

*Judy Mayer*

# HISTORY

## Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf



**First Meeting Place At  
Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly  
Talladega, Alabama**

**1959-1999  
40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**

**For all God's Servants at Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**

**The Men, The Women,  
The Boys and The Girls  
Who have been,  
Who will be  
And who are all  
Laborers together with God,  
1 Corinthians 3:9**

*By: Joyce Wesley*

*Thank you to. Peggy Estes for typing, Bonnie Gaither for proofing, and Loretta Williams for photo research. May God Bless you all.*

**Historical Highlights**  
**Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**  
**Established in 1959**

Constitution and By-laws  
Revised 1985-present

The Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf was organized in 1959, under the leadership of David Richardson. There were no by-laws, until 1985. The first revision was adopted in 1985 under the administration of Jimmy Smith.

The officers were:

President: Jimmy Smith-Mobile  
Vice President: Bonnie Gaither-Talladega  
Secretary: Floyd Little-Montgomery  
Music Director-Faye Rushing-Talladega

The committee for revision consisted of the following:

Paul Bradford  
Floyd Little  
Robert Moore  
David Richardson  
Tom Rushing  
Stan Stepleton  
John Watson

The second revision occurred in 1992 under the administration of Gary Shoemaker.

The officers were:

President: Gary Shoemaker-Leeds  
Vice President: Rick Milford-Talladega  
Secretary/Treasurer: Terry Cox-Mobile  
Song Leader: Richard Jones-Birmingham

The third revision was adopted in 1994 under the administration of Anne Clower.

The officers:

President: Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Vice President: Richard Jones-Birmingham  
Secretary: Carol Hall-Birmingham  
Assistant Secretary: Joyce Wesley-Talladega  
Jr. A.B.C.D. Coordinator-Buddy Burgess-Talladega  
Language Missions Director-Richard Alford- Montgomery

The fourth revision was adopted under the administration of Anne Clower in 1994.

The officers:

President: Anne Clower- Birmingham  
Vice President: Richard Jones-Birmingham  
Secretary: Carol Hall-Birmingham  
Assistant Secretary: Joyce Wesley-Talladega  
Treasurer: Paul Bradford-Birmingham  
Jr. A.B.C.D. Coordinator:  
Buddy Burgess- Talladega  
Language Missions Director:  
Richard Alford- Montgomery

The most recent revision was adopted under the administration of Cliff Watson in 1998.

The Executive officers are:

President: Cliff Watson-Birmingham  
Vice President: Ricky Milford-Talladega  
Secretary: Joyce Wesley-Talladega  
Assistant Secretary: Gwynne Fluharty-Ashville  
Treasurer: Richard Jones-Birmingham  
Jr. A.B.C.D. Coordinator:  
Ricky Milford, Jr.- Talladega  
Historian: Joyce Wesley-Talladega

Committees: Peggy Estes-Talladega  
Bonnie Gaither-Talladega

**1959**

### **Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf Historical Highlights**

Shocco Springs host Deaf Conference.

The Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf started May 29-31 1959 by missionary David Richardson, at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly.

The purpose: fellowship, learning about leadership and evangelism.

The conference began with the evening meal on Friday at 6:00 p.m. Registration fee was .50 cents. Meals were \$1.00 each. For those who stayed at the hotels or cottages, one fee is considered covering 3 meals.

The theme taken from John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The main speakers were: Rev. David Richardson of Montgomery, Alabama, Neal Peyton of Birmingham, Joseph Newton of Dothan, Alabama and James Arthur of Gadsden, Alabama. Forty-five deaf people attended the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf.

**1960**  
**Deaf Conference Meets in Montgomery**  
**July 29-31, 1960**

Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf held its second meeting with Huntington College, Montgomery, Alabama. Attendance was seventy. Guest speakers were: Dr. Jack Roddy of Atlanta, Georgia, Joseph Newton of Dothan, Alabama and David Richardson of Montgomery, Alabama.

Friday-July 29

Registration .50 cents

Room and Meals \$5.00

Insurance per person .25 cents

Supper- 5:45 p.m.

Song Service at 6:45 p.m.

Workshop:

7:05 p.m.-"Let's talk about W.M.U.", Miss Mary Essie Stephens

Worship 8:00 p.m. Rev. Joseph Newton

Saturday-July 30

7:30 a.m.--Morning Devotion- Jimmy Arthur

8:00 a.m.--Breakfast

Workshop: 8:45 a.m. "Let's talk about Sunday School", Rev. George Holmes

10:00 a.m. "The Home and Family Altar", Rev. and Mrs. Nelson Duke

Worship- 11:30 a.m. Worship, Rev. George Thomas

Dinner- 12:30

1:15- "Let's talk about Training Union", Rev. George Caldwell

2:30- Bible Doctrines, Dr. J.R. White

5:30 - Supper

7:10- Workshop- "Let's talk about Brotherhood", Rev. W. J. Isbell

8:10- Worship, Rev. David Richardson

Sunday July 31

7:30- Morning Devotion, Mr. Jimmy Arthur

8:00- Breakfast

9:30- Sunday School

10:55- Morning Worship, Dr. A.J. Roddy

1:00- Dinner

**1961**

**Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf**

**Birmingham**

**August 19-20, 1961**

Rev. Carter Bearden, an outstanding missionary to the deaf from Atlanta, Georgia was the Conference speaker August 19-20, 1961 at Howard College. The meeting began on Saturday morning and adjourned Sunday at noon. Registration fee: fifty cents per-person. The men and male children stayed in the men's residence hall for \$2.00 a person. The women and female children stay in the woman's residence at \$2.00 per person. In attendance were 75. A nursery was provided in the preschool building on the campus.

Sam Maltalka, a hearing student at Howard College, whose home is Jordan, was the guest speaker on Saturday morning.

Programs for Deaf Conference -Howard College August 19-20.

Theme "Building A Christian Life" I Corinthians 3:11; I Timothy 6:19

Saturday night- song service, prayer, announcements, along with a sermon by Rev. Carter Bearden, and a closed caption film titled "Beyond Silence" was shown. Fellowship followed.

Sunday morning at 6:30 the conferees began with a tour of the Nature Trail, held morning devotion which was followed by breakfast.

9:15- Assembly program in the chapel

9:30- Sunday School

Men's Class-Teacher, Houston Dutton

Women's Class-Teacher, Mrs. Carmi Clower

10:50 a. m. --Songs, Prayer, special music

11:00 a.m. --Sermon-Rev. Carter Bearden

12:00 a.m.--Lunch

**1962**

**Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

**Clifford Bruffey Conference Speaker**

**June 15-17,1962**

The Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf met at Shocco Springs, June 15-17, 1962 with an attendance of seventy-five. Guest speaker for the conference was Rev. Clifford Bruffey, born in Backhannon, West Virginia. He is a graduate of

West Virginia School for the Deaf Romney, West Virginia and Gallaudet College, Washington D.C. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Gallaudet.

Every heart was inspired and felt that nearness of the Lord brought through the messages of Rev. Clifford Bruffey, missionary to the deaf, Jackson, Mississippi. At the closing message on Sunday June 17, an invitation was given to follow Jesus. Three young men accepted, two making decisions to become Christians and one rededicating his life to Christ.

No information was given about programs or the names of officers.

The purpose of A.B.C.D. is to inspire, to teach and to train the deaf and the hearing to improve the work of the local church and have Christian fellowship and recreation.

**1963**

**Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf  
June 21-13, 1963  
Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

The Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf began on Friday evening, June 21-23. A religious captioned film for the deaf was shown after songs, greetings, and announcements. Interpreter's Conference Workshops were held for workers and interpreters with the deaf. In attendance were fifty.

Rev. Roy Cissna, missionary to the deaf in Missouri, was the conference guest speaker. In 1957, Roy was introduced to work with the deaf at Berkeley, California through the ministry of Glen Prock, missionary to the deaf with the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1958 Roy accepted an invitation from the Missouri Baptists to lead in the ministry of the deaf.

**1964**

**State Deaf Conference  
June 26-28, 1964**

The theme for the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf was "Sharing Christ with the whole world."

Rev. Bill Hickman, Southern Baptist Missionary to Paraguay was the guest speaker. The 1964 conference meeting had 90 in attendance. The Conference for

the Deaf was held at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega. Rev. Hickman is the brother of Mrs. David Richardson.

Rev. Bill Hickman message was interpreted and slides of his work in South America was shown. All who attended the weekend conference expressed their deep interest in his message. The deaf were given an opportunity to ask the missionary questions. For 35 minutes the deaf asked many questions about the people and their land in South America.

Mr. Houston Dutton was guest speaker for the young people Saturday morning.

Saturday afternoon the new swimming pool was opened for all.

**1965**  
**Camp Sumatanga**  
**Gallant, Alabama**

The State Deaf Conference met at Camp Samatanga in Gallant, Alabama. June the 4-6, 1965. Rev. Jim Whitworth, Cave Spring, Georgia was the guest speaker for the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf.

The camp is located between Birmingham and Gadsden, North of U. S. Highway 11, between U.S. Highway 231 and 278, on County Road number 35. Cost of camp: \$9.50 per person includes room, meals, insurance and registration fee. The men slept in one section of the lodge, and the women in another section. Married couples did not stay together. Children under 10 were charged \$4.50 per child. Nursery provided for pre-school age children during this conference. In attendance were 86 people. Meals for those who planned to stay for one night, was \$1.50 per person.

