

DID YOU KNOW?

Louis Harris and Associates, Incorporated conducted a nationwide survey of 920 employers through the International Center for the Disabled in cooperation with the National Council on the Handicapped and PCEH. Sixty-five percent of the EEO officers in the survey said their company has hired people with disabilities in the past three years. Managers who said yes to this question then were asked if their company had hired any disabled people in the last 12 months. The percentage of EEO officers who claimed to have done this dropped sharply to 43 percent. A 57 percent majority of companies, especially smaller companies, have not hired individuals with disabilities in the past year.

In August, the Dallas Mayor's Committee sponsored a job fair, held at the Dallas Convention Center. This is an annual event sponsored by the Mayor's Committee, the Dallas Alliance of Business, The Dallas Personnel Association, and PROJECT LINK. The most frequently listed skills being sought according to Steve Johns, Director of Handicap Services for the City of Dallas, were clerical, professional, technical, and to a lesser extent management, service or sales abilities.

Texas Respite Resource Network (TRRN) is sponsoring a national conference February 16-19, 1988 in San Antonio Texas. For information, please contact TRRN at (512) 228-2794.

The conference "Perspectives on Employment of Persons with Disabilities" is scheduled for December 2-4, 1987 at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md. The conference will provide information and tools on how to meet the challenge of improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. For more information about the conference, contact Rosemary Pettis, Voice or TDD, (301) 227-3917.



