

'67 DB Program Teacher Trainee Class

Q: The Teacher Trainee class of --

A: '67.

Q: This is 1967.

A: Deaf-Blind Program.

Q: OK, great. OK, what I'd like to do at this point is to have each person state their name, spell it please, and also if you're comfortable to state when you were born and where and I think that's it to begin.

A: We should do our maiden names because, as well as our married names.

Q: Good.

PETER BINNS: I'm Peter Binns B-i-n-n-s from Sidney Australia. I was born in Sidney on the 12th of November 1928. That all?

Q: That's it.

MARYLOU WILLIAMS-ROWE: I'm Marylou Williams-Rowe. I was born April 20, 1944 in Rochester New York.

KAREN ANDERSEN: And I'm Karen Andersen, A-n-d-e-r-s-e-n. I was born in the Southern part of Denmark on December the 24th, 1941.

LORRAINE JONES-SPENCINER: My name is Loraine Jones-Spenciner. My first name is L-o-r-a-i-n-e and my last name is S-p-e-n-c-i-n-e-r. I was born in Farmington Maine which is in the central part of the state on February 21, 1944.

Q: Great. Well thank you all for agreeing to be part of this oral history project. I'd like to begin, and again, just speak when you're comfortable and then we'll try to keep it one at a time. What years were you here at the Perkins Teacher Training Program?

LJS: 1967, we started in the summer of '67; '66, and then we went through to the following summer all the way through (laughter)

Q: And this would be I guess individually. What made you choose the Perkins Program?

PB: We were chosen. In Australia, we were, the position was advertised. We were interviewed and I was like enough to get the position because we were starting a deaf-blind unit in Australia.

Q: Oh.

PB: And I was the third person to be chosen to come to Perkins.

MWR: I'm Mary Lou, well, R-o-w-e, I forgot to do that. I saw the movie "The Miracle Worker" when I was a sophomore in college, did not know what I wanted to do, but I saw that movie and it changed my life, and I applied to Perkins and we had a full ride scholarship. We were very fortunate.

PB: Can I comment? My Education Department paid my salary. The Royal New South Wales Institute for Deaf and Blind Children paid for me to come to Perkins and paid me a living allowance while I was here, and my airfare and all that sort of thing.

KA: And now Karen is speaking, my head master of the school for the deaf where we were about to start a deaf-blind program asked me if I would go and they had sent one Dane already, his name was [Lars Goulair] and I went the year after him and the two of us were supposed to build [Abadane's] Deaf-Blind Department and Dr. Waterhouse and Ben Smith came to visit and interviewed me and I guess okayed me and I too was paid a salary while I was here, and I got a grant from American Field Service and a small grant from American Women's Club in Denmark to pay for my ticket.

Q: Wow.

LJS: This is Loraine, and I had just finished my under graduate work in psychology and I heard about this training program and I really didn't know very much at all about people who were deaf-blind, so I came to Boston and talked with the Director, Joe Hoff at the time, and he introduced me to a young woman whose name was Gale --

KA: [Sabonitis}.

LJS: Who had been involved in the Deaf-Blind Program because she herself was deaf, deaf and blind and I remembered meeting Gale and I was really quite fascinated that, that Gale was, had so much personality and, and was such an interesting individual, and I was absolutely fascinated and challenged to think about people with those kinds of disabilities and what might help them learn and achieve and so when I came back to the office and Mr. Hoff asked if I were interested, I, I said yes, I think I am.

Q: So what can you say about the first time that you all met?

MWR: We met over in, what was that hall over there, the boys part.

KA: (whispering) I'm Marylou.

MWR: I'm Marylou. What was that, on the other side of the close.

Q: It's not termed that...

PB: I think we met in Elliott Cottage, I'm not sure.

MWR: No, it was on the Boys, over there.

PB: That is.

MWR: And we stayed there, remember that, for the summer session? Were you guys here for the summer session? I know we were.

PB: We got here in, we got here in August.

MWR: Yeah. Now I thought, now I thought we had an early summer session because we took courses.

LJS: I came late.

KA: Can I.

MWR: Oh because you had been to Europe.

LJS: No.

MWR: Yes. We, we all took classes initially before the program started. We were here before... We were here before the kids, maybe you guys weren't.

PB: Well I got here in kind of arrived soon after, didn't you?

KA: Yes, I had been to Los Angeles during the John Tracy Clinic course for six weeks prior to coming here, so I didn't have to take the summer courses together with you.

MWR: And you didn't either. I was the only one. Well, I know the other kids were but.

Q: You must have been with the trainees in the Blind Program maybe?

MWR: Yeah. Yeah. I think they had an orientation. I know we did because I remember it was two summers we had to go because the last summer we went... I'm Marylou. The last summer we went was we had to take the course at Boston College, statistics course, and you guys didn't have to do that either.

PB: No, we went straight home after the finish of the Deaf-Blind course. We had already had deaf training.

Q: A-hmm.

MWR: But we were getting our, our Masters Degree from Boston college at that time, so they had to make sure that we had all the required courses.

LJS: I think I came a little later and everybody was here and I know I was quite surprised to find such an International group. I hadn't expected that. That was nice to see that.