What to bring:

Linens for twin sized beds, Bible, camera, clothes for hiking and recreation, bathing suits.

A registered nurse was at the camp with first aid equipment for care of minor injuries. Eighty-six people registered for the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf at Camp Sumatanga, Gallant, Alabama, also three blind-deaf people attended the state deaf conference. They were: Perry Glen Norris, Birmingham, Miss. Elaine King, Pelham and George Moore of Anniston.

**1966**  
**Alabama Baptist State Conference for the Deaf**  
**Held with Mobile College**  
**June 17-19, 1966**

Eighty-five people registered at the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf in Mobile, June 17-19, 1966. The weekend was filled with messages of inspiration by Rev. C. F. Landon, guest speaker. Four young people made public decisions for Christ and for rededication.

Saturday afternoon, everyone went on a tour of the Battleship Alabama. Two people who really enjoyed the tour were Elaine King and George Moore who are deaf and blind.

**1967**  
**New Record Attendance at Samford University**  
**For A.B.C.D.**

A new record attendance for the Alabama Conference (A.B.C.D.) was recorded. 125 people registered at Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama on June 16-18, 1967.

Jerry St. John, Missionary to the Deaf in Mississippi was the guest speaker.

The conference began with registration in the hallway of Reid Chapel at 1:30 p.m. which is in the cafeteria of the University. The first session program began at 7:00 p.m. in the Reid Chapel. Room cost \$2.00 each night per person. The cost for adults and children was- \$3.50 for meals. Children's meals depend on what they ate. Registration for adults .50 cents per person. Children .25 cent each. Insurance: .35 cents per person. Nursery for children preschool age was provided. Concerning the rooms, husband's and wives were able to stay in the same room. All single men stayed in the boy's dormitory and all single women stayed in the girl's dormitory.

Two important visitors attended the conference: C. F. Landon, Missionary to the Deaf in Arizona, attended on Saturday and Sunday and Miss Fran Amos, Ft. Myers, Florida, summer worker with the deaf under the Home Mission Board.

Rev. Jerry St. John, Missionary to the Deaf was the guest speaker.

**1968**  
**New Elections for A.B.C.D. Officers in History**  
**Shocco Springs**  
**June 28-30, 1968**

One hundred and four (104) people registered for the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, June 28-30, 1968.

One of the highlights of the conference was a drama presented by hearing youth from the First Baptist Church, Montgomery. The title of the drama was "The Challenge of the Cross". The drama was interpreted into sign language.

For 19 years there were no officers of A.B.C.D. In 1968-1969 officers were elected to make the conference more effective. The name for the conference was changed from the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf to the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf.

The officers elected for 1968-69:

Carmi L. Clower of Birmingham, Alabama, President  
Virgil Hutchins of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Vice President  
Don H. England, Secretary/Treasurer of Huntsville, Alabama  
Mrs. John Odgen of Dothan, Alabama: Music leader.

Qualifications for the officers of A.B.C.D. are as follows:

They shall be mature men and women whom are messengers to the convention which are elected, they are to be of good Christian character with proven leadership abilities and they are to be deaf people.

The name of the organization was declared to be the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf referred to as A. B. C. D. accepts the holy scripture as the all sufficient rule for faith and practice. It agrees with the Baptist faith and message accepted by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Kansas City. A.B.C.D. shall not join with any other group whose faith or doctrine or practice are against those of the Southern Baptist. The membership of A.B.C.D. is made up of any registered Messenger's who are members of a Southern Baptist Church of Alabama. Messengers to A.B.C.D. shall be deaf people or deaf ministry workers who are active members of local Alabama Baptist churches and shall have been voted by their church as a messenger. The messengers shall vote in the A.B.C.D. business meetings. All others are welcomed as "visitor's". A.B.C.D. programs are: workshops, interpreters, fellowship, and worship services. Each year the officers of A.B.C.D. require careful planning together for spiritual training programs for learning, leadership and evangelism in a way that will be uplifting and challenging in striving to do more for God.

1969  
**Mr. M.R. DeMeree Is Conference Speaker  
At Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly  
June 27-29, 1969**

One hundred and forty seven (147) registered at the State Conference for the Deaf. It was the largest Deaf group to ever register. This was the 10th anniversary of the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf. Three guests added to the spirit of the meeting. Charles A. Fanshaw, missionary to the deaf in Georgia, taught a conference on "How to Witness to People". Mr. DeMeree preached and his wife led the music.

Mr. M. R. DeMeree, Missionary to the Deaf in Florida and Colorado was the guest speaker for the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf, June 27-29 at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly near Talladega. Mrs. Helen DeMeree accompanied her husband. They have retired from the Home Mission Board and live in Niceville, Florida. Mr. DeMeree is a native of Cannon City, Colorado and attended the Colorado School for the Deaf. Mrs. Helen DeMeree was born in Louisville, Kentucky and attended the Kentucky School for the Deaf.

The conference begin on Friday night, June 27th with an evening meal at 5:30 and the programs started at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. DeMeree preached Saturday morning, Saturday evening and closed with the message on Sunday morning.

The new 1969-1970 officers:

President: Mr. Bonnie Mann-Birmingham  
Vice President: Houston Dutton-Talladega  
Secretary/Treasurer: Jimmy Smith- Mobile  
Song Leader: Mrs. J.C. McClure -Mobile

1970  
**Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf  
At Mobile College  
June 26-29, 1970**

The conference speaker was Robert M. Landes, Director of Deaf and Special Ministries in Virginia.

Mr. and Mrs. M. R. DeMeree led the conference Saturday morning and they taught Sunday School on Sunday morning.

A "chalk talk" was presented by Mr. Richard Faye, Mobile, Alabama on Saturday evening.

One hundred twenty people registered for the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf at Mobile College.

**1971**  
**Deaf Mock Trial Staged**  
**At Deaf Conference**  
**in Talladega at the County Courthouse**  
**June 11-13, 1971**

The Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf was held at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly near Talladega on June 11-13, 1971. Tommy Wheeler was President of A.B.C.D.

Mr. Carter E. Bearden, Field Consultant to the deaf, from the Home Mission Board/SBC, Atlanta, Georgia, was the guest speaker for the conference. An attendance of one-hundred-fifty people (150) was recorded. Bro. Carter Beardens message was not forgotten. He preached "Be Ye Doers of the Word and not Hearers Only". His message was not easily forgotten because, the message was seen on his hands, on his face, on his chalkboard. His message was supported by the life he lived among the people during the conference at Shocco Springs.

The new officers for 1971-72 were:

President: John T. Wheeler-Huntsville  
Vice President: Jimmy Bishop-Decatur  
Secretary: Mrs. Carmi Clower-Birmingham  
Song Director: Mrs. Elzie Chavers-Mobile

**Highlights of Deaf Mock Trial Story**  
**With Interpreters and Lawyers**  
**June 12, 1971**

A mock trial involving Deaf people and interpreters were one of the highlights of the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf. The mock trial was staged at the Talladega County Court house on June 12, 1971 with the Deaf people taking parts of the plaintiff and the defendant tried before a judge, with the help of interpreters. The purpose was to educate the deaf people in court procedures.

The jury was made up of six (6) deaf people and six (6) hearing persons.

Mrs. Betty Love, a Talladega lawyer, represented Mrs. Bessie Litaker (deaf), Mrs. Connie Barnes was her interpreter.

Mr. Huel Love was the lawyer for Mrs. Bonnie Mann. The ones interpreting for Mr. Huel Love: Mr. Bob Campbell, Mr. Don England, Mr. Harvey Williams, Mr. David Richardson.

Mrs. Mary Lou Bingham interpreted for the judge.

Those called to the witness stand were a (real) policeman who investigated the car accident and a doctor who examined the defendant after the accident.

The idea for this trial was copied from the mock trial at the C.O.S.D. (Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf) two years ago in Chicago, Illinois.

The deaf people who attended the conference want to express their deep appreciation to Judge William Powers and Mr. and Mrs. Love for giving of their time and help in the mock trial. Also, thanks to the interpreters.

**1972**

**Jerry Potter Conference Speaker at  
Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf  
At Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly  
June 9-11, 1972**

The State Deaf Conference took place at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, June 9-11, 1972. The purpose was to encourage deaf Christians in continued Christian growth. Conference pastor was Jerry Potter, missionary to the Deaf in North Carolina, and Mr. David Richardson, missionary to the Deaf in Alabama. Mr. Potter was a regular speaker on the television program for the Deaf, "Light Unto My Path". It was a weekly program on three television stations in Alabama that are especially for the deaf.

Rev. David Richardson reported that they have no Treasurer in the A.B.C.D. organization. The reason was simply because the money collected at the conference was used to defray guest speaker's expenses that may be incurred at the conference. In addition to gifts, whatever is left would be contributed the support of foreign missions. Therefore, no money would be left for the treasurer to take care of throughout next year.

The A.B.C.D. conference had more than one hundred fifteen (115) attending this annual meeting. A beautiful modern motel was completed on June 1, 1972 at Shocco Springs. It was named Mt. Moriah.

There were four group meetings on Friday and Saturday, June 9 & 10, 1972. At each session the adults had a choice of meetings they could attend.