GCDP REPORT

Austin, Texas

November, 1987

Waco Judge named Disabled Person of the Year

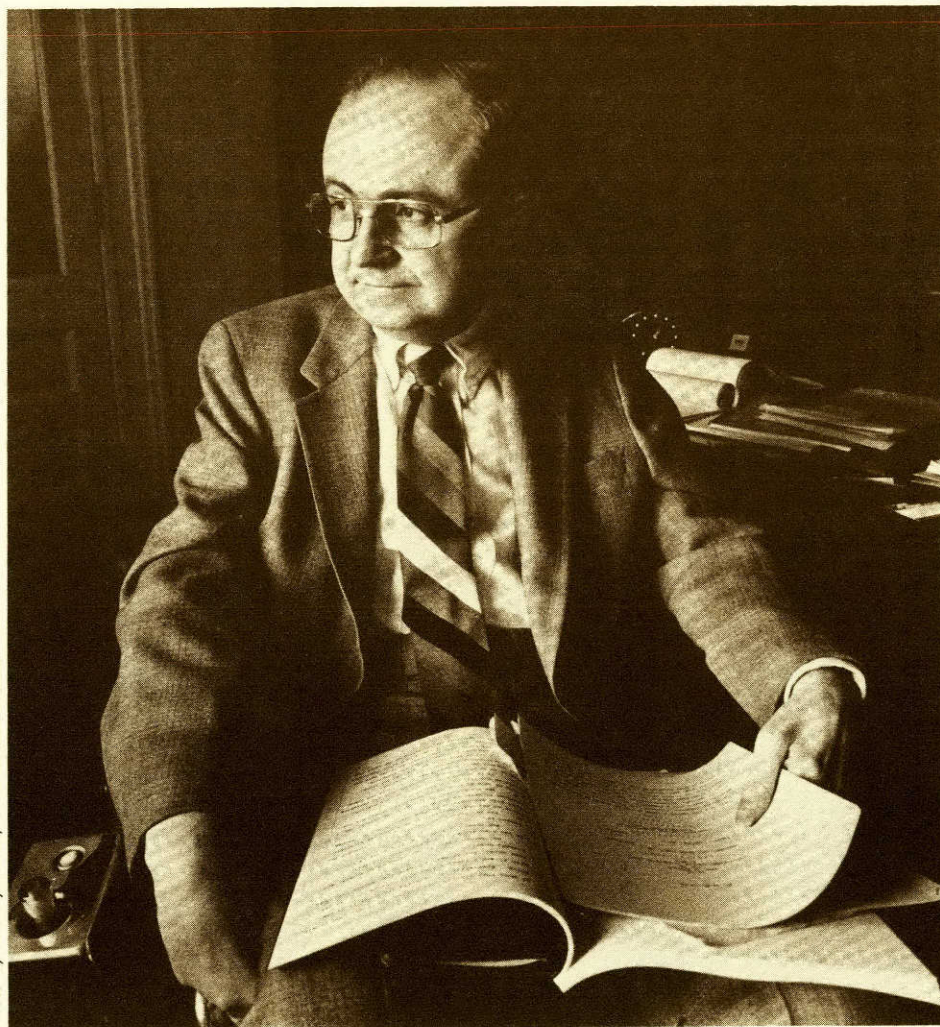


Photo by Rod Aydelette, Waco Tribune-Herald

On Friday, October 2, Judge Bob Thomas of Waco was honored as Disabled Person of the Year by the Texas Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons.

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Governor Clements appoints chairperson

Governor William P. Clements, Jr. recently appointed 33 year old A. Kent Waldrep, Jr. of Dallas as chairperson of the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons (GCDP). Waldrep chaired his first meeting of GCDP in Austin on October 1 and presided at the 1987 Employment Awards Conference on October 2. Waldrep says, "The Governor's Committee Employment Awards Conference is to be applauded for the focus it brings to a vital issue facing disabled citizens. Creating employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities is a 'smart' move to make. Most disabled citizens look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the system through payroll taxes rather than being dependent on state or federal subsidy programs."

Waldrep is the President of Kent Waldrep National Paralysis Foundation and Vice President of the National Council on the Handicapped. He is also Director of the Dallas Rehabilitation Institute and a member of the Rehabilitation Engineering Center at

the University of Texas at Arlington. Waldrep was named One of Ten Outstanding Young Men of America in 1985 by the United States Jaycees. He was named Outstanding Professional Fund Raiser of the Year in 1982 by the Dallas Chapter of the Society of Fund Raising Executives. In 1979, the Southern Baptist Radio & Television Commission produced a doc-

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Kent Waldrep, Chairperson, GCDP



umentary on Waldrep as part of their series entitled, "The Athlete".

In 1974, as a Texas Christian University halfback, Kent Waldrep jogged onto Legion Field in Birmingham, Alabama for a football game with the

nationally ranked Crimson Tide. Not long after the game started, his life changed. A vital tackle which damaged Waldrep's spine left him almost totally paralyzed. Since that time, Waldrep has prompted research on behalf of Americans with similar injuries. He has lectured about spinal cord injury and disability issues at college campuses, high schools, secondary schools, churches, civic clubs and banquets across the country. Waldrep has been featured in national media publications such as People magazine, Time, Look, Newsweek, and USA Today. Television appearances have included the Today Show, Good Morning America, NBC Nightly News, and Cable News Network.

Quotable Quotes from 1987 Award Winners.

Governor's Citation for Meritorious Service

Judy Comfort, Southwestern Bell Telephone, Houston
"Southwestern Bell Telephone wants to be part of the solution not part of the problem."

Small Employer of the Year

Courtney Wang, WANG Laboratories, Dallas
"No one can be successful unless they surround themselves with successful people. We recognize abilities."

Disabled Person of the Year

Judge Bob Thomas, Waco
"If I need a law book on the top shelf, I call the clerk and its second nature to use the elevator, not the stairs. You folks seem to be the weird ones who take the stairs instead of the elevator."

Governmental Agency of the Year Award

Bob Bullock, Comptroller of Public Accounts for the State of Texas, Austin
"The only disability that I recognize is the shortsightedness of any person who fails to understand the human and social potential of each person and each employee in the Comptroller's Office."

Large Employer of the Year

Debra Heaton, Pizza Hut, Inc., Dallas/Ft. Worth
"Pizza Hut's position and our challenge is to reach out and find more positions for individuals with disabilities within our company. I challenge all companies to commit themselves equally and reap the benefits."

LOCAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

NETH WEEK, October 4-10, 1987

AUSTIN
 awards ceremony
 proclamation

CORPUS CHRISTI
 "Windmills" employer
 training

DALLAS
 awards luncheon
 proclamation
 scholarship awards

HOUSTON
 awards luncheon
 proclamation

SAN ANTONIO
 proclamation
 job fair
 applicant seminar

SAN ANGELO
 awards luncheon

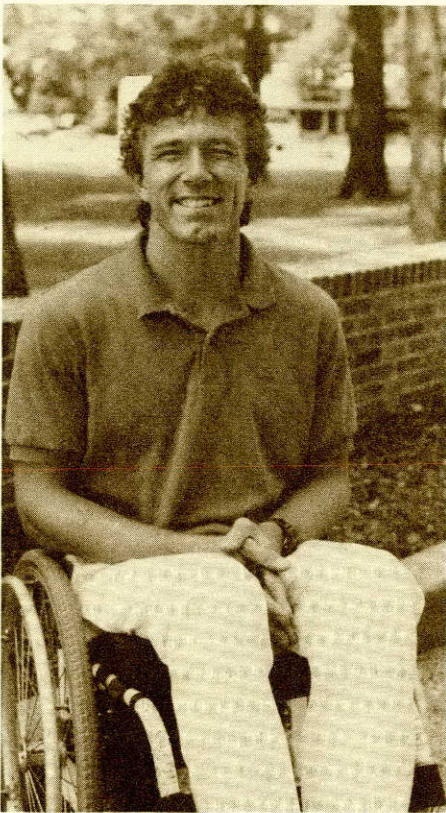
TEMPLE
 awards ceremony
 proclamation

WACO
 awards ceremony
 proclamation

"making employment a reality"

Meet Don Rogers and Bonna Jones Williamson

. . . leadership, scholastic standing, character and seriousness of purpose



Don Rogers is an athlete working toward a degree in therapeutic recreation. On October 6, he accepted a \$1,000 scholarship award from the Dallas Mayor's Committee.

What does a sandy-haired, strikingly handsome wheelchair athletic have in common with an energetic young Richland college student who recently lost her vision? The answer is a 1987 Dallas Mayor's Committee for Employment of the Disabled Scholarships which were presented on October 6, 1987.

Don E. Rogers, Jr., is an athlete working toward a degree in therapeutic recreation at North Texas State University and Bonna Jones Williamson is an honor student who plans to transfer to the University of Texas at Dallas for a special education counseling degree. This year, the Dallas Mayor's Committee awarded two \$1,000 scholarships, one to Don Rogers and the second to Bonna

Jones Williamson, according to Bill May, spokesman for the Board of Directors of the Dallas Mayor's Committee.

During an interview with Rogers at Bachman Recreation Center where he works as a rehabilitation aide repeated interruptions occurred when gleeful youngsters stopped to visit with their good buddy. Rogers smiled, stopping to give a parent a phone number concerning a wheelchair Rugby team, to compare notes with a fellow competitive wheelchair tennis player and to ask a question of a youngster about his swimming progress.

Rogers, who became disabled following a motorcycle accident, was two years into a career in engineering when he realized he was more drawn to "people contact fields."

"I knew I wanted to work with people, especially individuals with disabilities, not leading them by the hand but providing them opportunities to grow," Rogers explained. "All things I've been drawn to—recreation, adventure, sports, nature, people—seem to start coming together working with people with disabilities using recreation as my medium".

Rogers' interest in sports and recreation goes well beyond his participation as a competitive wheelchair tennis and basketball player. His love of outdoor adventure led him to volunteer with the American Red Cross' Kid Sport where he was Assistant Director for the Disabled Individuals Division of the Triathlon.