Q: Who else was as part of the group?

MWR: There were nine of us, no, ten of us initially. Marylou again. Peter, Karen, Loraine, myself, Storm Brown, Jerry Brown, Danny McCarthy.

LJS: Tom.

MWR: Tom Rogerson.

PB: From New Zealand.

MWR: From New Zealand, Janet [Biscanti], and one guy, what was his name?

KA And LJS: David.

MWR: David.

PB: David Grice.

MWR: And he didn't stay in the program long.

Q: Great. Just need, and I'm just going to check the tape because. OK, he didn't stay in the program very long?

MWR: No. He was dodging the draft.

Q: There we go. OK, next question that I have is what's the most memoral, memorable event or experience from your time at Perkins?

(laughter)

MWR: The whole year. The whole year was incredible. It was very intense training I thought. It was 24/7. We lived on campus. We lived, I was in the house in May Cottage. I had Gale that I was responsible for for each meal. We had to go to chapel. We would split the kids up, I think it was just Gale, and weren't there just two deaf-blind girls? I can't remember that.

LJS: No, I don't.

MWR: And we would split our time between the two girls. I don't know, I think our experience as a team, we found out that we were like a family. We had each other to support, to be with and we were together all the time.

PB: There's a big, it was a completely different, a completely new experience, especially for an Australian coming through to the states. I can't tell you well I want to just something the most memorable classes, but you're talking about going to chapel. We were rostered from time to time to interpret for the deaf-blind kids. Occasionally I have to have Isaac [Obie] and Billy [Begay], all at the one time, and I used to complain about my, not my fingers spelling but my spelling. (laughter) No, the whole experiences, and there were so many, it would be impossible to tell you them all, and I can't think of, I might think of one every now and then but no, it was great.

KA: To me, coming from a school for the deaf, it was a very giving experience to live with blind children 24 hours. I think to me that was the most important part of the whole learning program; that was to live with children, youngsters who had poor eye vision and, well, trying to dig more and more into their concept of what is the world like when you are deaf-blind, and there were some very, well, capable deaf-blind students that you could have a conversation with and I remember one time I had duty with Isaac [Obie] who was very good, and of course he would complain about my way of spelling because my English is not very good, and he had found himself a girlfriend, and he wanted me to take him to Boston and find a ring for this girlfriend which was very nice, and I learned a lot from what it's like to be blind. To go to a jewelry shop and where we would have a whole box of rings and we would just look and see, this is interesting, this is nice. We had to go over them all and there were hundreds. (laughter from all) And he wanted to see the whole variety and then he wanted to go back and check this, that or the other. I think we were there for a whole day, (laughter) and they were getting a little bit impatient with us and he ended up not buying a ring at all.

PB: Do you know Isaac?

Q: Yes.

PB: Oh.

KA: A-hmm. That was really an experience to me to on my own body to feel how much time a blind person needs in order to choose something. But my best learning experience was really not necessarily the courses but living with blind youngsters. I was in Fisher Cottage, and I would say good night and turn off the light and they would still be reading under the blanket. (laughter) Oh they were teasing us. It was so much fun. (laughter) They had a good time with us ignorant students.

LJS: This is Loraine, and, and I too think that the most valuable experience other than being together, our group being together, was that 24/7, and I lived in Bradlee which was the youngest group and I remember so clearly sitting down at the table and because the children were just learning to eat, we had to be sure that we had orientated the plate correctly and we talked about the clock. That was all new to me of course, and so each meal, we set that up so that their plate was orientated correctly, and then in the evening, we would read stories to them and tuck them in bed and it was, we really saw a part of working with kids that we don't really see, you know, just a regular school program. And then on the weekends, of course we shared duties and one of my fondest memories is just loading this whole group of kids in a big old station wagon, it was a big old station wagons that they used to have and taking them up on the North Shore and we went to the beach. I don't know if it was Marblehead or one of the towns up there, and the kids loved. They loved walking along the beach and that was so much fun.

MWR: Marylou again. One of the things when we had weekend duty, we didn't want to stay here. We had been on this campus too long. (laughter) And we needed a break, and we had a few kids, we would take them where ever we could. I had a couple experiences that I thought were fun. First of all, Peter and I one winter decided to take the kids tobogganing and you tell people you take kids tobogganing and they're blind and they go what? You know we'd take them, push them down the hill. We were safe. We knew what, we knew there were no trees. The kids trusted us. That was a beauty. There was a wonderful relationship there. And then I took the... I had the girls, so...

PB: Excuse me, while we were tobogganing, I ended up with solid ice. (laughter)

MWR: It was very bitter cold, and then I took a group one time down to Old Ironsides. Now I was extremely naive as a young woman, extremely and I thought well these girls, we were

greeted by a sailor and he was talking about the buttons on his pants that they came across here and down here and there were 13 representing the states. You know where this is going, don't you? (laughter) And I said to him...

PB: Gotten all of the buttons.

MWR: And I said to him each one, and I was naive, I really was, and I said OK, now here's, girls let's, I said do you mind, and we felt where the buttons were on each of those little girls that I took with me. Years later I thought oh that poor man. (laughter)

PB: Probably loved to bring them (laughter).

