

CMPE 80A: Universal Access: Disability, Technology, and Society



History of disability advocacy



Disability = 19th century?

- ▶ 3500 BC: Queen Vishpla after losing her leg in the battle, return to it with an iron prosthesis (Rig-Veda).
- ▶ 218 BC: The Roman General Marcus Sergius sustained 23 injuries and a right arm amputation at the war against Carthage. An iron hand was fashioned to hold his shield and return to battle.
- ▶ 1500: Girolamo Cardano was the first physician to recognize the ability of the deaf to reason.
- ▶ 1508: Gotz von Berlichingen (German mercenary knight who had a reputation as a Robin Hood) had two prosthetic iron hands made for him which were mechanical prostheses.



Disability = 19th century?

- ▶ 1575: Lasso (a Spanish lawyer), concluded that those who learn to speak are no longer dumb and should have rights to procreate.
- ▶ 1616: G. Bonifacio published a treatise discussing sign language, "Of The Art of Signs."
- ▶ 1696: Pieter Andrianszoon Verduyn, a Dutch Surgeon, introduces the first non-locking, below knee prosthesis. Similar to today's joint and corset prosthesis.
- ▶ 1755: First oral school for the deaf in the world in Germany and first free school for the deaf in Paris.
- ▶ 1790: In Paris, Pinel unshackles people with mental illnesses.
- ▶ 1829: Louis Braille invents the raised point alphabet that has come to be known as Braille.



Learning from History

- ▶ 1850-1880: Residential schooling
 - Designed for a short-term stay
 - Designed to be small (success = small numbers)
 - Focus of the stay is to adapt to life in the community (a.k.a. rehabilitation)
- ▶ 1870-1890: Shelter from society
 - Rapid growth in number of people served, system log jammed
 - Object of pity: *"a well-fed, well-cared for idiot is a happy creature. An idiot awakened to his condition is a miserable one."*
 - The economy of scale: *the more people congregated in a single institution, the cheaper the per capita costs.*
- ▶ 1880-1925: Period of indictment
 - IQ and eugenics emerge
 - Until 1963, persons committed to some state institutions could be released only if they were made sterile



The History of Disability Advocacy

- ▶ 1817: The American School for the Deaf, Hartford, CT
- ▶ 1890s: Advocates pushed for the creation of state workers' compensation programs
- ▶ 1909: NY Public School System adopted American Braille
- ▶ 1909: The first folding wheelchair
- ▶ 1921: The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) is founded.
- ▶ 1932: Disabled American Veterans is chartered by Congress
- ▶ 1935: The League of the Physically Handicapped in NYC
- ▶ 1940: National Federation of the Blind in PA (white cane)
- ▶ 1940: The American Federation of the Physically Handicapped is founded (first cross disability national political organization)
- ▶ 1947: Paralyzed Veterans of America is founded at Birmingham Hospital in Van Nuys, CA
- ▶ 1949: The National Wheelchair Basketball Association is founded
- ▶ 1960: Paralympic Games held in Rome



The History of Disability Advocacy

- ▶ 1968: Architectural Barriers Act
- ▶ 1972: US District Courts in District of Columbia ruled that children with disabilities cannot be excluded
- ▶ 1973: Disabled Parking Stickers
- ▶ 1973: Federal Aid Highway Act → federal fund for curb cuts
- ▶ Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ▶ 1974: The Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant established in Ohio
- ▶ 1977: Disability Rights Activists in 10 cities stage demonstrations in occupations at the offices of the federal HEW to force the Carter Administration to implement Section 504
- ▶ 1978: Disability rights activists in Denver stage a yearlong sit-in blocking the Denver Regional Transit Authority buses
- ▶ 1990: The Americans with Disabilities Act signed
- ▶ 1993: The American Indian Disability Legislation Project is established



Dark Days of People w. Disabilities

- ▶ 355 BC: Aristotle: "those born deaf become senseless and incapable of reason".
- ▶ 218 BC: Marcus Sergius was denied the chance to be a priest because of his prosthetics.
- ▶ 1935: Nobel price winner Dr. Alexis Carrel suggests the removal of the mentally ill and the criminal by euthanasia.
- ▶ 1939: Hitler orders widespread "mercy killing" of the sick and disabled. (Aktion T4).
- ▶ 1981-1983: The Reagan Administration attempted to amend or revoke the implementing sections for 504 and the Education for All Handicap Act of 1975
- ▶ 1981-1984: The Reagan Administration terminated Social Security benefits of people with disabilities
- ▶ 1993: Sewering, an SS-member who had sent a 14-year old girl with TB to be gassed, becomes president of the World Physicians Association.
- ▶ 1996: Congress passed legislation eliminating more than 150,000 children with disabilities from Social Security



Ed Roberts

- ▶ Father of Disability Rights movement
 - Accessibility and safety reform
 - Access to education and employment
 - The right to have independent life – with paid carer if necessary
- ▶ Diagnosed with polio at age 14
- ▶ The first student with severe disabilities to attend UCB
- ▶ Opened the first Independent Living Center in 1972



Judi Chamberlin

- ▶ Discovered that patients in mental hospital had no legal rights and were treated like prisoners.
- ▶ Co-founded a group of psychiatric survivors called Mental Patients Liberations Front in the early 70s.
- ▶ Fight for self-determination for people diagnosed with mental illness
- ▶ She is now at Boston University



Nancy Ward

- ▶ Labeled Mentally Retarded as a child.
- ▶ Created a petition opposing a commercial soliciting money for the Special Olympics due to it asking these people to pity these children, the commercial was later cancelled.
- ▶ Joined other advocates and had the words "moron" and "idiot" eliminated from the Nebraska State Legislature.
- ▶ Her latest effort is to fight for people with intellectual disabilities to vote

