

# Legacy Oral-Visual History Interview with Dwight Maxa

## Background Information

### Interview Information

This interview with Dwight Maxa (DM) was conducted for the Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans' (MNCDHH) Oral-Visual History Project. This interview took place on June 8, 2011 at the Golden Rule Building (85 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Place, St. Paul, MN 55101). The interviewer was Barbara W. Sommer (BWS).

### Translation Notes

The interview was recorded in English. The interviewer and interviewee used spoken English as a first language.

This transcript and the open captions in the video are based on the spoken English information.

Actions are in brackets. Translation notes are in parentheses and italics (using the emphasis font), and they represent additional information and corrections about what was said.

## Transcript of Interview with Dwight Maxa

### Key to names:

**DM** = Dwight Maxa (voices in English)

**BWS** = Barbara W. Sommer (voices in English)

[Visual of title graphic "Minnesota Oral History Project Interview with Dwight Maxa"]

[Barbara W. Sommer is sitting with Dwight Maxa for the interview.]

### ***[Interview time 01:27:24]***

**BWS:** I'm Barb Sommer and I'm sitting here today with Dwight Maxa. We're doing an oral-visual history interview for the Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans Oral-Visual History Project. It's June 8 (**2011**) and we are in the Golden Rule Building in downtown St. Paul in the Commission offices.

With that introduction I would like to ask Dwight – Mr. Maxa – Dwight Maxa if you would please introduce yourself and then we'll go into some questions.

**DM:** OK. My name is Dwight Maxa and I'm here to talk about the beginnings of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (*in the Department of Human Services*) and the Commission (*the Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans – MNCDHH*).

**BWS:** Thank you very much. Would you start by telling us how you became interested in or involved in the Services Commission and the work that you do.

**DM:** The beginning goes back to about 1976. My past history was that I started out as a teacher and then became a special ed (*education*) teacher and then became a special education director. I had just – I was just in the throes of completing my doctorate at the University (*of Minnesota*) and I had heard about this job. So I contacted the State Planning Agency and the fellow there that was in charge of this project – his name was Dean Hoenschlager. The background is that Rudy Perpich was governor then and some people from the Deaf community had contacted the Governor and explained to him that services really weren't up to par for deaf people. In fact, they were pretty much non-existent. I remember – I don't remember everybody, but I remember that Bob Harris and John Scanlon – who was a psychiatrist at Regions Hospital (*St. Paul Ramsey Medical Center*) – and, I think, (*Alfred*) "Sonny" Sonnenstrahl, Jerry Nelson – it's hard to do the names because I know I'm missing some – but anyway, this group of people had lunch with the Governor at the Governor's Mansion on Summit Avenue. They talked about – and I was not there – they talked the state of services and, particularly, that there was very little available in the rural areas. I have to give the Governor credit. I knew him personally and he was a man who really cared about underdogs and wanted to do something. So he approached the State Planning Agency, which, at that time, was really an arm of the governor's office, and asked that something be done. So there was a two-year study which was for the purpose of looking at how services were delivered and looking at how rural services might be delivered in a sparsely populated area to a group of people who were way less than one percent of the population. So that project was given to the State Planning Agency. I think it was funded by the Governor's office. That's where I came in. I was the person that was chosen to do this study. Prior to doing this study, I didn't have a lot of background in work involving deaf people or people who were hard of hearing. When I first talked to the Deaf community, I remember I went to a meeting over at MADC (*Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens*) at Thompson Hall. I had to give a little speech. When I told them that, "Well, you know, when I was born, I was deaf in my left ear and it caused me a lot of problems in school because in those days, there weren't audiology tests and people didn't really pay attention to it. But I was in about the eighth grade before they finally figured out I couldn't hear very well. Then my hearing started to deteriorate in my right ear later on in life." But I remember when I said that, they all clapped. They were so glad that somebody was doing the project who had some limited understanding of what it would be like to be hard of hearing or deaf.

