relations work for Dr. Castle's office. Neither do I want to pull my foot out of the classroom. Teaching helps me to be aware of student needs and the complexities of classroom teaching. When I returned to classroom teaching after a four-year break, one of my associates remarked that it was the first time in a while that she had seen me smiling and looking at ease with myself. Teaching has a lot to do with that, but I enjoy administrative work and will continue to stay in this area as long as I am useful to the missions of NTID.

Licata: The thing I really like about this job is that I feel I can be a "gardener" of sorts, with students and faculty. Not only can I try to plant seeds, but I can work to provide the right amount of water for them to grow. And I really view my job in that way.

Halverson: I like NTID, period. I don't think you can say that about most places. *I like NTID.* I think it's because we are part of a process that makes a helpful difference in the lives of our students. Most college teachers can't say that clearly. I think this is a good place to work.

AN OLD WORLD SABBATICAL

By Tom Willard

Two summers ago it was an old locker room, abandoned when the school built a new gymnasium. Today it is a center of education, a high tech classroom where people of all ages can use computers to learn about an infinite variety of subjects.

When students at England's Royal School for the Deaf (RSD) sit down to work in their computer classroom, they can thank NTID Associate Professor Paul Taylor, who devoted his recent 10-month sabbatical to establishing the school's computer system and training people in its use.

"Paul Taylor come to us 'heaven-sent' at a time when we were introducing computer education in the Royal School," says Principal Derek Langley. "He showed himself to be a good, adaptable teacher genuinely interested in his work and possessing an enthusiasm to share his knowledge and skills.

"No staff in the United Kingdom has his expertise in judging how hearing-impaired students may approach computer education, and we were very fortunate to obtain his help."

It all started when Taylor, who teaches data processing, reached the seven-year milestone at NTID and became eligible for a sabbatical.

"I knew that a sabbatical could provide many intellectual and therapeutic rewards," says Taylor, "and refresh my perspective toward teaching."

After considerable thought and discussion, Taylor decided on the topic of his research: the introduction of a small computer system into a secondary school for the deaf.

"I hoped to introduce children and teachers to the computer," he says, "and encourage teachers to include the computer in future curriculum changes.

"Furthermore," he adds, "I hoped to work in a school outside the United States, so that I could learn from educational methods unlike those at home."

Taylor contacted several schools, and —after a series of transatlantic correspondences—RSD agreed to host his sabbatical.

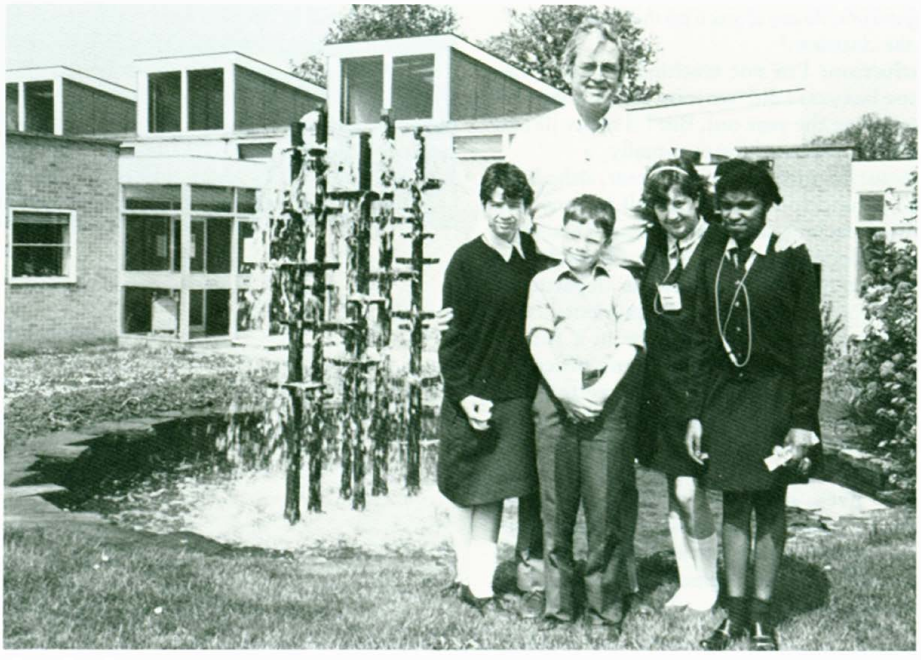
Accompanying Taylor overseas were his wife, Sally, and their 14-year-old daughter, Irene. A second daughter, Lucy, stayed behind to finish her senior year in high school; the Taylors' son, David, was attending the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. During their stay in England, the family received free room and board on the school grounds.

RSD is located in the northern section of Derby, a city of 220,000 about 100 miles northwest of London. With its rolling green hills and ancient stone buildings, the city reminds Taylor of New England. In a similarity even closer to home, the River Derwent winds its way through the city, much as the Genesee flows through Rochester.

The school has a long and colorful history. England's first recognized class for the education of deaf children was formed in 1880. Further expansion made a permanent institution necessary; in 1892, the Duchess of Devonshire laid the foundation stone for the new school. Five years later, Queen Victoria granted permission for the school to be known as the Royal Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, a name that endured until the present name was adopted in 1960.

"To illustrate how recently the name change took place," says Taylor, "several of the sturdier bed sheets in the dormitories still carry the D.D.I. (Deaf and Dumb Institution) labels."

Students at RSD range from 2-year-olds in the Nursery Department to young adults in the Department of Continuing Education; two-thirds of the 149 students live on campus.



New friends
Paul Taylor introduced these students and others to the world of computers.

Until Taylor arrived in September 1983, the "computer age" was just a vague abstraction for students at RSD. Computers were sweeping through England's public schools, but the privately owned RSD could not afford to hire additional personnel to introduce computers into its classrooms. Thus, never having peered into a video display screen, RSD students could be said to be at an even greater disadvantage than their hearing impairment alone might present.

Taylor moved quickly to improve the situation.

"Wisely, before my arrival the school purchased a BBC Acorn Model B 32K microcomputer with the essential peripherals, including a color monitor and a tape recorder," Taylor says. "This enabled me to get started right away."

Study break
Sally Taylor relaxes with students in the garden at the Royal School.

After becoming acquainted with the BBC—a British computer he found similar to the Apple—Taylor felt sufficiently confident to try it in the classroom.

"My first classroom encounter was quite an experience," says Taylor, who is hearing impaired. "The children were not used to my American accent, and I was not yet proficient in British sign language. However, the teacher was kind enough to interpret when necessary."

The first three weeks were used to show the students the scope and power of the computer. Taylor then introduced the keyboard and used educational software to pose questions and comments on the screen. He encouraged students to respond by typing on the keyboard.

The students were captivated by the new machine, and Taylor realized he would soon need additional equipment. He was asked to speak before the Board of Governors to justify the expense.