Q: How about the staff members. Any memorable staff members that you?

PB: All together.

ALL PARTICIPANTS: Rose Vivian. Yeah, Mrs. Vivian.

Q: OK.

MWR: She was incredible.

PB: A lot of them, yes, but Rose, here I go again, get a bit emotional (inaudible). She was wonderful. A lot of them were wonderful, but we loved Rose.

Q: Tell me a bit more about Rose and, and what.

PB: She was outgoing, friendly, helpful, what else.

MWR: She was like a mother figure.

PB: Yes she was.

MWR: She'd put you in your place if you were bad. She'd help you if she could and she just, she was our mentor.

PB: She took us, she was one of the leaders on the field trip to Washington, and a non present Danny had some sort of fit and went up over the inside of the cabin, and I was driving on the wrong side of the road.

MWR: Oh it's the right side Peter. (laughter)

PB: And so Rose wove this coat out the window and she told us that's how people knew you were in distress. We're stopped by the side of the turnpike and we hardly drawn a breath and the police were there, which not stop on the wrong side of the turnpike, we got him to the hospital, he survived, we went and had a wonderful trip and she was one of the main reasons.

LJS: She also though I think really stood out for me in terms of her lovely of expertise.

PB: Yes.

LJS: I think she mainly supervised and consulting with the teachers, and I know that when she would come up and she would talk with you when you were trying some new things with the kids, when she talked about them, I really felt that she had such a body of knowledge and experience and she was a wonderful mentor to, to have.

KA: Karen. To me, she was one of the few staff members who knew that it wasn't all that easy to come from a non speaking, non English speaking country. She really showed big, big insight. Yes, I have, I was very fond of her and she meant a lot to me.

PB: Well I had a little trouble with my English because I speak English. (laughter) I had a little, a little bit of trouble, not a lot, but the biggest trouble I had was keeping my Australian accent because we have to use American pronunciation teaching the deaf kids, but it was, that was a great experience too.

LJS: It's funny when you talk about that Peter because one of our courses was a course in sounds and and writing the sound out correctly, and I didn't realize it at the time but how very difficult that must have been for you and for Karen and really only this weekend.

PB: I must admit I had a bias against the American accent, I don't mind telling you, but nothing personal. (laughter) But one of the funniest instances using words in the right place. I was reading "Wind in the Willows" to the boys in Potter Cottage and I had to do this twice. I got to the place where [Rattie] and Molly were coming back from somewhere, and one of them fell over and the other said to the other, you silly ass. Oh! Mr. Binns said a swear! I said that's not, ass is a donkey. The next night, I had to repeat it and one boy said, on! Mr. Binns said a swear and all the boys said he didn't, that's a donkey. (laughter)

Q: Any other staff members?

MWR: I think Mr. Hoff. I'm sorry, but the speech class, even though I'm an American, I'm from Western New York, and Loraine is from Maine.

PB: He was from the mid West.

MWR: Yeah, we didn't speak the same way as he did, and if we didn't have it written the way he said it, we were wrong, and that's not right because no matter where you go, you're going to be teaching in your language. I mean I can't talk in the accent that he wanted us to do, so I resented that.

PB: He told us we were, he was going to put that little old R right back where it belonged. (laughter) And that's one sound we don't use very much, the little old R right back where, you know, we don't pronounce the R like as most heavily as most Americans do.

LJS: Nor do we in New England.

PB: Not there.

LJS: We always drop that R.

MWR: Oh, and then we had a speech teacher. Loraine, I don't know if you guys did, but Loraine and I did. We called her hot lips (laughter) because over enunciated everything that she said and so we called her hot lips, and Dr. Waterhouse, we nicknamed him too. Our first time he had us over for tea and Anne who was Tom's wife from New Zealand and I decided to name him Dr. Cookie. Would you like a cookie? (laughter) So he was Dr. Cookie to our group. (laughter) And we loved him dearly.

PB: Other teachers.

KA: This was Marylou speaking. (laughter)

PB: Dr. [Belbone]. He was the psychologist and all the children's problems were from were they properly toilet trained. (laughter) And I said to Dr. [Belbone], please, I can't believe that everything goes back to toilet training. (laughter)

KA: Karen. This, I don't think he was the psychologist. Wasn't he the medical doctor Peter? I'm sure he was.

PB: I thought psychologist.

MWR: Don't ask me.

KA: That was Carl Davis who was in charge of the Psychology Department.

MWR: Yeah.

PB: Yes.

KA: I'm sure he was the medical doctor.

PB: But he certainly came after this psychological reason here.

KA: Oh yes, oh yes, and we call him Dr. Baloney! (laughter)

MWR: See, there's a line here going through this whole group, and the unity.

KA: I had quite a bit to do with him because I caught mononucleosis when I was here.

PB: That's right too.

MWR: That's right.

KA: And I was kept in isolation and they put my food on a tray outside my door and I had to stay in that crummy room, no radio, no television, nothing but textbooks. (laughter) And I was not allowed to leave that room. I was in some kind of isolation. I'd never heard about this mononucleosis.

PB: Polish disease, kissing disease.