The programs were:

- \*Round-table conference for young people and adults (Bible study, religious problems, family life problems)
- \*Panel discussion between Rev. Potter and Rev. Richardson and two deaf participants plus question-and-answer session with audience
- \*Learn new religious signs taught by Rev. Potter
- \*Religious drama by the Deaf
- \*Entertainment program by the deaf and interpreters
- \*The ABCD Late Movie
- \*The Law, the Deaf and Interpreters--Mr. and Mrs. Huel Love and Judge William Powers
- \*Interpreter's Conference
- \*Role of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- \*Tours of Alabama School for the Deaf and Special Technical Facility
- \*Election of new ABCD officer
- \*Demonstration of Sunday School teaching methods
- \*Choir (Deaf and interpreters)
- \*Worship Services
- \*Interpreting services for the Deaf and Blind

Mr. Gary Shoemaker and Mr. Jimmy Smith are both graduates of the Alabama School for the Deaf. They lead the young people on Friday and Saturday, June 9-10, 1972.

The new officers for 1972-73:

President-Tom Wheeler-Huntsville  
Vice President-Gary Shoemaker-Leeds  
Secretary/Treasurer-Jean England  
Song Director-Fred Waldrip

1973

### **ABCD Hosts Conference at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

The State Conference for the Deaf was held at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly featuring two great religious leaders as speakers: Rev. Carter Bearden, field missionary from the Southern Baptist Mission Board and Rev. David Richardson, Alabama State Board of Missions. Mr. Charles Johnson, Principal of The Alabama School for the Deaf principal was also a guest speaker for A.B.C.D.'s Conference week-end on April 6-8, 1973. The theme of the conference was developed to encourage deaf people in their continued Christian growth. Who were present?

Youth, adults, hearing interpreters, parents of the deaf and all other interested people attended all sessions from Friday evening through Sunday noon.

There were special programs, conferences, general assemblies and individual sessions that permitted choices of different topics. Following is a list of some of the activities:

- \*Religious musical drama, "Celebrate Life"
- \*Drama by ASD Dramatics Club
- \*Dramas by Deaf and interpreters
- \*Skits by church groups
- \*The ABCD Captioned Movies (religious and non-religious)
- \*Review of Ameslan
- \*Recreation
- \*Election of new ABCD officers
- \*Sunday School Demonstrations
- \*Hymns by Deaf and interpreters
- \*Sunday Worship services
- \*Interpreting services for the deaf-blind

New officers for ABCD 1973-74:

President-Tommy Wheeler-Huntsville  
Vice President-Floyd Little-Montgomery  
Treasurer-Mrs. Jean England-Huntsville  
Song Leader-Randy Pix-Huntsville

1974

**State Deaf Conference Meets  
At Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly  
March 29-31, 1974**

The Speaker of the Alabama Conference for the Deaf was Mr. Joe Johnson, pastor of the Silent Friends Chapel, First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. He is the son of deaf parents.

Mrs. Doris Swan from the Sunday School Board in Nashville, one of the Deaf leaders. She is the editor of the Sunday School lessons book used by the many deaf groups throughout the country. She taught Deaf Sunday School teachers.

A banquet was planned for Saturday night in the dining hall. During the weekend a captioned movie was shown and recreations activities were planned for Saturday afternoon.

All of the meetings Friday and Saturday were held in Springview Inn and the dining hall. So there would be little walking. The meeting had more than 204 in attendance at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly near Talladega.

ABCD new officers for 1974-75:

President-Gary Shoemaker-Mobile  
Vice President- Mrs. Ann Clower-Birmingham  
Secretary-Mrs. Pollyanna Davis-  
Song Leader-Mrs. Frances Jones

**1975**

**Deaf People Present Drama  
At Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly-1975**

The Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf met at Shocco Springs, March 21-23, 1975 on Friday evening -Sunday noon. Registration began at 3 pm with an attendance 201.

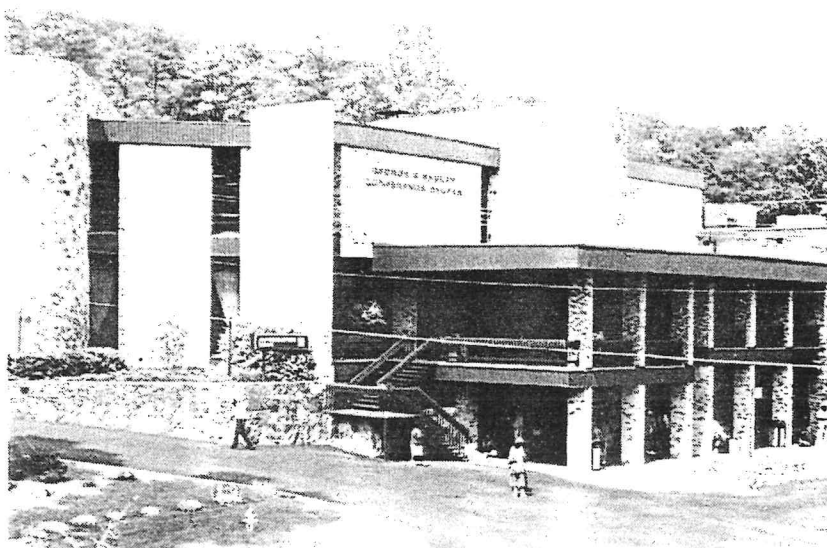
On Friday March 21, at 7 p.m., a drama was presented by the Montgomery deaf group from First Baptist Church. "I Saw Him" was the name of the presentation. There were eleven people in the play who represent physical places and things. Each one told what he saw, felt and thought during the last hours of Jesus life before His crucifixion.

Clifford Bruffey was the conference speaker. He is a native of Buckhannon, West Virginia. He serves as a Missionary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to the Deaf in Washington, D.C. Before assuming this field of service in 1967, he was missionary to the Deaf in Florida. He served as President and Vice President of the Southern Baptist Conference for the Deaf and President of the North Carolina Sunday School Association of the Deaf.

1975-76 ABCD Officers:

President-Gary Shoemaker-Mobile  
Vice President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Secretary-Treasurer-Pollyana Davis-Birmingham  
Song Leader- Frances Jones

**George E. Bagley Conference Center  
Shocco Springs**



**Shocco Springs... "The Gathering Place"**

Every year, in spring, the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf goes to Shocco Springs, the gathering place for all Alabama Baptist to hold for our annual meeting.

It is written that Shocco is an Indian word meaning "Big Tent" or gathering place.

**1976  
State Deaf Conference  
Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly  
June 11-13, 1976**

Two hundred two people (202) attended the State Deaf Conference at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly on June 11-13, 1976. Deaf choirs from Gadsden, Montgomery and Birmingham presented their special music, which was inspiring, led by "The Singing Hands" choir.

Rev. Carter Bearden, Field Consultant Missionary to the Deaf, Home Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Atlanta, Georgia was the weekend leader. Saturday everyone would have a choice of which conference to attend. Several deaf groups presented dramas and skits that were very interesting. Saturday afternoon a multimedia film, "How Ya Coming Alabama" was shown. It is about the History of Alabama, beginning with the first people who lived here.

Recreational activities were directed by Mike Parker from Birmingham. These included: Softball, volleyball, swimming, miniature golf, and tennis were provided.

Sunday School classes were provided for all age groups and for both deaf and hearing people.

Appreciation was expressed to Mary Lou Bingham for reverse interpreting during the Alabama Baptist Conference for the Deaf.

A.B.C.D. new officers for 1976-77:

President-Floyd Little-Montgomery  
Vice President-John Watson-Birmingham  
Secretary-Agnes Reaves-Birmingham  
Song Leader-Becky George-Tuscaloosa

**1977**

**ABCD meets at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly  
July 8-10, 1977**

The Alabama Conference of the Deaf met on July 8-10 at Shocco Springs Assembly. Registration began on Friday morning on July 8, 1977.

Meetings were planned for group participation such as question and answer time, dramas, skits, games, discussions, singing, preaching and other activities.

Charles Woody, pastor of the deaf group from First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas was the conference guest speaker. Ginny Davis, from the Sunday School Board lead a workshop; Sunday School Class for deaf children on Friday night and Saturday morning.

Also on the program was Gary Shoemaker, evangelist from Mobile, Al. Dr. Woodrow Elliott, President, Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Chief Wilby Wallace, Talladega Police Department, Mr. Floyd Little, President of Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf, Vice President, John Watson, Song leader, Agnes Reaves.

Officers for ABCD were:

President-Floyd Little-Montgomery  
Vice President-John Watson- Birmingham  
Secretary-Frances Jones-Birmingham  
Song Leader-Agnes Reaves-Birmingham

**1978**  
**Rev. Carl Earwood, Conference Speaker for Deaf Meeting**  
**June 2-4, 1978**

There were a total of two hundred forty (240) people at Shocco Springs for the Alabama Baptist Conference meeting, June 2-4, 1978. It was the largest number to attend a state conference in nineteen (19) years.

ABCD theme, "Bold Deaf Volunteer-Service for Christ". ABCD, guest speaker was Rev. Carl Earwood, Austin, Texas. He is pastor to the Deaf at Congress Avenue Baptist Church. He served as President of Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf in 1978. He is deaf and a graduate of Texas School for the Deaf. Both of his parents are deaf.

Saturday morning, everyone had a choice of conferences to attend. Then several groups of choirs led music and preaching. Saturday afternoon there was a time of recreation and conferences meetings. Wilbur Huckabe, Atlanta and Carl Earwood led the conference.

After the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf on June 2-4, 1978 meeting at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, many people were impressed with the conference. It was "tremendous".

The preaching of Carl Earwood, Minister to the Deaf at Congress Avenue Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, was inspiring and helpful. The singing of all the choirs was wonderful. Wilbur Huckabe led several conferences for deaf people and hearing people, which were interesting.