"In my speech, I emphasized the importance of computer training for career opportunities that would crop up in the near future," Taylor recalls. "I explained that computers are taking an ever-increasing slice of the industrial pie and that many people will be needed to operate and program these computers. And I told them that since computers do

Sally Taylor

While her husband concentrated on setting up the computer system at the Royal School for the Deaf, Sally Taylor found a number of activities to keep herself busy.

Aside from helping with the computer project, Taylor also taught a class of 16-year-old girls at the school and accompanied her husband on many of his information-gathering trips.

"It was a learning experience," she says, "that made me much more appreciative of the opportunities we have in America."

Taylor, who took a leave of absence from her job as a curriculum developer with NTID's Academic Department of Human Development, spent much of her time familiarizing herself with the variety of educational software available for the school's new computers. Each disc had a number of games and programs; her task was to write descriptions of each to help faculty members choose the appropriate programs for their students.

"It glued me to the computer," she says, "but I really enjoyed it. With all the games on the software, I felt as if I were playing at the same time I was working."

When she was not busy at the computer terminal, Taylor taught a class in life survival skills to a group of girls who were preparing to graduate.

"In England," she explains, "students complete their schooling at the age of 16, but these girls were not quite ready to go out into the world. You might say they were a little slower than the other students at the school, so they needed a bit more preparation.

"In the beginning I had a communication problem with them. The sign language in England is different, and the girls could not recognize many of my written words.

"We ended up teaching each other. I taught them the written words and they taught me the signs. Sometimes it was hit and miss."

Taylor found the experience quite different from what she was used to. "Since I don't usually work with young deaf children, I came away feeling that there is so much more I want to know about the education of deaf people."

England is about 10 years behind the United States in higher education for deaf people, Taylor believes. "It's going to be difficult. They are still fighting for their right to have a college or university education, since teachers there are not so receptive to the idea of interpreters in the classrooms."

Before leaving England, Sally Taylor gave some words of advice to the students at the Royal School for the Deaf.

"I stressed the fact that they should continue their education after they leave school at age 16, and that they should take advantage of all the modern technology that is available to them."

not speak or listen, they are somewhat ideal for deaf people."

Taylor concluded by talking about RIT's deaf data processing graduates and what they are doing in industry. Shortly thereafter, the board approved his request.

The old locker room was renovated over the Christmas holidays to contain the new equipment. Workers painted the room and installed fluorescent lights, electrical outlets, and sturdy tables to support three BBC computers with disc drives and printers. Taylor was quite pleased with the results.

"At last, I felt that there would be many opportunities for everyone at the school to learn how to use the computer in a cheerful and motivating environment."

Following the Christmas break, Taylor began training teachers and administrative staff. Informal lunchtime sessions were conducted daily, with participants free to attend as their schedules allowed. Since most had no prior experience with computers, Taylor provided a rather elementary text: "A Child's Guide to the BBC Micro."

There was some resistance at first, not to the book—"They were grateful for it," he laughs—but to the computer itself.

"In an educational environment," Taylor explains, "children of all ages enthusiastically accept the computer. Teachers, on the other hand, are slower to accept it.

"However, after initial training and familiarity, teachers readily accept the computer as a teaching tool that adds a new dimension to their teaching activities and helps reduce some of their repetitive teaching drills."

Toward the end of his sabbatical, Taylor conducted two all-day training workshops for 13 faculty and staff members. He was assisted by his wife, who had spent much of the previous winter reviewing the available educational software and documenting the attributes of each program.

At the conclusion of the training workshops, participants were introduced to WORDWISE, a software program that allows word processing.

Teachers and staff were quick to recognize the possibilities of WORDWISE. One administrator found it useful for processing letters of recommendation, while secretaries employed it to prepare letters and notices for special meetings.

Word processors should be used by students when writing, Taylor believes, "because the powerful editing capability of a word processor removes much of the tedium of scribbling and re-scribbling."

The "tedium" has also been removed from the school's front office, where student records had been kept on countless sheets of paper inside a number of filing cabinets. The school records are now computerized; complete information on each student can be obtained with the push of a few buttons.

"It was an unplanned event," says Taylor. "In terms of hours spent on the keyboard, computerizing the school records constituted by far the largest of any project. But in the end, the display and ease of obtaining printed records makes it worthwhile."

"Very fortunate"
Principal Derek Langley, with wife Joyce and prize-winning Great Dane Folly, says: "Paul Taylor came to us 'heaven-sent'.... We were very fortunate to obtain his help."

Several teachers have been trained to use the computer, and one faculty member has even purchased an identical computer for home use. If further assistance is needed, the computer department at nearby Derby Lonsdale College of Further Education has offered to help. Taylor is confident that the computer system he established has been left in good hands.

Having almost single-handedly brought the computer revolution to the Royal School for the Deaf, Taylor is modest about his accomplishment.

"I feel good about it," he says. "By helping so many deaf children become involved with the computer, I hope I have had some impact on their education."

Jeff Float: Going for the GOLD

By Kathleen Sullivan

Jeff Float settles into a comfortable chair in the restaurant of the Rochester Hilton, runs his fingers through his wet hair, and picks up a glass of orange juice. He notes the ring of water left on the formica table and begins to create—one, two, three, four, five Olympic rings in a pattern—then looks up, grinning.

Float is every inch the All-American. From the multitude of Olympic pins and the tiny U.S. flag that adorn his lapel to his red, white, and blue tie, he fairly screams Baseball, Hot Dogs, and Apple Pie.

This morning, however, it's Eggs Benedict for the 24-year-old captain of the United States men's swim team, as he prepares for a busy day of appearances at RIT's Homecoming Weekend festivities. His October visit was co-sponsored by RIT's Department of Athletics and the NTID Special Speakers Series.

Float isn't kidding when he says that he has "lived and breathed" Olympic fever for the past two years. His dedication to his craft goes beyond the obligatory 250 laps that he swam every day. It goes beyond giving up almost entirely the normal social activities of a Southern California college student. It even goes beyond sleeping with an Olympic flag tacked to his bedroom ceiling, at which he gazed every night before dropping off to sleep, exhausted after an eight-hour day of workouts.

Jeff Float is believed to be the first American hearing-impaired athlete to win a gold medal in Olympic competition. He captured the hearts and imaginations of the American public during the Los Angeles Games with one simple gesture—flashing the "I love you" sign to the cheering crowd after winning the 4x200 meter swimming relay. For millions of hearing-impaired Americans, Float was the undisputed hero of Los Angeles. And then the media blitz began.

ABC news commentators duly noted how Float "strained to hear the National Anthem" as he received his gold. *Sports Illustrated* reported how he inspired his teammates with his books on positive thinking, an outgrowth of his degree in psychology from the University of Southern California (USC). *Vanity Fair* magazine picked up on his All-American good looks and flew him and his teammates to New York City to shoot a cover with actress Raquel Welch, a session that developed into a publicized caper in which the Olympians doffed their bathing suits in front of Welch, prompting her to "grin while they bared it," according to *Time* magazine.

It's been a heady few months of notoriety for Jeff Float, but he has come out unscathed. He is polite, friendly, and self assured, with a maturity and perceptiveness that belie his 24 years.

