

# NDA THE SOURCE

A PUBLICATION OF NATIONAL DEAF ACADEMY **SUMMER 2004**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

JAMES TRESH, PRESIDENT

## 2004 International Conference

Dear Families and Friends:

I hope that each of you is enjoying a wonderful summer!

### 2004 International Conference

In this issue, I have a great deal to share with you! I would like to begin with information about the annual National Deaf Academy Conference. This year's conference, international in scope and held in March, was titled "Mental Health and Deafness Around the Globe."

The Conference, held at the Hilton at the Walt Disney World® Resort, was attended by more than 200 people. We were very proud to provide the participants with unique information and training from Deafness professionals from throughout the world. Speakers from France, England, Belgium, and Holland shared their clinical experiences from their work with Deaf patients in their respective countries. In addition, other speakers now living in the United States, originated from Malaysia, Taiwan and Nepal.



2004 International Conference Poolside Lunch at the Hilton at the Walt Disney World® Resort

We were proud to open this year's conference with a keynote address delivered by Dr. I. King Jordan, President of Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Dr. Jordan, Deaf himself, is the first Deaf President of Gallaudet University. He has held this position for 16 years. Dr. Jordan inspired us with his encouragements to "never give up," when striving to assist Deaf clients with a multitude of special needs. At our banquet, Mr. Andrew Lange, President of the National Association of the Deaf, addressed the congregation by describing a recent position paper in which the National Association of the Deaf officially acknowledges the need for appropriate mental health services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

This year's conference was also a venue for special recognitions. Our welcoming dinner was held on the campus of National Deaf Academy. Dr. McCay Vernon, Chairperson of the NDA Advisory Board, was recognized for his lifetime of dedication to the field of mental health care for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, as well as his

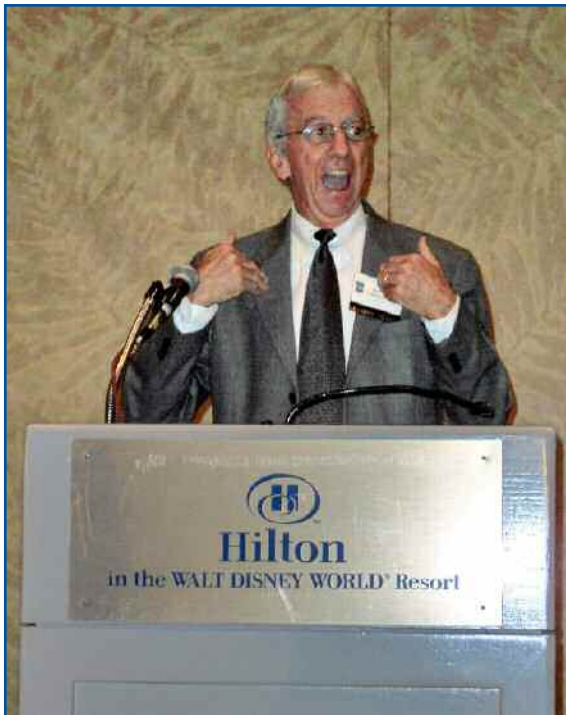
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# 2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



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*Keynote Speaker Dr. I. King Jordan*

ongoing support and encouragement to National Deaf Academy. Dr. Vernon was presented with a portrait, created by a talented artist by the name of Dan Tashlin. Vernon Hall, NDA's new primary therapy building, was dedicated in McCay Vernon's honor at this ceremony. Dr. Vernon was given a plaque to recognize his work as a teacher, a mentor, an author and a clinical psychologist. Dr. Vernon's lifetime efforts have resulted in the enhancement of the quality of care that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people receive in mental health programs. A duplicate plaque has been hung, along with his portrait, in Vernon Hall for all visitors, staff and patients to see and enjoy!

We also used the occasion to recognize two other worthy individuals who have demonstrated personal commitment and dedication in their work with Deaf people. Dr. William McCrone, Professor from the Counseling Department at Gallaudet University, was surprised and honored during the unexpected announcement that National Deaf Academy has established a new Dr. William McCrone Fund at Gallaudet University. Dr. McCrone was presented with a facsimile check, representing the initial donation to Gallaudet to start the **Dr. William McCrone Fund**. The purpose of this Fund will be to offer financial assistance to new and upcoming mental health professionals in Deafness. Graduate students pursuing a mental health relevant degree program can apply for this new scholarship. Dr. McCrone, both an attorney and a professor at Gallaudet University, has made major contributions to the Counseling Department at Gallaudet. Dr. McCrone has written about various topics including legal and ethical issues in mental health and substance abuse/addictions treatment. Dr. McCrone also serves on the National Deaf Academy Advisory Board. He has been an ongoing supporter of NDA's mission and goals.



