

- **Dr. Jim Westbury**, Board President  
jwestbury@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Dr. Dan Cuneo**, Board Vice President  
dcuneo@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Dr. Ken Eigenberg**, Board Secretary  
keigenberg@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Ms. Jan Goodman**, Director  
jagoodman@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Mr. John F. Koeper**, Director  
jkoeper@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Ms. Marilyn Stewart**, Director  
mstewart@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Ms. Zella Williams**, Director  
zwilliams@ssd.k12.mo.us
- **Mr. John C. Cary**, Superintendent  
jcary@ssd.k12.mo.us

[www.ssd.k12.mo.us](http://www.ssd.k12.mo.us)

*Special Edition* is a publication of the Communications Department of Special School District of St. Louis County.

- Nancy Ide, Chief Information Officer  
314.989.8434 / nide@ssdmo.org
- Tia Kreinbring, Director of Publications  
314.989.8168 / tkreinbring@ssdmo.org
- Cathy Regazzi, Communications Manager  
314.989.8117 / caregazzi@ssdmo.org

**Special School District Notice of NonDiscrimination and Accommodation**

Special School District does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, veteran status, age, or activity protected by federal or state law in its programs, activities and employment. Direct inquires and complaints under this policy to Special School District's Compliance Coordinator, 12110 Clayton Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63131; telephone 314.989.8100 or to the Office of Civil Rights, 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, Mo. 64114-3302; telephone 816.268.0550. Information about the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities accessible to impaired persons can be obtained from Special School District's Compliance Coordinator at the phone number and address listed above.

♻️ Recycled Paper



**Special School District of St. Louis County**  
12110 Clayton Road  
Town & Country, MO 63131

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ST. LOUIS, MO  
PERMIT NO. 1282



# SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 3, 2010

## ADA All the Way SSD employee Nancy Martin offers unique perspective on the Americans with Disabilities Act 20 years after its passing

*“This is our Declaration of Independence Day.”*

Those are the words that Nancy Martin, administrator for the Special School District Parent Education and Diversity Awareness Program, used 20 years ago to describe her feelings about the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

As one of hundreds to witness the historic signing of the ADA in person on the White House lawn, Martin recalls a feeling of relief, joy and celebration.

“It was very emotional,” Martin said. “It’s an amazing part of our history, and to be there to witness it was truly an experience. There was much joy, laughter and tears on the White House lawn that day.”

July 26 marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the ADA, which protects people with disabilities from being discriminated against in the areas of employment, access to public facilities, transportation and communication. As a local activist who was part of the grassroots effort to support the historic legislation, Martin was invited to witness the signing of the bill into law by President George H. W. Bush.

“I compare it to the fight of African-Americans living in the South during the Civil Rights movement,” Martin said. “But for people with disabilities, the law to guarantee our civil rights didn’t come until 1990.”

As a person with a physical disability, Martin has first-hand knowledge and awareness of the personal, social and environmental issues encountered by the disabled community. Martin, who was

born with cerebral palsy, is one of nearly 50 million people living in the United States today with some type of long-lasting condition or disability. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, people with disabilities make up 19.3 percent of the population nationwide — roughly one out of five people.

In 1990, Martin was working as director of independent living specialists for Paraquad, a local not-for-profit with a mission to empower people with disabilities to increase their independence. Realizing the importance of her trip to Washington D.C., Martin invited a representative from Paraquad’s Youth and Family Program to join her. Polly Tallarico, who was 16 at the time, said she was delighted to make the trip with Martin.



“It was so much of an experience,” said Tallarico, who has cerebral palsy. “To me, it meant everyone would be treated the same. Because I was only 16, I don’t think I was aware how important this legislation was at the time.”

Martin had a different perspective. Born in 1957, times were very different for her. She recalls overcoming hurdles to receive an education and learn to drive. She said the road has not always been easy.

*continued, page 2*

### Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George H. W. Bush on July 26 1990, is a landmark civil rights law.

The ADA extends protection against discrimination to people with disabilities and ensures services to be accessible to people of all abilities in four main areas:

» **Employment** – bars employment discrimination against people with disabilities who can perform the essential functions of a job if given reasonable accommodation that does not create an undue hardship on the employer. The protection extends to job application procedures, hiring and firing, compensation, or any other term, condition, or privilege of employment.