There is an easy ambience to Float's style—he can subtly charm a talk show hostess during a television interview at 9 a.m. and, two hours later, unpretentiously weave his way through a crowded cafeteria line with 200 deaf students. Loosely translated, he keeps things in Perspective.

He might consider adding that word to his personal "Five P's for Success," which he shared with audiences during his appearances at RIT. A capacity crowd of deaf students at his Saturday evening presentation listened attentively, if not reverently, to his formula:

"To be a winner," he noted, "you must have *Passion* for your goal, whether

that goal is to do well in your studies, or get a job, or win a gold medal. You also must have *Patience*. Dreams don't come true overnight. You must have *Perseverance*; and be willing to *Persist* until you succeed. And finally, you must have *Perfect Practice*.

"I remember coming home exhausted after a workout and my father asked how many turns I did when I swam my laps. 'About 249,' I told him. 'And how many of those were perfect?' he asked. He wanted me to try to do them *all* perfect."

On a driving tour of Rochester, over the din of Bruce Springsteen's singing, appropriately enough, "Born in the USA," Float revealed that his birthplace was Buffalo, New York. His family (which includes a sister, 34, and a brother, 35) moved to California when Jeff was a year and a half old, after his hearing impairment was diagnosed from a bout with viral meningitis. His first education took place at the John Tracy Clinic in Los Angeles.

He began swimming lessons at age 3, after his mother tired of watching him chase the family dog around the house.

"I had lots of energy," he jokes.

Competing for the Arden Hill Swimming and Tennis Club in California, he won his first national title at age 10. But swimming was not his only love. In addition to being a Boy Scout, he participated in virtually every sport, including football, basketball, skiing, and baseball. (There still is a trace of wistfulness in his voice when he talks about his Little League pitching days.)

At Jesuit High School in Carmichael, he didn't begin to concentrate exclusively on swimming until his coach told him that he was "Olympic material." Despite a late start, he still became a four-year high school All-American.

In 1977, he participated in the World Games for the Deaf in Bucharest, Romania, an experience that changed his life.

"We had a training camp at Gallaudet College," he recalls. "First of all, I had never really had any contact with other deaf people. And second, I was one of only a few 'oral' athletes."

He candidly admits that he was "a big dog in a little puddle" at Bucharest, where he won 10 gold medals and set 10 world records.

Seeking a college with a good swimming program and support services, Float enrolled at USC, where he majored in psychology, minored in business administration, and concentrated on swimming.

"I like to think that I'm more of a 'people' person. And I have a unique message."

He was ranked second in the world in the 400-meter freestyle in 1978, and set his sights on the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. When news of the United States boycott reached him, he was "crushed."

He recovered his voice in time to sing the National Anthem, as spectators worldwide watched his "dream come true."

As the first hearing-impaired athlete to achieve national prominence in his sport, Float knows that he has a shot at creating "deaf awareness" in niches as yet unexplored. He also is aware of the fate of fellow Olympic swimmer Mark Spitz, who marketed his seven gold medals from the 1972 Olympics into a short-lived entertainment career. But Float sees an important difference between the two.

Olympic charmer
Jeff Float delighted the "Morning Break" crew and audience with his animated personality.

"Politics and athletics should not have anything to do with each other," he says vehemently, adding that he still hasn't forgotten or forgiven President Carter's decision not to participate in those Games.

Setting his sights immediately on the 1984 Olympics, he intensified his training program. Knowing that the Olympics literally were in his "backyard" at USC and buoyed by the support of friends and family, he Persevered.

As captain of the men's swim team, Float felt a particular responsibility to be "up," to motivate his fellow swimmers to excel collectively and individually. His moment would come July 29, as he left the blocks to swim the third leg of the 4x200 meter relay. Float gave teammate and anchor swimmer Bruce Hayes a 10-foot margin as Hayes hit the water to duel with feared West German swimmer Michael Gross, who quickly shortened the distance between the two. With only 10 meters to go, Float says, Hayes "put his head down and swam the final strokes without coming up for air," edging out Gross by only four one-hundredths of a second.

As the gold medal was draped around his neck, Float recalls feeling, "Ecstatic ... speechless."

"I like to think that I'm more of a 'people' person," he says. "And I have a unique message."

To help him spread that message, Float recently hired an agent and signed as a public relations representative with Oticon Corporation, a hearing aid company.

What lies ahead? He is interested in continuing his marketing job with Anheuser-Busch, Inc., the beer company for which he worked through the Olympic Job Opportunities Program.

As *Sports Illustrated* noted, Float wore his gold medal for an entire week after winning it. He doesn't do that anymore, although he carries it with him almost everywhere. There are other visual reminders of his achievement, however, most notably his Olympic ring. With its five circles, representing the five participating continents of the world, it's easy to imagine Jeff Float visiting—and conquering—them all.

Becoming Better Teachers

By Ann Kanter

Approximately 20 percent of deaf students enrolled at NTID cross register into major programs at the other RIT colleges, and another 50 percent take individual courses there.

How do instructors react to having deaf students in their classes? How do they communicate with these students? Do they adapt their teaching methods for them? If they alter their pedagogic style for the few, how does it affect the many?

More and more faculty members in other colleges are showing a special sensitivity toward deaf students.

Dr. Karen Paul, an assistant professor who teaches management courses in the College of Business, subscribes to the point of view that "We would be whatever another person is, if we grew up in their set of circumstances."

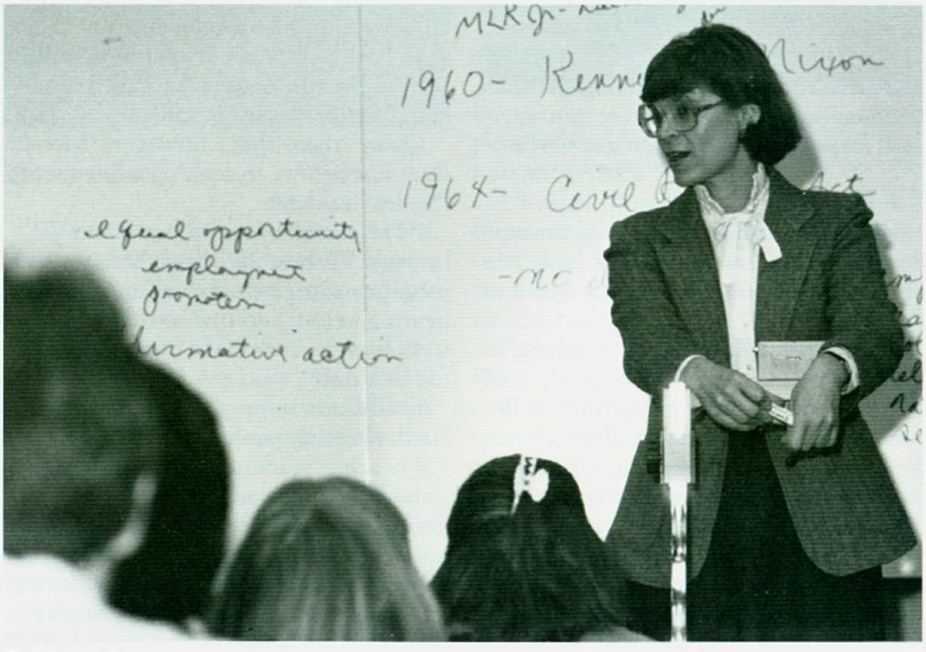
This viewpoint has opened her awareness to the feelings of others, including deaf people.