**[Interview time 06:10:25]**

**BWS:** As part of the legislative, LCHI (*Legislative Coalition for the Hearing Impaired*), is that what grew out of that (*your study*)?

**DM:** Yes, that is correct. When the study was designed, it was set up so that there was a fair amount of research done. I was the researcher. But in addition to that, it was also designed so that there could be adequate input from the community. There was a lot – I can't remember all the details, but there was a large group of people – there was a large advisory committee. They had representation from all over the state. The thing that strikes me about that is how committed people were. You had Deaf people and you had mothers of hearing impaired kids and you had adults – people with hearing disabilities. They would drive from places like Brainerd and Fergus Falls just so that they could offer input. They did it, not once, but several times, over a period of two years. What evolved from that was something called the

Committee of Nine. Those were people who came from that larger committee. I would think there was probably maybe twenty-five people on the large committee. The Committee of Nine was a legislative arm that was put together so that they could contact legislators and tell the story that was evolving about the fact that there were few services and something needed to be done.

**BWS:** Talk about your study and what you found.

**DM:** The legislation – that was the outcome of this two-year study. The idea was that if you are going to have legislation, then it has to be supported if it's going to be – if it's something that you want to take to legislators and you want to lobby for and get advocates involved, it's got to be based on good information. So we worked with Gallaudet College. We worked with the Census Bureau, with the Center for Disease Control (**CDC**), and several other medical groups including the University of Minnesota medical school. We asked questions about the prevalence, about the incidence of deafness and hard of hearing – especially with the school age populations. We even went so far as to lay the information out in age cohorts so that you had 0-5, 5-10, 10-20, and so on – even up through 85+. All we did was gather the best available information. It may not have been perfect or exactly correct, but it's all we had. It was a composite of all those sources. So when it went to the legislature, they were pretty impressed that we had taken the time and we could cite not only one source, but many. (**Footnote 1: Minnesota State Planning Agency. Human Resources Division. Coordinated services to deaf and hard of hearing persons in Minnesota: a preliminary report to the 1978 Minnesota State Legislature. Submitted by (the) Minnesota State Planning Agency, Human Resources Division. 1978.**)

**[Interview time 09:40:20]**

**BWS:** That study led into what became the legislative commission on the hearing impaired.

**DM:** Yeah. The Committee of Nine lobbied the legislature. We identified certain legislators – people with disabilities, legislators that had a history of helping other areas like blindness and physical handicaps. We actually explained to them what we found, explained what some of the service needs were, and then asked them to support a bill which I wrote at the State Planning Agency. That bill was the Hearing Impaired Services Act (**HISA**). It went pretty well. Our strategy from the beginning was that we would work with a bi-partisan group. This was thirty-five years ago and the political climate was much different. There were people who really wanted to do the right thing. I just didn't see the kind of political in-fighting that we see today. It was hard to find the difference between a liberal Republican and a conservative Democrat. That was the kind of coming-together point. So we actually enjoyed pretty good support for what we were doing. It's never easy to get a bill passed like this – especially a bill that has what we call "tails." In other words, if you passed it today, you are going to be living with it twenty years from now. That came up. Legislators were concerned about, "What is this going to cost? What's it going to look like in five years or ten years?" But we were able to convince them that it's an important bill and it needs to be passed. And it especially needs to be passed because the people it affects are not getting equal services. In fact, back then, there were cases where, if you were in a hospital and you wanted to understand what was happening, you had to pay an interpreter to help you or you had to use a family member. To use a family member, oftentimes it was a child and then it put the child in a very difficult place and you may or may not get accurate information.