KA: Yeah, kissing disease. Wonder where I got it from, yeah, but nobody else I knew was sick so it could have been from anything, but that was terrible for me. That was almost like sensory deprivation, no nothing to relax with. I don't remember how, how long I was confined to my room, but that they would put my food on a tray and knock on the door, meal is served.

MWR: You're a prisoner.

KA: I was almost a prisoner. Yeah. So that's why Dr. Baloney was a special friend for me. (laughter)

PB: There must have been others, who were they?

MWR: Mrs. Stenquist.

KA: Oh.

PB: Mrs. Stenquist, yes.

MWR: And Nan (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

PB: You know her, do you?

KA: She was dear.

MWR: Nan Robins.

KA: Chris Castro.

MWR: Oh, I loved her.

KA: Peggy [Than]. Mal [Bos], or something. Dotty Walsh.

PB: Yes, yes.

KA: Yeah.

PB: She's the one we stayed with over the holiday down on the (inaudible).

KA: That's right, and a beautiful girl, tall girl with a ponytail, she taught Debbie [Brummet], I think she was Kathy something. She had a hard time with Debbie [Brummet].

PB: One of the saddest occasions was was one of the, I don't know what, whether she was a teacher or secretary and I can't remember her name, but she committed suicide. We came in one morning and she'd, I don't know what or how she did it, but she had killed herself in her flat, apartment. Do you remember what, what she was?

KA: I, I have a picture of her but I don't remember her name.

Q: What was the deaf-blind program like in those days? You visited while you were here, so can you talk a little bit about what it was like then and how it looks different today or...

PB: Well the children are not, the children are different not because they're different children but because the handicaps.

MWR: And the needs are different.

PB: Needs are so different, yes.

KA: Karen. I remember a very to me strict policy about the children being in on a two-year trial period and if they didn't succeed in language skills, they were dismissed from the program, and Peter and I taught a class, we shared a class, and the little girl we had, her name was Laurie, and I heard later that she had been not accepted into the program. I think if the standards

required at the time we were here were implied today, there would be less than five deaf-blind children in the program. They have widened the definition of deaf-blindness to be a different group. Laurie would have been one of their top students and back then, she was expelled and we didn't use much sign language. It was a manual, it was a [Teralmet] method, and we sneaked and we sneaked and picture grams and pictures and we would sneak in a few natural gestures, but that wasn't really good policy.

LJS: I remember the children when we would work with some of the kids in the deaf-blind program, most of the children had, I don't think any of the children actually had any physical disabilities. That was really purely a you know a deaf or deaf and blindness.

PB: Can I interrupt, what do you mean by a physical disability, like.

LJS: Cerebral palsy.

MWR: There was somebody that had braces.

KA: Stevie [Lershman].

PB: He had this terrible.

KA: He had a skin disease.

PB: And, well Laurie had some movement problems.

KA: No!

PB: Didn't she?

KA: I think she was just.

PB: Angular.

KA: Yeah.

PB: Not, I don't mean twisted.

KA: No. But.

LJS: But some of the problems.

KA: But there was nobody in a wheelchair or with crutches.

LJS: Some of the metoric problems I think that we were seeing was that just a lack of opportunity to, to explore and, you know, do the natural crawling. There was a very interesting research actually with of how children who were deaf and blind develop a little bit differently than, than kids who are typically developing. But yesterday, the children I think that we saw really were, were kids that we traditionally would call children of multiple disability. You know certainly there's a cognitive overlay with the kids that we saw and the, the materials were very different, lots and lots of materials for more sensory experiences, whereas the experiences that we were giving the children back then were really language communication and, and a lot of pre academic, a lot of, you know, early mathematics and, I don't remember who, we did some, some reading, some beginning Braille here with the children, and so it's really...

PB: If Debbie [Brummet] was a Brailier, wasn't she?

KA: Yes, she was, she was totally blind.

MWR: Yeah, we never, as I said, we never did signing at all because, this is Marylou by the way. It just was not permitted, and I saw yesterday a lot of signing, I'm going wow! Different approach. I like that. I like that they use that. In the same token, I was thinking this morning, we did a field trip and I can't remember to what hospital it was in Boston, but we would see children that were deaf-blind and multiply handicapped that now are the children that you're teaching, and I thought that was an interesting thing that we wouldn't have had that type of child when we were in training.

LJS: The other part I think that's really different is there's more of a multidisciplinary that is here today, certainly having a nurse as part of the program, that's a very nice piece, and yesterday an OT and PT and speech, and I don't remember any, anybody from Allied Health here when we were here, any therapists at all. If we did any motor, it was more adaptive physical additive.

MWR: Right.

LJS: Things like that.

MWR: I, yesterday when we... Marylou, when we went into the Keller Building, Sullivan Keller, whatever it's called now, I was in shock. I can remember it being so big, and I went in and I went holy macro, this is really small, and so so different than when we were there.

Q: Is that where you taught?

MWR: We taught there, yes, every, all our classes. Not only did we teach there but our classes that we had from instructors were there. We were the first class from Boston College and the

first semester we had no classes off campus, and by second semester we said we need to go off campus. (laughter) We just need to get away for at least an hour or two. I mean we were poor students. We were, we were here all the time. If a teacher was sick, we became a sub, not paid. That's OK, it was part of our training. I don't regret any of that. I think it made us better teachers.