"I'd like us all to come to understand deafness, what it means to be at NTID, and what it means to have to think about things that others don't," she says.

Recalling her arrival at RIT four years ago, she says, "Having an interpreter in the classroom was distracting for the first day or so, and the presence of deaf students made me conscious of facing the class when I lecture.

"Deaf students need to watch your lip movements," she says, "and they can't if you turn around to write on the board while you're talking."

Dr. Paul now encourages her students to work together on small group projects, a practice she says is especially helpful for deaf students. "It's also good for hearing students to see how much effort their deaf peers must expend to acquire the same information that they get so easily," she adds.



Dr. Karen Paul
"It's good for hearing students to see how much effort their deaf peers must expend to acquire the same information that they get so easily."

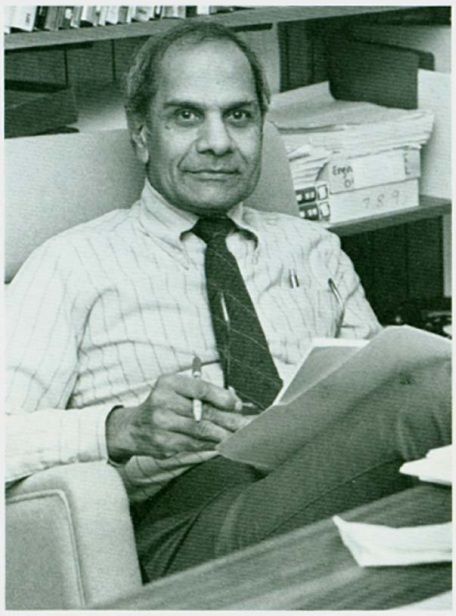
"Teaching deaf students has forced me to become better organized, which benefits all the students," she says. "I make a special effort to summarize and review before a test. Initially, I did this to help the deaf students, but the hearing students say that they too find it helpful. Being a good teacher for deaf students is being a good teacher for all students."

Dr. Swaminathan Madhu, professor in the College of Engineering, has been at RIT for 16 years and says that having deaf students in his classes never presented any problems.

"When I arrived here, NTID was just getting started," he explains, "and we had an entire day devoted to workshops on the special needs of deaf students. The things they told us may seem obvious, but it helped to have them pointed out.

"We learned that students who depend on lipreading will miss what we're saying if they have to take notes. [NTID Support Services provides notetakers to alleviate this problem.] We also learned that if you stop lecturing to avoid being drowned out by the roar of a jet plane, the deaf students won't know why."

Madhu has had one or two deaf students in most of his classes ever since coming to RIT, and says that to help them understand, he uses the chalkboard as much as possible.

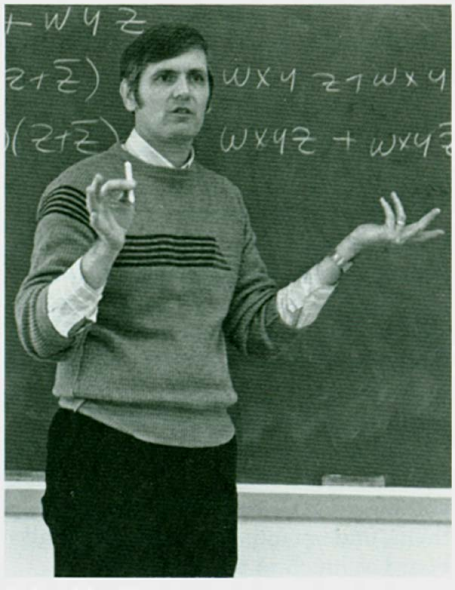


Dr. Swaminathan Madhu
"... If you stop lecturing to avoid being drowned out by the roar of a jet plane, the deaf students won't know why."

He tried learning sign language several years ago, but says he didn't have the opportunity to use it enough to become fluent.

Robert Merrill, associate professor in the College of Applied Science and Technology, found it impossible to become a fluent signer for the same reason. Nevertheless, he says he can fingerspell, sign an equation when necessary, and carry on a limited conversation.

When Merrill came to RIT in 1971 and faced the prospect of teaching deaf students, he wondered if it would work.



Robert Merrill
"When they [deaf students] leave here to get a job, they must be able to function in a hearing world, and one of the best ways to help them is to start preparing them for that now."

Most of the material in his courses in Applied and Fluid Mechanics and Machine Design is quite visual and mathematical, so he makes frequent use of the chalkboard, filling it with diagrams, pictures, and equations.

He also uses an overhead projector as much as possible, because all types of visual aids facilitate learning for deaf students. In addition, he sees that deaf students get seats at the front of the classroom, where they can see the interpreter and the visual aids.

Lab reports, an important part of Merrill's courses, sometimes present problems for deaf students, he says, who seem to have difficulties with written communication. To alleviate this problem, he gives the students a few extra days and directs them to the Learning Development Center, where they can get help in written expression.

Other than that, however, Merrill does not believe in making adjustments for deaf students.

"They are the ones who must adjust," he says. "When they leave here to get a job, they must be able to function in a hearing world, and one of the best ways to help them is to start preparing them for that now."

In addition to preparing deaf students for the hearing world, Merrill hopes that his hearing students' lives will be enriched by association with their deaf peers. Language barriers often limit communication between the two groups, so he was especially gratified when, during a class presentation, two deaf students described the isolation that they, as deaf people, feel when they are part of a hearing group.

"It was a good experience," says Merrill. "It provided the hearing students with a new awareness."

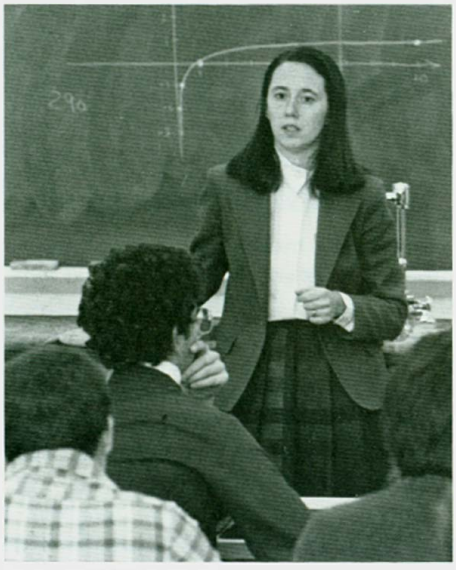
Jean Douthwright-Fasse, assistant professor in the College of Science, recalls an experience with a similar result. When her biology lab class was working on tissue regeneration involving live newts, a deaf student, seeing her newt jump off the table, let out an ear-splitting scream.