**[Interview time 12:14:00]**

**BWS:** The Hearing Impaired Services Act – it took a lot of work, didn't it, to get it passed?

**DM:** It did. I think if there was a contribution that I made, it was writing a good bill. I had a lot of help at the State Planning Agency. In fact, I mentioned Dean Hoenschlager was the person at the State Planning Agency who was my boss. Coming from education, I didn't know all that much about state government, but I learned in a hurry. He was really good to me. He helped me learn how to work the system. That's really, oftentimes, what gets missed with advocates when they bring legislation in. So the Governor had asked us to put together a model that would allow for service delivery in rural areas. The idea came up that we would have Regional Service Centers and that was an important part of the bill. At the time, it was new thinking. There were other states that were planning legislation like this, but they never quite developed their thinking to that extent. So the legislation allowed for eight centers and a division that would oversee services and would act as a liaison with the state Department of Human Services.

**BWS:** That became the Deaf Services Division?

**DM:** That eventually became the Deaf Services Division. Actually, the division was – or the program – was formed in 1978 but it wasn't a division. It was just a program. People in government weren't quite sure what to do with it and they didn't particularly like it either. Here's one more thing they had to do with not enough money. Wisely, the legislature had phased it in so that the first couple of years, we were to put up three centers. Then, six centers, and then two more after that. So it was like a four-year phase-in. That was a good thing because, I think, if we had tried to do all eight right away, we would have failed.

**BWS:** Really.

**DM:** Because it's so hard to find – well, back then, it was really hard to find good staff and that's the key. You know, you have to have people who really have a background in deafness or are deaf so that they can lead others. Part of the Regional Center concept was that we would – the Centers would work with counties and it would be like a technical assistance project. They would teach the counties things that they needed to know in order to provide equitable service.

**[Interview time 15:13:17]**

**BWS:** How large, in terms of staff, were the Regional Service Centers? What did you think would be an appropriate (**staffing**) level to provide the services?

**DM:** Well, when a bill passes, they usually pass some money with it and then they pass whatever they think positions are needed to get the job done. So, I remember, at the beginning, I think we had a staff of three but yet we had the mandate to do these centers and we couldn't really do them because they didn't give us the staff. So it was like that. I mean, nothing ever starts easy. It was, every year, going back and explaining and asking and explaining. I will say that the legislators that we worked with were good, they were good to us, but they wanted assurances that we were going to do what we said we were going to do. They didn't want any failures. So, it all evolved over time. We started with three (**staff**). I

don't know how many are in the Division today but I think during the end of my tenure, I think we had twenty-five people.

**BWS:** In the Deaf Services Division of the Department of Human Services. What was the role of the Deaf Services Division – to oversee the Regional Service Centers but also to look more at a statewide approach?

**DM:** Yes, they did oversee them. And we eventually had staff in each one. I don't even know if I can remember where they were, but Fergus Falls and Rochester and St. Paul – they had one for the Metro area here, there was one in Duluth, I think one in Two Harbors – that's all I can remember.

**[Interview time 17:18:26]**

**BWS:** The Deaf Services Division – the mandate was to – as you started to develop it – was to look at the state overall? Talk about the Deaf Services Division.

**DM:** One of the things that we were being held up to for comparison with the services for the blind. They did a lot of things and we actually ourselves after them for a period of time. We also, at that time, the human services part of it was help with social services, help with child support, Medicaid, Medicare – those kinds of issues – because that's what the Department of Human Services does. So the technical assistance and the interface with those services was through the Division here in St. Paul. The rehabilitation – what we called DVR (**Department of Vocational Rehabilitation**) – that was done separately. So, we would refer and that was a big job for the Regional Centers and for the Division to constantly be referring people to different services. It was a central entry point. In fact, I think that language was in the bill. Central entry point. That way people could – deaf people and hard of hearing people – could come there, come to the Center, and troubleshoot problems. I think that's less of an issue today but at the beginning, that was really the main purpose and the main methodology of how we did things. It's interesting to note that about, I think, four years into the program, into the creation of the program, we felt that we should combine vocational rehabilitation and our division and so there was legislation that addressed that. The legislature made the decision to take resources from the Division of Rehabilitation and bring those together and that increased the size and the budget of the Deaf Services Division considerably.