*Dr. McCay Vernon presenting at the 2004 International Conference*

Our third recognition was the **"Award of Lifetime Achievement."** This award recognized Ms. Gloria Hines, CSC. Gloria has been working and assisting Deaf people, their families and many others for over 40 years. I personally met Gloria back in 1979, when I was a fledgling vocational rehabilitation counselor. Gloria was the first sign language

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BY DR. ALAN M. COHEN, M.D.



*Dear Dr. Cohen:*

*My 11-year-old son is Deaf since birth, and has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and mild Depression. He was evaluated by a Child Psychiatrist, and placed on medications which were helpful with regard to improving his daily functioning in school. The problem, however, is that he's still having conflicts with friends, and is extremely oppositional at home. The doctors say his response to the medication has been excellent, and there's nothing else they can do. Help!...*

*Mr. T. B. Wheeling, Skokie, Ill.*

## Dear Mr. Wheeling:

Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon problem for either Deaf or Hearing children and adolescents who have been successfully placed on psychotropic medications with good results. However, they may often continue to have a great deal of interpersonal difficulties. For better or for worse, we live in a time where medications are being used more and more frequently for a wide range of behavioral problems. In fact, recent newspaper accounts have highlighted the dramatic increase in utilization of these medications across the nation—especially for kids.

Despite research that has repeatedly shown medication to be dramatically more effective when used in conjunction with individual, group and/or family psychotherapy, the rise in the use of medication is disproportionately greater than the rate of psychotherapy utilization. Why? As is the case with so many issues these days, the problem often rests in the financial concerns of the insurance companies who seem to rely on the use of medication as a "quick fix" for children and their struggling families. In an effort to limit their expenditures for treatment, insurance companies tend to steer their subscribers in the direction of fast evaluations and rapid onset

of medication regimens. This is frequently in a manner which is contrary to the way mental health professionals have been trained to assess potential patients.

Parents also need to take some responsibility for this phenomenon, as they will often choose to take what they perceive to be the easier way out by simply going along with medication trials. They intuitively know that other deeper problems exist and that psychotherapy is indicated. Their resistance is sometimes based on bad advice. While at other times economic, time and emotional constraints limit their ability to make full commitments to the best treatment plan available. In short, therapy is very hard work and involves the ability to look at oneself critically and subsequently make difficult changes that children and their families may find too overwhelming.

What can we do about this troubling trend? My recommendation is three-fold:

1. **The public must first be educated regarding the fact that optimum treatment for kids with problems always involves psychotherapy whether medication is indicated or not.**

2. Physicians and other mental health professionals must take a stand on the efficacy of combination therapies. Subsequently they should require that prescriptions for medications such as anti-depressants and/or stimulants like Ritalin, require accompanying psychotherapy or attendance at a community-based support program.
3. The insurance companies must be held accountable for not fully advising their subscribers as to which approach to child psychiatric issues is statistically seen as "best." Then the providers must be required to provide effective and affordable therapeutic options in conjunction with the "quick fix" supposedly offered by medication.

Remember, the use of medication is not the problem here. In fact, progress over the past decade in the appropriate use of psychopharmacological agents with kids has made a huge difference in many of their lives. Rather, the problem lies in not having equal access to psychotherapeutic interventions in combination with these very effective medication regimens.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER



*2004 International Conference, continued from page 2*

interpreter with whom I had ever worked. I had just completed two weeks of intensive training at the Institute on Deafness at Northern Illinois University. I had been taught how to use a sign language interpreter. Upon my return, I had my first Deaf client who used sign language. Gloria responded to my request for an interpreter from a local agency. She made the experience a very positive one for me, as a new Deafness professional trying to “learn the ropes” of Deafness. Gloria was also the first “CODA” (Child of Deaf Adults) I was to meet. From our relationship over the years, I have gained a great deal



*Dr. William McCrone*

of insight into Deafness as a lifestyle, with its many joys and challenges. It was a great honor for me to be able to make this presentation to Gloria after working with her for some 30 years in many different settings, and in two different states. I have to thank Gloria, again here, for her many years of ongoing support, encouragement and mentorship.

Special thanks to Mr. Steve Larew of the Gallaudet Regional Center for his sponsorship. In addition, we extend our appreciation to Florida Hospital for facilitating CEU's for nurses and mental health professionals.