ABCD officers for 1978-1979:

President-Gary Shoemaker, Mobile  
Vice President-Frances Jones-Birmingham  
Secretary-Becky George-Tuscaloosa  
Song Leader- Paul Bradford-Birmingham

**1979**  
**Attendance Keeps Growing**  
**A.B.C.D. Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**  
**June 8-10, 1979**

The highest attendance in ABCD history was broken with two hundred seventy people (270) registered on Friday 5:30 p.m., June 8-10-1979. Registration cost of \$4.00 a person. \$27.00 for 2 people in a room and \$32.00 for 3 or 4 people in a room. Total cost - the price of room and registration fee. This includes 2 nights

lodging and six meals. It covers attendance to all of the conference sessions, provides sickness and accident insurance along with infirmary services. Also the privilege of using the recreation facilities. A nursery was provided.

The Barnetts lead the deaf adults and young deaf people at Shocco Springs State Deaf Conference on June 8-10, 1979. Mr. Hoyt Larry Barnett was the guest speaker. He is the son of deaf parents and has followed God's call to give his life and talents in ministry with the deaf people. Mr. Larry Barnett, former Director of Deaf Ministries in the office of the Louisiana Baptist State Convention.

Workshop: Children's Sunday School literature led by Mrs. Donna C. Barnett. Donna is the wife of Larry Barnett. Donna, in the Deaf Children's Sunday School literature workshops, gave practical information for those who work in this area. There was a time for questions and answers.

ABCD officers for 1979-80:

President-Rev. Tom Rushing-Talladega  
Vice President-Floyd Little-Montgomery  
Secretary-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Song Director-Judy Enzor-Frisco City

**1980**

**George Joslin, Speaker for State Conference  
July 11-13, 1980**

Flash-Flash.....Notice--change of room rate for Deaf Conference at Shocco Springs. The date of the conference was changed for 1980. The Deaf conference was held July 11-13, 1980 at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly.

The new rate for Springview Inn per person, \$34.00 for two people per room. For three (3) or four (4) people in a room \$30.00 for the weekend. For the total cost of the conference per person add \$4.00 registration fee to the cost of the room for the weekend. This includes two nights lodging and six meals per person. The conference began with supper at 5:30 p.m. and closed with a noon meal Sunday, July 13th. One hundred thirty (130) people registered.

The conference speaker was Mr. George, a native of Missouri. He became the director of Language Missions with the Virginia Baptist General Board. In 1978, he became director of Richmond Center for the Deaf, at the J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Richmond, Virginia. In addition to being the main speaker for the conference, he led conferences on Saturday morning. Rev. Duane Davis, missionary to the deaf in Talladega, and pastor of Faith Baptist Deaf Church also lead conferences Saturday morning. Mr. Joslin and his wife Cindy led one of the children's conferences. The Brunsons were leaders for recreation and activities for

children and young people during the conference. Mr. Brunson is a magician. He uses magic to present the gospel.

ABCD officers for 1980-81:

President-Miss Annette Neal-Birmingham  
Vice President- Mr. Tom Rushing  
Secretary-Mrs. Bonnie Gaither  
Music Directory-Mrs. Patti Roper

**1981**  
**State Deaf Conference**  
**June 12-14, 1981**

The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf changed its meeting time back to the month of June. Last year, 1980 the conference met in July and it was so hot and inconvenient that the conference decided to move back to the regular June meeting. One of the reason last year (1980) the Alabama Association of the Deaf met a week later than the Deaf Conference at Shocco. The people who attended the A.B.C.D. Conference voted to move it back to June. The guest speaker of the State Conference for June 12-14, 1981 was Rev. Carol Enoch, pastor of Baptist Church for the Deaf, Louisville, Kentucky. His wife, Sue led many conferences in several different states, also at Glorietia and Ridgecrest Baptist Assemblies. Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Brunson were in charge of the recreation for the children and young people. The Brunsons taught magic tricks to the children, as they went on nature trail hikes, and other types of recreation.

Approximately one hundred seventy three (173) people attended the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf at Shocco Springs on June 12-14, 1981.

An offering of, \$170.32 was given by those attending the conference. This money was used to pay expenses for deaf boys and girls at camp during the summer.

Officers for 1981-82:

President-Jimmy Smith-Mobile  
Vice President-Bonnie Gaither-Talladega  
Secretary-Floyd Little-Montgomery  
Music Director-Faye Rushing-Talladega

**1982**  
**The Deaf Meet At Shocco Springs**  
**June 11-13,1982**

The 1982 Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf met at Shocco Springs on June 11-13, 1982. One hundred forty six (146) people attended the conference.

Note: Rate for children, birth through 2 years, \$3.00 per day. Children ages 3-8, in room with parents are charge half the conference rate. Children can not be left unattended either in the building or on the grounds. Adults: for one person staying at Springview Inn, \$44.00 for two nights lodging and six meals. This includes registration fee \$6.00 for the conference. \$40.00 for three or four per person in one room includes \$6.00 registration fee.

The conference guest speaker for Shocco was Mr. James Fair, a deaf pastor. He was elected as President for the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf during the annual meeting at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, August of 1981.

The Brunsons, Patrick the magician and his wife, Cindy led the young people for the weekend. They live in New Orleans, Louisiana. He is a pharmacist and his wife attended New Orleans Baptist Seminary.

ABCD officers for 1982-83:

President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Vice President-Jimmy Smith-Mobile  
Secretary-Treasurer-Bonnie Gaither-Talladega  
Song Leader-Tom Rushing-Talladega

**1983**  
**New Junior A.B.C.D. Added to**  
**The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**  
**Founder- Anne Clower, Birmingham, Al.**

The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf met at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly which is near Talladega on June 10-12, 1983. There were meetings for deaf people, interpreters, young deaf people, and activities for people of all ages. A nursery was provided. Attendance was 124. The conference leader was Dr. William R. Young, Instructor in Foundations of Education, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He has led many conferences and workshops for deaf people.

Something new was added to the state conference--Junior ABCD has been added to the program of the ABCD.

Rev. Stanley Stepleton, pastor of McElwain Deaf Mission, Birmingham and Rev. Tom Rushing, pastor of Faith Baptist Church of the Deaf, Talladega both lead the conferences on "How to Serve the Lord Within the Church" and "Ways of Fellowship Within the Church".

The meeting began with the evening meal on Friday, June 10th, and concluded with lunch following the Sunday morning message by Rick Yount.

1983-84 officers for ABCD:

President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Vice President-John Watson-Birmingham  
Secretary/Treasurer-Bonnie Gaither-Talladega  
Song Director-Tom Rushing-Talladega

**1983**

### **Jr. A.B.C.D. and Interpreters Workshops**

The Jr. A.B.C.D. and the interpreter's workshops were organized in the year of 1983. Anne Clower, Birmingham was elected as ABCD President in 1982. She went to the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf in Waco, Texas and learned the Jr. ABCD and the interpreter's workshops were already organized. She saw that Alabama needed these for Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf. Therefore, she was able to get the programs added to the program of the regular Deaf Conference of ABCD.

The first new Jr. ABCD 1982-83 officers were elected:

President-Susan Wilson-Chelsea  
Vice President-Don Donald, Montgomery  
Historian-Brenda Robertson-Birmingham

The first conference leader for the Jr. ABCD was Mr. Robert Moore of New Orleans, Louisiana. He graduated from Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. in May 1983.

The interpreter's workshop had their own meeting separate from the deaf meetings. Mrs. Peggy Terrell led the conferences for the hearing people who work with the deaf. She serves as an interpreter with First Baptist Church of Pell City.

Both of these groups are still in effect as of today.

**1984**  
**Alabama Deaf Conference**  
**Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**  
**June 8-10, 1984**

Rev. Jari Saavalainen was the speaker for the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf, June 8-10, 1984 at Shocco Springs. Attendance was 149. Jari Saavalainen is the of pastor of the Alpha Baptist Chapel of the Deaf, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

A program called "Reach out to Alabama Deaf" (ROAD) was started during the State Deaf Conference in June at Shocco Springs. To promote the program the following committee was named: Richard Jones and Stan Stepleton, Birmingham; Jimmy Smith and Robert Moore, Mobile; Floyd Little and David Richardson, Montgomery; and Tom Rushing, Talladega.

The goal of ROAD was to enlist more deaf people in Alabama for Bible Study and worship in various areas, and to involve more deaf Christians in finding their place of service for the Lord.

One of the workshop leaders was Vesta Bice, Coordinator of Mission Service Corps--Reach out to Texas Deaf.

The Jr. ABCD program was led by the following officers:

President-Tim Campbell-Cleveland  
Vice President-Anne Neel-Birmingham  
Secretary/Treasurer-Rhonda Young-Birmingham  
Historian-Brenda Robertson-Birmingham

The Jr. ABCD sessions were planned to meet the needs of teenagers and young adults.

Workshops for interpreters and workers with the deaf was led by Mrs. Peggy Terrell of Talladega. She led the conference for the hearing people, who work with the deaf. Mrs. Terrell, a former teacher at ASD in Talladega, is a native of Mississippi and the daughter of deaf parents. She serves as an interpreter at First Baptist Church, Pell City, Alabama.