**BWS:** Why did you decide to do that?

**DM:** We did it because we were all over the place. The more we could get together under our umbrella, the better we thought it would be. And apparently the legislature agreed.

**[Interview time 20:04:10]**

**BWS:** That was a time when this was all very new. So you were working your way through it?

**DM:** You know, a comment about that would be that, at the same time that we were doing this work, other states were doing it as well. There was a movement in the country to find a way to equalize things. Some of the Federal legislation had passed, like the ADA (**Americans with Disabilities Act**). That was a big factor. But what I want to say is that I think one of the key things for Minnesota was the placement

of the services. I know that there were states where the legislation passed but it never quite got any traction. Then in a few years, it was gone. The reason I think it got traction is because we were able to put the Division in one of the largest state departments, if not the largest state department, where we had a lot of people that were willing to help us and to teach us and to show us how to do things. And then having that status – the status of being a Division – helped us with the legislature because we weren't reporting to the mental health division or to the social services division. We were seen as an important part of government. I noticed when I studied – I did a follow-up study after the Hearing Impaired Services Act and I looked at how other states were doing. I noticed that the ones that failed had failed in that regard. They had ended up in some small corner of the social services division or part of vocational rehab and they never had the status to really pull themselves up. We did pattern ourselves after services for the blind because, they too, were a division and kind of an important part of the department they were in.

**BWS:** You had visibility that way?

**DM:** We had credibility with the legislators that we wouldn't have had otherwise.

**[Interview time 22:24:23]**

[Short break in interview.]

**[Interview time 22:37:01]**

**BWS:** When you started to have the Regional Service Centers, what were some of the needs you felt were critical (*to address*), thirty-five years ago? We know things have changed but what were some of the needs that through the Deaf Services Division wanted to see being given to?

**DM:** I can think of two things. One was the communications at all levels. Now with all the services that we have, including captioned TV, you take it for granted. But then, there was no captioning and no one would pay for it. That was a hard fight. I think the Commission really was instrumental in getting that done. But if you went to a hospital for services, there was always an argument about who was going to pay for it. Or even if you went to a welfare department, like if you were in Ramsey County and you went to Ramsey County services, they would argue and say, "We don't have to provide an interpreter." And they were, of course, wrong. It took several years to teach them that they were wrong – because you could go in and tell them and say, "You really can't do that." And they'd say, "Yeah. Well, too bad. We're going to do it anyway." So it took many years of kind of badgering and cajoling and showing them the legislation to get them on board and to get them to really – not just do it – but to embrace it. So it was just trial and error. You had to be very tenuous. The other piece was the – escapes me now.

**[Interview time 24:24:29]**

**BWS:** People talk a lot about communication.

**DM:** The part about – what I'm trying to say here, the people themselves had real needs, not just communication. But they had issues like just being left out. I remember in those days, for example, deaf people who graduated – many of the guys ended up in printing shops because it was so noisy and loud that it just was assumed that if you're deaf, then you'll make a good printer. We kind of laugh at it now,

but that was really the case. That was another area that opened up – the Division worked hard to teach employers what advantage there is to hiring someone with a hearing impairment. The same with schools. The children oftentimes weren't taken seriously because they maybe had a mild hearing impairment or maybe they were actually deaf but the school didn't know quite what to do. The Division was, again, in a teaching role. So I guess the two-part thing would be communication and then to address the real needs of people who had disability.

**BWS:** Is it a stereotype that you were fighting? Is that a wrong way of describing it?

**DM:** Yeah, I think it was a stereotype.

**BWS:** It's changed.

**DM:** Things have changed so much, I've completely forgotten that that was a problem, but it was a problem. Yes.

**BWS:** From that work, you also started moving toward the development of the Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (**MNCDHH**) which started out as MCHI- Minnesota Commission for the Hearing Impaired?