» **Public facilities** – requires places of “public accommodation” (a term clearly defined in the act to include hotels, restaurants, movie theaters and many other facilities) to assure that all new buildings and all modifications meet accessibility guidelines. It also mandates the removal of physical barriers from existing facilities.

» **Transportation** – mandates that all public buses and rail cars be wheelchair accessible as well as bus and train stations. It also specifies that transit authorities must provide comparable para-transit or other special transportation services to individuals with disabilities who cannot use fixed route bus services.

» **Communication** – requires telephone companies to provide telephone relay services for people with speech or hearing impairments.

The ADA also requires all state and local government facilities to adhere to the same standards. For more information on the ADA or to view the legislation in its entirety, visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or call the ADA’s toll-free help line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).



Neuwoehner student Theresa Ryan cheers with the Fontbonne Griffin during a men’s basketball game. SSD students who participate in job training at Fontbonne University played basketball during half time of the game for Special Olympics.

*continued from page 1* “When I turned 16, I dutifully went out and applied for jobs, but no one would hire me,” she said. But Martin said she never really saw herself as an activist. It wasn’t until she entered college that she realized something needed to be done.

She began by attending town hall meetings led by the late Justin Dart, an international disability rights advocate who crafted and spearheaded the passage of the ADA. During the meetings, Martin would give personal testimony regarding her experiences and why she and other citizens with disabilities needed a law to protect their civil rights. During the ’80s, Martin volunteered her weekends and evenings at St. Louis city and county college campuses and public events. She collected hundreds of signatures in support of the ADA.

Martin said the passage of the ADA was truly a bi-partisan effort.

“Republicans and Democrats worked together,” she said. “It didn’t matter what your political party affiliation was. Disabilities don’t recognize you as Republican or Democrat. Disabilities don’t discriminate. They affect everyone.”

Martin, who uses a motorized scooter to help with her mobility, said she has seen many changes take place over the past 20 years. One local example is MetroLink. Since it was built after the passage of the ADA, it meets accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

A personal example for Martin occurred just this past October when she was able to travel to Las Vegas for her niece’s wedding. Martin said prior to the enactment of the ADA, the trip may have been more difficult because she would not have known whether the airports, hotels, restaurants and other public facilities would have been accessible to her.

She said a true testimony was when she was in Las Vegas and was waiting for a taxi to take her to the airport for her return trip to St. Louis. She said within minutes a wheelchair-accessible van pulled up, the door opened and the lift was lowered. She entered the van, held onto the overhead handle and said, “ADA all the way!”

“It’s just so freeing to be able to do that with no question,” Martin said. “That

never would have happened 20 years ago.”

Tallarico, who uses a wheelchair, said the ADA has made it possible for her to maintain her independence. She serves as a community advocate for Paraquad and owns her own home. As a community advocate she visits local businesses and facilities to see if they are meeting ADA standards.

Tallarico said the ADA has had a tremendous impact on her life.

“It has impacted my life greatly because it allows me to be employed, get the help I need to live independently in my own home, and have access to my local community,” she said.

Martin said one of the most dramatic changes that has taken place over the past 20 years is something completely intangible.

“People’s mindsets have changed,” she said. “You can take a jackhammer to put in curb cuts, but you can’t take a jackhammer to people’s opinions and mindsets. That’s where the true power of the ADA has come into play. It’s the general attitude change that has been remarkable.”

But both Tallarico and Martin say there is still more work to be done in the area of rights for people with disabilities. And just as Martin was a part of the disability rights movement 20 years ago, she will again be a part of shaping the future of the ADA.

Martin will again be traveling to Washington D.C. next month to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the ADA. She has been selected as a delegate by the National Council on Disability to participate in the National Summit on Disability Policy. Martin is the only delegate from the state of Missouri invited to take part in the summit.

“It’s truly an honor,” Martin said. “To live through the past 20 years and see the changes that have occurred is pretty phenomenal. To be a part of what the next 20 years will look like is exciting.” ■

*The August issue of Special Edition will feature highlights from Nancy’s return visit to Washington.*

## Missouri History Museum Commemorates ADA Anniversary Year-long Exhibit Kicked Off June 27

In honor of the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Missouri History Museum is hosting the exhibit *Americans with Disabilities Act: 20 Years Later*.

The one-year exhibit opened June 27 with a commemorative march and rally.