PB: Wasn't there some dispute I'll call it, or change over from BU to BC at the time we came here? That's just a little point.

MWR: Yeah.

Q: I thought you were BC.

MWR: We were the first BC class.

Q: OK.

LJS: One of the nice parts that I think we've been talking about this last couple days but one of the very nice parts of this program was towards the end, we had a wonderful tour of facilities beginning at Clark School for the Deaf. We went in two vehicles out there, and then we went to, to Hartford to the American School for the Deaf and down to New York...

PB: That's where I learned this.

LJS: That's where you... That's a very important sign.

MWR: Yes it is.

LJS: (laughter).

MWR: Yes it is.

LJS: And then to New York.

MWR: New York Institute.

LJS: To the New York Institute and then finally to Washington.

PB: We went to the school in...

MWR: There was New Jersey.

LJS: New Jersey, oh in New Jersey. The New Jersey School for the Deaf.

PB: We went to a school in New York as well.

KA: Yes.

MWR: Oh P S something or other.

PB: Oh well, yes, but I can't, I now that, I remember going to that school for some reason.

MWR: I know we didn't go to Lexington.

PB: No.

MWR: I know we didn't go out on the Island so it had to be PS something or other.

KA: It was.

PB: We went to.

KA: We went to Gallaudet.

MWR: Gallaudet.

PB: We went to Maryland School for the Deaf.

KA: Gallaudet College.

MWR: In Maryland, did we...

PB: Didn't we go to Maryland School for the Deaf?

MWR: No, I think it was in Jersey.

PB: It might have been New Jersey.

LJS: But the fact that you know we learned about the program here and then had a chance to go and to visit these other places, and even while we were here too, we went to the Randolph School for the Deaf.

MWR: We did student teaching at Randolph.

LJS: Yeah. So that was a very...

MWR: And we also did another school, Horseman, we did Horseman.

LJS: That's right.

MWR: And I think we did Clark too.

LJS: We did go to Clark.

KA: Yes. Yes.

MWR: Yeah, we had a really good tour of all the schools which I thought was, it gave us a broader view.

LJS: And especially because some of them had a different philosophical orientation, and that was very nice to have that grounding; so when we left here, we had a sense not just of this program but the other programs.

MWR: And I want to say when we left here I think we were pretty, we felt pretty good as teachers; that if we could teach here, we could teach anywhere. I think we were well trained.

Q: That's a good segue into my next question, and that's what happened when you left? What did you all do? (laughter)

PB: Well Karen and I went back to Europe. We spent a few days in England. My brother and his wife had just moved to England to work with his public energy commission. Then we went our separate ways. Karen went home to Denmark. I went for a few days to Sidney (inaudible) in Holland and then I went down to Switzerland to visit some friends and I went home to the founding of what was going to be the Australian National School for the Deaf-Blind similar to the Deaf-Blind unit here, and two people came over after me. Mary Kennedy and, yes, I can't remember his name at the moment. They came over and just as an aside. They were bonded when they came over. They had to sign a bond to come here. I didn't. But I went back and I was the third, the two that had done the first training, we took an American back with them, I can't remember her name either. So there were three of them, then four of us, then five. We founded the new unit. We did training and of new students, new trainees and they came in, but Rubella had disappeared, RLF was disappearing, so after I, I left the deaf-blind after a few years, then went into the actual Institute which is a private owned buildings, the Department of Education owned the school, and I took on the supervisor of residences. Gave that up for a while and fell back into what I've been doing now, itinerant support teacher of the blind. And that started and I finished just this year, I've been teaching for 46 years.

MWR: My story's a lot different. After we went to Randolph, I fell in love with preschoolers, deaf children. I'm Marylou, and my first job was with preschoolers out in Oklahoma, deaf children, and then I came back to New York State which I did most of my, rest of my teaching. But I bounced around from every level possible from an oral program I started. I went to NTID, picked up signing, I taught at the state university of New York at [Genecio], under grad and graduate students. I went to the School for the Deaf in Rome, New York, and I was there my longest time, five years, and I taught junior high reading which I absolutely loved, that level, they're just cool kids. I married my husband and we moved to New York City and I started the [Bosies] program and that's their Columbia County. No, no, no, no. I did that first. Then went to New York, worked at St. Joseph School for the Deaf with five teenagers that they told me were language delayed. One was retarded, one was, they were all Hispanic, they came from a Hispanic background, so they have Spanish at home, English in the school system and sign language. They were pretty cool kids. At that time, IEPs were just coming out, and I had one boy that was very large, probably 6 ft 3, and at that time 13, 14 years old. The desk sat on him instead of. (laughter) But he was extremely talented and I could not reach that talent. He was very artistic. Our art teacher was not a good art teacher but the graphic artist was excellent, and I said, please, please, I beg you to teach him. So she did and he did two paintings that were copies of Van Goghs that you would have thought were Van Goghs. So that was something I had to put in his IEP. Please continue this artwork because he was so talented. I have to tell this story because I think it's cute. I taught the kids the subway system. I did a lot of hands on because these kids were really, really language delayed so they needed home skills and survival skills. So I taught them the subway system of New York, and we were to go from St. Joseph to Lexington the next year, this class, so our whole group got together, went over there and two of my boys were missing; and up they come walking up the street. They had taken the subway and the nuns told them to go home. I was furious, but in this story, they learned. That was the important thing. From St. Joseph's, I then became an itinerant teacher up in West Chester County. I had a fourth grader and a girl that eventually graduated from high school and Regent's diploma, is now a teacher in New York City, profoundly deaf. And then I moved to California with my husband and I could not find a job. I did subbing at UCLA in a parent infant program so I've had from the babies all the way up through college, and my husband said I cried for six months because I couldn't find a job, and then I found I could go hiking, I'm now a quilter, so I do all sorts of fun things in my life.

