

# TEXAS AND NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY TIMELINE: SIGNIFICANT EVENTS 1776- 2010

## INTRODUCTION:

This timeline presents events of historical significance from the birth of the United States to the present day. The focus is the history and achievements of people with disabilities in the state of Texas, nationally, and internationally. Where appropriate, the timeline uses people-first language, but in some instances has preserved historical terms that are derogatory by today's standards. These terms are included here in an effort to accurately reflect the context of the time in which they were used.

## TIMELINE FROM 1776-2010

**1776** Stephen Hopkins is one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Many medical historians believe his signature on the Declaration – second in size only to that of John Hancock – is evidence that he had a disabling condition, possibly cerebral palsy. Hopkins is known for saying, “my hands may tremble, my heart does not.”

**1784** Valentin Huay, known as the father and apostle of the blind, established the Institution for Blind Children to help make life for people who were blind more tolerable. Huay also discovered that people who were blind could read text materials printed with raised letters.

**1793** Phillipe Pinel, a physician at La Bicetre, an asylum in Paris, removes the chains attached to people with mental illnesses. Some had been chained to walls for more than 30 years.

**1798** The First Military Disability Law was signed by John Adams for the relief of seamen who were sick and disabled. (July 16, 1798).

**1800** Phillipe Pinel writes *Treatise on Insanity* in which he develops a medical classification for the major illnesses: melancholy, dementia, mania without dementia, mania without delirium, and mania with delirium.

**1801** Jean Marc Gaspard Itard establishes the principles and methods used today in the education of people with mental illness through his controversial work with Victor, the “wild boy of Aveyron.”

**1805** Dr. Benjamin Rush, considered the father of American psychiatry, publishes *Medical Inquiries and Observations*, the first modern attempt to explain mental disorders.

**1809** Louis Braille is born on January 4<sup>th</sup> at Coupvray, near Paris. At three years of age, an accident caused him to become blind and in 1819 he was sent to the Paris Blind School which was established by Valentin Huay.

**1815** Thomas H. Gallaudet leaves the United States for Europe to learn how to teach people who were deaf. Upon his return, he founds the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons in Hartford with Laurent Clerc. It is the first permanent school for the deaf in America. The opening of its doors, on April 15, 1817, marks the beginning of efforts in America to educate people with disabilities.

**1818** The first patient was admitted to the Charleston branch of the Massachusetts General Hospital, which is later named the McLean Asylum for the Insane. The hospital will become one of the best known mental facilities in the country serving such artists as Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, James Taylor, and Susanna Kaysen (author of *Girl, Interrupted*).

**1829** Louis Braille invents the raised point alphabet. His method doesn't become well-known in the United States until more than 30 years after it is first taught at the St. Louis School for the Blind in 1860.

**1835** Samuel McCulloch, a man who was a free black soldier, becomes the first Texan casualty of the revolution when a musket ball shatters his right shoulder, resulting in a life-long disability.

- ❖ Irish-born Thomas William ("Peg Leg") Ward ventured to Texas in 1835 to fight in the Texas Revolution, but in his first day of action his right leg was hit by Mexican cannon fire and was later amputated. Four years later he lost his right arm to cannon fire in an accident. Though confronted with an unending problem of mobility and tormented by pain in his residual leg, Ward's public career spanned three decades and a multiplicity of responsibilities—military officer, three-time mayor of Austin, presidential appointments as U.S. Consul to Panama and a federal customs official in Texas—but it was as Texas land commissioner during the 1840s that he particularly made his mark. At a time when land was the principal asset of the Texas republic and a magnet for immigrants, he fought to remedy the land system's many defects and to fulfill the promise of free land

to those who settled and fought for Texas. If Ward had a remarkable career, his life was nonetheless troubled by symptoms comparable to those experienced by some war veterans diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder—a hair-trigger temper, an impulse to violence, and marital discord.

**1836** President David Burnet names Peter Grayson, who had a mental illness, Attorney General of the Republic of Texas.

- ✪ First Congress of the Republic elects Robert "Three-Legged Willy" Williamson county judge of the Third Judicial District, making him a member of the Supreme Court. Williamson used an artificial limb because one of his legs was drawn back at the knee due to a childhood illness.
- ✪ Jesse Billingsly, who received a permanent injury to his hand in the Battle of San Jacinto, serves in the House of Representatives of the First Congress of the Republic.
- ✪ Greenburry Logan, a man who was a free black soldier, is wounded at the siege of Bexar causing a permanent disability.

**1838** Charles Baudin's French Naval forces aid the young Republic of Texas by attacking the citadel San Juan de Ulloa. He had lost his right arm in battle in 1808.

**1840** Henry Augustine, an amputee as a result of the Cherokee War, serves in the House of the Congress of the Republic; by a special act of this Congress he receives a wooden leg.

**1841** Dorothea Dix begins her work on behalf of people with disabilities incarcerated in jails and poorhouses.

**1843** Henry Augustine, a war hero with a leg amputation, serves on the Board of Trustees, San Augustine University.

**1844** The Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, the precursor to the American Psychiatric Association, is founded.

**1847** Welborn Barton, who had a physical disability from childhood, practices medicine, serves as a Mason and as a trustee of Salado College, and teaches Sunday school.

**1849** The first "sheltered workshop" is developed for people who are blind at the Perkins Institution in Massachusetts.

**1851** Oliver Cromwell Hartley, who was a person with a disability, is elected to represent Galveston in the state Legislature.

**1853** Elisha M. Pease is elected Governor. He would later establish funds for a hospital for people with mental illness and schools for people who were deaf or blind.

**1856** The Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum, now the Texas School for the Deaf, begins with 3 students. The Blind Asylum begins with 3 students.

**1857** The State Lunatic Asylum, now Austin State Hospital, opens with about 50 patients.

**1858** The last president of the Republic of Texas, Anson Jones, whose left arm was disabled by an injury, dies at the age of 60.

**1860** The [Braille](#) system is introduced to America and is taught with some success at the St. Louis School for the Blind.

- ❖ William Little makes the first step toward identifying children with Cerebral Palsy. He also correctly identifies that the condition, known for some time after as “Little’s Disease,” is caused by lack of oxygen during birth.

**1861** As a result of the American Civil War (1861 - 1865), there are 30,000 amputations in the Union Army alone.

**1862** Joseph Carey Merrick, better known in later years as the “Elephant Man,” is born in Leicester, England. He had a rare nervous system disorder later diagnosed as neurofibromatosis.

**1864** Alois Alzheimer, who first described the disease which was named for him, is born.

**1864** Gallaudet University begins.

**1872** Alexander G. Bell opens a speech school for teachers of people who are deaf in Boston.

**1875** Matthew D. Ector, former Confederate general whose leg was amputated in 1864, serves on the Court of Appeals.

**1876** A patent for the telephone (No. 174,465) is issued to Alexander Graham Bell. The telephone was one of the many devices Bell developed in support of his work with people who were deaf.

**1878** William Walsh, who was severely injured in the Civil War and used a crutch, serves as Land Commissioner.

- ✪ George McCormick, whose leg was amputated during the Civil War, serves as Attorney General.
- ✪ J.W. Smith invents American Modified Braille.

**1879** John Bell Hood dies at the age of 48. Hood was a Confederate general during the Civil War who lost his right leg as well as the use of his left arm while in battle. He gained fame by commanding Hood's Texas Brigade, "perhaps the finest brigade of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia."

**1881** After researching the central nervous system at Vienna University, Sigmund Freud, 24, qualifies as a doctor of medicine. The following year, he begins work at Meynert's Psychiatric Clinic and begins to formulate his ideas on Psychoanalysis.

**1883** Sir Francis Galton in England coins the term eugenics to describe his pseudo-science of "improving the stock" of humanity. The eugenics movement, taken up by Americans, leads to passage in the United States of laws to prevent people with disabilities from moving to this country, marrying, or having children. In many instances, it leads to the institutionalization and forced sterilization of people with disabilities, including children. Eugenics campaigns against people of color and immigrants led to passage of "Jim Crow" laws in the South and legislation restricting immigration by southern and eastern Europeans, Asians, Africans, and Jews.

**1884** John B. Hood Camp of United Confederate Veterans opens to provide a home for veterans who were disabled and indigent.

**1885** North Texas Lunatic Asylum, now Terrell State Hospital, opens.

- ✪ William Hardin, unofficial advisor to the Alabama-Coushatta Indians and soldier who was disabled at San Antonio during the Texas Revolution, dies at the age of 79.

**1886** The Bluebonnet Association of the Deaf begins, later renamed the Texas Association of the Deaf.

- ❖ Herman Hollerith, an inventor with a learning disability, begins to use punched cards to keep and transport information, a technology used up to the late 1970s. This technology was first used to allow the 1890 census to be tabulated. This construction meant a great improvement as hand tabulation was projected to take more than a decade. **They called this little invention, the computer.**

**1887** The Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institute for Colored Youth begins.

- Helen Keller meets Annie Sullivan in Tuscomb, Alabama at age seven.

**1892** Southwestern Lunatic Asylum opens, later the San Antonio State Hospital.

- ❖ Pattillo Higgins, who experienced a wound at the age of 17 that led to an amputation of his arm, incorporates the Gladys City Oil, Gas, and Manufacturing Company with partner George Washington O'Brien. The men hoped to find oil atop Spindletop Hill in Beaumont despite popular opinion that the Gulf Coast region lacked any oil potential.

**1894** Thomas Gore, who was blind, practices law in Corsicana, later campaigns for the Populist and Democratic parties, and then serves in Congress representing Oklahoma.

**1902** Goodwill Industries begins. Dr. Edgar J. Helms, a young, idealistic, energetic, socially-minded minister, was years ahead of modern medicine and psychology when he took up the challenge of Boston's miserable South-End slums and founded Goodwill Industries in 1902. Dr. Helms, a preacher, recognized the therapeutic value of work. He saw in a job the first step in returning society's outcasts to normal, useful, happy community living.

**1903** Lou Gehrig is born.

**1904** A colony for the epileptic insane, now the Abilene State School begins serving 100 patients.

- ❖ Helen Keller graduates from Radcliffe College.

**1907** Indiana becomes the first state to enact a eugenic sterilization law for "*confirmed idiots, imbeciles and rapists,*" in state institutions. The law was later enacted in 24 other states.

**1909** The first folding wheelchairs are introduced for people with mobility disabilities.

**1912** Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party endorses social insurance, including health insurance, as part of its platform.

**1914** Jonas Salk, developer of the Salk polio vaccine, is born.

**1916** Joseph Mansfield, a wheelchair user, represents Texas in the U.S. House of Representatives and serves as a vestryman in the Episcopal Church.

**1917** State School for the Feeble Minded, now the Austin State School, opens with 65 female students.

**1918** Texas State Library provides raised-letter books for persons who are blind.

- As a result of the large number of WWI veterans returning with disabilities, Congress passes the first major rehabilitation program for soldiers. In 1920, a bill funding vocational rehabilitation guarantees federal money for job counseling and vocational training.

**1919** The Rusk Penitentiary becomes a hospital for the "Negro Insane."

- Edgar Allen, a businessman in Elyria, Ohio founds the Ohio Society for Crippled Children, which becomes the national Easter Seals organization.

**1920** Congress passes The Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act providing services for people with disabilities.

**1921** The Disabled American Veterans (World War) forms in Fort Worth.

- ❖ The Sheppard-Towner Act passed which provided matching funds to states for prenatal and child health centers. The Act was not reauthorized when it expired in 1929.

**1922** The Northwest Insane Asylum, now Wichita Falls State Hospital, opens.

- ❖ Adam Rankin Johnson, Confederate general blinded during the Civil War, dies at the age of 88.

**1923** Department of Texas, Disabled American Veterans, World War I, forms.

**1925** Frida Kahlo, 18, is injured in a bus accident in her hometown of Mexico City. Her spinal column, collarbone, ribs, and pelvis are broken. For a month, she remained in bed and began to paint. This is her first step towards becoming one of the most influential artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**1926** "Blind Willie" Johnson, Texas blues performer, begins recording for Columbia Records.

**1927** Franklin Roosevelt co-founds the Warm Springs Foundation at Warm Springs, Georgia. The Warm Springs facility for polio survivors becomes a model rehabilitation and peer-counseling program.

- The Supreme Court rules in *Buck v. Bell* that the compulsory sterilization of “mental defectives” such as Carrie Buck is constitutional. In his opinion, Oliver Wendell Holmes writes, *“It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind.....three generations of imbeciles are enough.”*
- Philip Drinker and Louis Shaw develop the iron lung, a chamber that provides artificial respiration for polio patients being treated for respiratory muscle paralysis.