**DM:** Right.

**[Interview time 26:45:04]**

**BWS:** How did that get going?

**DM:** Can I go back and just say one other thing about -?

**BWS:** Yes, definitely.

**DM:** On the communications side, now we have email. But I remember when I first started, I was given a TTY (**Teletypewriters or Text Telephones**) machine – which was an old teletype machine that had been converted for use by a person by the name of Gordon Allen who supplied many of us with these machines. I had one in my house and I had one in my office. It was really this big – I mean, it was like five feet across and about two feet in depth. Amazing. That's what it took. We had to sit there at the keyboard and type and clunk, clunk, clunk, you know. It's hard to imagine that it was really that bad only thirty-five years ago. Of course, now, things have completely changed. But the point is that communication was a big thing as far as people trying to order a pizza. How do you do that? You'd have to find somebody that can use the phone – maybe a friend or whatever – and have them do it for you. I wanted to highlight that part.

**BWS:** Safety issues would have been a factor, I would think.

**DM:** That too, of course.

**BWS:** How do you deal with a tornado alert?

**DM:** How do you dial 911 when there is nobody that has a TTY? That was true at one time.

***[Interview time 28:26:14]***

**BWS:** I think you were quoted as saying once that most people got telephones in 1910, but 1975 when we started seeing them come into the deaf community.

**DM:** Yeah. Well, regarding the Commission, the way that came about is kind of interesting. By that time, the Division had been lobbying the legislature and, like every year, trying to get a little bit more resources so we could do the job they already gave us to do. So we were pretty adamant about working and just not giving up. At one point, some of them got kind of tired of us. They said, "You know, you need to define your role here as a Division. Are you an arm of state government? Are you a division that provides services to people, social services and all of the other things that people need so they can enjoy the same level of support as everybody else? We don't see where, according to you being in the state department, how you can be here lobbying." They were absolutely right. They caught us, because we were doing way too much lobbying. So that's actually – when that happened, that's about the time the idea came along that what we need here is a commission so that their sole purpose is to work with legislators and other policy-makers so that they can develop a better understanding of what people need. It was a huge success right from the beginning. They had no holds barred. They could go out and do what needed to be done. We always had to hold back a little bit because we had a kind of an identity crisis.

**BWS:** You were part of the first Commission – you represented DHS on the Commission.

**DM:** Yeah, I really don't remember much about it. I know it was very small at the beginning. I really don't remember who was on it even except for Curt Micka, who came to be the director – and a very good one. There were different Deaf people that were brought in and taught how to approach legislators. Of course, that was another thing where other disability groups – because speech wasn't a barrier or hearing wasn't a barrier – they kind of automatically knew the drill and what to do. But our constituents didn't. They had to be – things had to be taught and broken down and explained. I think everybody has seen this big chart that Bob Cook drew about the implementation – the development and implementation of the Hearing Impaired Services Act. That was actually a teaching tool more than anything. It was a visual tool so that people in the deaf and hard of hearing community could look at that and understand. It wasn't necessarily for show. It was a teaching tool.

***[Interview time 31:49:06]***

**BWS:** That's what you were doing – as it began – was teach people to advocate.

**DM:** We started with nothing and then people who expressed an interest in wanting to work with legislators gradually began to show up. They gradually developed skills, and good skills, in how to present their argument. I think they are still doing it today too. The people come and go and their energies burn out and you've got to get more people. It's a constant struggle but that's what it was all about – the teaching and then "go forth and do."

**BWS:** In that case, were there any areas where you felt the Commission needed to sink – do its work? Any specific areas of need in the community?

**DM:** That the Commission needed -?

**BWS:** The Commission could take hold and work on.

**DM:** Well, they've been responsible for just a whole bunch of legislation. They have created, I know – most of the interpreting laws that we have today are the result of the work that was done by the Commission. I know that there's an infant screening bill that was just passed a few years back that requires that all hospitals screen newborns for deafness. That was something that they did. Having been out of the field for a while, I don't remember all the other things – all the other issues and needs that have been taken care of, but I do know that there are many.