KA: And I'm Karen. I returned to Denmark and together with our school there, that I mentioned earlier, we started the Daily's National Deaf-Blind Program; starting off with two children, that was natural, that was born within the school district, so we had to serve them. But we got children and an applications from all over Denmark, and we have the philosophy that they should, if possible, they should go home every weekend no matter where they lived, be it on

in Ireland or in Copenhagen, so we had to build up a whole traffic system, transport system for these children. And the cottages were closed Friday, Saturday, Sunday, so we often had to take the children home to stay with us because while the ferry, it was too icy, couldn't sail and this, that and the other. But anyhow, we built up that department and it grew very very fast, and where you in Australia was two, three, five, we were two, and last decided to go back to teach at Perkins. So from being two, we were just one, and I stayed in as head of the department for 15 years, and built up a good program, built up a good infant program with five home visiting teachers. We, I was involved in getting the European teacher training program. Dr. Jean Kenmore from the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, she was stationed in Paris, and she had the money and the will, will power. Dr. [Yahn Fandike] from Holland had good teachers and good references and university backing, and I was kind of on the sideline and European Teacher Training College was formed and given at (inaudible) (inaudible) and Dr. [Fandike] was the leader of that and I was lecturing on and off when he went to [Carniva]. (laughter) And had his Geneva, I went down and was lecturer. So we had a good relationship, and I served on the Nordic Honor Working Committee under the Nordic Council for many years, and we built up a training program for the Scandinavian countries and that still runs. They should take their basic deaf-blind training and language skills in their home country and then they would be offered a six weeks training course coming from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark, and that still runs and it's also a research post and I served on that committee and had that going; and while I was very much the assessment teacher, I studied psychology and worked as a psychologist so I was very much involved in diagnosing the very young ones. And then I, in, I also arranged, was arranging the International Conference in Hanover in 1980, served on the Planning Committee. So I had a chance to meet lots of deaf-blind colleagues form all over the world. We also started the first European Newsletter called CONTACT, and had four issues put out and the idea was that the British should take over after us. We had committed ourselves to get it started and just have it for a year, but they never picked up. Miss Shields and Mike Meyers were going to continue but they didn't.

PB: Condo Vahall.

KA: Condo Vohall and the British Deaf-Blind Program. After 15 years, I took a position at the Teachers University and taught special education, speech therapy, courses for teachers who were going to work with the blind and so on, and stayed with that for 16 year. And then I went back to the Deaf-Blind Department for one and a half years, and then I had to retire due to health reasons and that was the biggest sorrow in my life.

LJS: Well when I left Perkins, my first goal was to get married, which I did that summer and we moved to New Jersey and actually while I was still here at Perkins, they had the person from

the New Jersey Commission for the Blind come; again it was I think part of thinking about opportunities once you leave Perkins, and so that was a wonderful connection for me because I interviewed and then was employed as an itinerant teacher for the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and I worked there for three years in North Western New Jersey. Had about 30 children on my caseload and there were, of course all the children were so interesting. There was one little girl that I remember from a rural area in Northern New Jersey who, who was blind and she was entering kindergarten in her public school and of course she was the only child who's blind in her school, and I was looking very forward to that. I thought that would be interesting. The teachers were very excited about her coming and I would be, we would talk a little bit about maybe some of the needs and some ways that they could help her, and I was excited about teaching her Braille because, you know, coming from Perkins, I knew how to, how to teach Braille. And then I learned that they were using a new system of reading which I can't recall the name of that, but it was, it didn't stick around too long for a method of teaching reading. But it was a phonetic approach and I couldn't translate the Braille into this because she needed to, to learn to read Braille correctly.

PB: What was it called?

LJS: Do you remember that Peter?

PB: Pitman. It might have been one of the, the Pitman, they used like a C and an H together.

LJS: Yes.

PB: To get a, I think it was called the Pitman something.

LJS: I think you're right.

PB: It was very good if you could see it.

LJS: It was, it supposedly it was very good for sighted kids.

PB: Yes, that's funny you couldn't Braille it.