The ABCD officers for 1984-1985:

President-Robert Moore  
Vice President-John Watson-Birmingham  
Secretary-Treasurer-Paul Bradford  
Song Leader-Annette Neel

**1985**  
**Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**  
**June 7-9, 1985**  
**Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

Deaf and hearing people gathered at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, Talladega, for the State Conference of the Deaf, which met June 7-9, 1985. One hundred forty-seven people registered for the weekend. Rates per person: rooms in Springview Inn for 2 cost \$44.00, for 3 or 4 in a room cost \$36.00 per person. The group was greeted by Dr. George Ricker, Director, Shocco Springs. Jerry St. John Missionary to the Deaf in South Carolina was the conference speaker. It was fortunate that he could be with A.B.C.D., after the scheduled speaker had to cancel his plans to come to Alabama.

Billy Stricklen, Jr. ABCD speaker, is a Minister to the Deaf Youth, at Silent Friends Chapel, Dallas, Texas. He was the conference leader for Jr. ABCD. There was good attendance and attention at his meeting during the weekend.

A big "thank you" went out to those who led the workshops: Tom Rushing, Pastor of Faith Baptist Deaf Mission, Talladega. Stan Stepleton, Pastor, McElwain Deaf Mission, Birmingham. Lynn Stepleton, led the WMU. Patti Sheets led the interpreters. Martha Roberson, led the Sunday School teachers.

A special "thank you" to Mary Lou Bingham, who was in charge of activities for the deaf/blind during the conference.

At the conference, Mary Lou Bingham announced her retirement with the deaf/blind fellowship, which meets every year during the ABCD.

**1986**  
**June 6-8, 1986**  
**Alabama Deaf Conference**  
**Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

The Conference speaker for the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf was Rev. Donnie Wiltshire, pastor of Baptist Deaf Mission, Lakeview Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana. Rev. Wiltshire is a hearing person that God has called to preach for the deaf with an attendance of 129. There were several workshops for deaf church members and deaf church leaders. History of deaf missions led by Donnie Wiltshire, New Orleans, Louisiana, a missionary. Led by Stan Stepleton, Birmingham, Al.

Some of the workshops for deaf people are:

"History of Deaf Missions" led by Donnie Wiltshire, New Orleans, Louisiana.  
"Me, A Missionary?" led by Stan Stepleton, Birmingham, Alabama. "Where Can I,  
As a Lay Person, Do Mission Work?" --Robert Moore, Mobile, Alabama. "Doctrine  
of the Laity" --taught by Tom Rushing, Talladega, Alabama.

The Jr. A.B.C.D. meeting led by Severa Trevino, born in San Antonio, Texas, who  
sings with the Reach Out to Texas Group. Miss Trevino was in the singing group  
from Texas who sang at McElwain Baptist Church during the Christmas Banquet in  
December, 1986. Severa Vesta Trevino's parents are deaf. She has three hearing  
brothers. Severa was led to become a Christian by Miss Vesta Bice, who was  
director of Reach Out to Texas Deaf Project.

Mary Lou Bingham of Midfield was awarded a plaque at the Alabama Baptist  
Conference of the Deaf at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, honoring her for 60  
years of service " as an interpreter, counselor, and friend" to the deaf. Presenting  
the award to Mary Lou Bingham are Robert Moore, pastor of the Deaf  
congregation at Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama and John Watson of  
Birmingham.

A special class for deaf/blind group was on Saturday and Sunday led by Mrs. Faye  
Rushing, Talladega, Alabama.

Interpreter's workshop was held on Saturday morning, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:45.

ABCD officers-1986-87:

President-Richard Jones-Birmingham  
Vice President-Jimmy Smith-Mobile  
Secretary/Treasurer-Judy Enzor-Frisco City  
Song Leader-Peggy Estes-Eufaula

Jr. ABCD Officers:

President-Don Donald-Montgomery  
Vice President-Susan Wilson-Chelsea  
Secretary/Treasurer-Brenda Robertson-Birmingham

**1987**  
**28th Annual**  
**Alabama Deaf Conference**  
**At Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

PLEASE NOTICE THE CHANGE OF DATE FOR THIS CONFERENCE- FROM THE  
MONTH OF JUNE TO THE MONTH OF MARCH FOR 1987.

State Deaf Conference begins March 13-14, 1987

The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf guest speakers were: Rev. Danny Bice, Missionary to the Deaf in Oklahoma. Jr. ABCD leader was Rev. Carter Bearden, Jr., Pastor of First Baptist Deaf Mission, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In attendance, 83.

Friday Evening session:

Richard Jones--- President of ABCD  
Group Singing--- Peggy Estes  
Greeting, George Ricker, Director of Shocco Springs Assembly  
Announcements---Jimmy Smith  
Special Music---"Signs of Praise"  
Message---Danny Bice  
Break--Snack Room and Gift Shop open  
Fellowship  
Light Outs!!!

Saturday Morning and afternoon Sessions:

Two deaf laymen, Jimmy Smith of Mobile and Richard Jones of Birmingham, lead workshops for the deaf. Theme for the Conference held on March 13-14, 1987. "Growing and Strengthening Your Spiritual Life" - Danny Bice  
Doctrine of Prayer - Jimmy Smith Jr.  
ABCD - Carter Bearden, Jr.,  
Deaf/Blind Activities -- Lin Fulton  
Richard Jones taught "Growing and Strengthening your Bible Study Life"  
Interpreters Workshop sessions led by Joyce Franklin, Paula Frederick, Lynn Stepleton and Harvey Williams

Saturday afternoon--Business Meeting and Election of officers  
Conference Adjourns at 3:30 p.m.

Sunday morning session:

Morning Worship----Assembly Room  
Group Singing-----Peggy Estes  
Announcements-----Jimmy Smith  
Special Music  
Message-----Rev. Danny Bice

Lunch at 12:00---Dining room  
Go Home....

Jr. A.B.C.D. officers:

President--Susan Wilson, Jacksonville

\*Susan was Vice President and became President after Don Donald moved out of state. Brend Robertson took Susan Wilson's position as Vice President.

Secretary/Treasurer--Brenda Robertson, Pelham

A.B.C.D. officers:

President--Richard Jones-Birmingham

Vice President--Jimmy Smith-Mobile

Secretary/Treasurer--Judy Enzor, Frisco City

Song Leader--Peggy Estes - Eufaula

Children's program-age 7-14--Leader by Mrs. Faye Sims Nursery (for children thru age 6)--Children's Building during the entire conference.

**1987**

**Program Personalities**

Carter E. Bearden.,Baton Rouge, Louisiana , Pastor,Baptist Deaf Mission

Danny Bice, Moore, Oklahoma State Missionary to the Deaf

Mary Lou Bingham, Midfield, Alabama Interpreter at Large

Peggy Estes, Eufaula, Alabama First Baptist Church

Joyce Franklin, Birmingham, Alabama Director of "Signs of Praise"

Paula Fredrick, Montgomery, Alabama Interpreter/Coordinator of Montgomery Deaf Center

Lin Fulton, Alabaster, Alabama Free Lance, Certified Interpreter

Richard B. Jones, Jr., Birmingham, Alabama McElwain Baptist Deaf Mission and Contract worker with Alabama Baptist State Convention

David Richardson, Montgomery, Alabama State Missionary to the Deaf

Jimmy M. Smith, Jr., Mobile, Alabama Spring Hill Baptist Church

Lynn Stepleton, Birmingham, Alabama McElwain Baptist Deaf Mission

Harvey Williams, Birmingham, Alabama Interpreter for the Deaf in Birmingham schools

**1988**  
**Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**  
**Shocco Springs**  
**June 3-5, 1988**

During the weekend of June 3-5, 1988, one hundred seventy people attended the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf at Shocco Springs, near Talladega, Alabama.

The Conference began with registration Friday, June 3 and ended with the noon meal on Sunday. The cost of Friday supper through Sunday noon was- \$54.00 per person with two (2) people in a room. For three (3) or four (4) people cost \$45.00 , includes six (6) meals and two (2) nights lodging at Springview Inn.

The Conference speaker for ABCD, Rev. Arthur Craig, pastor of Woodhaven Baptist Deaf Church, Houston, Texas. He preached during the Conference, and led a workshop for Deaf people.

Frances Flowers of Helena, Alabama was a leader of Jr. ABCD. She taught deaf school children in Dallas, Texas. Frances worked with deaf people through Faith Baptist Church of the Deaf when Rev. Tom Rushing was pastor. Also, she worked with Deaf Opportunity Out Reach in Fort Worth, Texas.

Interpreter's workshop led by Mrs. Sherri Morgan, a Deaf employee at Tennessee School for the Deaf, at Knoxville, Tennessee.

1988 ABCD officers:

President--John Watson-Birmingham  
Vice President--Billy Marsh--Opp  
Secretary/Treasurer--Paul Bradford  
Song Leader--Janet Brock

Jr. ABCD officers:

President--Cromwell Josey--Andalusia  
Vice President--Scott Young--Anniston  
Secretary--Clifton Stinson--

**1989**  
**Deaf and Hearing Invited to ABCD**  
**At Shocco Springs**  
**June 2-4, 1989**

The State Conference of the Deaf held its 30th annual meeting at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega. One hundred twenty seven (127) people registered

for the weekend, June 2-4, 1989. All participants stayed at the deaf conference Springview Inn. The following cost for a person in a room or two people each person \$56.00, if three or four people in a room cost \$47.00 each person for the conference. Includes six (6) meals and two nights lodging.

A special meeting for the Jr. ABCD was led by Rev. David Whitcraft, Minister to the Deaf at Olivet Baptist Church, Wichita, Kansas. The weekend was filled with workshops for the deaf, hearing and youth. There were special classes for the deaf/blind.

On Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning interpreters workshops were led by Barb Coffin from Arvada, Colorado.

Rev. Buddy Burgess, Missionary Chaplain to the Deaf and Blind in Talladega was the guest speaker for A.B.C.D., on June 2-4, 1989.

Activities for children ages 7-14 led by Mr. and Mrs. Pat Brunson, who provided entertainment, hikes, crafts, and other activities.

Alabama Baptist for the Deaf officers for 1989-1990 were elected on Saturday, June 3, 1989 at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly.

President-Jimmy Smith-Mobile  
Vice President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Secretary/Treasurer-Terry Cox-Mobile  
Song Leader-Linda Shoemaker-Leeds

Jr. ABCD officers:

President-Cromwell Josey-Andalusia  
Vice President-Scott Young-Anniston  
Secretary-Clifton Stinson-Andalusia

## 1990

### Special Conference for Deaf Youth Deaf Adults and Hearing Persons

"Deaf Can" was the theme for ABCD. Rev. Carden Bearden, Jr. was the guest speaker.

Guest speaker for Jr. ABCD was Mark Mitchell.

All deaf people and hearing people were invited to Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly on June 8-10, 1990 (Friday-Sunday). Attendance was 151 people for The State Baptist Conference of the Deaf. The weekend was filled with special

workshops for hearing people to learn more about deaf people and how to work more effectively with them.

The group led the state conference at Shocco were "Silent Touch" from Louisville, Kentucky. The group are made up of deaf and hearing people. The group led musical programs, drama, and workshops during the weekend. The Silent Touch singers have had led church revival meetings for deaf people, given special music programs in schools for the deaf, and have given special music for conventions at large meetings throughout the United States.

There were special workshops for the deaf adults, deaf youth, deaf children, hearing adults, hearing youth and hearing children.

A nursery was provided for babies and children through age 6. Cost for babies and children: Birth-2yrs old-\$6.00 for 2 nights and 6 meals. Ages 3-8- \$30.00 each child for 2 nights lodging and 6 meals, 9 years and up--\$60.00 each person with lodging and 6 meals.

ABCD officers for 1990-1991:

President-Jimmy Smith-Mobile  
Vice President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Secretary/Treasurer-Terry Cox-Mobile  
Song Leader-Linda Shoemaker

Jr. ABCD officers:

President-Don Donald  
Vice President-Cathy Donald

**1991**

**Shocco Springs Hosts Deaf Baptist Conference  
June 14-16, 1991**

The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf was led by Richard Alford, Alabama State Board of Missions, Montgomery, Alabama with an attendance of 107.

The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf was held on Father's Day at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega. For the first time in ABCD's history all men were elected as officers. All of them are fathers.

ABCD expresses our appreciation to the 1990-91 officers who led the conference. Richard Alford who counseled or helped at the conference; Joe Cox of Florida, led the Jr. ABCD as their pastor; and Howard Burkhart as ABCD pastor.

Executive officers for 1991-1992:

President-Gary Shoemaker-Leeds  
Vice President-Rick Milford-Talladega  
Secretary/Treasurer-Terry Cox-Mobile  
Song Leader-Richard Jones-Birmingham

ABCD Logo Committee Members:

Paul Bradford-Birmingham  
Maye Watson-Birmingham

1992

Shocco Springs  
Talladega, Alabama

"God's True Fellowship in Alabama" was the theme for June 12-14, 1992, 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf at Shocco Springs in Talladega. Ben Cox of Memphis, Tennessee, was guest speaker.

Deaf workshop leaders:

Phillip Easterling, - "Fellowship Make Revival".  
Elaine Easterling - "The Roles of Women in Church Fellowship".  
"The Roles of Senior Adults in God's Fellowship" led by Ben Cox.  
"Music Fellowship" - Richard Jones  
"Reaching Youth through Christian Fellowship" ages (13-18) - Don Donald.  
"Blind/Deaf in Church Fellowship" - David Richardson  
Children (Grades 1-6) - Vicki Milford  
Interpreter's - Richard Alford.

Program Personalities

Richard Alford, Alabama State Board of Missions, Montgomery, Alabama.  
Ben Cox, First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee.  
Don Donald, Eastmont Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama.  
Elaine Easterling, First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.  
Phillip Easterling, First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.  
Vicki Milford, Faith Baptist Deaf Mission, Talladega, Alabama.  
David Richardson, First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama.  
Buster Taylor, Director, Shocco Springs, Conference Center, Talladega, Alabama.

ABCD officers 1992-1993:

President-Gary Shoemaker, Leeds  
Vice President-Ricky Milford, Talladega  
Secretary/Treasurer-Terry Cox, Mobile  
Song Leader-Richard Jones-Birmingham

ABCD Logo Committee Members:

Paul Bradford-Birmingham  
Maye Watson-Birmingham

### 1992

Heather Whitestone was on the ABCD staff as counselor at Shocco Springs. She served for the Jr. Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf. Miss Whitestone was an inspiration for the deaf youth at the ABCD. She came back to visit ABCD, March 4-6, 1992 as the newly reigning Miss America.

The Miss America pageant began in 1921. Each year the pageant offers scholarships to contestants who place categorically. In 1994 it offered \$24 million in scholarships to the contestants.

### 1993

#### **Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly**

Rev. Daniel Johnson was our guest speaker, March 5-7, 1993 for The Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf. He is a deaf pastor at First Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He works with kids at Louisiana School for the Deaf in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

One hundred eleven people attended the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf, March 5-7, 1993.

ABCD Themes for the conference:

"Personal Christian Growth Through Leadership" Scripture: 11 Thessalonians 1:3.  
"We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ".

The four workshop topics were:

1. "Personal Growth in Deaconship Role" led by Roy Blaylock, Memphis, Tennessee.
2. "Evangelism Training" led by Rev. Daniel Johnson, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
3. "How to improve our Leadership role in the Church/Christ" led by Arthur Craig, Houston, Texas.
4. "Woman's Missionary Union" led by Barbara Owens, Montgomery, Alabama.

ABCD officers for 1993-94:

President-Ricky Milford-Talladega  
Vice-President-Richard Jones-Birmingham  
Secretary-Carol Hall-Birmingham  
Asst. Secretary-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Treasurer-Bonnie Gaither-Talladega

1994

### Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf

The 35th annual Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf met at Shocco Springs on March 4-6, 1994 with an attendance of one hundred forty three (143) people. Rev. Phillip Easterling of Ohio, was the guest speaker for the weekend.

ABCD "Theme", "Let Your Heart Shine for Jesus Christ" The conference used the theme from scripture II Corinthians 4:6. "For God, who said, Let Light Shine out of darkness, made His Light Shine in our hearts to give us the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ".

ABCD held four workshops:

"Prayer for Spiritual Awakening" led by Joyce Smith, Ridgecrest, North Carolina.

"Song Leader/Music" led by Mark Mitchum, Arlington, Texas.

"Interpreter Workshop" led by Rev. David Richardson, Montgomery, Alabama.

"Youth Camp" led by Larry White from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The Youth Camp celebrated their Third Annual Deaf Youth Camp. Mark Mitchum helped the youth to feel the Spirit of God through music. Their camp pastor was, Rev. Larry White, First Southern Baptist Deaf Church in Del City, Oklahoma.

#### Children's Program

Ages 0-6: Nursery provided during all workshops, business meeting and assemblies. Pre-school Building-Jane Ryan

Ages 7-12: Program provided during the entire conference. Same as above.

A statewide committee planned a Deaf Children's Camp. The committee guided and promoted the camp. Those who serve with Rick Milford were:

Penny Anderson

Angela Blair

Rev. Buddy Burgess

Vicky Brown

Robert Weaver

They welcomed the youth camp as they met with A.B.C.D.

Eighty-five Alabama Baptist Churches report that they have an interpreting ministry. Congratulations to Green Valley Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama. They have begun a new deaf mission. Danny Blair, is pastor of Green Valley Baptist Church. It is located on US Hwy 31 and Cahaba Valley Road in North Shelby County.

1994-1996 ABCD officers:

President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Vice President-Richard Jones-Birmingham  
Treasurer-Paul Bradford-Birmingham  
Secretary-Carol Hall-Birmingham  
Asst. Secretary-Joyce Wesley-Talladega  
Language Missions Director-Richard Alford-Montgomery  
ABCD Coordinator-Buddy Burgess

The new 1994-1996 Jr. ABCD officers:

President-Cobby Newman  
Vice President-Casey Williams  
Director-Rev. Buddy Burgess  
Language Missions-Rev. Richard Alford

**1995**

### **Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**

ABCD held its 36th Annual Conference at Shocco Springs on March 10-12, 1995 with an attendance of 148. This conference is made possible with cooperative program funds of Southern Baptist Churches.

ABCD theme for the 36th annual conference is "Who is Lord?" Rev. Lloyd Carrera from Tampa, Florida was our guest speaker. Scripture Luke 6:46, "And why do you Call Me, "Lord, Lord", but do not do what I say?"

Joyce Smith, North Carolina, a nationally certified interpreter for the deaf led the workshop of "Experiencing God".

Gerrie Hatley of Birmingham, Alabama, an interpreter for the Gardendale schools led workshop of "Expressive Interpreting" for the interpreters. Everyone loved her.