**1929** Texas Legislature passes the Texas Vocational Rehabilitation Act beginning the State Board of Vocational Education, now the Texas Rehabilitation Committee, with a staff of two and budget of \$12,500.

- ❖ The first Prepaid Hospital Insurance Plan is introduced: an official at Baylor University Hospital in Dallas noticed that Americans, on average, were spending more on cosmetics than on medical care. "We spend a dollar or so at a time for cosmetics and do not notice the high cost," he said. "The ribbon-counter clerk can pay 50 cents, 75 cents or \$1 a month, yet it would take about 20 years to set aside [money for] a large hospital bill." The Baylor hospital started looking for a way to get regular folks in Dallas to pay for health care the same way they paid for lipstick — a tiny bit each month. Hospital officials started small, offering a deal to a group of public school teachers in Dallas. They offered a plan for the teachers to pay 50 cents each month in exchange for Baylor picking up the tab on hospital visits. When the Great Depression hit, almost every hospital in the country saw its patient load disappear. The Baylor idea became hugely popular. It eventually got a name: **Blue Cross**.

- ❖ Seeing Eye establishes the first guide dog school in the United States.



**1931** The Texas Legislature creates the State Committee for the Blind with a volunteer staff, and later budgets \$8,250, which was used to hire home teachers located in six Texas cities.

- ✧ The Farmers Union Cooperative Association, generally considered to be the first health maintenance organization with a flat fee for members, is formed in Elk City, Oklahoma.

**1933** Wiley Post, blind in one eye, becomes the first solo flyer to circle the earth.

- ✧ Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was paralyzed from the waist down for much of his adult life, serves 1st term as President.

**1934** Austin State School Farm Colony for Men for people with intellectual disabilities.

- ✧ Roosevelt's Committee on Economic Security addresses medical care and insurance. After considering, but then backing away from, a national health insurance program as part of the New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt creates the Committee on Economic Security, in part to address medical care and insurance issues. However, private insurance companies begin to sell hospitalization insurance.

**1935** Alcoholics Anonymous begins.

- ✧ Dr. Alexis Carrel, a Nobel Prize winner, publishes *Man the Unknown* in which he suggests the removal of criminals and people with mental illness by small euthanasia institutions.
- ✧ Roosevelt signs and Congress passes the Social Security Act, which includes grants for maternal and child health, but omits health insurance.
- ✧ The first compulsory health insurance bill was introduced in Congress. It does not pass.
- ✧ To protest the fact that their requests for employment with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) have been stamped "PH" for physically handicapped, 300 members of the League for the Physically Handicapped stage a nine-day sit-in at the Home Relief Bureau of New York City. Eventually, they help secure several thousand jobs nationwide. The League of the Physically Handicapped is accepted as the first organization of people with disabilities by people with disabilities.

**1936** Passage of the Randolph Sheppard Act establishes a federal program for employing vendors who are blind at stands in the lobbies of federal office buildings

**1937** Gonzales Warm Springs Foundation for Crippled Children begins serving children with polio.

- Curtis Veach of Childress, Texas becomes first Texan to receive a seeing eye dog.
- Ray Charles Robinson loses his eyesight to glaucoma in Albany, Georgia. He learns music and Braille and drops his last name while performing on the Florida blues circuit.

**1938** The Federal Technical Committee on Medical Care, a joint effort of the Children's Bureau, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the Social Security Board, publishes, "The Need for a National Health Program," arguing for comprehensive health care reform. The committee's recommendations—for expanding public health services, making grants to the states for the construction of hospitals and the implementation of medical care programs, and providing disability compensation—becomes the focus of a **National Health Conference**.

**1939** Department of Public Welfare begins, known today as the Department of Human Services.

- ✧ Big Spring State Hospital begins.
- ✧ Dallas Society for Crippled Children opens, later becoming the Easter Seal Society for Children.
- ✧ Hitler orders widespread "mercy killing" of the sick and disabled, code named Aktion T4, which accounts for almost a hundred thousand deaths before being "suspended." However, it actually continued, using drugs and starvation instead of gassing.
- ✧ First Blue Shield plans were organized by physicians, designed to cover the costs of physician care.
- ✧ The National Health Bill, called the "Wagner Bill," is introduced in the Senate. It incorporated such recommendations of the 1938 National Health Conference as the institution of compulsory health insurance. The proposal did not reach the Senate floor.
- ✧ July 4, 1939, Lou Gehrig Day is held at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The first baseman nicknamed "the Iron Horse," had been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS but that day he tells the world, "Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

**1940** The National Federation of the Blind is formed in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, by Jacobus Broek and other blind advocates. It advocates for "white cane laws" and input by blind people into programs for blind clients, among other reforms.

- ✪ The American Federation of the Physically Handicapped is founded by Paul Strachan as the nation's first cross-disability, national political organization. It pushes for an end to job discrimination and lobbies for passage of legislation calling for a National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week, among other initiatives.

**1941** Laurence Melton, an amputee from Dallas, Texas, becomes national commander, Disabled American Veterans, and later secures an executive order from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for government agencies to cooperate in the hiring of the physically handicapped which later became the President's Committee for the Hiring of the Handicapped.

**1942** Henry Viscardi begins his work as an American Red Cross volunteer, training 1944 soldiers to use their prosthetic limbs. His work at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., draws the attention of Howard Rusk and Eleanor Roosevelt, who protest when Viscardi's program is terminated by the Red Cross and the military.

**1943** Congress expands the Vocational Rehabilitation Act to include persons with hidden disabilities such as mental health and mental retardation.

- ✪ The Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill is introduced, proposing universal comprehensive health insurance. Congress takes no action.
- ✪ Texas Governor Coke Stevenson proclaims Hearing Week.

**1944** James Fields, wounded and rendered speechless, leads his depleted army platoon using hand signals, scatters the enemy, and later becomes an independent oil operator.

- ✪ The Social Security Board calls for compulsory national health insurance as part of Social Security.

**1945** National Employment of the Physically Handicapped Week begins.

- ✪ President Harry S Truman's introduces a 10 year plan, calling for compulsory health coverage and doubling the number of doctors and nurses nationwide. The American Medical Association warns of "socialized medicine."

**1946** Mexia State School begins.

- ✪ The film "The Best Years of Our Lives" premieres; Harold Russell later wins an Academy Award. He lost both hands in a wartime accident.

- ✪ The Hill- Burton Act funds construction of hospitals and a revised Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill is introduced again; an alternative Senate bill authorizes grants to states for medical care of the poor. Neither bill passes.

**1947** Representative Jefferson Mansfield dies after 31 years of service in the United States Congress; 27 of those years were served in a wheelchair following paralysis in 1920.

- ✪ The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities begins.
- ✪ Emerson Romero develops the first captioning of a film by putting captions between picture frames.
- ✪ President Truman calls for a National Health Program.

**1947 -** Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is founded at the Birmingham Hospital in Van Nuys, California, by Fred Smead, Randall Updykes, and other delegates from Veterans Administration hospitals across the country.

- ✪ The first meeting of the Presidents' Committee on National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week is held in Washington, D.C. Its publicity campaigns, coordinated by state and local committees, emphasize the competence of people with disabilities and use movie trailers, billboards, and radio and television ads to convince the public that its "good business to hire the handicapped."

**1948** The first Texas Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, Harris County Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities, begins.

- ✪ The American Medical Association launches a campaign against National Health Insurance.
- ✪ Dr. Howard A. Rusk found the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine in New York City, where he develops techniques to improve the health of injured veterans from WWII. His theory focused on treating the emotional, psychological, and social aspects of individuals with disabilities and later became the basis for modern rehabilitation medicine.

**1949** Governor Shivers proclaims October 2-8, 1949 as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week," in Texas.

- ✪ People with hearing impairments enjoy the first color open-captioned film America the Beautiful.
- ✪ The Supreme Court upholds a National Labor Relations Board ruling that employee health benefits can be included in collective bargaining.

**1950** September 27, 1950, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities is created by Official Memo stating, "Governor Shivers today signed an official Memorandum designating the week of October 1-7 as National Employ the Physically Handicapped in Texas. At the same time he added four state officials to the statewide NEPD Committee headed by Harry B. Crozier, chairman of the Texas Employment Commission, and asked Mr. Crozier to secure representation on the committee from some 25 Texas organizations. Named to the committee were Charles L. Morris, executive director of the State Veterans' Affairs Commission; Lon E. Alsup, executive secretary director of the State Commission for the Blind; J.J. Brown, director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Texas Education Agency, and John Ben Sheppard, Secretary of State. The Governor suggested that the presidents of the following organizations be asked to serve or to name representatives on the committee: Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Amvets, Jewish War Veterans, Catholic War Veterans, Junior Chamber of Commerce, East Texas Chamber of Commerce, West Texas Chamber of Commerce, South Texas Chamber of Commerce, Texas Press Association, Texas Broadcasters Association, Texas Trade Association Executives, State Medical Association, Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, State Tuberculosis Association, Texas State Federation of Labor, State CIO Council, State Farm Bureau and various civic clubs—Kiwanis, Exchange, Lions, Rotary, Civitan, Optimists."

- ✦ The Association for Retarded Children of Texas forms by a group of concerned parents of children with intellectual disabilities.

**1951** Kerrville State Home opens.

- ✦ Vernon State Home opens.
- ✦ The Texas Legislature places the Texas School for the Deaf under the Texas Education Agency where it claimed the distinction of being the oldest publicly funded school in continuous operation in Texas.

**1952** The Texas State Library adds talking book services for children who are blind.

- ✦ The President's Committee on National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week becomes the Presidents' Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, a permanent organization reporting to the President and Congress.
- ✦ Henry Vicardi takes out a personal loan to found Abilities, Inc., a jobs training and placement program for people with disabilities.

**1953** The first heart lung machine is developed.

- ✧ Clemens Benda, clinical director at the Fernald School in Waltham, Massachusetts, an institution for boys with intellectual disabilities, invites 100 teenager boys to participate in a “science club,” in exchange for special outings and extra snacks. In a letter requesting parental consent, Benda mentions an experiment in which “blood sample are taken after a special breakfast meal containing calcium.” She makes no mention of the inclusion of radioactive substances that are fed to the boys in their oatmeal.

## **1954** United Cerebral Palsy of Texas organizes.

- ✧ Linus Pauling receives a Nobel Prize for his work in chemistry, later promotes decreasing incidence of genetic diseases by requiring everyone to be tested for such, and to be publicly identified if they are a carrier.
- ✧ President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposes a federal reinsurance fund to enable private insurers to broaden health coverage.
- ✧ The Revenue Act excludes employers’ contributions to employees’ health plans from taxable income.

## **1955** Criss Cole, who was blind, serves in the Texas House of Representatives.

- ✧ Salk vaccine becomes viewed as "safe," potent, and effective.
- ✧ Harold Wilke becomes the founder and first executive director of the Commission on Religion and Health within the United Church of Christ General Synod in New York. In this capacity he works to open religious life and the ministry to women and people with disabilities. Mr. Wilke was on the signing podium at the ADA signing in July 1990 with President George Bush.

## **1956** Legislation is introduced in the House to provide health insurance for Social Security beneficiaries. It fails, but is reintroduced in 1959.

- ✧ Dependents Medical Care program, later referred to as “Military Medicare,” is enacted, which provides government health insurance for dependents of members of the Armed Forces.

## **1957** Texas Research Institute of Mental Sciences begins in Houston.

- ✧ State Welfare Department adds Aid to Permanently and Totally Disabled.

- ✧ Billy Barty, an actor, make a national appeal to the little people of America to converge on Reno, Nevada. Twenty-two answer the call, creating the *Midgets of America* organization, later renamed the *Little People of America*.

**1958** The first Pacemaker introduced.

**1959** The Goodwill Industries of Austin begins.

- ✧ Texas Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, an expansion of the Southwestern Poliomyelitis Respiratory Center, opens in Houston.

**1960** Denton State School for persons with mental retardation begins.

- ✧ Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan is initiated to provide coverage to federal workers.
- ✧ The Kerr-Mills Act provides federal funds for medical care for the poor and elderly. The Congress passed the Kerr-Mills Act to assist state programs that offer medical care to the poor and elderly.
- ✧ The first Paralympic Games, under the auspices of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) are held in Rome, Italy.