## **Annual Conference 2005**

National Deaf Academy will continue to host a major annual conference with a Mental Health theme in Deafness. The 2005 National Conference will be held in Orlando on March 16, 17 and 18, 2005. The tentative theme of the 2005 conference will be “Beyond the Bandage.” We will focus on issues that many of you face while working with Deaf children with special needs and challenges. The conference will again be educational in nature. It will be designed to assist parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing

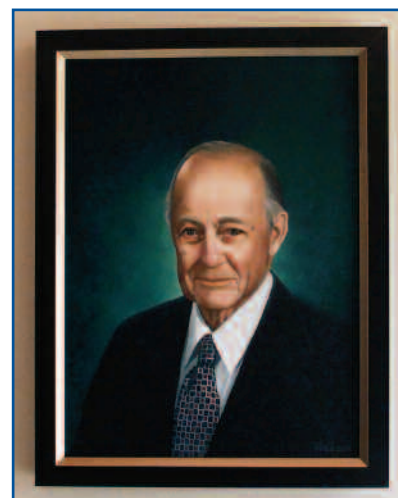
children, teachers, school counselors and psychologists, mental health professionals and all others who care about education, rehabilitation and mental health care of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and adolescents. I invite prospective presenters to send me your proposals, in writing, by Email or postal service. Topics to be presented will include mental health services in mainstream schools, mental health issues in residential schools, Deaf children with Autism, classroom management, bullying and other relevant topics. If you wish to send your proposal by Email, please write to me at: [Jatresh@nationaldeafacademy.com](mailto:Jatresh@nationaldeafacademy.com). For proposal acceptance, I will need an abstract of the presentation, a biographical statement describing the presenter and a draft of the presentation. I promise to respond to those proposals in a timely fashion so that presenters will have sufficient time to prepare. We will host an International Conference again in 2006. Please watch for further details regarding the March 2005 conference in the autumn and winter issues of THE SOURCE.



*Jim Tresh's Opening Comments for the 2004 International Conference*

## **Internships at National Deaf Academy**

As part of our mission to help facilitate growth and development in our field, National Deaf Academy maintains affiliation agreements with several colleges and universities. One of the goals of NDA is to provide quality internship experiences for new professionals



*Portrait of Dr. McCay Vernon created by: Dan Tashlin of The Black Dog Studio*

*2004 International Conference, continued on page 5*

# MEET THE STAFF



## Rebecca Hilding

Director, Charter School at National Deaf Academy

Rebecca Hilding earned her Master's Degree in Deaf Education from Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania. Additionally, Ms. Hilding completed a Fellowship with Lexington School for the Deaf in their parent-infant program. She also participated in the Rural New England Interpreter Preparation Program of Northeastern University. She recently completed her fifteenth year with the Austine School for the Deaf/Vermont Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Inc.

During her tenure with VCDHH, she held several administrative positions. These include positions of Principal, Director of Vocation and Guidance, and most recently, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Regional Programs. Ms. Hilding also has 12 years of teaching experience at all age levels and disability areas within the field of Deaf Education. Her teaching experience began in Pennsylvania Intermediate Units, and continued at the New York State School for the Deaf and then the Delaware School for the Deaf. Ms. Hilding recently moved to Mount Dora to accept the challenge of the position of the Director of the Charter School at National Deaf Academy.



*Entrance to the Charter School at National Deaf Academy*

## 2004 International Conference

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entering the fields of mental health, sign language interpreting, therapeutic recreation and other related fields. NDA has already served as an internship site for the Mental Health Counseling, Social Work and Recreation Therapy Departments at Gallaudet University. We have other affiliation agreements with various college and university programs as well. We hope to give interns, eager to learn new information, a positive overall experience that enriches them in their future clinical or interpreting work. Interns also have the unique opportunity to work with Deaf clients, of all ages, who come here for care from all 50 states. In addition, we now have approximately 60 Deaf staff members who can provide a special level of collegiality.

In this issue of THE SOURCE, you will find Dr. Cohen's article, "Your Kids and Mine." You will also have the opportunity to see photos from the International Conference, and meet an important new staff member.

Until next time, I wish each of you a wonderful Summer.

Sincerely,

James Tresh



19650 U.S. Highway 441  
Mount Dora, FL 32757

352.735.9500 Voice  
352.735.9570 TTY  
800-752-7345 V/TTY-Answering Service  
352.735.4939 Fax  
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## DID YOU KNOW?

National Deaf Academy provides residential mental health care and education to Deaf-Blind individuals!

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## MOVING OR RECENTLY CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS?

Please send us your updated information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

**(For address changes please include both the previous address and the new address.)**

Do you have a friend or colleague who would like to receive this newsletter?

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Elena L. Moore  
C/O National Deaf Academy  
19650 US Hwy 441, Mt. Dora, FL 32757  
Fax: 352.735.9500  
[emoore@nationaldeafacademy.com](mailto:emoore@nationaldeafacademy.com)