**[Interview time 33:38:05]**

**BWS:** Was the work with interpreters and licensing and forming a more – how do I say this – structured interpreting?

**DM:** Structured interpreting?

**BWS:** In a more defined way? Identify what their background was.

**DM:** I understand. It's just such an evolution of things. At the beginning, everybody was happy with having an interpreter. But then they soon realized that an interpreter that works in the court system and one that works in the hospitals and one that works for social services, that one person might not be adequate to cover all those bases. So the Commission went to work and developed legislation that would require those providers to have qualified interpreters. Then, at the same time, had to back up and work with some of the training institutions to provide the classes necessary so that could happen.

**BWS:** That was another area. There were many areas within communications where specific needs were being met as time moved on.

**DM:** Right.

**BWS:** I have a list of some of the other types of advocacy issues that seemed to be popping up. I don't know how many of them you were involved with. You mentioned education and working with schools. Understanding the needs of children. Was that an area you'd like to comment on?

**DM:** I think our role with education was more of a -

**[Interview time 35:51:04]**

[Short break in interview, chatting during break not transcribed.]

**[Interview time 37:09:11]**

**BWS:** Talk a little about development of the Commission's mission.

**DM:** The need for the Commission. We had gotten criticism that the Division was going too far into the political world and so the Commission was really created so that it could do the interfacing with policy makers and legislators and so on. At that point, we made a decision to separate ourselves from the

Commission because we had to. So I did have a presence at the very beginning and I was there, but I phased myself out as soon as I could because they really needed to operate independently.

**BWS:** Were you involved in helping write the mission statement for the Commission?

**DM:** Yeah, I was. One thing to note on that is there are several – again, its placement in government that’s important. There are several ways you can do the work. You could be a committee. You can be a commission. You can be, probably, three or four other things. But the commission was really the highest level and it was not easy getting that passed because the legislature was very reticent about wanting to have another commission. Commissions – they have more power and they’re listened to – where a committee, maybe not so much.

**BWS:** Took a little work?

**DM:** Yeah. It actually didn’t pass the first year. I think it took two or three years to get that word in. The word “commission.”

**BWS:** And to get the support for doing that.

**DM:** Right.

**[Interview time 39:07:16]**

**BWS:** You stayed the course. You didn’t accept anything else.

**DM:** That was not an option for the Deaf community. They were absolutely convinced that that’s what needed to happen. They stuck with it and it did happen. Actually, as time passed and the Commission became more independent and more better at what they did, we had a number of cases where our Division didn’t agree with the Commission – which is inevitable. That’s all there is. It’s a good thing. I mean, at the end of the way, the Division has to support the Department of Human Services and they have their mandates and they tell us what has to happen. But that may or may not be in the best interests of the people we serve and so that’s where the Commission comes in. They have the – they’re there for the purpose of making known what the needs of the community are. So there are two different roles.

**BWS:** But both working toward the end of helping the community. Is the Commission more of an advocacy organization?

**DM:** Absolutely. It’s one hundred percent advocacy.

**[Interview time 40:29:04]**

**BWS:** You see it identifying issues that need to be dealt with? Being active in working with the community that way.

**DM:** Right. Again, that’s something that evolved. A commission does just what you said. A better commission not only identifies the needs, but does the research to support it and writes legislation so

that it can pass and then lobbies the legislators and educates the community. And that's what this one does. They've done some excellent work. If I were to rank nationally, I think Minnesota's is number one.

**BWS:** Good! We asked about some of the other areas where the Commission has worked for the needs of the community. Needs that involved both the Commission and the Division. Communication comes up often. A little bit on education. You've mentioned public education and outreach. Is there anything more you would like to say about that?