**1961** The drug Thalidomide is found to cause birth defects.

- ✧ John H. Griffin, a World War II veteran with a disability, publishes his best known work, *Black Like Me*.
- ✧ 1962 Lufkin State School and Rio Grande State Center for Human Development begin.
- ✧ S.A. Kirk coins the term "learning disabilities."
- ✧ National "Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" name changes to "National Employ the Handicapped Week."
- ✧ Dallas/Fort Worth Chapter, Little Persons of America begins.
- ✧ A Presidential task force recommends that Social Security include health insurance for the elderly. Consequently, the King-Anderson bill is introduced to create a government health insurance program for the elderly; organized labor supports it; the American Medical Association and commercial health insurance carriers strongly oppose it. It does not pass.

- ✪ The American Standards Association, later known as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) publishes the first accessibility standard titled, “Making Buildings Accessible to and Usable by the Physically Handicapped.” Forty Nine states adopt accessibility legislation by 1973.
- ✪ Ronnie White (of the Miracles) discovers 11 year old Steveland Judkins and arranges an audition with Motown CEO, Barry Gordy, who immediately signs the boy as “Little Stevie Wonder.”

**1962** President John F. Kennedy gives a televised address on Medicare; the American Medical Association issues a televised rebuttal.

- ✪ The President’s Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped is renamed the President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, reflecting its increased interest in employment issues affecting people with cognitive disabilities and mental illness.
- ✪ Ed Roberts, a young man with polio, enrolls at the University of California, Berkeley. After his admission, he is rejected and he fights to get the decision overturned. He becomes the father of the Independent Living Movement and helps establish the first Center for Independent living (CIL).

**1963** Criss Cole, who was blind, serves in the Texas Senate.

- ✪ Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children, Galveston Burns Institute opens.
- ✪ Texan Justin Dart started Tupperware Japan with three employees and by 1965 had expanded to some 25,000 employees, with a focus on employing women and people with disabilities.
- ✪ The King-Anderson bill is reintroduced which would provide healthcare to the elderly. It is again unsuccessful in Congress, but paves the way for Medicare and Medicaid.
- ✪ President Kennedy, in an address to Congress, calls for a reduction, “over a number of years and by hundreds of thousands, (in the number) of persons confined” to residential institutions, and he asks that methods be found “to retain in and return to the community the mentally ill and mentally retarded, and there to restore and revitalize their lives through better health programs and strengthened educational and rehabilitation services.” Though not labeled such at the time, this is a call for deinstitutionalization and increased community services.



- ✪ The Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act of 1963 passes. The act sets aside money for developing State Developmental Disabilities Councils, Protection and Advocacy Systems, and University Centers. In 1984 it is renamed the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.

**1964** Robert H. Weitbrecht invents the “acoustic coupler,” forerunner of the telephone modem, enabling teletypewriter messages to be sent via standard telephone lines. This invention makes possible the widespread use of teletypewriters for the deaf (TDD’s now called TTY’s), offering deaf and hard-of-hearing people access to the telephone system. “the acoustic coupler,” or “Baudot” code is still used today.

- ✪ President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaims October 15 the first annual national White Cane Safety Day. This day is set aside to honor the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired and celebrates a traditional symbol of independence: the white cane. In October 2011, President Barack Obama renamed this day Blind Americans Equality Day.

**1965** The Texas Legislature creates the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR).

- ✪ Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County begins.
- ✪ The Learning Disabilities Association of Texas forms including parents and professionals.
- ✪ "Ironside" begins, starring Raymond Burr using a wheelchair.
- ✪ President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Medicare and Medicaid programs into law.
- ✪ Neighborhood health centers are established as part of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

**1966** The Texas Constitution allows the State vocational rehabilitation agencies to contract with private providers

- ✪ Texas State Library Talking Book Program expands to Texans with certain physical disabilities.
- ✪ Dallas County, Lubbock Regional, Amarillo Regional, Bexar County MHMR Centers, and El Paso Center for MHMR Services begin.

- ✧ Concho Valley Center for Human Advancement (formerly MHMR Center for Greater West Texas) begins.

**1967** Texas Legislature allows certain state colleges to offer an elective course in "dactylogy" (sign language).

- ✧ Vocational rehabilitation extends services to persons with behavioral disorders.
- ✧ Texas Committee for the Deaf begins.
- ✧ First successful heart transplant.
- ✧ Austin-Travis County Regional, Hidalgo County, and Central Counties MHMR Centers begin.
- ✧ Paul Moreno, a person who uses a wheelchair, serves in the Texas House of Representatives.
- ✧ Social Security amendments pass, adding optional Medicaid categories to insure others who are not receiving cash assistance.

**1968** Richmond State School and Amarillo State Center for Human Development MHMR open.

- ✧ Regional Center of East Texas and Heart of Texas and Northeast Texas MHMR Centers open.
- ✧ Patsy Smith, disabled as a result of childhood polio, serves as first woman judge of the 72nd District Court.
- ✧ The Architectural Barriers Act is passed, mandating that federally constructed buildings and facilities be accessible to people with physical disabilities. This act is generally considered to be the first federal disability rights legislation.
- ✧ First International Special Olympics Summer Games, held at Soldier Field in Chicago.

**1969** Texas Legislature requires certain public facilities to be accessible.

- ✧ Texas Legislature creates the Texas Rehabilitation Committee as a separate state agency.

- ✧ Lubbock and San Angelo State Schools begin; Wichita Falls Community Center for MHMR Services, Tarrant County MHMR Services, Beaumont and Laredo State Centers for Human Development begin.
- ✧ Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults of Bexar County begins.
- ✧ Big Spring State Hospital begins Texas MHMR's first community outreach program.
- ✧ Criss Cole, who was blind, becomes President Pro Tempore of the Texas Senate.
- ✧ Nueces County MHMR Community Center begins.
- ✧ Special Olympics of Texas begins.
- ✧ Leon Payne, country and western singer and composer who was blinded in childhood, dies at the age of 52. George Jones would record a tribute album of Payne's songs in 1971.

**1970** Central Plains Comprehensive Community MHMR Center, Sabine Valley Regional MHMR Center, Gulf Bend MHMR Center and Corpus Christi State School begin. Leander Rehabilitation Center begins.

- ✧ Judy Heumann sues the New York City Board of Education when her application for a teaching license is denied. The stated reason is the same that originally barred her from kindergarten—that her wheelchair is a fire hazard. The suit, settled out of court, launches Heumann's activism. She later founds the Independent Living Movement with Ed Roberts and oversees education and VR programs in the United States during the 1990's.

**1971** Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center for the blind opens.

- ✧ Mobility Impaired Grappling Hurdles Together (MIGHT) begins at the University of Texas.
- ✧ Abilene Regional MHMR Center begins.
- ✧ Governor Preston Smith appoints the first Texas Developmental Disabilities Planning and Advisory Council.
- ✧ President Richard M. Nixon backs a proposal requiring employers to provide a minimal level of insurance to employees. Senator Edward M. Kennedy counters with a uniform single payer health care reform plan. Neither proposal passes.

**1972** The 47-foot high scoreboard at Memorial Stadium at the University of Texas at Austin is dedicated to Freddie Steinmark, who had his leg amputated and later died as a result of cancer. Steinmark was a defensive back for the Longhorns on their national championship football team of 1969.

- ✧ Texan Barbara Jordan, who had MS, is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- ✧ Julia Child's *The French Chef* is the *first national broadcast* of an open-captioned program, airing across the country on PBS.
- ✧ More Social Security amendments pass, allowing people under 65 with long-term disabilities or end-stage renal disease to qualify for Medicare coverage.
- ✧ The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, in *Mills v. Board of Education*, rules that the District of Columbia cannot exclude children with disabilities from the public schools. Similarly, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, in *PARC v. Pennsylvania*, strikes down various state laws used to exclude children with disabilities from the public schools. These decisions will be cited by advocates during the public hearings leading to passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. *PARC* in particular sparks numerous other right-to-education lawsuits and inspires advocates to look to the courts for the expansion of disability rights.
- ✧ The Center for Independent Living (CIL) is founded in Berkeley, California. Generally recognized as the world's first independent living center, the CIL sparks the worldwide independent living movement.
- ✧ The Houston Cooperative Living Residential Project is established in Houston, Texas, becoming a model, along with the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, for subsequent independent living programs.

**1973** MHMR of Southeast Texas, Permian Basin Community Center for MHMR, and Gulf Coast Regional MHMR Center begin.

- ✧ Lynden Olsen, who was an amputee, serves in the Texas House of Representatives.
- ✧ President Richard M. Nixon signs the Health Maintenance Organization Act which set aside \$375 million to finance demonstration projects.
- ✧ The first handicap parking stickers are introduced in Washington, D.C..
- ✧ Passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act authorizes federal funds to provide for construction of curb cuts.

- ✧ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 makes it illegal for federal agencies, public universities, and other public institutions receiving federal money to discriminate on the basis of disability.

## **1974** MHMR Center for Central Texas begins in Brownwood.

- ✧ Travis County Services for the Deaf launches.
- ✧ MHMR Authority of Brazos Valley, MHMR Services of Texoma, and Deep East Texas Regional MHMR Services begin.
- ✧ Texas State Library expands Talking Books services to certain persons with learning disabilities.
- ✧ Brenham State School opens.
- ✧ Reclamation, Inc., launches for self-advocacy by persons with mental illness.
- ✧ ERISA, Employee Retirement Income Security Act is passed which exempted self-insured employers from state health insurance regulations.
- ✧ The last “Ugly Law,” is repealed in Chicago, Illinois. These laws allowed police to arrest and jail people with “apparent “ disabilities for no reason other than being disfigured or demonstrating some type of disability.

## **1975** The Coalition for Barrier-Free Living begins in Houston.

- ✧ "Spectrum: Focus on Deaf Artists" starts in Austin.
  - ✧ El Paso State Center opens.
  - ✧ First handicapped parking ID sold.
  - ✧ The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Pub. Law 94-142) is passed, establishing the right of children with disabilities to a public school education in an integrated environment. The act is a cornerstone of federal disability rights legislation. In the next two decades, millions of children with disabilities will be educated under its provisions, radically changing the lives of people in the disability community.
  - ✧ The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities is founded. It becomes the preeminent national cross-disability rights organization of the 1970s, pulling together disability rights groups representing people who were blind, deaf, or have physical or
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developmental disabilities. It hires Frank Bove as its first executive director and begins a major study of the current status of Americans with disabilities.

- ✧ New York Governor Hugh Carey signs the Willowbrook consent order closing down a state institution notorious for its horrible conditions. Governor Carey pledges to relocate patients in community settings.

## **1976** Austin Special Transit begins.

- ✧ Fort Worth State School opens.
- ✧ Texas White House Conference on the Handicapped convenes in Austin.
- ✧ Southwest Wheelchair Athletic Association forms.
- ✧ Federal Communications Committee reserves Line 21 on television sets for closed captions.
- ✧ Texan Barbara Jordan, who was diagnosed with MS in the early 1970's, gave the Keynote address at the Democratic National Convention.
- ✧ President Jimmy Carter is elected president and calls for comprehensive national health insurance with universal and mandatory coverage.
- ✧ Deaf actress Linda Bove, graduate of Gallaudet College and veteran of the National Theater for the Deaf, signs a long-term contract to play Linda the Librarian on public television's Sesame Street.

## **1977** Texas sells first handicapped parking stickers for license plates.

- ✧ Pecan Valley MHMR Center begins in Stephenville.
- ✧ Association for Individuals with Disabilities begins in Dallas.
- ✧ Travis County Council for the Deaf launches.
- ✧ Independent Living Research Utilization begins.
- ✧ Secretary of Health Education and Welfare (HEW) signs Federal 504 Regulations, after a sit-in in by persons with disabilities in nine cities. When FBI agents prevented people from leaving the HEW building in Washington D.C., a person who was deaf signed out the window to another person who was deaf and he communicated with the media.

- ✧ Congress passes the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, encouraging employment of people with disabilities.
- ✧ Advocacy, Inc. starts.
- ✧ White House Conference on the Handicapped convenes in Washington D.C..

## **1978** San Antonio State School opens.

- ✧ Coalition of Texans with Disabilities forms.
- ✧ ADAPT demands lifts on buses in Denver.
- ✧ Launch, Inc. starts for self-advocacy of adults with learning disabilities.
- ✧ Fiesta Educativa (Education Fest) is formed to address the lack of Spanish-speaking support services to families of children with disabilities in southern California.

## **1979** Texas Legislature recognizes American Sign Language as a language that may be taught in public schools or state colleges.