"For the first time, the hearing students thought of her as a person with feelings and reactions like their own," says Douthwright-Fasse. "The incident broke down a wall that had existed between the deaf and hearing students in my class."

Speaking of her own reaction to deaf students, Douthwright-Fasse, who has been teaching at RIT for five years, says, "I do what you'd expect any caring teacher to do—learn some sign language, respect the way the deaf students communicate, and learn about their culture. It's just common courtesy," she explains, adding that students appreciate her efforts and realize that she can't become a proficient signer without living within the deaf culture.

"My signing isn't good enough for lecturing," she says, "but I can converse with students on a one-to-one basis. That's often necessary, especially during labs."

Douthwright-Fasse says, "I try to do everything possible to help the deaf students, to be sure that they understand everything, because, for some of them, English is a second language. I encourage them to ask questions before or after class. In addition, during class I make it a practice to ask questions of all my students, both deaf and hearing.



Jean Douthwright-Fasse
"I do what you'd expect any caring teacher to do..."

"Deaf students lend another aura to RIT," says Douthwright-Fasse. "Many of the hearing students enjoy studying sign language," she says, "and they're delighted to have deaf classmates with whom they can practice."

Like Douthwright-Fasse, Steve Loar, assistant professor in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, describes his provisions for deaf students as "simple courtesy."

"I try to be attentive to their needs," he says, explaining that this involves an initial interview to determine the mode and level of communication the student prefers. Attentiveness includes taking the time to introduce himself to the interpreter, to establish a rapport and "let the interpreter know where I'm coming from."

Steve Loar
"I think my efforts to clarify things for deaf students have made me a better teacher."

Considering the needs of deaf students and interpreters necessitated a major change in Loar's teaching style, which tended to be, by his own description, "highly participative, with some discussions bordering on the chaotic.

"To ensure that deaf students get what they need, I've switched to a more structured presentation, planning my materials well in advance and with a good many printed handouts. I make sure to present information in logical order, which simplifies the interpreter's task as well.

"I think my efforts to clarify things for deaf students have made me a better teacher."

Concepts are the most difficult thing to communicate to a deaf person, he says, and for this reason, he returns to each idea several times, approaching it from different angles. Since abstractions can be hard to grasp for hearing persons as well, Loar says that this technique benefits all his students.

Another Loar strategy is to incorporate as many visual aspects as possible in his lectures. For example, when he says, "Turn to page 10," he will hold up the book and point to the page number.

"Deaf students may sometimes use a less sophisticated vocabulary than hearing students," says Loar, "so I try to use only basic language in my lectures."

In written statements describing a class project, however, he says that he makes no compromises in his choice of words.

"When they don't understand a word, I explain it to them," he says. "I feel it's part of my role as a teacher to expand their vocabulary.

"When these students get into the working world," says Loar, "they will be crippled if they can't convey their ideas. I consider it part of my job to see that they can."

Robert Webster, associate professor in the College of Graphic Arts and Photography, agrees that good communication is important. To be sure that he is communicating clearly to his students in screen printing, he makes a point of repeating things several times. After he tests the deaf students, he explains their mistakes, and when he is convinced that they understand, he retests them, thus giving them the opportunity to raise their marks.

Webster has been at RIT since 1961. When NTID was new to the RIT campus, he studied sign language, but regrets that, having little occasion to use it, he soon forgot it.

His efforts, however, were not wasted, because his then 11-year-old son, Kip, became intrigued with the sign book he brought home and began accompanying his father to class during the summer break.

Today, Kip, 27, is a certified interpreter, and the two Websters form a unique father-son team.

While Kip was studying for his social work degree at RIT, he took all the available sign language courses. He later enrolled in the Basic Interpreting Training Program, although at the time he had no thoughts of becoming an interpreter.

Nevertheless, when he was offered a job as an interpreter after graduation, he took it.

Kip frequently interprets for the elder Webster and, because of the rapport they share, Kip interprets "with a difference."

Not long after he began interpreting in class for his father, he surprised everyone by stopping his father in midsentence when he didn't understand a point. Now, he often enhances the "traditional" interpreter's role, and if he thinks that the way his father has worded something will not be clear to the deaf students, he expresses it in a way they can understand.

Bob approves of Kip's innovative interpreting, saying, "You're dealing with people—you've got to think of the human element."

Unusual though it may be for an interpreter to step outside the traditional role, Bob Webster is not the only instructor to encourage this kind of flexibility.

Houghton Wetherald, professor of Fine Arts in the College of Liberal Arts, encourages such behavior from both his interpreter, Jim Orr, and his tutor/notetaker, Amelia Kennedy.

Wetherald, known to students and colleagues as "Houghtie" (rhymes with "throaty"), has been at RIT since 1969 and believes he was one of the first professors from another RIT college to participate in NTID's New Staff Training Program in 1973. During this intensive eight-week experience, he became aware of the special needs of deaf students and learned sign language.

His purpose in doing this was to improve his ability to communicate with deaf students. He wanted to conduct his class in sign language and did so for one year. "However," he says, "unlike NTID instructors who communicate with deaf students most of the day, everyday, I teach one class with deaf students, for a total of three hours a week."

Although he spent hours studying in NTID's Self-Instruction Lab, Wetherald found that he couldn't keep his signing skills up to the sophisticated language level necessary to teach his class.

In order to give hearing-impaired students the extra attention he feels they need, Wetherald teaches one section for hearing-impaired students. This section

Robert Webster
"You're dealing with people—you've got to think of the human element."

closely parallels the classes for hearing students, except for a possible alteration in the sequence of topics, to follow the students' interests.

"My course is conceptual rather than historical," he explains. "It's based on sensitivity, rather than memorization. It's involved with seeing new things and understanding them."

Because of the difficulty in communicating such concepts in sign language, Wetherald decided to return to the use of oral communication and the assistance of an interpreter.

But it was not a decision to settle for "second best." For from the time when Wetherald stopped signing to his classes, he began to develop the unique teaching arrangement that led to having Kennedy as tutor/notetaker and Orr as interpreter.

Since Kennedy, in her role as a tutor, works closely with the students, she has a good feeling for what they will understand.

"Other instructors don't allow this," she says, "but with Houghtie, I do more than provide notes. I also explain any concepts I think the students won't understand. Sometimes, just changing the order in which he says things can help to clarify them."

In addition, if Wetherald finds that he is getting blank stares from the students, he will ask Kennedy to take over and explain whatever is not clear to them.

"This is not in line with the usual role of tutor/notetakers. We had to work it out, and Houghtie explains our system to the students at the beginning of the course," she says.

Orr mentions stepping outside the traditional interpreter's role as well. "I try to make it look self-generated, rather than translated," he says.

Over the years, Orr has developed a whole system of signs relating to the field of art.

"This is really special to me," he says. "For Houghtie's class, it's subtle and sophisticated, and a little twist of a hand, the nuance—is important."

According to Wetherald, "Amelia and Jim are my right and left hands."