LJS: I couldn't Braille it. So anyway, we, we managed and so that meant that I needed to go to her school on a daily basis to help her with her Braille reading and writing while the other children were learning reading this way. And she, she just was the cutest kid. She had so much spunk and I had a little, a little Volkswagen Beetle and I remember that sometimes I would have to take her home and she would want to have her hand on the stick to learn how to shift it. (laughter). So we had such a great time. And I worked for the Commission for the Blind for

about three years. During that time, we had another person and myself who was also interested in kids who are deaf-blind, had a camp program up in, in one of the little areas in the mountains there, it was Camp Marcella, and we brought children who were deaf-blind for about a week. The commission, the commission gave us money to plan it and I remember the parents were, they seemed to be very grateful that time because there really wasn't much respite during that time. And we stayed at the camp so much, it was kind of set up much like our experience here at Perkins. And from there I, we moved to lower New York state and I worked for [Bosies] as an itinerant teacher for a few years and then we, we moved back to Maine and I was hoping to stay in the field, but unfortunately there was only one position in the state and that position was filled. So I kind of broadened my areas and I went into more mild disabilities or more mild MR. and learning disabilities and I taught in the public schools for a while and then I decided to go back to school, went back to Boston College in their PhD program and I completed my course work down here and then while I was working on my dissertation, I was employed by the Department of Education in Maine and, as a consultant, and stayed there for a little while; and then I took a position at the university where I am now professor of special education, and one of my students actually came back to Boston College and studied vision and she's currently working in Maine as an itinerant teacher. So.

Q: Very successful class.

MWR: I have a question. Didn't you feel, I did, that because of our education, doors were opened for us?

LJS: Absolutely.

MWR: Yeah.

LJS: That's a really key point.

Pit's that American impression.

MWR: Yes, definitely. And no matter where I went, oh you're a Perkins graduate, OK, we'll hire you. I never had a problem finding a job if the job was there.

LJS: No, there were so many opportunities.

MWR: Yeah.

LJS: Yeah, it was very very nice.

MWR: Yeah. It really was.

Q: OK. This one is what do you know about Perkins that would surprising to people?

PB: Well, in Australia, the fact that Perkins was then considered the be all and end all. I say then because I'm not prepared to comment now because I'm not, wouldn't know enough. It was the be all and end all and Perkins was quite, is the place we had gone to and wow!

MWR: That's it.

PB: And unfortunately, as I said, the deaf-blind program fizzled out but we never lost our contact with Perkins. We never lost contact with a lot of the people here. Some of them I haven't kept as much contact with as others, but am I answering the question?

Q: That's fine. (laughter).

MWR: You're answering the question Peter.

PB: I came back for a visit in 1973 on my way to, (inaudible) home, it must have been part of that course, what was it, and I spent six weeks in at the Social (inaudible), the school for the deaf in.

KA: (inaudible) for (inaudible).

PB: Yeah, (inaudible) for (inaudible), and so I had a few days here. I stayed with Sally and Ken Stuckey and I felt quite at home when I came back to this lovely coming back.

MWR: As I said before, I felt that Perkins was a Harvard in its field when we were here. It was the best not only in the country but in the world for training, and I felt that I got a very good, got a good background in training. Today I don't know that much about Perkins. We came back in '92 for a 25th reunion and I don't remember a lot of that reunion, I don't know why. I think I was so excited. (laughter). Do you think? (laughter) This time around, I was, I'm surprised it's still here because of the population change. I think we all realize that the student, we had no longer exists because they've been mainstreamed which Loraine and I became part of that mainstream process with our [Bosies] program. I'm pleased to see the children that you're, you're servicing and my only concern is what happens after 22, that bothers me that there's not a placement for them or continuation.

PB: That wasn't the one when we were here?

MWR: Pardon me?

PB: Was the post 22 program for the...

MWR: Most of those kids were able to go on except for like Gale. Gale's in a nursing home. That bothers me because she was an intelligent individual and to see that person now just being in a nursing home really bothers me. It's not fair. It's not fair to them.

KA: Karen speaking. I don't think Perkins is that much known in Denmark today, but I couldn't tell for sure since I've left the field. We've been much more into, we haven't sent other people to train at Perkins. We are more into the European education or the Nordic education, and it has been a bit disappointing to see when you make reading lists for students that actually there has been so little published from Perkins, like research projects that would be sure to be put on any deaf-blind trainee's reading lists. I've been very surprised that so little has been produced or printed or done in terms of research or good text books or good documentation because Perkins really has the capacity, the money and a whole variety of different children. It would have been such a help except for Man Robins little booklets that are quite old, and I think Mrs. Stenquist wrote a book on Leonard Dowdy and his wife. Except for that, I don't know if there are any publications that would be Internationally known and have the academic level of being put on a reference list, and that's one of the reasons why Perkins name may fade. I don't think Perkins is known in Denmark.

Q: I'll say stuff when we finish, but I won't do it now, it's probably take.

LJS: Well I mean I think Karen's point is so important, and, excuse me, even maybe more so today, because of the challenges that the children present here and if some of those strategies that the teachers are finding that work and that are effective with kids to publish that information, to publish that these are evidence based practices, even if it were a single case study approach, would be such a contribution to the field, and when I, you know, when I read journals here in the states, I don't ever receive this kind of, of work coming out of Perkins. It doesn't, actually there's not an awful lot coming out at all, and I think that that could be very helpful. I also don't think that in the schools that outside of this state that they understand that there's technical assistance available from Perkins, and I'm not sure where does that disconnect is. That would surprise people that they knew what was happening here today I think.

