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THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CTD CON-
VENTION HELD SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 1, 1978 AT THE EL TROPICANA
HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Pat Found welcomed everybody to the first CTD meeting.

Larry Johnson introduced Representative Henry B. Gonzales of San Antonio.

Representative Gonzales:

"Thank you very much, Larry...or should I say Mr. Johnson. We'll get real formal. I feel as if we know each other pretty well because, as he said, he did give me the pleasure of seeing him in Washington. It is always a treat to have a friendly San Antonio presence in Washington. We get visitors but never seem to get enough...at least to satisfy me. We had a very nice visit and I think some of the problems we all confront in common were very well discussed. And then we had a chance to intercede as we should because you have this tremendous governmental structure and to most people it is an impersonal thing and the citizen tends to get lost and unless you have some means... This is why this office of representative is so critical, so crucial, to our society. You know it is a prime constitutional office. What I mean by that is: it is one of the few that is provided in the constitution itself. But of all the legislative branch, I consider it the most critical because the people who wrote the constitution wanted it that way... for good reason. You know the only way to become a representative is to get elected by the people. You can't be appointed. Now, a U.S. Senator can be appointed if there is a vacancy for any reason. A Governor can appoint a U.S. Senator during the interim but never a member of the House. A representative can be a representative only by virtue of an election...an open election by the people in that particular district. And the reason is there because this is the office that has to be accessible to the people. As I've always said, it should be as accessible as the telephone and when it isn't then it isn't functioning. And it's pretty difficult to say you're going to try to represent...as our district presently turns out to be on an average of a half million citizens...it's not an easy task and it takes a lot more than so many even students of government realize in the way of help...staff help and so forth.

"But I think the important thing is that we realize that, at least in my book, everybody is important all the time...not just the powerful; not just the privileged; but everybody...and not just during election time but all the time. Everybody's important. (At least that's the way I feel it is....and this is the way it has to be reflected in the office and this is the way the staff has to reflect or there's not going to be staff members for long in the 20th district office.

"I would just like to say a very few things I've prepared because in anticipation of this meeting...and I wanted to thank you to begin with for thinking of me. I particularly would like to thank Mr. Johnson. I'm sure were it not for him probably I wouldn't. It's a privilege. We're in an area in which when it come to legislation, whether it's on the local, state or national level, you have to make a special effort. When I first went to the State Senate 21 Years ago, I found about 33% of my legislative plans were based on what I considered to be...I couldn't see how anybody could debate the need for legislation effecting the blind. At that time you had a very different, you had a primitive set up and to my surprise, I found that it was difficult to find anybody else willing to co-sponsor the bill. Why? Because in our system it is turning out to be that we have government by pressure groups. This is one reason why I wanted to congratulate you for forming this specific...what I would call...a task force. It's long overdue. And I've discovered that you had to have a very special interest and I couldn't even get a sub-committee hearing on my bill and it was a minor thing. It was really to bring long delayed justice in handling then the partially existing state programs. Finally after the first three months, I got a hearing and then the rules changed and it was harder to get the bill...and then the sub-committee called a meeting and said they would have to call the Director of Public Welfare (that's what they called it then). To my astonishment, the Director came in and opposed the bill. Well that killed it right there you know. I was a freshman Senator...Here was the powerful Director and he say 'no' the State of Texas can't afford to have this. I was flabbergasted! Well, I thought maybe I misinterpreted my bill so I sought a personal audience with him and discovered that actually it was a matter of policy. Unless the Department came in and requested legislation they would resist anybody else coming in with legislation. Well, let me make a long story short. I finally got the bill but it took 4 years...and it really was a minor change. So this is the thing you meet and now on the national level things have, I think, improved tremendously. There is an awareness and this is what I wanted to say: (Nobody has to tell you this) Historically, the handicapped have been out-of-sight, out-of-mind. Public consciousness of the handicapped was limited more or less to an occasional glimpse of a blind person with a dog; a street beggar asking for alms; or perhaps a pencil seller. For years this was our common notion of handicapped.

There are countries in which begging is a profession and in which that is the profession of the handicapped. But that is not a profession of honor as the common accepted word is understood even in those countries...and I think least of all in America. Here I think we have finally provided a little bit of help. We have provided a little bit of sympathy and we have most of all an averted eye to the handicapped. You know you're there but really we don't want to know - but I think things are changing...

I know they have changed! And you're part of the change and, as I have said, I congratulate you for forming this particular group. I think that it is essential under our system.

"Today, in Washington, we have a new subway system for example. It's a several billion dollar system. The station platforms are designed for use by the blind. Smooth tile structures tell you where it is safe - rough stone borders tell you where the platform edge is. There are elevators for the chair-borne...and the subway car doors are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs...and there are no stairs to negotiate. At the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport, where I'll be finding myself in about 2 hours, you can find information signs in braille in elevators and elsewhere. You can get around if you're chair-borne or if you're blind. And in every city in America the corner curbs are being cut down for ramps to accommodate wheelchairs.

"Bus systems are being required to provide real service to the handicapped. Now, some of the bus provisions, I hope to be the author of some of the amendments because I sit on the committee that used to have jurisdiction of mass transit legislation and when we had the first mass-transit legislation of any consequence, I was the one who authored the particular provision that got into the law and remained in subsequent enactments.

"Colleges are being required to widen their doors and eliminate other barriers and construction under federal program grants. Again I think I had a hand in that.