- ✧ Texas Legislature establishes the Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf.
- ✧ Navarro County MHMR Center begins in Corsicana.
- ✧ Leander State Center opens.
- ✧ Waco Center for Youth comes under direction of Texas MHMR.
- ✧ Austin Resource Center for Independent Living forms.
- ✧ Governor's Committee issues the first awards for employment of people with disabilities.
- ✧ First documented case of AIDS is reported.
- ✧ "Facts of Life" premieres; Geri Jewell, an actress with cerebral palsy, sometimes appears on this show.
- ✧ Marilyn Hamilton, Jim Okamoto, and Don Helman produce their "Quickie" lightweight-folding wheelchair revolutionizing manual wheelchair design.

**1980** Austin City Council names February 21 "Charles S. Eskridge Day" in honor of his work for people with mental illness and intellectual disabilities.

- ✦ Houston Center for Independent Living begins.
- ✦ Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf begins instruction.
- ✦ Texas Advocates begins - first Texas self-advocacy organization for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- ✦ Tony McGregor, an artist who is deaf, wins honor from the Austin Chamber of Commerce.
- ✦ "Blind" Lemon Jefferson, who was born blind, is inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame.
- ✦ Miller Reese invents electric hearing aid.
- ✦ Sears, Roebuck & Co. sells television decoders for closed captioning.
  
- ✦ The Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA) gives the Department of Justice power to sue state or local institutions that violate the rights of people held against their will, including those residing for care or treatment of a mental illness.

**1981** Texas celebrates International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) by nominating Pat Pound and Allen B. Clark, Jr. to receive awards at a special gala at the Baltimore Convention Center in Maryland.

- ✦ Edna Marie Moore, noted Texas artist, donates a bluebonnet picture to the state in honor of the IYDP. She used a wheelchair.
- ✦ San Antonio Independent Living Services forms.
- ✦ Victor Galloway becomes the first deaf superintendent at the Texas School for the Deaf.
- ✦ Texas Head Injury Association forms, later becoming the Brain Injury Association of Texas.
- ✦ Texas Legislature starts the nation's first interpreter certification program to provide qualified sign language interpreters to serve the state's deaf population.
- ✦ Andrew Foster, who was the founder of the Negro Baseball League and had mental illness, is elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.



- ✧ Federal budget reconciliation requires states to make additional Medicaid payments to hospitals that serve a disproportionate share of low-income patients.

## **1982** Governor's Committee publishes a report of a transportation barriers questionnaire.

- ✧ Alan A. Reich founds the National Organization on Disability (NOD). NOD's mission is to expand the participation and contribution of Americans with disabilities in all aspects of life and to close the participation gap by raising disability awareness through programs and information.

## **1983** Texas Legislature prohibits employment discrimination against persons with disabilities.

- ✧ Texas Legislature creates the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities.
- ✧ Texas Legislature provides increased access to polling places for people with disabilities.
- ✧ Governor's Committee presents first Barbara Jordan Awards for excellence in communicating the realities of persons with disabilities.
- ✧ Texans Justin Dart, Pat Pound, Dennis Dildy, Larry Johnson and Virginia Roberts created a 19 page document called, *The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities* for Governor Bill Clements which would eventually form the basis of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- ✧ Texas Diabetes Council begins.
- ✧ Dallas Center for Independent Living opens.
- ✧ National ADAPT organizes to secure access on buses.
- ✧ World Institute on Disability launches.
- ✧ Medicare introduces Diagnostic Related Groups (DRGs) as a prospective payment system for hospitals.

## **1984** Texas Alliance for the Mentally Ill begins.

- ✧ Arnett Cobb, an artist who was disabled as a result of a car crash, shares a Grammy with B.B. King for best traditional blues performance.
- ✧ President Reagan issues National Policy for Persons with Disabilities.

- ✧ Congress passes Federal Voting Accessibility Act.
- ✧ President's Committee begins services to employers, called the Job Accommodation Network.
- ✧ Advocacy, Inc. files a federal complaint against Southwest Airlines for denying a woman who was deaf-blind the right to fly unaccompanied.

**1985** Texas Association of the Deaf celebrates its centennial convention in Austin.

- ✧ Texas Cancer Council begins.
- ✧ Disability Rally Day convenes at the State Capitol.
- ✧ Governor's Committee co-sponsors Disabled Hispanic Texans: Rehabilitation & Employment Conference.

**1986** Dallas Mayor's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities awards first annual scholarship for individuals with disabilities.

- ✧ Congress passes the Air Carrier Access Act.
- ✧ Disabled Women's Political Caucus forms in Washington, D.C..
- ✧ Nellie Moone of San Francisco stops a city bus with her crutch until a lift equipped bus is sent.
- ✧ Texan Justin Dart was appointed to the head of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- ✧ Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act requires hospitals participating in Medicare to screen and stabilize anyone using their emergency room, regardless of the ability to pay.
- ✧ COBRA, Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, allows employees who lose their jobs to continue with their health plan for 18 months.

**1987** Texas Legislature creates a pilot attendant care delivery system, allowing individuals with disabilities to supervise their own attendants.

- ✧ Austin City Council passes a Disability Rights Ordinance.

- ✧ Secretary of Transportation rules that Southwest Airlines discriminated against a deaf-blind person who was not allowed to fly independently.
- ✧ Marlee Matlin, an actress with a hearing impairment, wins an Academy Award for her performance in "Children of a Lesser God."

**1988** *Time* magazine publishes a letter from Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons vice chairperson Kathy Weldon commending Gallaudet University's students for urging to have a president who is deaf.

- ✧ Texas Mental Health Consumers begins.
- ✧ 300 people parade in Dallas to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that includes equal rights in Section 504.
- ✧ First volunteer parking enforcement program starts through efforts of Beaumont Mayor's Committee.
- ✧ Congress expands National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- ✧ Congress passes Fair Housing Act.
- ✧ Grupo Dignidad, Igualdad y Oportunidad (Dignity, Equality and Opportunity Group) begins.
- ✧ Dr. I. King Jordan becomes first President of Gallaudet University with a hearing impairment.
- ✧ Texan Justin Dart is appointed co-chair of the Congressional Task Force on Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities.
- ✧ Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act expands Medicare coverage to include prescription drugs and a cap on beneficiaries' out of pocket expenses; act is repealed the following year.
- ✧ Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 is passed which increases access to, availability of, and funding for assistive technology through state and national initiatives.

**1989** Texas Legislature allows public schools to give language credit for American Sign Language.

- ✪ Texas Legislature establishes Relay Texas to provide telephone access for persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech-impaired.
- ✪ Texas athlete Todd Freeland competes in the Oita International Wheelchair Marathon in Japan.
- ✪ Congress passes Hearing Aid Compatibility Act, making telephones accessible for hearing aid users.
- ✪ "Life Goes On" with actor Christopher Burke, who has Down Syndrome, airs on ABC.
- ✪ Texan Justin Dart is appointed chair of the President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities.
- ✪ On September 7, 1989, the United States Senate, by a vote of 76-8, approves the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**1990** President George H. W. Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act at the largest bill signing ceremony ever on the White House grounds.

- ✪ TV movie "When You Remember Me," about the formative years of ADAPT and the disability movement, airs on ABC.
- ✪ Disability Policy Consortium forms.

**1991** Texas Legislature moves the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities into the Office of the Governor. Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities was created statutorily June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1991 by [Senate Bill 381](#) in order to continue the functions of the Council on Disabilities, a separate entity, which was abolished on the recommendation of the Sunset Commission.

- ✪ Texas Legislature requires sellers of lottery tickets to comply with the ADA.
- ✪ Texas Legislature requires textbooks to be available in electronic format to facilitate Braille translation and provides for Braille instruction for students who are blind.
- ✪ Texas Association of Mayors' Committees for People with Disabilities organizes.
- ✪ Governor's Committee in conjunction with the Dallas Mayor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities hosts the largest ever President's Committee national conference in Dallas with more than 6,000 attending.
- ✪ Texas Deaf Caucus forms.

- ✧ ADA Texas forms through efforts of the Texas Rehabilitation Committee and the Governor's Committee to train employers, people with disabilities, and service providers about the ADA.
- ✧ "Reasonable Doubt" starring Marlee Matlin, an actress with a hearing impairment, premiered on NBC.

**1992** Governor's Committee publishes "From Institutions to the Community" recommending how the state can increasingly serve Texans with disabilities in their local communities.

- ✧ First accessible parking placard sold.
- ✧ Governor Ann Richards announces the closing of the Fort Worth and Travis State Schools.
- ✧ Texas Assistive Technology Partnership begins.
- ✧ Jeff Kurz, a Gallaudet University student, becomes the first hearing impaired athlete to be named Scholar-Athlete by the National Football Foundation.

**1993** Texas Legislature establishes a birth defects registry and creates financial incentives for teaching students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

- ✧ Texas Legislature expands the architectural barriers law to all buildings covered by the ADA and increases accessibility of private polling places.
- ✧ Capital Metro in Austin equips all buses with wheelchair lifts.
- ✧ Barbara Jordan presents the Barbara Jordan Media Awards for the first (and only) time.
- ✧ Governor's Committee presents First Governor's Trophy to Dik Johnson.
- ✧ John Hockenberry, national news correspondent and a wheelchair user, joins ABC's "Day One."
- ✧ Sewering, an SS member and lung specialist in Germany who sent a 14 year old girl with tuberculosis to be gassed, becomes president-elect of the World Physicians Association. Protests force him to resign.
- ✧ WGBH/The Caption Center devises the Rear Window Captioning System to display captions on movie screens using a system to display the captions in reverse at the back of the theater which are then reflected at the seat.

- ✦ President Bill Clinton convenes White House Task Force on Health Reform and appoints First Lady Hillary Clinton as chair.
- ✦ President Clinton's proposal, the Health Security Act, is introduced in Congress but gains little support.
- ✦ Other national health reform proposals—including McDermott-Wellstone single payer health insurance proposal and Cooper proposal for managed competition—are introduced in Congress but fail to pass.

**1994** Texas adopts the Texas Accessibility Standards.

**1995** Governor George W. Bush appoints Greg Abbott to the Texas Supreme Court, the first person who uses a wheelchair to serve on Texas' highest court.

- ✦ Texas Legislature renamed the Texas Committee for the Deaf the Texas Committee for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- ✦ First monetary penalties assessed for inaccessibility under the Texas Architectural Barriers Act.
- ✦ Mattel markets first Barbie doll in a wheelchair and later modifies her house.
- ✦ Quaker Oats and M.I.T. pay \$1.85 million to more than 100 former residents of the Fernald State School in Massachusetts who were fed radiation-spiked cereal in nutrition experiments during the 1940's and 1950's without consent of their parents.

**1996** Governor's Committee publishes the first booklet describing key Texas laws affecting persons with disabilities.

- ✦ Texas Accessibility Standards become equivalent to federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.
- ✦ Congress passes the Telecommunication Act of 1996 requiring captioning and telecommunication access.
- ✦ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act passes, restricting insurers' ability to deny coverage because of preexisting conditions, setting privacy standards, and establishing tax-favored treatment for long-term care insurance.

- ✧ Mental Health Parity Act prohibits group health plans from having lower annual or lifetime dollar limits for most mental health benefits than for medical or surgical benefits.

**1997** Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities reports first data about State employees with disabilities.

- ✧ Texas law provides for telecommunications or other adaptive devices to make telephone use accessible for persons with disabilities.
- ✧ Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities presents the first Entrepreneurship Award to Chad Raney.
- ✧ James A. Michener publishes his last book, A Century of Sonnets, after becoming a person with a disability.
- ✧ Governor George W. Bush joins disability advocates urging that an additional statue depicting Franklin Delano Roosevelt using a wheelchair be erected.
- ✧ Bill Clinton's second presidential inauguration becomes the first inauguration to be simultaneously captioned live on television and the Internet.
- ✧ Justice Greg Abbott makes comments on Capitol Day regarding the ADA and issues related to Texans with disabilities.
- ✧ Medicare+Choice or "Medicare Advantage," is established. The Balance Budget Act changes provider payments to slow growth in Medicare spending and establishes Medicare+Choice program. It was renamed "Medicare Advantage," in 2003.
- ✧ State Children's Health Insurance Program is enacted, providing block grants to states for coverage of low-income children.

**1998** George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum opens in College Station including an exhibit on the ADA.

- ✧ Governor's Committee offers information on its new website.
- ✧ U.S. Supreme Court hears first ADA case and finds on behalf of a person with AIDS who a dentist refused to treat in his office.
- ✧ Justin Dart Jr., former chairman of the Governor's Committee, receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom in January from President William J. Clinton.