"Houghtie" Wetherald
"Amelia and Jim are my right and left hands."

NTID's "senior" students prove...

Stella Johnston

The unique nature of NTID draws people of all ages from around the country. NTID's student population includes several people who might be considered "old" at other colleges but who, because they share the common trait of deafness, fit in well with NTID's younger students. These older students provide positive role models and prove that it's never too late to learn.

NTID's enrollment includes more than 35 students over the age of 30. Only two, however, are over 40: Stella Johnston and Pat Irr.

At an age when many people are looking forward to retirement, Johnston, 56, and Irr, 52, are working toward their degrees and making plans for new careers.

Pat Irr

By Tom Willard

It's Never Too Late to Learn

Stella Johnston remembers the day more than 30 years ago when she was home with her baby, mopping the kitchen floor and listening to music on her new radio.

Without warning, the music suddenly stopped.

"I was annoyed," she recalls, "because I thought I would have to take the radio back to the store."

In frustration, she let the mop fall to the floor. Before she could investigate the faulty radio, though, she realized something: the mop had fallen without a sound.

She picked it up and again dropped it, this time with some force. Nothing. "I felt as if I were in a closet."

The year was 1952. Harry Truman was president and NTID was some 15 years away from becoming a reality.

Today, three years shy of her 60th birthday, Johnston is a student in NTID's Optical Finishing Technology (OFT) program, and is making plans for a career after graduation in May.

She hopes to find a job with an optician in Philadelphia, where she can be near her daughter and grandson. Then again, she would not mind staying a few more years in school. "I have a thirst for knowledge," she says. "I want to learn all I can."

Perhaps Johnston is simply making up for lost time. Until she came to NTID, her education had been a hodgepodge of frustration.

She was born with a 10-15 percent hearing impairment; the mop-and-radio incident simply marked the loss of her residual hearing. When she was growing up, her hearing impairment went unnoticed by her teachers and family, who attributed her "inattentiveness" to a variety of other causes. "People thought I was just dumb or unfriendly," she recalls.

Had Johnston been born into a smaller family, things might have been different. As it turned out, she was one of 12 children, and her parents had recently come to America from Italy.

Her father died in 1934 when Johnston was 6 years old. Her family struggled through the Depression, with money going for food and clothing, not for "luxury" items such as hearing aids and special schools. In any case, no one knew that she required special help.

Her disability had its effect on her education. She attended a Catholic school for girls in Philadelphia, where the lack of special help and understanding took its toll. Forced to repeat several grades, she finally dropped out at age 15, after completing seventh grade. "I wasn't getting anywhere," she remembers.

Over the years, Johnston tried to make up for what she missed. Several times she enrolled in night school, but the same frustrating situation confronted her each time: support services for deaf students were practically nonexistent.

Attempting to remedy the situation, she bought her first hearing aid when she was 29. "I later found out I could have gotten my hearing aid free from the government," she says, "but at the time I didn't know that." She also was unaware that she should see an audiologist before getting a hearing aid. "I just went out and bought one."

The hearing aid helped, but her lack of a high school diploma made it difficult to find employment. Still, she managed

Back to school
Education, says Pat Irr, "helps an older person keep an open mind."

to hold a series of jobs. The first, in a factory, involved operating machinery that made nylon stockings.

"I worked there for four years," she recalls, "and at the time, I thought there was no future for me."

She later worked as a seamstress ("making the kind of men's jacket that would cost $400 today"); a hairdresser ("I went to school at night for one year to earn my license"); and in television repair ("I had to quit when the company moved 40 miles out to the suburbs").

The late 1970s found Johnston living in Orleans County, New York, where she worked as a maid and shared a trailer home with her dog. When a foot problem developed that made walking painful, she says, it motivated her to find a better job.

Realizing the value of a high school degree, Johnston decided to earn a General Equivalency Diploma. "I had four years of high school crammed into four months of studying," she recalls. "It wasn't easy."

The diploma, however, was not the panacea for which she had hoped. Still having trouble finding a job, she went to see a counselor at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation near Buffalo. It was at this meeting that she first learned about NTID.

Since Johnston did not know what kind of a job she wanted, her counselor suggested that she participate in NTID's Summer Vestibule Program, during which students have the opportunity to sample a variety of career areas.

Johnston accepted the counselor's advice and arrived in Rochester in July 1982 to begin her college education.

"I had mixed feelings," she recalls. "I asked myself, 'What am I doing here? Am I doing the right thing?' "

Her apprehension wore off quickly, though, when she discovered the services available to students at NTID. "People here will help you do anything!" she exclaims.

One such "helpful" person is Assistant Professor Pat Coyle, Johnston's OFT instructor.

"Stella has had a somewhat difficult time," he says, "because it's been a long time since she was in school. Yet her work is at the same level as most of the other students in class.

"She won't graduate with straight A's," he adds, "but we are confident that she will make it through the program and find a good job."

If a 56-year-old college student is something of a rarity, Johnston is even more unique: while most older students commute to school, she has chosen to live on campus in the residence halls.

She remembers her freshman year, when she lived in a private room on the first floor of the residence hall, as a time of transition. Immersed in a new way of life, she studied diligently and made the Dean's List, but there was just one hitch. "I had to pay an extra $77 each quarter for the single room," she says. "I couldn't afford it."

Thus, she has had a roommate each of the last two years.

"I enjoy the company of younger people," she admits. She has a number of friends with whom she shares meals in the dining hall, and whom she enjoys visiting. "When something goes wrong, they like to cry on my shoulder."

Nonetheless, she has had her share of roommate conflicts. She recalls living with an art student who thought nothing of working half the night and sleeping half the day. "I had to get used to sleeping with the lights on," she says.

Still, occasional roommate disagreements are a tradition of college life that Johnston shrugs away. She came to NTID to be educated; everything else is secondary.

"I came here for one reason—to better myself."

One of Johnston's primary goals should soon become a reality. She has been receiving financial help from the federal government, based on her 20 years of work experience, and anxiously awaits the day when such help is no longer needed.

In the meantime, she continues her studies and reflects on the changes that NTID has brought to her life.

"I feel good about myself," she says with a smile. "I could never say that before."

When Johnston seeks a more mature perspective than her young friends can provide, she visits fellow student Pat Irr, four years her junior but still a senior citizen by most college students' standards.

Irr recalls a time not long ago when she was at one of life's crossroads.

Her husband of 29 years had passed away. Her six children were grown and busy with their own lives. And her hearing had suddenly worsened to the point where she could no longer understand what people were saying.

At 52, Irr did not want to waste her remaining years in a world of silence. Sitting around the house held no appeal for her. She was looking for something to do.

She found it at NTID.

Irr decided in September 1983 to return to school after a 34-year absence. She chose RIT because the support services available through NTID would help her achieve her goals.

"When I lost my hearing," she explains, "I had a hard time finding help. I felt that many other people who develop hearing impairments in their later years must also find it difficult to obtain help. I decided I wanted to work with these people."

