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## Editors' Note

# Remembering Sally Smith



A common promise of the political candidates is that they will *make changes*. The learning disabilities community recently lost Sally Smith, who made changes in the lives of children with learning disabilities. Sally Smith was a visible and vibrant member of LDA. Esther and Jerry Minkoff wrote a beautiful tribute to Sally Smith, which appeared in the November/December 2007 issue of *LDA Newsbriefs*. If you missed this article, we are reprinting their article, *Remembering Sally Smith* here.

*Along with more than 1,200 people, we had the bittersweet experience of attending Sally Smith's memorial service on December 7 at the Bender Basketball Arena at American University. Sally passed away on December 4, 2007. It was sad to lose one of the greatest visionaries in the field of learning disabilities, but it was also sweet to celebrate her life and her achievements. The one consistent comment we heard echoed was that Sally changed lives. She changed the lives of the children and families at the Lab School, she changed the lives of the people who read her books, and she changed the lives of the people who flocked to hear her speak at the LDA conferences. She had magic, she was dynamic, she was creative, she loved people, and people loved her. There was no obstacle that Sally couldn't overcome. She was a problem solver and a doer. She was a force of nature.*

*Sally was a Renaissance woman. She did everything and she did it all well. She founded and directed the Lab School of Washington and in recent years created satellite schools in Baltimore and Philadelphia. She headed the American University program in special education where she trained outstanding teachers. She wrote a dozen books, including No easy Answers: The Learning Disabled Child at Home and School, the bible for so many parents and teachers.*

*She created on of the most effective approaches in special education. The Lab School approach taught academics through academic clubs and the arts. The effectiveness of this approach has been demonstrated through research and follow-up studies of school graduates (90% go on to college) and its selection as a National Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education. Recognizing the need for life-long services for adults with learning disabilities, she developed a model night school program to help persons meet the challenges of adult living.*

*For 23 years, she stimulated public awareness of learning disabilities through her annual gala where she honored outstanding achievers with learning disabilities, such as Charles Schwab, Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy, playwright Wendy Wasserstein, Cher, and many others from the business world, politics, show business, and sports.*

*Sally was a dedicated LDAer having served on the Professional Advisory Board and receiving the LDA Award, the highest honor give by LDA. Her sessions at LDA were always standing room only. Sally was a key figure on the I Have a Kid Who... panel at the annual LDA conference for nearly 20 years, where her perspective as both a parent and professional provided valuable advice to the parents and teachers in the audience.*

*Sally believed in the power of art as shown by the Lab School competition for art teachers who work with learning disabled students to come to the Lab School and meet with word-renowned artist, Robert Rauschenberg. Sally also believed in the art of self-decoration. She loved colorful, glowing scarves, nails painted different colors, and outrageous jewelry. But her greatest artistic achievement was sculpting the field of learning disabilities.*

*Sally's interest in the field of learning disabilities began with her experiences with her son, Gary, who was born with significant learning disabilities. Through her need to understand her son and to get the best education for him, she benefited not only her son but thousands of children and adults with learning disabilities. For*

her parenting of Gary, she recently received the Mother of the Year Award by NBC's Today Show.

She will be missed by her sons, Gary, Randy, and Nick and her beloved grand-daughter, Maggie. Needless to say, she will also be missed by the learning disabilities community of America, but knowing the legacy she has left will warm out hearts. Sally, who inspired so many, caressed our hearts and sparked our laughter.

From Remembering Sally Smith by Esther and Jerry Minskoff. LDA Newsbriefs. Volume 42, No. 5, p11.

## Overview of Articles in This Issue

This issue of *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal* contains articles on important issues on the field of learning disabilities.

*Many Students with Learning Disabilities Are Not Receiving Special Education* by Daniel P. Hallahan and Sandra B. Cohen describes what students with learning disabilities need but are not receiving under current educational policies.

*The Effects of Repeated Readings on the Reading Fluency and Comprehension for High School Students with Specific Learning Disabilities* by Amy C. Vandenberg, Richard T. Boon, Cecil Fore III, and William N. Bender reports a study that examined the efficacy of repeated readings on the oral reading fluency rate and reading comprehension accuracy of high school students with specific learning disabilities.

*Self-Disclosure and Adults with Learning Disabilities: Practical Ideas about a Complete Process* by Paul J. Gerber and Lynda A. Price discusses the complicated issues involved in self-disclosure for adults with learning disabilities beyond the school years.

*Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Learning Disabilities in Gifted, Well-Educated Adults* by Kenneth E. Guyer, Barbara P. Guyer, and Steven R. Banks reports a retrospective study of college students who were referred to a university clinic for learning problems. The participants were diagnosed with a Learning Disability, with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or a combination of Learning Disabilities and ADHD.

*The Effects of Reread-Adapt and Answer-Comprehend (RAAC) Intervention of the Reading Achievement of Students with Reading and Behavioral Difficulties* by William J. Therrien and Shannon Gormley shows the effects of the Reread-Adapt and Answer-Comprehend (RAAC) Intervention with students who have behavioral difficulties.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles.

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Co-Editors