- ✦ Lex Frieden, senior vice president at The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, is named the Henry B. Betts Award laureate for his instrumental role in the development of the ADA.
- ✦ Casey Martin wins the right to use a golf cart as an accommodation for his disability based on the ADA.
- ✦ Johnson & Johnson start clinical trials on a new gyro-balanced mobility system, intended to replace the wheelchair as we know it called “The iBot,” invented by Dean Kamen.
- ✦ The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) decides that the telecommunications industry must make pagers, cellular phones and other equipment and services easier for people with disabilities to use.
- ✦ Citibank pilots and tests “talking” ATM machines.
- ✦ In January, rules mandated in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 become effective regarding closed captioning.
- ✦ The FCC adopts rules and policies to implement Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.
- ✦ The Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities goes through the Sunset Process with the next scheduled review process in 2011.

**1999** Lance Armstrong, a cancer survivor and cycling champion from Austin, wins the 1999 Tour de France.

- ✦ Blue Mist, a band with members who are blind, plays for one of Governor George W. Bush’s inaugural balls.
- ✦ Texas Governor’s Committee issues the first-ever history of disabilities in Texas to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary—resulting in a *New York Times* article.
- ✦ Kim Peek, the real “Rain Man”, who is a megasavant (not autistic), demonstrates his total recall abilities by responding to audience questions in Amarillo.
- ✦ Texas State Senator Chris Harris, when interviewed about his dyslexia, states he can read and write, but can’t read out loud from written material. “It’s just a blur,” he says.
- ✦ Governor George W. Bush issues an Executive Order directing the improvement of community services for persons with disabilities.
- ✦ Texas 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals rules that most parts of churches must be accessible.



- ✪ Texas Governor's Committee staff participates in a John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts forum on employment of persons with disabilities in the arts.
- ✪ First White House teleconference on mental health issues includes an Austin satellite link.
- ✪ Steven Hawking promotes global participation of persons with disabilities.
- ✪ Eddie Timanus, a sportswriter who was blind, wins five consecutive games of Jeopardy, using a Braille list of the categories.
- ✪ Congress passes the Work Incentives Improvement Act allowing more persons with disabilities to become employed by eliminating various disincentives.
- ✪ President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities introduces a new website for small business and self-employment of persons with disabilities.
- ✪ The World Wide Web Consortium releases "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines."
- ✪ National Council on Disability publishes recommendations regarding air travel and persons with disabilities.
- ✪ Governor George W. Bush releases an Executive Order, GWB 99-2 relating to Community Based Alternatives for People with Disabilities.

**2000** Lance Armstrong, a cancer survivor and cycling champion from Austin, wins the 2000 Tour de France. It is his second consecutive victory.

- ✪ President George H.W. Bush presents medals at a ceremony in Houston; and Governor's Committee Chairman James L. Caldwell together with former Governor's Committee Executive Director Virginia Roberts participates in a torch relay in Austin celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA.
- ✪ The FCC adopts rules requiring all telecommunications carriers nationwide to implement 7-1-1 as the permanent nationwide number for all telecommunications relay service calls.
- ✪ Texas implements 7-1-1 service in October.
- ✪ A student from Texas A&M University who acquired a disability after the collapse of the A&M Bonfire takes classes over the Internet while in rehabilitation in Dallas.

- ✪ The National Association of State Information Resource Executives honors the State of Texas with the annual recognition award for its efforts to increase Internet accessibility for people with disabilities.
- ✪ Jack Kilby, a Texan with a hearing loss, wins the Nobel Prize for an invention of a microchip.
- ✪ During the 2000 election season, some voters who were blind or visually impaired were able to cast their ballots in private for the first time using an electronic voting system called eSlate, developed by Hart Inter Civic of Austin, Texas.
- ✪ Texan Norman Brinker, who started from scratch and built a chain of more than 1,000 casual-dining restaurants, retires as chairman of Brinker International. Mr. Brinker was severely injured during a polo match in 1993 and doctors thought he might not emerge from a coma.
- ✪ Kristen Jones a Houston College student with a disability serves as a White House intern, working in the office of Public Liaison.

**2001** Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation creates an online database of accessible buildings in Texas. The new database contains a search function that allows people to check whether businesses, schools, and other buildings in their neighborhoods or across the State comply with the Texas Accessibility Standards.

- ✪ Lance Armstrong, a cancer survivor, wins 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive Tour de France.

**2002** The Lance Armstrong Foundation educates lawmakers and the public about the needs of cancer survivors. The Foundation donates tandem bikes to children with visual impairments. The Associated Press names Lance Armstrong, “Male Athlete of the Year”.

- ✪ President George W. Bush appoints Texans Lex Frieden and Pat Pound to serve on the National Council on Disability; Mr. Frieden is named chair.
- ✪ C-SPAN airs a celebration of life service held in the memory of Justin W. Dart, Jr., a Texan known for his great advocacy.
- ✪ Governor Rick Perry issues an Executive Order for state agencies to promote community-based alternatives for persons with disabilities.
- ✪ Attorney General John Cornyn affirms Advocacy, Inc.’s access to the records of persons with mental illness or developmental disabilities and also affirms the privacy of disability information of people taking exams given by licensing agencies.

- ✧ Federal approval allowed for Texans with disabilities to choose and contract for Medicaid and community-based services through a new Texas plan.
- ✧ Public Utility Commission rolls out Speech-to-Speech as an additional relay service for persons with speech disabilities, and an easy 711 number is now available to reach relay services.
- ✧ Harris, Tarrant and Travis counties use accessible electronic voting machines in elections. A Texas bank installs talking ATM machines.
- ✧ As a result of the U.S. Department of Justice review, the City of San Antonio improves access to the Riverwalk and other city facilities and services.
- ✧ The Health and Human Services Commission issues grants to improve telecommunication access for Texans with disabilities.
- ✧ Texas Education Agency adopts rules about behavior management including positive training supports and training about de-escalation.
- ✧ The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities announces “Team Everest 03.” An 18 member team of climbers with disabilities, led by Gary Guller, plans to climb to the 17,500 foot base camp of Mount Everest.
- ✧ President George W. Bush launches Health Center Growth Initiative, expanding the number of community health centers for underserved populations.

**2003** Austin climber Gary Guller becomes the first person with one arm to scale Mount Everest, gaining positive recognition of the abilities of people with disabilities through international press coverage.

- ✧ National Council on Disability Chair, Lex Frieden, moderates a panel discussion on the importance of a United Nations convention on the human rights of people with disabilities.
- ✧ A Texas-based, international firm requires its advertising agency to use actors with disabilities as a result of viewing the Governor’s Committee’s “Scoop on Reporting about People with Disabilities”.
- ✧ The Dallas Mayor’s Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities participates in the International Labor Organization’s conference resulting in publication and promotion of “Managing Disability in the Workplace.” This annual event sets the international standards for labor and is attended by top representatives of 177 countries.

- ★ Texan, President George W. Bush signs a law allowing military retirees who have disabilities with 20 or more years of service and a VA disability rating of 50 percent or more to receive both VA disability and a 10-year phase-in of retirement pay.
- ★ For the third year, Challenger Tee Ball teams compete as a part of the President's White House Tee Ball Initiative, illustrating competence and accommodations for ball players with a variety of disabilities; The White House website features video of games.
- ★ The Waco-McLennan County Public Health District Worksite Wellness Training Program wins one of the first Innovation in Prevention Awards presented by HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson.
- ★ The Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio receive National Eye Institute Healthy Vision 2010 funds for community-based eye health education and promotion programs.
- ★ A McNeil High School junior competes in Japan in the Oita International Wheelchair Marathon.
- ★ The University of Houston honors internationally known disability advocate, Justin W. Dart, Jr., by naming the new center for students with disabilities, the "Live the Dream" center.
- ★ The W.W. Samuell High School Deaf Choir from Dallas signs the National Anthem in a pre-game performance at the nationally televised Thanksgiving Day Dallas Cowboy football game.
- ★ Governor Rick Perry creates the "OneStar Foundation" to promote volunteerism that meets Texans' needs; he cites the Interfaith Care Partners for services, including respite care for individuals with disabilities.
- ★ The Texas Legislature creates penalties for use of fraudulent accessible parking placards, protects assistance animals from dog attacks, continues the Architectural Barriers Program, and allows individuals to place health information on driver's licenses and ID cards.
- ★ Voters approve constitutional amendments allowing property tax exemptions and freezes for certain property owners with disabilities.
- ★ The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation issues more than 4,700 "Access for All" decals to businesses achieving full facility access.
- ★ The State Board of Educator Certification sets new standards for first year special education teachers.

- ✪ The first Texas Music license plate features “Blind” Lemon Jefferson for his significant contribution to the development of Texas music.
- ✪ The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities makes history when its Team Everest climbers with disabilities reach Mount Everest base camp. As a result of recognition from the climb, CTD collaborates with AARP to create “livable communities” for people who are aging and people with disabilities starting with projects in El Paso and Corpus Christi.
- ✪ The Governor’s Committee promotes implementation of recommendations in access, communication, education, health, housing, recreation, transportation, and workforce, and provides more than 53,000 individuals information about disability issues this year through phone calls, e-mails, letters, handouts, and coverage in the media.
- ✪ Medicare Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act creates voluntary, subsidized prescription-drug benefits under Medicare and is administered through private plans.
- ✪ Medicare legislation creates Health Savings Accounts, allowing people to set aside pre-tax dollars for medical expenses in conjunction with a high deductible health plan.

**2004** Texan Lance Armstrong is the first cyclist to win six consecutive Tour de France titles. Armstrong is a cancer survivor and his foundation, dedicated to cancer survivorship programs, expects to raise more than \$21 million this year. Lance is selected as The Associated Press’ Male Athlete of the Year, for the third time.

- ✪ **Houston based Dynamic Orthotics & Prosthetics and Harris Methodist Hospital make and attach donated prosthetics for seven Iraqi amputees whose limbs were severed by Saddam Hussein’s government.**
- ✪ Native Texan and Deaflympics silver medalist, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, is a torchbearer for the Athens 2004 Olympic Torch Relay.
- ✪ San Antonio hosts the Breast Cancer Symposium with more than 6,000 delegates from over 80 countries.
- ✪ The University of Texas develops a toaster-sized device to help treat people with HIV in developing countries. It allows doctors in remote areas to quickly and cheaply conduct a key diagnostic test that until now required a huge and expensive machine.
- ✪ Texan Gary Guller who has only one arm, summits Mt. Cho Oyu in Tibet. Afterwards he meets with injured service men and women returning from Iraq at Brooks Army Medical Center.

- ✪ Austin, Texas, ties with Bloomington, Indiana for third place in the National Organization on Disability's Accessible America award program.
- ✪ The Cooper Institute in Dallas participates in a National Institute on Aging study to learn how to prevent or delay age-related disability in people over age 70.
- ✪ Texan Randy Snow, a Basketball, Tennis, and Track and Field Paralympian, is inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. He is the only athlete to compete in three Paralympic games in three different sports, and win medals in each.
- ✪ Juliette Rizzo, graduate of University of North Texas, serves as Ms. Wheelchair America 2005.
- ✪ A retired business owner from Victoria, who has diabetes, flew a 1976 Grumman Cheetah airplane from California to North Carolina in just under 15 hours, the fastest anyone has ever flown from the Pacific to the Atlantic oceans in one of these small aircrafts.
- ✪ Suzanna Christy, a Baytown student who is deaf, signs the national anthem for pop singer Beyoncé Knowles at the Super Bowl in Houston.
- ✪ Governor Rick Perry grants Robert Smith a commuted sentence to life imprisonment instead of death after the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles unanimously recommended such action after he was found to be a person with developmental disabilities.
- ✪ The Austin Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities provides unprecedented access to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport by posting a text map on the Internet describing the airport's layout including gates, elevators, ATMs, restrooms, and retail stores.
- ✪ Bryan-College Station Mayors' Committee on People with Disabilities hosts a demonstration of new accessible voting devices allowing people with disabilities to vote independently.
- ✪ Judge Lee H. Rosenthal orders the City of Houston and the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities as a part of street and traffic signal improvements under the ADA.
- ✪ Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio participate in a clinical study comparing three treatments of type 2 diabetes in children and teens.
- ✪ Candlelight Ranch at Lake Travis builds the first Universally Accessible Tree House in Texas.

- ✧ Austin hosts the National Trails Symposium including an afternoon presentation about accessible trails.
- ✧ Texas adds another 500 individuals with developmental disabilities to the state's Medicaid home and community-based services waivers. Services include respite care, minor home accessibility modifications, skilled nursing, adaptive aids, and other services.
- ✧ The University of Texas at Dallas' Callier Center for Communication Disorders receives a \$2.4 million federal grant to develop a diagnostic technique to determine which children with hearing impairments will benefit most from a hearing aid or a cochlear implant.
- ✧ 129 Texas schools offer American Sign Language for foreign language credit.
- ✧ Knowbility, Inc. sponsors three panels including information technology accessibility at South by Southwest, holds an Internet rally for state agencies and universities, and for non-profits in Houston.