To achieve her goal, the Buffalo, New York, native enrolled in RIT's College of Liberal Arts, where she is working toward a bachelor's degree in Social Work. As a cross-registered student, she has access to interpreters, notetakers, and tutors.

"I'd always wanted to go to college," she says, "and I was really excited when I found out about RIT and its support services."

She recalls move-in day, when three of her children "brought Mom to school," as an exercise in role-reversal. Returning to school means long separations for Irr and her family, but her children, who range in age from 21 to 28, have been supportive of her decision.

"They knew I needed something to do," she says.

Even with that support, however, returning to school at an older age is a formidable task.

"I've had to adjust to a different method of teaching," Irr says. "Students today are encouraged to express themselves, but when I last was in school, you had to just sit and listen—especially if you disagreed with the teacher!

"I think the freedom to speak up in class is good," she adds, "but it's difficult for me to break my old habits and express myself, especially since I'm not always sure of what is being said."

When she does speak up, she sometimes finds her ideas at odds with those of the younger students in class. She recalls a discussion in one class—Family from a Social Work Perspective—in which the subject of family structure came up.

"Having been married almost 30 years, and having raised six kids, I feel that family structure is very important," Irr says. "The younger kids in class, though, were not so sure."

The obstacles facing an older student do not end in class, she notes. In fact, just getting there can sometimes be a problem.

"Walking across campus can be very strenuous," says Irr. "I have learned to schedule my classes so that I am not crossing campus two or three times a day."

Loneliness can be a problem at times. Last year, Irr lived in a private room in the residence hall, hoping to meet other deaf people and learn sign language. She ended up staying by herself much of the time.

"The kids would say, 'What's she doing here?' When I came out of my room, they would act like their mother was watching over them."

But when they needed something mended or wanted a stamp for a letter, they would knock on her door.

"It's my mother image," she says with a laugh.

That image can have its humorous consequences. "Because of my age, students often seem to think I know what to do in every situation," she explains. "But many times, I am the one who's more confused."

Still, Irr believes that the advantages of gaining an education outweigh the disadvantages she encounters as an "older" student.

"I think I appreciate education more than some of the younger students. I find most of my classes very interesting, and I don't understand why the kids are not as excited about them as I am."

Maturity is part of the reason for her positive outlook. "Being more mature," she says, "I think I am better at scheduling my time and making priorities.

"In some classes, my life experience has been most beneficial. At first, I didn't think I had many skills, but one of my teachers made me realize that all those years of planning for my family had taught me something."

Irr enjoys what she calls the "new sense of identity" she has found as a college student, and says academic life helps her deal with mid-life crisis.

"Education always stimulates the mind. I think education helps an older person keep an open mind.

"Education also provides its humorous moments," Irr notes. She recalls being teamed with two students for a debate in her psychology class. On the day of the debate, one team member did not come to class; the other had not prepared. Irr was forced to face the other team—three well-dressed young men brandishing a stack of visual aids—by herself. Undaunted, she presented her arguments well. "I knew what I was talking about," she explains.

At the end of the debate, her classmates approached her and said, "Wow! You really surprised us."

Perhaps the students had doubts about her ability to succeed in what is normally considered a young person's domain. Irr confesses to doubts of her own when she began her studies.

"I wasn't sure I could do it," she admits, "but everyone has been so helpful. If I have difficulties in my classes, someone is always willing to help."

Her confidence received a boost last fall when she won a Scholarship Incentive Award, given annually to one student from each career area.

K. Dean Santos, chairperson of the Human Services Support Team, says:

"Pat is a very special person who deserves a special award. It takes a lot of courage to come back to school so late in life and begin looking at a new career.

"Pat's perspective on life, work, careers—and everything else important—is a much more experienced one, and that is why she has so much to offer."

Irr says she never could have made the adjustment to college without help.

She gives special credit to her sign language instructor, who helped her not only learn a new language but also adjust to what she calls "a sort of 'limbo.'"

Having lost her hearing, Irr explains, "I no longer felt a part of the hearing world, but it did not take me long to realize that I didn't really fit into the deaf world, either.

Learning by doing
"I have a thirst for knowledge," says Stella Johnston, NTID's oldest student.

"After much talking and reading, I began to understand my feelings," she adds. "I guess you would say I finally began to adjust to my deafness."

Learning sign language helped make the adjustment easier, Irr reveals.

"Sign language is very important to me. I need it to manage in class and feel it will help me with my work in the future. Learning sign, however, seemed to be one of my most challenging tasks.

"At first I felt strange when I used sign language in public," she remembers. "It seemed as if everyone was looking my way.

"Now I feel strongly that people should be exposed to sign—to help erase the stigma that has been attached to it."

The experience of learning and using sign language has made Irr even more determined to reach her goals.

"Sign language has been so beneficial to me," she explains, "that I want to tell anyone with a hearing impairment at any age to try to learn it."

As her second year of school draws to an end, Irr approaches the midpoint of her studies.

She can look forward to another two years of education before embarking on her new career. She can also look back and be thankful for the courage and foresight that brought her here.

"Before I came to NTID," Irr says, "I found myself withdrawing from people, because I couldn't understand what they were saying.

"I don't have that problem anymore."

FOCUS on Audrey Ritter

By Vincent Dollard

A soft sculpture in the Whitney Moore Young Staff Resource Center depicts a multitude of hands. It is an active piece of work, one that implies that there is much to say and much to learn. Audrey Ritter, Resource Center specialist, exemplifies this discipline of active learning.

"My father was a news reporter," she says. "He loved to dig up a good story and get right into the middle of things. I think I get some of that from him, because I like to find things out. I read most of what comes across my desk."

Ritter began work at NTID in 1978. At that time, the Institute had a collection of print materials, but no full-time professional to maintain the collection.

"Much of the material was already here," she notes. "Part of my job was to merge the RIT and NTID collections in order to make what was available more accessible and cost effective."

The Institute also was interested in a resource center that could offer employment information, something in which Ritter had been involved in her former position at the Geneseo, New York, Public Library.

Under her guidance, the Staff Resource Center (SRC) has become a valuable asset to faculty and staff members of RIT.

"The faculty members here make a great commitment of time to their teaching and research," Ritter says. "They don't always have time to get over to Wallace Memorial Library [RIT's main library]. So it's necessary to have an easily accessible research facility here for them."

The philosophy behind the Resource Center is to be service oriented. Ritter says that SRC staff members will go out of their way to find obscure reference materials when necessary.

Robert Menchel, senior career opportunities advisor at NTID, worked with Ritter on an article published recently in *Personnel Journal*, a magazine circulated among industrial personnel departments. The article discussed on-the-job safety for deaf and handicapped employees.

"I enjoyed working with her," he says. "She was valuable in finding the information needed to put the paper together."

Menchel says that Ritter possesses resources that complement her library skills.

"She has a kind of insight into knowing, without being given much background information, what a person needs. She knows just where to find pertinent data."

Menchel, who has written articles on various topics in recent years, says, "I don't think I could have accomplished much of my writing without support from her."