**DM:** Just that I think with education, there is a definite division between our work – the work of the Division – I'm getting confused with divisions – the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services – they have a role. And then there's the Department of Education which has, of course, a role in educating children. The thing is that they set their own policy. It's very difficult for us to tell them how it's going to be. We can advise them. We can offer technical assistance, which is what we did. But we didn't have any real authority over the policies that they set for youngsters and for high school and so on. There are some Federal mandates that address that, but here again, we go right back to the Commission again – where they can recommend to them changes without any conditions. And they can lobby to make those changes happen. The Department of Education doesn't necessarily have to agree with them. But our department, here, we have no influence – or very little.

**[Interview time 43:05:08]**

**BWS:** Changes include access to interpreters. What else are you referring to?

**DM:** If you go back to the very beginning, deaf and hard of hearing students – I think hard of hearing were probably OK, but deaf students weren't necessarily mainstreamed. They were put into special programs for deaf kids. Then, of course, there was the state school in Faribault (***Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf – MSAD***). So things have changed a lot. Now school districts have to mainstream students and that means there's a lot of exposure to interpreters and sign language and you've got other students who see that and want to learn.

**BWS:** ASL (***American Sign Language***) has been accepted as a recognized language. Was there work in that direction as well?

**DM:** Yeah.

**BWS:** Understanding the role of ASL.

**DM:** That's true. There was a time when ASL was a language spoken by deaf people and no one really seemed to recognize the value. Later on, that's exactly what happened. It was recognized as a real language and treated accordingly.

**BWS:** All of these are changes that have just happened – you've fought for or identified. Those working for deaf people. The Commission included DeafBlind – will you talk about that and how that came about? Including that in the mission.

**DM:** Fairly early on, one of the needs that came up was that the deaf and hard of hearing – the DeafBlind were pretty much left out of things even though we were making progress with deaf and hard of hearing people – they were sort of still castaways. At the time, the services for the blind was doing some work but they didn't have the resources they needed to serve that population because typically they didn't have any understanding of ASL or sign language or even signed English. So we as a Division made a decision to go forward and make it known that we wanted to work with DeafBlind people and were willing to do what we needed to do. They became, They now come to use as part of that central entry point where they can be referred back for services that they need. But we have a long history with DeafBlind people and I think we were part of the original effort to get interpreters for DeafBlind people. I think you know that interpreting is done in the hand, obviously, because they can't see.

**[Interview time 46:29:22]**

**BWS:** That was another area of education, I would think, as you tried to help people understand what was needed.

**DM:** Right. They really – they were misunderstood. They really didn't fit in. There were such a small number that they never really got traction, but once we included them with the deaf and the hard of hearing and so on, things changed.

**BWS:** Is there anything that you – as we've talked about this in the areas you've worked with – what do you see the needs are today and then the future.

**DM:** This is a hard one for me because I've been away for so long that I don't know that I don't know that I can really talk about today's needs. I really don't know. One thing I do ponder is the impact of email and how that's affected Deaf people.

**BWS:** Would you comment on your hope for the future?

**DM:** I think, as I see it, people in the Deaf and hard of hearing community are doing very well. I hope things continue and I hope things at the legislative level are such that this program and the other programs don't go backwards. That's a real fear I have. That would be really heartbreaking.

**[Interview time 48:28:16]**

**BWS:** So that meeting at Thompson Hall when you received the applause early on has carried through your career?

**DM:** It has. I definitely like the work. I was kind of a long shot, I think, for someone to take on that project but it all worked out and I'm happy. I'm very proud of what's been done. I'm proud of all the people that are doing the work today and all the ones who gave contributions year by year. There's been many people that have left and some have come back, but it's been, from my perspective, one of the most satisfying experiences that a person can have. Although I don't know that I was a huge success financially because I was a state employee, I can say that I think there are very few people (***who have the job satisfaction I have***). It's exciting. I was excited then and I still get excited about it now.

**BWS:** Thank you.