**2005** Governor Rick Perry urges Texans to evacuate before Hurricane Rita; the emergency message includes sign language interpretation. He asks the Texas Association of Broadcasters to remind TV stations to caption emergency information. Texas evacuates an unprecedented number of people, many with disabilities.

- ✧ Texas state and local officials collaborate to assist hurricane Katrina evacuees from Louisiana, many with disabilities. Individuals receive replacement wheelchairs, walkers, Braille writers, hearing aids, eyeglasses, and assistance with personal care and other disability services.
- ✧ Texas A&M University establishes new scholarship for veterans with disabilities.
- ✧ The University of Texas adopts an accessibility policy for its website.
- ✧ San Antonio-based Xilas Medical Incorporated conducts clinical trials on an infrared temperature monitoring device allowing individuals with diabetes to monitor feet for possible inflammation.
- ✧ Texas State Fair provides sign language interpreters for specific events.
- ✧ The new Dallas-Fort Worth Airport terminal displays access and new intuitive Wayfinding features which help travelers with disabilities.
- ✧ H.B. No. 2819 introduced in the Texas House of Representatives, makes electronic and information technology readily available to state employees with disabilities and members of the public requiring accessible information.

**2006** The United Nations General Assembly adopts the first convention to give rights to the world's 650 million people with disabilities, capping four years of negotiations.

- ✦ With a grant from the Texas Governor's Emerging Technology Fund, Hanson Robotics, Inc. of Dallas receives \$1.5 million to commercialize its patent-pending robot that offers speech recognition software and a more lifelike appearance than existing robots. Initial applications of the technology will include potential prosthetic research and applications.
- ✦ Secretary of State Roger Williams promotes accessible voting in the November, 2006, elections — the first national election in which counties are required to have accessible voting.
- ✦ Texas wins the 2006 Council of State Government Innovations Award for its Money Follows the Person policies.
- ✦ National Organization on Disability recognizes Austin in their Accessible America contest for disability work including efforts to increase accessible housing—Austin took third place with 28 communities entering.
- ✦ Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation publicly announces fines of companies and individuals who did not comply with the Texas Architectural Barriers Act.
- ✦ Texas Residential Construction Commission incorporates Easy Living and Certified Aging in Place into their Star Builder program; this will increase housing visitability.
- ✦ Department of Information Resources issues rules implementing new legislation requiring state information technology and Website accessibility for people with disabilities.
- ✦ Texas School for the Deaf and Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired celebrate 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. Both schools were created before public schools began in Texas.
- ✦ America becomes the first country in the world to require all new television programs, with few exceptions, be closed captioned.
- ✦ Texas hosts the National Bridges to Employment Conference for Latinos with Disabilities, and Governor's Committee provides welcome and serves on legislative and business panel.
- ✦ Texas hosts the Sunbelt Builders Show including a session on making homes visitable for people with disabilities.



- ★ Texas hosts “Sportsmen Saying Thanks,” an event honoring military personnel recovering from amputations or burns at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.
- ★ Michael Hunter, a pilot who is insulin-dependent, flies for the Texas Thunder Air Show with a cockpit equipped with a blood glucose meter and a pump that administers insulin every three minutes.
- ★ Professor David Oshinsky, from the University of Texas at Austin, wins a Pulitzer Prize after writing “Polio: An American Story” on the polio outbreak, the reaction to it by the American public, and the story of the vaccine creators.
- ★ KUT public radio airs “Rediscovering Barbara Jordan” and includes audio clips of Barbara Jordan and information about the Governor’s Committee’s Barbara Jordan Media Awards.
- ★ The Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities produces the Committee’s Scoop on Reporting about People with Disabilities training program on DVD - one of the first DVDs in the country to have an accessible audible navigation menu.

**2007** The Austin Film Festival shows “Team Everest 03”, a documentary of people with disabilities’ journey to the top of Mount Everest. This is a project of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities.

- ★ Austin native and Pflugerville resident Clarence Swenson gets a star on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame. Mr. Swenson played a munchkin in the “Wizard of Oz.”
- ★ Governor Rick Perry announces numerous Emerging Technology grants in the fields of drug research, robotics, nanotechnology, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and medical testing.
- ★ Governor Perry announces a substantial Texas Enterprise Fund grant to Scott and White for expansion of cancer research.
- ★ Governor Perry makes 32 appointments to various committees and councils involved with disability issues.
- ★ Governor Perry hosts UT Arlington’s Movin’ Mavs wheelchair basketball team at the capitol, recognizing the players for the 2006 championship.
- ★ Texas Department of State Health Services creates a new Website for registering as an organ, tissue, or eye donor.
- ★ Judge Marion T. Carson, serving the Cibolo Municipal Court, is the only totally deaf judge presiding in Texas.

- ✦ Texas Children's Hospital receives a donation to help build the world's first Pediatric Neurological Research Institute.
- ✦ Intrepid, a high-tech rehabilitation center for service members with amputations or burns opens in San Antonio.
- ✦ New Fort Bliss Restoration & Resilience Center restores battle-readiness to post-deployment soldiers and their families using integrated state-of-the-art treatments.
- ✦ Abilities Expo/Texas in San Antonio educates people with disabilities, senior citizens, as well as family members and caregivers about disability products and services.
- ✦ Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center in Houston uses Language Access Network, Inc, a live video interpretation service available in over 150 languages, including American Sign Language.
- ✦ Matt Philips, a fifth grader from Abilene, qualifies to compete in the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.. Matt has osteogenesis imperfecta.
- ✦ U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association induct Texas Coach Beverly Kearney into the Hall of Fame. Coach Kearney sustained disabilities in an automobile accident.
- ✦ Bass Concert Hall in Austin offers Disney's "The Lion King" in American Sign Language and with audio description.
- ✦ 4-H in partnership with Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired receives a grant to promote environmental awareness.
- ✦ Ronan Tynan, M.D., an amputee and champion athlete, physician, and renowned tenor speaks and performs at Baylor University.
- ✦ A Supreme Court ruling gives parents of children with disabilities the right to go to court without a lawyer to seek compliance with special education law.
- ✦ Department of Justice awards a grant to SafePlace of Austin to expand its model of services for clients with disabilities who have been victims of abuse.
- ✦ First Daughter Jenna Bush writes [Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope](#), about a woman in Latin America living with AIDS.
- ✦ Texas Special Olympics athletes compete in the 2007 Summer World Games in China.

- ✧ The Healthy Americans Act is introduced, proposing to require individuals to obtain private health insurance coverage through state health insurance purchasing pools and to eliminate favorable tax treatment of employer-sponsored insurance premiums. The act does not pass but is reintroduced in February of 2009.
- ✧ President George W. Bush announces a health care reform platform plan that would replace the tax preference for employer-sponsored insurance with a standard health care deduction. The proposal is not acted on by Congress.

## 2008

- ✧ Governor Rick Perry appoints 43 people to Committees, Commissions, Boards, and Councils involved with disability issues.
- ✧ Texan Matthew Swinton increased mobility through National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) technology that allows him to drive a minivan. The technology was developed to drive the lunar rovers and allows Mr. Swinton to drive using a touch computer screen.
- ✧ Texan Javier Serrano received a degree in social work from Gordon College in Massachusetts. Javier mentors children and speaks to children in elementary schools each year about children with disabilities. Javier also got to toss out the first pitch this year at Fenway Park. Javier was born without hands and does not use prosthesis.
- ✧ Team Perry participates in the Mighty Texas Dog Walk which benefits Texas Hearing and Service Dogs.
- ✧ Kristin Pass, a high school senior at Aledo High School with Down's syndrome, is crowned prom queen.
- ✧ Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) selects providers for two new Independent Living Centers. The new centers, Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL) in Laredo and Not Without Us! in Abilene promote independent living for any person with a disability through advocacy, peer support, independent living skills training, and information and referral.
- ✧ Baylor University researchers design a custom "lift system" to help Texans with physical and mental impairments at the Heart of Texas Therapeutic Riding Center (HOTTRC).
- ✧ The Captioning Key for Educational Media, a set of guidelines and preferred techniques regarding how to caption educational media, developed by the DCMP, is completely revised for the Web and published in October 2008. The document overviews how to caption educational media, including types, methods, and styles of captioning; presentation rate; text; language mechanics; sound effects; music; foreign language/dialect; and other special considerations.

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- ✦ Mike Weinstein, a student with autism wins the regional science contest in chemistry. He later places fourth in the statewide science competition.
- ✦ The City of Houston was chosen as the winner in Accessible America Contest, held by the National Organization on Disability. The city was chosen for the award for its focus on issues affecting Houstonians with disabilities and its successful design of accessible programs, services, and facilities.
- ✦ President George W. Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act-Amendments Act (ADAAA) on September 26, 2008.
- ✦ President Bush signs the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) on May 21, 2008.
- ✦ The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 passed on October 8, 2008 which requires full parity.

## 2009

- ✦ The Children's Health Insurance Program is reauthorized and expanded.
- ✦ During the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session, Senate Bill 2 postponed the Sunset Advisory process for the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities to 2013.
- ✦ November 21, 2009, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, GINA went into effect.
- ✦ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announced an investment of \$5.5 million from the [Texas Emerging Technology Fund \(ETF\)](#) for the [University of Houston](#) to create a world-class Institute of Biomedical Research in conjunction with the [Methodist Hospital Research Institute](#).
- ✦ [Governor Rick Perry](#) bolsters the state's precautionary measures to address the [H1N1](#) threat as a result of confirmed cases in certain parts of the state by issuing a [disaster declaration](#) for the entire state of Texas. The disaster declaration allowed the state to implement emergency protective measures and seek reimbursement under the [Federal Stafford Act](#) for protective measures associated with the state's response to this public health threat.
- ✦ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces the state will invest \$750,000 in [Halsa Pharmaceuticals Inc. of Houston](#) through the [Texas Emerging Technology Fund \(ETF\)](#). This investment follows a \$250,000 deal announced in March 2008, and will fund additional development of [Halsa's treatment for obesity and diabetes](#).
- ✦ [Senate Bill 1715](#) which takes effect in January 1, 2010 requires landlords of dwelling units in Texas, such as apartment complexes, to purchase and install [visual smoke](#)

[alarms](#) upon request for their deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind tenants. These visual smoke alarms must be installed in the bedroom where a deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind person will be sleeping.

- ✪ The [Justice Department](#) announces an agreement with [Gregg County, Texas](#), to improve access for persons with disabilities to its programs, services, activities and facilities. The agreement was reached under the Department's [Project Civic Access initiative](#), which helps bring localities into full compliance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). This agreement is the 163rd entered into under Project Civic Access.
- ✪ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces funding of up to 12 new veterans counselors to expedite benefits claims for veterans. The Governor's Office funding will allow the [Texas Veterans Commission \(TVC\)](#) to reduce the number of veterans' claims pending at the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#) regional offices in [Waco](#) and [Houston](#).
- ✪ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces initiatives to work with the Legislature and the [Health and Human Services Commission \(HHSC\)](#) to secure an additional \$5 million to supplement the \$1.2 million from the state budget to expand mental health treatment and support programs for veterans and their families.
- ✪ [Governor Rick Perry](#) increases access to health care for Texans in the [Rio Grande Valley](#) with the establishment of a medical education facility in the region. The governor signed [Senate Bill 98](#), which establishes a health science center and medical school in South Texas.
- ✪ [Governor Rick Perry](#) speaks at a ribbon cutting at a home built by the [Bay Area Builders Association Support Our Troops \(BABASOT\)](#) for veteran [Sgt. David Worswick](#). BABASOT helps veterans with disabilities by building accessible homes to accommodate their injuries.
- ✪ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces the state will invest \$3 million in [Patton Surgical Corp](#) through the [Texas Emerging Technology Fund \(ETF\)](#) for the commercialization of its [PassPort double shielded trocar device](#) for use in [laparoscopic surgeries](#).
- ✪ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces the state will invest \$600,000 through the [Texas Enterprise Fund \(TEF\)](#) in [Cardiovascular Systems Inc. \(CSI\)](#) for the creation of a facility in Pearland to manufacture their arterial disease treatment system, [Diamondback 360](#). This TEF investment will create 100 jobs, with the potential to grow to 250 jobs over the next five years, and generate \$23 million in capital investment.