Mark Mitchum is deaf. He is also an ordained Southern Baptist Evangelist and has been in the ministry for 18 years. Mark and his wife, Beth led their workshop in American Sign Language (ASL) and voice music. He led Jr. ABCD (Youth only).

ABCD recognized Heather Whitestone, Miss America, as a devout Christian and

supports her in all her Christian endeavors. ABCD applauded her straight forwardness in recognizing the Lord our God in showing and announcing her faith in Him. We, ABCD, support her with love, prayers and encouragement to witness for Christ.

The Children' program and Child Care was provided by Jane Ryan and Acteen Activators of Greenbriar Baptist Church, Anniston, Alabama.

Leader: Mrs. Jean Knight

Acteens:	Kim Kessler	Elizabeth Young
	Shyna Williams	Jamie Hinton
	Maria Williams	Christy McDaniel
	Dottie Weaver	Heather Phillips

ABCD officers-1994-1996:

President-Anne Clower-Birmingham  
Vice President-Richard B. Jones-Birmingham  
Secretary-Carol Hall-Birmingham  
Asst. Secretary-Joyce Wesley-Talladega  
Treasurer-Paul Bradford,Birmingham  
Language Missions Director-Richard Alford  
Jr. ABCD Coordinator-Rev. Buddy Burgess

Jr. ABCD officers for 1994-1996

President-Cobby Newman  
Vice President-Casey Williams  
Director-Rev. Buddy Burgess  
Language Missions-Richard Alford

**1996**  
**A B C D**  
**Alabama Baptist Conference**  
**Of The Deaf**  
**March 1-3, 1996**  
**Shocco Springs**

Began Friday evening and ended with lunch on Sunday. A total of 178 people attended the ABCD.

The guest speakers for the Friday night service were Carter Bearden of Atlanta, Georgia and Cliff Watson of Birmingham. Cliff Watson led the morning worship service also. ABCD's theme was "The Mind of Christ".

There were four workshops held:

"Deaf Leadership" -Carter Bearden-Georgia  
"Family Life"-Cliff Watson-Birmingham  
"Signed Music"-Mark Mitchum-Arlington, Texas  
"Interpreter Training"-Gwen Fluharety-Ashville, Alabama  
All leaders were deaf, except Gwynne Fluharty

Guest speaker for the Jr. ABCD was Chris Shirley from South Carolina.

The children's program was provided by Missionary Robin Latham, Jackson, Tennessee, a graduate of Union University. She performed with a deaf ministry named Heavenly Praise for 7 years. She taught children's choirs and worked at Centrifuge. She has extensive experience in Vacation Bible School (VBS), songs, leading recreation, camp staff, life guard, drama, singing solo and choir, puppets, clowning, and song interpretation. She has traveled to Hawaii and Honduras.

We re-elected the same ABCD officers from last year.

1997  
ABCD-38th Annual Conference  
March 7-9, 1997  
Shocco Springs Center

The program for the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf featured the following guest speakers:

Rev. Samuel Marsh of Danville, Kentucky led the Adult ABCD Conference.

Rev. Kevin Clark of North Carolina led the Jr. ABCD Conference.

The ABCD Theme for the Conference, "Am I Looking to God?" Isaiah 45:22.

ABCD Deaf Workshops:

"Right from Wrong" led by Rev. Samuel Marsh, Kentucky.

"Experiencing God" led by Rev. Cliff Watson, Birmingham.

Music Workshop led by Rev. Paul Ellis, Birmingham

Interpreter workshop led by Laura Kennedy, Jasper.

In attendance for the ABCD Conference 132 people

ABCD officers for 1996-1997:

President-Anne Clower-Birmingham

Vice President-Don Lehnerz-Talladega

Secretary-Joyce Wesley-Talladega

Treasurer-Richard Jones-Birmingham

Language Missions -Richard Alford, Montgomery

Jr. ABCD Coordinator-Ricky Milford, Jr.-Talladega

Director of Missions-Rev. Luther Williams-Talladega

Rev. Kevin Clark, a pastor from North Carolina, preached Saturday night services. He impressed God's Word in such a beautiful way so dramatically demonstrated. It came alive from the Bible, James 2:18-20. Kelvin has the talent of a photographic memory, which he uses in preaching the Bible. He performed a song by Carman, "Who Is In the House?" J.C., (Jesus Christ). Debbie, his wife did beautiful in reverse imitating her husband's dramatic act.

Song leader-Paul Ellis led special music, "Welcome the Holy Spirit" and "Holy, Holy, Holy". Signed music can be a tremendous tool to help us to praise and worship God, says Paul.

Pastor Samuel Marsh ends Sunday's messages, "Watch your Consciences".

**1998**  
**39th Annual**  
**Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf**  
**March 6-8, 1998**

The 39th Annual Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf met March 6-8, 1998 at Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega with an attendance of one hundred-forty three people and thirty three messengers, and eight visitors.

The theme for 1998 was "Christ's Ambassadors" II Corinthians 5:20. The conference began their meeting with Rev. Koehring of Raleigh, North Carolina, as guest speaker. Fritz is deaf, raised in Africa while his father was a US Diplomat. Fritz is pastor to the Deaf at Raleigh Baptist Deaf Mission, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Workshop Leaders:

Cliff Watson who taught "Three Steps Backward, and Two Steps Forward". He is the pastor of Birmingham Community Deaf Church.

Lewis Cleveland, Music Leader at First Southern Baptist Church, Del. OK. Taught the music workshop.

Fritz Koehring led "People Sharing Jesus".

Harvey Williams led "Interpreters Workshop". He is a full time interpreter from Birmingham, Alabama.

Mike McKee led Jr. ABCD, is pastor to the Deaf at First Deaf Mission, in Shreveport, Louisiana.

This conference is made possible through the Cooperative Program gifts of Alabama Baptist Churches and the funds of the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf.

Saturday night JR. ABCD:

Pastor Mike McKee preached. There were 22 boys and girls from Alabama School for the Deaf that attended ABCD with their camp pastor Mike McKee. These students did a drama demonstrating how to get rid of evil (sins) by throwing Satan from your heart, and letting the Holy Spirit come into your heart. It was brought to life, their performance was excellent.

Rev. Fritz Koehring concluded Sunday morning with a powerful message from God's Word to the Deaf on ABCD theme: "Christ Ambassadors" from II Corinthians 5:20. He gave a challenging message that Ambassadors are inspired by God to reach out to other people. They are to go out and tell others about God before it's too late. He explained three essential steps on how to be Christ's Ambassador's. He concluded that people can, be ambassadors if they are willing. He grew up in Kenya, Africa where he does evangelism to the deaf in Kenya.

Nominating Committee Chairperson: John Watson

John Watson listed the names of people to serve as officers for 1998-2000. He made a motion to accept nominations as presented. All members agreed. Passed.

ABCD new Executive officers for 1998-2000:

President-Cliff Watson-Birmingham  
Vice President-Rick Milford-Talladega  
Secretary-Joyce Wesley-Talladega  
Assistant Secretary-Gwynne Fluharty-Ashville  
Treasurer-Richard Jones-Birmingham

Gwynne Fluharty is the first hearing person in ABCD history to become an Assistant Secretary with ABCD on March 7, 1998. This was done for the importance of preservation of our history.

Vicki Milford was appointed as ABCD Children's Coordinator by Ricky Milford.

Sunday afternoon, March 8, 1998:

After the ABCD Conference ended at noon. The new executive officers of 1998 2000 held its first meeting at Shocco Springs Conference Center at 1:00 p.m. with pastor Cliff Watson, presiding.

President Cliff Watson opened the meeting with a vision for ABCD to reach the deaf through the interpreting services of Deaf Bible Study. The goal is to promote the ABCD's vision through the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf. President Cliff Watson challenged the officers to be committed to help this vision of ministry in Alabama. The theme for ABCD 1999 Conference, "Walking in Love".

Cliff said that the time has come for us to move forward in God's will for ABCD. The Lord has chosen President Cliff Watson to lead us to seek God's direction so

that we might be better equipped to "Glorify God by obediently making and equipping disciples of ABCD".

ABCD key verse is Ephesians 5:1-2, Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. We are following this principle to commit ourselves to God, making and equipping disciples of Christ in order to reach the lost for Jesus Christ.

**1999**  
**Shocco Hosts Alabama Baptist Conference of The Deaf**  
**March 5-7, 1999**

Jeffery Jackson challenged the deaf audience to gain faith in Jesus Christ. Jeffery was the keynote speaker during "Walking in Love". Ephesians 5: 1-2 at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf at Shocco Springs, March 5-7, 1999. Jackson, is deaf minister at First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Florida.

Jeffery gave participants concepts of who God is and how God sent Jesus to earth. He help us to gain interest for a deeper relationship with God, and to reach out to other people. We are to go out and tell others about Jesus.

Cliff Watson, president of the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf, and pastor of the Birmingham Community Deaf Church, expected the Conference to inspire the deaf to understand God. They were Christian Leader role models. "We want the deaf to have a real relationship with God in their personal life, their ministry and at home."

There was an attendance of 186 people at Shocco.

During the Saturday evening banquet on March 6, 1999 awards were presented to David Richardson for his work with Deaf Ministries. Mrs. Mary Lou Bingham in honor of her work and service to the deaf/blind and for may years of service as an interpreter, counselor and friend to the deaf.