Q: What would you like to tell us that I didn't ask you?

LJS: Well I'll just start in. I think it's been wonderful for us to be able to come here and have a place like this, a department which it's such a place to gather and chat and reconnect and certainly very reasonable to do that.

PB: It would have been very difficult for us to come if this wasn't available.

MWR: And Suzanne has been wonderful.

PB: She has, absolutely marvelous.

LJS: And I think that the tours yesterday were just, I found them fascinating and wonderful to have a chance to see some of the classrooms, to see what the teachers are doing there, and we very much appreciate that.

MWR: I felt honored to have the tours that they did yesterday that Suzanne had set that up for us. It was enlightening to me being out of the field for a number of years, but my heart still, my heart will always be at Perkins.

PB: A-hmm.

MWR: This group, I don't think, I don't know if there's another group like us, but we are extremely close to each other, as I said to Tom's daughter who is in New Zealand, he could make it because he ended up going home with a quadruple bypass. I said for 40 years, we've managed to stay together and most of those 40 years there was not a computer to communicate with. I think that's pretty, that says a lot about this group and how much we mean to each other, and I appreciate the fact that we are allowed to stay here, and I thank you all.

KA: I'll second that.

MWR: OK, yes. Now bring out the wine. (laughter)

Q: So we stop? Is that?

PB: No, no.

Q: OK.

PB: Thank you very much, it's been great.

MWR: Yes.

KA: Thank you.

PB: We've had marvelous talks, we've brought up all sorts of subjects, not many that we couldn't repeat here, but I was surprised when I got the message via Marylou from you and I thought oh this is great because oral history is so important in every area, so thank you, the three of you, and thank you Perkins.

Q: OK.

MWR: Thank you for making us history.

Q: Absolutely. Great.

PB: I remember back in the 1950s before I can became anywhere interested in teaching, I was working in one of our more up market furniture stores, and next door, the old fashioned newsreel theatres, and Helen Keller came to visit Australia so at lunch time, I went out, went to the newsroom theatre, went round the block and came back and went to the newsreel theatre to watch Helen Keller.

MWR: Cool.

PB: That was, because she, even at school and when I was a little boy at school, Helen Keller was one of our icons. She always has been, hasn't she?

MWR: Oh yeah. I think one of my good experiences in California, my husband was with Kodak and we got to go to a number of black tie affairs, and we went to one where Patty Duke was there, and I had wanted to meet her because of the movie. At that time, she hadn't played Annie Sullivan yet, but she had played Helen, so I got the opportunity to meet her and I said it's because of you that I went to Perkins to become a teacher of the deaf-blind. Then a few years ago, we were down in Alabama and we visited Helen's home and I did not think it would have the impact on me that it did. I walked outside, I saw that pump and I started to cry because it was like that, that was the symbol. That was the beginning.

PB: My reason for going in first to teach the deaf. I don't, nobody seems to recognize the film I saw called Mandy and it was about a little girl in Birmingham, a teacher, and that it was based on fact, a teacher, saw the ability she had and taught her to speak and Birmingham because one of the big centers for the training of the deaf, so that got me into teaching the deaf and then I came on to Perkins.

Q: Well it's funny, talking to some of the alums that did sing at the funeral, they didn't remember that. They remembered the trip, they remembered the kids that they were, they were kids. That's of course what their real efforts, you know. It was kind of, it was fun. Last summer, I interviewed David Abraham's daughter.

PB: Oh yes.

Q: Which was also great fun because she remembers when her father was working on the

Perkins Braille and would get up from the dining room table to go try something out because he had, you know, he was working at home in his spare time on the Braille, so we interviewed her and some former teachers, yeah.

PB: I've got somebody I want to remember, Leon Murphy. Is he still here?

Q: Leon just retired. I think so. I think he just retired.

PB: Because I worked with him because I did the Braille repair course with him, and while I was there, I also, I don't know what the right word is, I made my own Braille under Leon's supervision and we kept in contact, exchanged stamps, so he was a high point as far as I was concerned. Does he still live in the area?

Q: Yes.

PB: Down near Watertown Square?

Q: I'm not sure...

PB: He lived around...

Q: Somewhere in the neighborhood.

PB: Oh good.

PB: LJS: Well I still have my Perkins Braille from when we were here 40 years ago.

Q: Wow!

LJS: And we actually still use it because we have a nursery school program at our University and each semester usually a student stops by the office and wants to take that Perkins Braille down to the writing table and so we, we put it out as an example of another kind of writing material and all of the children have a chance to type on that Perkins Braille. It's a little stiff. I should talk to you about. (laughter)

PB: My Braille cost me 100 dollars when I bought it here. I took it home and used it regularly but not over used it, about 12 or 18 months ago, I put it on E-bay and sold it for 500 dollars and it went to a little average new girl way up in the out back of New South Whales.

MWR: Oh cool!

PB: I was a bit concerned because I know out in that area that the average on people who are

not, were not very well up but I was pleased that the teacher said, no, she will take it home and it will be looked after, and I had to have an extension key put on it. (laughter)

Q: OK, now we'll stop.

End - '67 DB Program Teacher Trainee Class