- ★ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces that the state will invest more than \$1 million in [Azaya Therapeutics Inc. of San Antonio](#) through the [Texas Emerging Technology Fund \(ETF\)](#) for the development of their innovative [Azaya Liposome Encapsulated Radiation Therapy \(ALERT\)](#) for treatment of cancerous tumors.
- ★ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces the state will invest \$6 million through the [Texas Enterprise Fund \(TEF\)](#) in [Medtronic Inc.](#) to open a new facility for its [diabetes](#) business unit in San Antonio, creating nearly 1,400 new jobs and generating more than \$23 million in capital investment.
- ★ The State of Texas settles a twelve year lawsuit regarding the \$5 fee for accessible parking placards for \$24 million in a class action lawsuit filed against the [Department of Transportation](#). The settlement represents one of the largest single checks the state has written to settle a legal claim.
- ★ [The Justice Department \(DOJ\)](#) files a lawsuit against [JPI Construction L.P. \(JPI\)](#) and six JPI-affiliated companies in [U.S. District Court in Dallas](#) for failing to provide accessible features required by the [Fair Housing Act](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) at multi-family housing developments in Texas and other states.
- ★ [First Lady Anita Perry](#), breast cancer survivors, health care advocates and medical providers hold a Press Conference at the Texas Capitol to emphasize the importance of routine screening mammograms for women over the age of 40.
- ★ [Governor Rick Perry](#) announces the state will invest \$5 million through the [Texas Emerging Technology Fund \(TETF\)](#) in [Mirna Therapeutics Inc.](#) for the development and commercialization of its biopharmaceutical research in micro ribonucleic acid (RNA) treatments for cancer. Mirna is developing a cancer treatment that introduces synthetic micro RNA, or miRNA, back into tumors to trigger their death. Research has shown that the use of this therapy has reduced or eliminated cancerous tumors in mice. The treatment would focus on inflammatory, cardiovascular, ophthalmic, metabolic, neurological and infectious diseases.
- ★ [The ADA Amendments Act of 2008](#) (P.L. 110-325), becomes effective on January 1, 2009.
- ★ 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of [Seeing Eye](#) in January of 2009.
- ★ [Air Carrier Access Act of 1986](#) (ACAA) and its implementing regulation, [14 CFR Part 382](#) (Part 382) become effective on May 13, 2009.
- ★ The [Media Access Group at WGBH](#) provides [Closed Captioning](#) and Live Description for PBS's [President Obama's Inaugural Address](#).
- ★ On January 16, 2009, the [Civil Rights Division](#) enters into a [settlement agreement with Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.](#) under [Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) to improve access for persons with disabilities at [Wal-Mart](#) stores nationwide including Supercenters, Sam's Clubs, and Neighborhood Markets.

- ✪ The online travel agency [Hotels.com](#) agrees to improve access for travelers with disabilities as part of a settlement of a lawsuit that alleged it refused to guarantee reservations for rooms that are wheelchair accessible.
- ✪ [Congressmen Edolphus "Ed" Towns](#) (D-N.Y.) and [Cliff Stearns](#) (R-Fla.) introduce [H.R. 734, "The Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2009,"](#) which provides protections for people who are blind.
- ✪ In January, [Communication Services for the Deaf](#) (CSD) announces that it had been awarded a contract from the [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC) to implement an awareness campaign targeted at the nation's deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind consumers in regards to the [Digital TV \(DTV\) Transition](#).
- ✪ [The U.S. Department of Labor](#), for the first time, releases employment and unemployment data on people with disabilities. This information will assist the nation in understanding how changing labor market conditions affect Americans with disabilities.
- ✪ The [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit](#) rules that a diabetic employee may pursue a claim for violation of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). The Court announces its decision in the case entitled, [Rohr v. Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District](#). The Court's decision provides a framework for understanding [diabetes'](#) impact on life and work.
- ✪ [Justice Department](#) officials notify Memphis that the city has until September 2010 to update [Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium](#) in compliance with [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) requirements, a project that officials say will cost more than \$40 million.
- ✪ For the first time, President Obama designates [Kareem Dale](#) as a Special Assistant focused exclusively on disability policy. President Obama is the first president to have a member of his cabinet focused on disability policy.
- ✪ [The Office of Disability and Employment Policy](#) (ODEP) has released a new Fact Sheet titled: *"Supporting the Workplace Success of Wounded and Injured Service Members."*
- ✪ The [Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act](#) is signed, which will for the first time in history; bring together the best minds across the country to collaborate on research, rehabilitation, and improvement of quality of life for people living with paralysis.
- ✪ [Staples](#), the world's largest office products company, announces that it will be designing its website to meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) issued by the [World Wide Web consortium](#).
- ✪ The Supreme Court rules in [Forest Grove School District v. T.A., 08-305](#) that parents of special education students who opt for private school instead of trying the public system cannot be barred from seeking public reimbursement for their tuition costs.

- ✪ The [U.S. Department of Labor](#) announces "[Expectation + Opportunity = Full Participation](#)" as the official theme for October's [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#).
- ✪ The [National Association of the Deaf](#) partners with the [Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS) to make sure that important tax information reaches the deaf community.
- ✪ The Accessible Technology Bill is introduced in Congress, as the "[The 21st Century Communications & Video Accessibility Act of 2009](#)," H.R. 3101.
- ✪ The [U.S. House of Representatives](#) passes a bill that prohibits employers from discriminating against veterans needing time off to treat injuries incurred in or aggravated by military service. The [Wounded Veteran Job Security Act \(H.R. 466\)](#) amends the [Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act](#) to ensure that, if a veteran needs time off from work for treatment, he or she may use any accrued paid vacation or sick leave or take an unpaid leave of absence.
- ✪ The [5th Circuit](#) rules that [Chronic Fatigue Syndrome](#) is a qualifying disability protected by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). An employee provided enough evidence that her [CFS](#) substantially limited her in the major life activities of caring for herself, sleeping, and thinking to warrant a jury trial. The [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#), which has long said [CFS](#) is a disability, represented the employee in the case.
- ✪ The website [Disability.gov](#) offers social media tool upgrades to complement information from 22 federal agencies on disability-related programs and services.
- ✪ [CVS/pharmacy](#), the nation's largest retail pharmacy, announces that it is implementing functional improvements to benefit its customers with visual impairments and other disabilities. The Company has installed [tactile keypads](#) in all CVS stores and it will enhance its website in 2009.
- ✪ The "[Service Dogs for Veterans Act of 2009](#)" is sent to Congress which would require the [Secretary of Veterans Affairs](#) to carry out a [pilot program](#) to assess the feasibility and advisability of using service dogs for the treatment or rehabilitation of veterans with physical or mental injuries or disabilities, and for other purposes.
- ✪ Lawyers with the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) file [suit against Starbucks](#) citing discrimination against an Arkansas job applicant with [Multiple Sclerosis](#).
- ✪ [A statue called "The Miracle Worker," of Helen Keller](#) commemorating her 1887 breakthrough is unveiled in the [U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall](#).



- ✪ The [Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act](#) passes and gives the federal government authority to prosecute violent [hate crimes](#) based on disability when local authorities failed to act.
- ✪ On October 1, 2009 the first national study on crime against persons with disabilities is released by the [Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics \(BJS\), Office of Justice Programs](#).
- ✪ On May 21, 2008, the [President Bush](#) signs the [Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008](#) (GINA). GINA includes two titles. Title I, which amends portions of the [Employee Retirement Income Security Act](#) (ERISA), the [Public Health Service Act](#), and the [Internal Revenue Code](#), addresses the use of genetic information in health insurance. [Title II](#) prohibits the use of genetic information in employment, prohibits the intentional acquisition of genetic information about applicants and employees, and imposes strict confidentiality requirements. [Title II of GINA](#) takes effect on November 21, 2009.
- ✪ The [National Football League](#) announces that it will implement rules to help alleviate and manage head injury, concussion, and trauma.
- ✪ President Obama signs the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) on Friday, June 24, 2009 at a White House ceremony marking the anniversary of the adoption of the [Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act](#).
- ✪ Dozens of nations meet in Geneva to consider adopting the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty for [Sharing Accessible Formats of Copyrighted Works for Persons Who are Blind or Have other Reading Disabilities](#). The [proposal](#) before a subcommittee of the roughly 180 [World Intellectual Property Organization](#) members will sanction the cross-border sharing of DRM-protected digitized books that tens of thousands of blind and visually disabled people read with devices and tools like the [Pac Mate, Book Port and Victor Reader](#).

## 2010

### Texas:

- ✪ Gov. Perry announces a \$2 million investment in development and commercialization of cancer treatment and salient pharmaceuticals treatment which ease side effects of chemotherapy.

- ★ Gov. Perry announces an additional \$1.75 million in grants for veterans' mental health services to help veterans find access to treatment, expand trauma therapy services, and promote peer support for veterans and their families.
  
- ★ Hanger Orthopedic Group relocates its corporate headquarters to Austin. Hanger is the nation's premier provider of orthotic and prosthetic patient care services, with approximately 670 patient care centers located in 45 states, including Texas, and the District of Columbia
  
- ★ Texas awards Ensysce Biosciences Inc. a \$250,000 investment for the development of its carbon nanotube technology as a delivery agent for cancer therapeutics. Carbon nanotubes' unique chemical structure allows them to form stable complexes with cancer-cell targeted agents, revolutionizing the delivery of cancer treatments that cannot be delivered by conventional means, improving their efficacy and reducing side effects.
  
- ★ Texas awards Leonardo BioSystems, Inc. a \$2.5 million investment for the development a cancer treatment that targets small-molecule therapeutics to specific tissues on a molecular level.
  
- ★ Texas awards Nano3D Biosciences Inc. a \$250,000 investment for the commercialization of its 3-dimensional, in vitro cell culturing. This technology will have significant implications for life science research and development, as well as applications in drug discovery, toxicology, and regenerative medicine.
  
- ★ Prestige-Ameritech, the largest domestic manufacturer of surgical face masks and disposable medical products in the U.S., consolidates its three facilities in Texas. The facility will help the U.S. and other countries build surgical masks and N95 respirator stockpiles for use during pandemics, reducing the likelihood of shortages in global emergencies.
  
- ★ Temple Grandin, the movie, was filmed in and around Austin, Texas . It wins five Emmy Awards in 2010. Temple Grandin, Ph.D., is the most accomplished and well-known adult with autism in the world.
  
- ★ The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) announces the formation of the Housing and Health Services Coordination Council (HHSCC). HHSCC's purpose is to increase service-enriched affordable housing for seniors and people with disabilities.
  
- ★ The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities announces the 2009 Barbara Jordan Media Award Winners. Winners in eight categories were chosen by a statewide

panel of judges including journalists, professionals in the field of disabilities, and people with disabilities.

- ✦ Walgreens is launching a pilot program in the Dallas/Fort Worth area to broaden its workforce and disability inclusion initiatives. The program will hire people with disabilities for 10% of service clerk openings at stores in the area.
- ✦ Morgan's Wonderland has its grand opening April 10, 2010. Morgan's Wonderland sets new standards of excellence in providing outdoor recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- ✦ Governor Rick Perry announces a program to ensure that veterans and their families have the resources necessary to receive an education and to transition back into the work force and civilian life after their deployments are over. A \$3 million workforce development initiative, seeking to maximize a returning veteran's knowledge, skills, and abilities for college credit and employment will be offered.
- ✦ Judy Scott, Director of the AFB Center on Vision Loss, is inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame. Judy Scott has been an activist in the field of aging and vision loss for over 40 years. Scott was appointed to the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities in 1996 and began serving as Chair Person in 2007.
- ✦ Lubbock, Fort Worth, and Arlington Texas are ranked among the top 20 most livable U.S. cities for Wheelchair Users, rated by the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.
- ✦ Texas' first public school for children with autism opens in San Antonio.
- ✦ The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Division for Blind Services (DBS) announces Judy Scott as its 16<sup>th</sup> inductee into the Wall of Honor. The Wall of Honor recognizes people who have made significant contributions to the blind community by expanding opportunities in employment, public transportation, education, and community living.
- ✦ Governor Rick Perry names Joe Bontke of Houston as chair and appointed Margaret Larsen of Austin to the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities.

- ✪ In support of Rosa's Law and out of respect for people with intellectual disabilities, the Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers, Inc. changes its name to the Texas Council of Community Centers.