1986 was not an especially good year for Bonna Jones Williamson. After having been diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy, an eyesight complication of diabetes, Williamson underwent four surgeries to attempt to save her failing vision. Then another complication, glaucoma, set in. Two surgeries later, Williamson remained legally blind.

But then you have to remember that all of this happened to a bright optimistic young woman. "If you tell me, 'you can't do that — you're

blind,' I'll find a way!" This is how Williamson describes the "fire that keeps me going."

"If you tell me 'you can't do that — you are blind!' I'll find a way."

||||| Bonna Jones Williamson |||||

A native of Dallas, Williamson graduated from Ursuline Academy in 1979 winning honors in voice and dance. Her first attempt at College was thwarted when she had to withdraw due to papilledema in both eyes. But even such a health problem didn't keep Williamson down. She went to work for Neiman Marcus, later worked for Culligan International in personnel and Motorola in accounting. Her musical ability and "can do" spirit led Williamson to start her own business: Bon Bon's Body Shop where she taught adult aerobics and children's dance classes. "I've always let the kids choose their own music. I feel if the kids choose, they will do their best." Williamson's recipe for success in her children's classes is one she also applies to her life. "I want to work as a counselor for kids in Special Education because they need to know they can reach their dreams. I know because I am working out my own dream right now!"

There is little doubt that Williamson will make her dream come true. One of her professors at Richland College refers to Williamson as "easily the most outstanding student I've encountered in my classes . . . I think of no other . . . who has so much to offer others in the area of spirit, intellect, creativity and caring." Oh yes, and 1986 wasn't such a bad year after all. Williamson was married to her husband Matt in July of that year.

The scholarship program is in its second year and is supported by private contributions from business and industry.

Waco Judge named Disabled Person of the Year

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"To me this high honor is symbolic," Thomas said after accepting the award at the luncheon ceremony at the Wyndham Southpark Hotel. "It is an honor to all Texans with disabilities who have accomplished a lot but maybe not with such notoriety as has been my fortune."

Thomas, a former McLennan County Judge who won a seat on the state's Tenth Court of Appeals in 1982, received a standing ovation when introduced by Richard Land, Administrative Assistant to Governor Clements.

Land said, "Thomas contracted polio as a teenager in one of the last epidemics before the development of the Salk vaccine." In his own words Thomas said, "I went from an irresponsible 15 year old to a very serious 16 year old. I quit worrying about who I was going to dance with Saturday night and started thinking about what I was going to do with my life."

"Thomas has exuded cheerfulness, quick wit, and interest in others while coping with his disability through initiative, resourcefulness, and perseverance," Land said. Land quoted Thomas as having once dryly remarked, "lack of alternatives does wonders for your concentration." Concentration enabled Thomas to excel in his chosen career.

Thomas is known for his hard work as an attorney and a judge. In 1980, he was appointed by the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to a task force to revise the Texas Mental Health Code. From 1980 to 1985, he served by appointment of the Commissioner of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, on the agency's Consumer Consultation Committee. From 1983 to 1986, he served as Vice-Chairman for the Central Texas Council for the Deaf. Prior to the establishment of the newly formed Waco Mayor's Committee, he served as chairman of the McLennan County Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

"Over the last 35 years, I've made my way with the disability in an unsheltered environment, and I appreciate particularly those in my community who have never pulled any punches as far as I'm concerned because I have always been involved in the hurly burly world of politics.

"The people in Waco have treated me just as they would have anyone. That means a lot to me and I think it says some good things about the City of Waco and McLennan County."

"Individuals with disabilities want to contribute to their community, be productive, and have a good job."

Judge Bob Thomas, Waco



GCDP Report

The GCDP Report promotes employment and public awareness of the abilities and special needs of persons with disabilities. This quarterly GCDP Report is published by the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons.

Communications may be addressed to: Cindy Counts, Editor, GCDP Report, 118 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704. You may also call (512) 445-8741 VOICE or TDD.

Taped copies of the GCDP Report will be provided upon request.

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