"All across the land barriers are coming down...and for the first time opportunity is replacing charity...but this has not been accidental. The elevators on the Washington subway were not put in until a Federal judge ordered it and actually enjoined the use of any station that did not provide access to the handicapped. It took a lawsuit! It wasn't done voluntarily. The judge ruled, in effect, that if a public transportation system could not serve all the people who supported it, it couldn't serve any of them at all... and of course he was right.

Barrier-free design has been talked about for decades but did not become a real priority until it became literally a legal necessity. And even though we provide these clauses in the law, nobody ever really enforced them for years because the first provision I spoke about awhile ago...I put in about some 14 years ago...it was either 1963 or '64. I think 1964... '63 we had the first mass-transit bill. It got no place but it was in '64 that we finally had a little push and then I'm sure the first amendment was put on.

"Access to even so basic a thing as adequate educational opportunity - the provision of special programs at special facilities - is only now achieving the status of a legal right.

"There is one simple reason for all of this: The handicapped people of America began to speak up for themselves. Handicapped people lost their patience and found their votes. First class citizens are the only kind of citizens in this country. That may not be a total reality but we can surely make it a total commitment...and it is only in that spirit that I feel we welcome each other this morning.

"You're here because you know that opportunity comes to those who seek it. You made the rest of us sensitive; you have made us provide what we should have provided all along; and you know how very much there remains to be done. You're not going to be asking for anything that you're not entitled to in my opinion. Access to public places, barrier-free designs, sensible aids, reasonable and adequate programs: All these things that mean opportunity. This is the land of opportunity for you as well as for me but only if your rights are respected and upheld. I wish you well and success and God-speed in your coming deliberations and in your future actions. And thank you for the privilege of sharing a few minutes with you. Thank you very much."

Pat pound introduces Ray Vaughn (TRC) and Bert Risley (TCB). Bert Risley said a few words:

- 1.) He commended Henry B. Gonzales
- 2.) He commended the people involved in the Texas White House Conference.
- 3.) Organization is the best way to affect change.
- 4.) Training facilities, service delivery
- 5.) He introduced Preston Arnold, Director of Client Assistance, TCB.

Carol Simon, Department of Human Resources was introduced.

The Keynote speaker, Mr. Joe Veiz, was introduced.

Joe Veiz:

- 1.) Member of the ACCD Board of Directors
- 2.) Past President - Florida Council of Organizations
- 3.) Chairman of the Spinal Cord Advisory Council
- 4.) Registered lobbyist in the Florida Legislature.

The following is an outline of Joe Veiz's Speech.

Topic: Why-How-What a Coalition

Why a Coalition

- 1.) Access - Do as a coalition what is impossible as an individual.
- 2.) Representation -
 - a.) Different groups - Each need to be consulted on each decision - one voice.
 - b.) Cross-disability
- 3.) Consensus - One voice speaking for different wants.

Goals of A Coalition

- 1.) Must be agreed on by groups in coalition.
- 2.) Coherent
- 3.) Simple
- 4.) Implemental

How a Coalition

- 1.) Individual decisions are different in each state
- 2.) Leadership - Understand cross-disability coalition and the needs of different groups.
- 3.) Common concern
- 4.) Joint action

Forming a Coalition

- 1.) By-laws
- 2.) Resolution of conflict while each group keeps its identity.
- 3.) Each disability group must be involved in planning with no one dominant.
- 4.) Communications - Groups must perceive what is being done.
- 5.) Accountability

Maintenance of the Coalition

- 1.) Issues need to be seen collectively.
- 2.) Autonomy of groups
- 3.) Staff
 - a.) Funding
 - b.) Volunteers
 - c.) Staff must represent coalition
 - d.) Staff and Boards must be coordinated
- 4.) Patterns of cooperation between disability groups.

Question-and-Answer session was held after Veiz's speech.
Points brought out during the session:

- 1.) Establish credibility
- 2.) Funding sources
 - a.) Grants
 - b.) Membership
 - c.) All groups contribute something
- 3.) Disabled most effective spokesperson - Don't discriminate against able-bodied - Impact.

- 4.) Individuals can join in Florida - No vote
Groups of Individuals can join.
- 5.) Leader should not go off in a direction that body
has not approved.
- 6.) Response time for communications must be specified.

RESOLUTION

The following is a composite of issues that individuals would like to see CTD address during the next year:

- Housing for urban and rural areas
- Greater accessibility
- More availability of communication assistance for the deaf.
- Advocacy training for disabled Texans.
- Raise the allowable income level for assistance from vocational rehabilitational agencies.
- Education
- Leisure
- Concern about Proposition 13 fever.
- Employment
- Captioned TV for the deaf
- Public relations, success stories about persons with disabilities.
- Review of existing legislation and the enforcement procedures therein.
- Implementation of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Making the voting process more accessible for disabled Texans.

THE REMAINDER OF THE PROCEEDINGS WILL FOLLOW IN A FUTURE MAILING.

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- 4.) Individuals can join in Florida - No vote
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has not approved.
- 6.) Response time for communications must be specified.

RESOLUTION

Be it resolved: The following is a composite of issues that individuals would like to see CTD address during the next year:

That CTD supports their members in the Corpus Christi area in their effort to expand and to gain access to the beaches and other recreational facilities.

- Housing for urban and rural areas
- Availability of communication assistance for the deaf.
- Advocacy training for disabled Texans.
- Raise the allowable income level for assistance from vocational rehabilitation agencies.
- Education
- Leisure
- Concert
- Employment
- Captioned TV for the deaf
- Public relations, success stories about persons with disabilities
- Review of existing legislation and the enforcement with
- Making the voting process more accessible for disabled Texans.

Submitted by:
Bob Kafka

October 1, 1978

Approved unanimously by
the Delegate Assembly

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