## National:

- ✪ A federal court approves a "record-setting" Americans with Disabilities Act settlement that requires Sears, Roebuck and Co. to pay \$6.2 million for instituting an inflexible workers' compensation leave policy. The settlement is the largest in a single ADA lawsuit in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission history, according to the commission.
- ✪ This year is the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- ✪ The U.S. Department of Justice announces separate agreements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding the use of an electronic book reader, the Kindle DX, an electronic book-like reading device, regarding its use in classroom settings. Under the agreements, the universities, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Pace University in New York City, and Reed College in Portland, Oregon, will not purchase, recommend, or promote the use of the Kindle DX or any other electronic book reader, unless the electronic devices are fully accessible to students who are blind or have low vision.
- ✪ The National Council on Disability releases a report entitled "The State of Housing in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The report provides recommendations intended to improve housing opportunities for people with disabilities. The report's recommendations include that there needs to be an increase in affordable, accessible, and integrated housing for people with disabilities. In addition the report advocates for an increase in access to existing units, the prevention of further loss of affordable and accessible housing, an expansion of housing vouchers, and an improvement in fair housing enforcement of disability rights.
- ✪ Under new federal law, more Medicare beneficiaries qualify for extra help with their Medicare prescription drug plan costs because of new income and resource counts.
- ✪ The U.S. Department of Justice announces that it has entered into a settlement agreement with the Metropolitan Government of Nashville, Tennessee and Davidson County, Tennessee. The settlement was a result of episodes of peer-on-peer sexual harassment on buses designated for students with disabilities. The agreement obligates the Nashville Public School District to enhance the security of students with disabilities on its public transportation system.

- ✪ The U.S. Department of Justice reached a settlement against Wales West LLC, owner of Wales West RV Resort and Train and Garden Lovers Family Park in Silverhill, Alabama over compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The U.S. Department of Justice alleges that Wales West LLC denied full and equal service to a child and his family because the child had HIV. Under the settlement's agreement, Wales West LLC must establish policies, procedures, and training practices to ensure that patrons and their families are not discriminated against on the basis of disability.
  
- ✪ Senator Dodd and Senator McCain introduce the Blind Persons Return to Work Act of 2010 (S. 2962). The bill allows blind Americans to more easily transition from Social Security beneficiaries to income earning, productive members of the workforce. The bill specifically replaces the SSDI monthly earnings limit with a gradual phase out, allowing blind beneficiaries to systematically replace benefits with earned income.
  
- ✪ The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury jointly issued new rules providing parity for consumers enrolled in group health plans who need treatment for mental health or substance use disorders. The new rules prohibit group health insurance plans from restricting access to care by limiting benefits and requiring higher patient costs compared to general medical or surgical benefits.
  
- ✪ U.S. Representative Schakowsky introduces the Technology Bill of Rights for the Blind (H.R. 4533). The bill mandates that all consumer electronics, home appliances, kiosks, and electronic office technologies provide user interfaces that are accessible to people who are blind.
  
- ✪ The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities replaces 'mental retardation' with the new term 'intellectual disability.'
  
- ✪ President Obama signs Rosa's Law into law. Rosa's Law changed the terms 'mental retardation' and 'mentally retarded' into 'intellectual disabilities' and 'intellectually disabled' in federal laws regarding education, employment, and certain health programs.
  
- ✪ The U.S. Department of Justice announces that it has reached an agreement with Alameda County, California, under which the county will provide sign language interpreters and other auxiliary aids and services to arrestees, detainees, suspects, victims, witnesses, complainants, and visitors who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind at their jails.

- ✪ The Social Security Administration announces that the agency is adding 38 more conditions to its list of Compassionate Allowances. The new conditions range from adult brain disorders to rare diseases that primarily affect children. The expansion of conditions means that more Americans with disabilities will now be approved for benefits.
- ✪ The U.S. passes the Keeping All Students Safe Act. The Act protects students from abusive restraints in school settings, only allowing the use of restraints to be used on children in imminent danger of injury.
- ✪ President Obama expands the federal hate crime statute to include crimes based on a person's disability.
- ✪ A study published by the Journal of American Medical Association states that more than a quarter of children in the United States have a chronic health condition. Children today suffer from a different set of illnesses, like obesity, asthma, attention deficit disorder, and other mental health/behavioral conditions not diagnosed years ago. This increase may also be because of the broader definitions for health conditions.
- ✪ The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs awards Benetech and the U.S. Fund for DAISY funding to create a research and development center that will improve the processes and availability of accessible images for students with disabilities.
- ✪ The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) sponsor a historic day long Federal Hiring Event for People with Disabilities.
- ✪ A landmark agreement between the State of Illinois and thousands of persons with mental illnesses will result in reforms of Illinois' outdated and overcrowded nursing home systems. The agreement will give persons with mental illnesses the choice of moving out of the nursing homes and into community -based settings with the supports they need to be successful.
- ✪ The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) launches a new Livable and Sustainable Communities website. The Sustainable Communities Partnership works with other agencies to provide citizens with access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs, while protecting the environment.

- ✪ Departments of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban development partner, as a part of President Obama's Year of Community Living initiative, to provide housing support for non-elderly persons with disabilities to live productive, independent lives in their communities rather than in institutional settings. HUD offers \$40 million to public housing authorities across the country to fund approximately 5,300 Housing Choice Vouchers for persons with disabilities, allowing them to live independently.
  
- ✪ The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) releases a blueprint to expand the availability and benefits of broadband technology, including high speed internet service throughout the nation. The plan offers strategies to make broadband available to all Americans and to maximize its use in order to improve economic output, education, security, healthcare, and energy efficiency. The plan also recommends steps federal agencies can make to improve technology access for people with disabilities.
  
- ✪ Representative Gwendolynne S. Moore introduces H.R. 5083, the Promoting Fair Work Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. The bill will give states incentives and flexibility to better serve people with disabilities in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
  
- ✪ The U.S. Department of Justice announces today an agreement with Shannon County, South Dakota to ensure compliance with provisions of the Voting Rights Act that requires the county to provide election materials and information in Lakota to Lakota-speaking American Indian voters. The agreement with Shannon County provides for a comprehensive Lakota language assistance program for American Indian voters including bilingual election officials available at all polling places in the County. Each polling place should also have an operational voting system that provides accessibility for minority language voters through a Lakota audio ballot as well as accessibility to voters with disabilities.
  
- ✪ Regulations requiring that businesses' websites be ADA accessible are in the works and could be finalized as soon as September, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.
  
- ✪ The House of Representatives and the Senate pass S. 1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, to be signed into law by the President. The legislation covers a broad range of health care initiatives and reforms, including the elimination of co-payments for Priority 4 veterans.
  
- ✪ The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals rejects arguments by attorneys for the Arizona-based Harkins theater chain. The judges state that the theater must purchase and install

necessary equipment to ensure that those with hearing and vision disabilities can enjoy the movies.

- ✪ The Health and Human Services' Office on Disability announces the award of over \$6 million under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to establish a Center of Excellence in Research on Disability Services, Care Coordination and Integration. The Center will support and conduct research on the effectiveness of systems of care for people with disabilities to improve the health and support services they receive.
- ✪ President Obama signs legislation to improve health care for veterans and to recognize the important role that family caregivers play in the recovery of wounded personnel. The new law increases support for veterans in rural areas with the transportation and housing needed to reach VA hospitals and clinics. The law has also expanded health care for women veterans to meet their unique needs.
- ✪ HUD is awarded \$32.7 million in Service Coordinator grants to provide more than 19,200 low income elderly and residents with disabilities in federally supported housing with assistance to locate and receive health care, meals, and other support services so they can live independently in their own homes.
- ✪ The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) announces the availability of up to \$500,000 in funds for a two-year grant focused on research to improve voting technology and processes for recently injured military personnel. Funds will support research to better understand the needs of injured military personnel in major hospital recovery and rehabilitation facilities related to election processes.
- ✪ The U.S. Health and Human Services Department announces the availability of \$60 million in Affordable Care Act grants to states and communities to help individuals and their caregivers better understand and navigate their health and long term care options. Some aspects of the grant focus on assisting older adults and people with disabilities live at home or in settings of their choosing with the right supports and assisting people in transitioning from hospitals or nursing homes back into the community.
- ✪ The Secretary of Transportation announces the first federal rule to specifically provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protections to people with disabilities who travel on boats and ships. The rule will ensure that vessel operators do not discriminate against passengers with disabilities. Vessel operators cannot charge extra for accessibility related services, must provide information to passengers about the accessibility of their facilities, and must make a knowledgeable person available to resolve accessibility concerns.



- ✦ The FCC reinforced its commitment to protecting the Video Relay Service (VRS). VRS permits people with hearing or speech disabilities to use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with family, friends, and conduct business.
  
- ✦ Veterans Affairs announces new rules that will make it easier for veterans, with post traumatic stress disorder, to receive disability benefits. The new rules eliminate requirements that veterans document specific events that might have caused PTSD. Under the new rules veterans only have to show that they served in a war zone and in a job consistent with the events that they say caused their conditions.
  
- ✦ The Department of Veterans Affairs announces plans to develop a fully automated, online system for handling veterans' disability compensation claims. The new system will guide veterans through automated, program-assisted menus to capture the information and medical evidence that will drive faster claims decisions. The online system will substantially reduce processing time and increase accuracy while simplifying the way veterans interact with the claims process.
  
- ✦ The U.S. Department of Justice celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 23, 2010.
  
- ✦ The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved legislation (H.R. 5756) that amends the Developmental Disabilities Act to create a national training initiative within the University Centers on Excellence focused on autism research and training.
  
- ✦ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announce \$2.25 billion in grants to states to support community based alternatives to institutional long term care.
  
- ✦ President Obama issues an executive order directing federal agencies to increase efforts to hire 100,000 employees with disabilities over the next five years. The order directs the Office of Personnel Management, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Management and Budget to design strategies within 60 days for recruiting and hiring workers with disabilities.
  
- ✦ The Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy announces the availability of \$2.3 million to fund up to four cooperative agreements ranging from \$500,000 to \$625,000 in support of the Add Us In initiative. Add Us In is designed to increase the ability of businesses owned, operated, and controlled by African Americans; Asian Americans; Latino or Hispanic Americans; members of federally recognized

Tribes; Lesbian; Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people; and women to employ adults with disabilities.

- ✦ President Obama announces the U.S. Department of Justice has issued final regulations revising Title II and III, including ADA Standards for Accessible Design.
- ✦ This year is the fifth anniversary of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month that unites communities to raise awareness of bullying prevention.
- ✦ New rules, by the Department of Veterans Affairs, expand the list of health problems the VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures. The VA is adding Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease, and is expanding lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B cell leukemias.
- ✦ President Obama signs into law the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010. The law ensures that Americans with disabilities can more fully participate in society and enjoy all that new technologies have to offer.
- ✦ The Department of Education announces the award of \$10.9 million for 28 grants under two new federal programs that create opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to attend college. The new federal programs include the Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) and a new coordinating center to support these TPSID grantees.
- ✦ S. 3907, the Debbie Blanchard Access to Health Care for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2010 is introduced to Congress. The act amends the Public Health Service Act to increase awareness of the need for accessible health care facilities and examination rooms for individuals with disabilities.
- ✦ The EEOC issues final regulations implementing the employment provisions (Title II) of the GINA. Title II of GINA prohibits the use of genetic information to make decisions about health insurance and employment, and restricts receiving and sharing of genetic information.

## **International:**

- ✦ The Paralympic Games held in Vancouver, Canada, highlight the contribution sports can make in promoting the inclusion and well-being of people with disabilities.

According to the President of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), Truce Wall, the Paralympic Games advances the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- ✪ The Disability Rights Fund is offering an international grant program to promote the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- ✪ The National Assembly of Vietnam enacts a National Disability Law in June 2010 that guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities for the first time in the nation's history. The legislation strives to be inclusive of persons with disabilities by providing Vietnamese with disabilities equal access in an array of areas, including education, employment, health care, information technology, public places, and transportation.
- ✪ Vladimir Putin, the Prime Minister of Russia, announces that a program is being developed for inclusive education in all of Russia so that individuals with disabilities can attend schools with their peers.

## Conclusion

In reflection, the Lone Star State can be proud of its leaders with disabilities. Both the early pioneers with disabilities who led the Republic and the disability advocates of today shaped our state for all Texans, including persons with disabilities. If we continue the rate of progress seen in the last quarter century, Texans with disabilities will become more equal participants in our great state. We have certainly moved from isolation to participation in education, employment, public service, housing and transportation. The next century will magnify this participation.

**Footnote:** Not all history is positive as noted by events throughout the timeline, however it is necessary to be included in our ongoing mission for equal and full access to lives of independence, self-determination, and productivity. If non-people first language is used or derogatory terms by today's vernacular, it is done in the context of the date and language used at that time and is considered part of the historical record.

**Last revised: August 22, 2011:** *The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities updates this history periodically to denote new found information and to add to its history as events occur.*