Children's program ages 0-6 and 7-12

Director: Vicki Milford

Teacher: Vicki Milford

Assistant: Ricky Milford

Cliff Watson

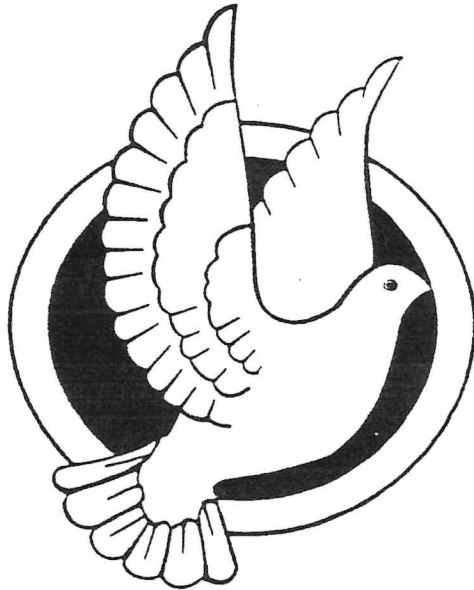
Luther Williams

Loretta Williams

Nursery provided during all workshops, business meetings and assemblies.

# Walking In Love

Ephesians 5:1,2



40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf

March 5-7, 1999

Shocco Springs Conference Center

Talladega, Alabama

**March 6, 1999  
Saturday  
6:00 p.m.**

**BANQUET**

**Welcome/Announcement  
Ricky Milford**

**History of ABCD  
Peggy Estes**

**Skits/Testimonies  
Jr. ABCD**

**ENTER TO WORSHIP**

**Worship God Through Prayer  
Richard B. Jones**

**Worship God Through Music  
Lewis Cleveland**

**GATHER TO ENCOURAGE**

**Exhorting One Another-Giving**

**Exhorting One Another-  
Ministry  
Lewis Cleveland**

**Exhorting From the Word  
Jeffrey Jackson**

## **Guest Speaker**

**JEFFREY JACKSON** is the Deaf pastor of First Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, Florida. He has a wife, Maura Catalina, and two precious children, Benito Roberto, 4 years old and Joshua Emmanuel, 2 years old. He graduated in Physical Education from California State University in 1993. He was involved in athletic games such as softball and basketball for Deaf clubs and rode bicycles across the USA four times. He was involved with mission works in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, El Salvador and the USA.

## **Guest Music Leader**

**LEWIS CLEVELAND** has led music at worship services at First Southern Baptist Deaf Church in Del City, Oklahoma for seven years.

He is hard of hearing and is married. His wife's name is Becky and she is Deaf. They have two daughters, Sarah, age nine years and Ashley, age four years. Both girls are hearing.

Lewis has worked in banking for 20 years and is presently with Guaranty National Bank in Del City.

He also travels to various cities to lead workshops and revivals. He is now President for Oklahoma Baptist Conference of the Deaf.

## **ABCD WORKSHOPS**

### **Dr. Berry:**

Family Issues; Will focus on parenting as wisdom-based parenting, parenting toward trust and confidence, parenting toward acceptance and love, parenting toward positive self-concept, and parenting toward balance.

### **Mr. Cox:**

Leadership: Will look on Mark 10: 43-44 to understand the need for Christian leaders. The scripture reveals that servanthood is the key to leadership and teaches us how to use our talents and gifts in order to become strong leaders.

### **Mr. Ellis:**

Me and My Sword! A sword is designed to be used skillfully in battle as both an offensive and a defensive weapon. God has equipped you with a great instrument for spiritual battle, "The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to accomplish the work of God. Join us as we learn how to take up our Sword and apply it to our lives.

### **Mr. Hatley:**

The Interpreter's Workshop is to get interpreters to "Get the Glue of Your Feet, and Put Expression on Your Face." There will be a getting to know you time on Friday where we will "Look at what We Do" and Liking the End Result." Interpreters will learn the "Ins and Outs" of story telling. Learning how to use expressive skills. Then on to "Flowing with the Music" learning meaning and how to express yourself. Then on Sunday we will rap-up viewing "Stories in Sign" pulling everything together and taking it home to use.

## Workshop Leaders

Sharon R. Berry, Ph.D., is the daughter of Deaf parents and a graduate of Gallaudet University, being one of its first two recipients of a doctoral degree. Her most recent professional responsibility has been the development of more than 100 textbooks and related publications used in Christian schools and home schools. However, she continues to serve as a consultant and speaker in special education, child psychology and in ministries serving the deaf. She is married to Ray Berry, a retired pastor, and together they are parents of two grown daughters, Sherry and Jayne. Jayne's family serves as missionaries in Croatia.

Ben Cox graduated from Mississippi School for the Deaf in Jackson, Miss. in 1944. He worked as a printer for 43 years, and retired in September, 1987. He has been married to Evelyn Marble since December 23, 1945 and has three children and seven grandchildren. He has been a Sunday School teacher since 1958, Deacon since October, 1971 and member of the Silent Praising Hands choir. He has been involved with Mission work with the Deaf five times, in Hawaii, also three times in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. He wrote Bible lessons for the Deaf several times; also a book on Hosea. He is currently an evangelist, workshop leader, teacher, and preacher since 1963.

Paul William Ellis trained and served with the Navigators as a young man. His ministry then changed to a large urban church where his heart was challenged by the needs of several Deaf members. Talented in sign language and music, his passion has been to translate the beautiful language of signs into contemporary music, to teach the Word of God, to open new vistas for the Deaf especially as they seek to enter the ministry,

and to bring greater understanding and unity between the Deaf and Hearing Worlds. Paul served as the first President of the National Baptist Conference of the Deaf which is now the National Christian Conference of the Deaf, Founder of International Institute of Deaf Services and presently serve with Christian Deaf Fellowship.

Gerrie Hatley has been an interpreter for the past 14 years. She works as an Educational Interpreter in the Gardendale area. Gerrie serves as an interpreter in her home church, Hueytown Baptist Church. She has worked with the Southern Baptist Convention providing interpreting service during their meetings. On the state level, she has interpreted the past four years for WMU (Women's Missionary Union) conventions. Recently, Gerrie has given of her time and talent for the Youth Evangelism Conference. She has taught an Adult Sunday School Class for the Deaf at her church. Gerrie was one of the first to complete the Interpreter Training Program at the University of Alabama under the direction of Patty Sheets. Gerrie Hatley is a wife, mother of three, and a proud grandmother of three beautiful grandchildren with an additional one due in August. Gerrie gives God the glory for all that HE has done.

*This conference is provided through the Cooperative Program gifts of Southern Baptist churches and the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf.*



**Mrs. Canoles Bingham**  
**Dedicated Her Hands to Religious Work**

Mrs. Mary Lou Bingham believes everything happens for a reason. Hearing parents would tell their baby to say mama or daddy. Only Bingham's parents were deaf, and would sign it to her. She was taught sign language before she could talk. Her neighbors made sure she was able to talk before time to start kindergarten, but Mrs. Bingham, 82 of Midfield never stopped using her talented hands. Mrs. Bingham, was in charge of the Deaf-Blind program for the Alabama Baptist Conference of the Deaf for 20 years. Bingham started interpreting at age 10. She served as director of Deaf activities at First Baptist Church, Birmingham, for the past 60 years. She had interpreted in schools, churches, and at Talladega Mayor Larry Barton's inauguration and also at weddings. In 1974, Mrs. Bingham was chosen as Outstanding Teacher of the Year, by the Pilot Club. She taught sign language to nurses. Bingham's advice to beginning interpreters, those who don't know sign language, "Don't mother them". "The deaf are smart people" Try to learn their sign language and be their friend.

Mrs. Bingham, known as "Mamma Lou" by many friends, has a TTY to talk to her friends. Bingham retired in 1978 due to health problems.

Bingham had interpreted at Oral Roberts and Billy Graham crusades. She served two terms as President of the Alabama Registry for the Deaf, and received several awards from community organizations. Bingham is more dedicated. Her character is above reproach. She has a servanthood Spirit.

Bingham started working on a history of denominational churches of the Deaf.



**David Richardson**

35 year career as a Missionary to the Deaf

David Richardson served as a missionary to The Deaf in Alabama, thirty-five years. Eight years after his retirement he is still working with deaf people. A native of Gadsden, Alabama he graduated from Howard College now Samford University, Birmingham, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana. Richardson served as an associate to the department of Association and Cooperative Missions at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Richardson also worked with deaf people, blind people, planned literacy mission workshops and camps for mentally challenged persons. He also coordinated conferences for the Deaf. He became a missionary to the deaf in Alabama, August 1957. He began a conference at Shocco Springs for the deaf in 1959. Richardson established 60 ministries with deaf in Baptist churches in the state of Alabama.

Richardson, a member of the Alabama and Montgomery Registries of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the Alabama Association of the Deaf, is often asked to interpret funerals, weddings, in hospitals, at trails, in jails, and correctional facilities, and he has also taught sign language classes.



**Richard B. Alford, Jr.**

Richard Alford is an associate in the missions Department of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Language Missions along with Christian Social Ministries are his two main areas of work. Appointed as a home missionary by the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board he is working in Cooperation with the Alabama Baptist State Convention and the eighty five (85) Baptist Associations of Alabama.

Alford began his duties January, 1990. Prior to coming to Alabama, he was a consultant for the Cooperative Missions Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention. He is married to the former Patricia Kerr, a graduate of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Mississippi. They have three children: Julie Lynne, John David, and Bruce Richard.

Richard meets regularly with the ABCD officers and serves as a resource person, answering questions and giving advice. He encourages the deaf leaders to perform their role independently, under God's leadership.

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