Ritter credits her grandmother with helping to instill in her a real enthusiasm for her work.

"You look around for where particular characteristics come from," she says. "I think my enthusiasm and curiosity may have come from her. There were four children in my family, but I was the only one who was close to her. We liked a lot of the same things."

Ritter was born in Montreal, Canada. Her grandmother, who married a Canadian, was "from hearty, flag-waving

"I've dealt with people from across the country as well as overseas. People everywhere are interested in deafness."

American stock." Her mother also was Canadian born, and her father was an Englishman who was granted American citizenship after joining the United States forces during World War I.

Ritter left Montreal for the United States when she was 20. She had spent two years at McGill University and left because she "wanted to search for something different. We don't always have specific reasons for doing things. I was curious about what America was like."

She first went to Antioch College in Ohio and then transferred to Ohio State University.

While there, she became interested in anthropology, geology, and history. She thought perhaps that she wanted to be "an explorer." However, one of her professors had spent seven years living with the Crow Indians and explained in great detail the hardships involved in this career. She decided it wasn't for her.

Shortly after arriving at Ohio State, she met Edward Ritter, and in 1952, left school to marry and raise a family.

"Since I'm a person who likes to jump in with both feet," Ritter says, "we started a family right away." That family grew to six children.

They moved to New Jersey when Edward took a teaching position at Pace University in New York City. Ten years later, Edward was offered a teaching post at State University of New York College at Geneseo and the family pulled up stakes and headed to upstate New York.

Ritter decided to continue her formal education at Geneseo. At the time, four of her six children were still in school. What did they think of her decision?

"Oh, they were happy," she says. "There were the usual stresses and strains because they were used to having me around. But over the years, they became more helpful around the house."

Ritter earned her bachelor of arts degree in history and went on to receive a master's degree in library science. "I'd already spent so much time in libraries, I thought I might as well get paid for it!" she says.

After receiving her degree, she became the director of the Geneseo Public Library. She enjoyed working at a small library in a college town.

"I liked the variety of people I worked with," she says. "I was able to help children, senior citizens, and everyone in between." She worked there for four years before responding to an ad for a position at NTID.

"I liked the idea of zeroing in on a specialty," she says. "Public librarians are supposed to know everything about anything and few ever do. I was interested in learning as much as I could about one area."

In the process of learning about the various aspects of deafness, Ritter established a reputation as a specialist in the truest sense of the word.

Focusing on her interest in the Job Information Center, Ritter compiled for NTID's National Center on Employment of the Deaf (NCED) an annotated bibliography, which is used as a source of information for deaf people looking for jobs and for employers looking for information regarding the hiring of hearing-impaired people.

For the past two years, together with Karen Hopkins, manager of NTID's Department of Training and Media Services, Ritter has been writing an annotated bibliography of the published materials on deafness that are available at Wallace Memorial Library and the Staff Resource Center.

A Deafness Collection—Selected and Annotated explains what resources on deafness are available on campus.

"Bibliographies are becoming Audrey's specialty," Hopkins notes. "She developed the NCED bibliography, she coordinates the NTID Professional Papers bibliography, and she has made a major national contribution in compiling the selected and annotated work."

One of the reasons Ritter is so good at what she does is an uncanny ability to recall specific articles on the many topics that find their way into the Resource Center.

Menchel confirms, "It's almost as if she were guided by something, a spirit that tells her where to go!"

"I find it easy to remember print materials," Ritter says. "Even the page something was found on." She laughs, "However, I'm not right as often as people think I am."

Ritter says that the best part of her job is dealing with people and being a part of their projects.

"I've dealt with people from across the country as well as overseas. People everywhere are interested in deafness. Usually, I have something here for them, something they don't have. NTID has so much information about various aspects of deafness, and the Staff Resource Center can bring it all together for people."

Among the challenges she finds in running the Center is that of keeping a balance among users.

"Some people want a quiet place to sit and write, others need to view videos, and still others come in to have meetings." Every so often, they all converge on the Resource Center at once.

A complex facility like the Staff Resource Center is a ball of yarn constantly waiting to unravel. Ritter knows it is not good to hold emotions inside.

"I'll never have an ulcer," she says. "I don't take these things gracefully. It may not be good for the people around me, but it's good for me!"

NTID NEWSLINE

DeCaro Named Dean of NTID

Dr. James DeCaro was named dean of NTID in an announcement made jointly in November by Dr. Thomas Plough, provost and vice president of academic affairs for RIT, and Dr. William Castle, vice president for government relations for RIT and director of NTID.

In his role as dean, Dr. DeCaro will oversee the academic curricula offered at NTID and assist Dr. Castle in establishing and evaluating general policies and directions for NTID. As one of RIT's academic deans, he will report to the provost on matters of academic policy, curriculum, and faculty.

Dr. DeCaro has been associated with RIT since February 1971, when he took a position at NTID as an instructor to establish the Civil Technology program. Since then, he has served as an instructional development specialist; chairperson of the Construction Technologies Department; acting director of the Division of Business Careers; curriculum development specialist; and most recently, director of the Division of Career Opportunities.

"Our new dean will bring to the job a strong background in both deafness and curriculum development," says Dr. Castle. "He is well prepared to deal directly with students, both deaf and hearing; to deal with faculty and staff regarding their needs and interests; and to deal with issues that are of interest to NTID and to the rest of RIT. As the dean of NTID, he will make an excellent officer for RIT."

Dr. Plough adds: "The academic deans of RIT and I welcome Dr. DeCaro to full membership on the Dean's Council. He brings great commitment, integrity, and intelligence to the academic leadership group of RIT. Drs. Rose, Castle, and I were pleased to make this important executive appointment with the full endorsement of the other deans of RIT."

Lord is Distinguished Alumnus

Edward Lord, a 1973 graduate of RIT through NTID, received the 1984 Distinguished Alumnus Award during Homecoming festivities in October. The award is given annually to graduates from each of the nine colleges of RIT who have brought distinction and prestige to the Institute through individual achievements in their respective professions. Lord is an assistant professor in NTID's Business Occupations Department. He is active in many organizations serving hearing-impaired persons, including the Oral Deaf Adults Section of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and the Rochester, New York, Civic Association of the Deaf.

Satellite Conference Held at NTID

Students and faculty members in the Medical Record Technology (MRT) Program attended NTID's first satellite teleconference in November. The American Hospital Association conference on "medical coding" was videotaped for possible use in the classroom. This unique educational offering was coordinated by faculty and staff members of the MRT program, the Instructional Television Department, and the Department of Interpreting Services.

The conference was shown simultaneously to the NTID audience via satellite downlink, using a receiving dish positioned outside the building.

Teleconference on coding
A multitude of television monitors enabled participants at the satellite conference to pay close attention.

A Final Word...

This past year's entering class of hearing-impaired RIT students had the largest percentage of students deafened by rubella in the nation. We are proud to have been their choice, and prouder still of the efforts made by the Institute on their behalf.

Dr. M. Richard Rose
President
Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester Institute of Technology

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