The exhibit includes a 1,000-square-foot gallery installation examining life in St. Louis prior to the landmark legislation, the work of local disability rights advocates to secure the passage of the ADA, post-ADA societal changes and the challenges remaining.

Nancy Martin, who serves as an administrator of the SSD Parent Education and Diversity Awareness Program, served as one of several advisors to the Missouri History Museum regarding the ADA exhibit.

“It’s an important part of our history, and it’s a great honor that the Missouri History Museum has chosen to commemorate it in such a way,” she said.

The kick-off event included keynote speaker Robert Silverstein. Silverstein is a principal in the law firm Powers, Pyles, Sutter & Verville PC and director of the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy, where he directs actions of disability-related policy issues. For more than a decade, Silverstein served on the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Disability Policy, where he was the behind-the-scenes architect of 20 bills enacted into law, including the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act.

The exhibit, which includes various disability programs, will be open throughout the year. For more information, call 314.746.4599 or visit the museum’s Web site at [www.mohistory.org](http://www.mohistory.org).

## FOCUS ON YOUR CORE

Over the past year, the SSD community has spent a great deal of time talking about its core values — those central tenets that define who we are as an organization and how we should be serving our community. And in these discussions it became clear that trumping all other values is our central belief that all students can learn and succeed.

We have been recognizing and celebrating those student successes in the last couple of months at SSD.

In April, the Special Education Foundation and SSD came together to recognize the outstanding achievements of local students through the annual Commitment to Kids Banquet. Students received Rosemary Zander Awards for their tremendous achievements over the previous year. Others were honored with financial scholarships for college or summer camps.

The district also recognized the top students in more than 30 programs offered at North Technical and South Technical high schools. The “Tops at Tech” honorees boast a long list of recognitions and will be attending colleges and universities around the country. Ken Nguyen, a South Technical High School graduate, was also inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame.

All the students have diverse achievements and varied journeys, but they have all become living proof of SSD’s central belief that all students can learn and succeed.



EDWARD CONNOLLY



DAVION COLEMAN

### ROSEMARY ZANDER AWARD WINNERS

Christina Allen, James Birchfield, Brandon Bridges, Julia Collins, Edward Connolly, Michael Cummings, Demetrius Davis Jr., Mary Katherine Evitts, Andrew Furrer, Keegan Kelly, Andrew Koehler, Dara Massey, Sarah McCoy, Brooke Nickelson, Lillian Opinsky, Katelyn Paquette, Samantha Price, James Alexander Pugh, Addison Roshto, Nancy Shelton, Gary Silerio, Michael Weidle

### SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**SAMMY GOLDMAN “LIVING BIG” CAMPERSHIP**  
Jack Fearn

### ALLISON M. HAAKE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Corshaney White

### SSD BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Dino Galic, Scott Roth

### BONHOMME LIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

Robert Neal Mitchell II, James Alexander Pugh, Scott Roth

### DIANNE ARBEITER SCHOLARSHIPS

Edward Connolly, Eric Jenkins, Zachary Jodlowski, Jelynn Louis, Robert Neal Mitchell II, Joshua Pickens, Richard Prielnski, Rachel Varner

### CHRISTOPHER DAVIS SCHOLARSHIPS

Erica Davis, Katherine Koch

### DAN MCLAUGHLIN SCHOLARSHIP

Angela Seley

### LAURA K. SHERMAN LAUGHLIN SCHOLARSHIP

Barbara Holcomb

### SPECIAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Thomas Jonathan Bottchen, George Collins, Margaret Mack, De’Amon Pernell, Damiou Williams

### TOPS AT TECH AWARD WINNERS

**Automotive Collision Repair:**  
Asantee Turner, Bradley Hammel

**Automotive Technology:**  
Christopher Webb, Nick Basile, Connor Neal, Mike Sacco

**Bricklaying and Masonry:**  
Nathen Hoff

**Broadcast Captioning and Court Reporting:**  
Megan Girolami

**Carpentry:**  
Jessica Harvey, Ross Glick

**Cosmetology:**  
Fakihla Patterson-Bey, Chelsea Riemann

**Culinary Arts:**  
Tanya Presley, Tina Templemeyer

**Dental Assistant:**  
Doniesha Ivery

**Diesel Technology:**  
Zack Peth

**Early Childhood Careers:**  
Holly Schmidt, Jami Greer

**Electrical Trades:**  
Joshua Joseph, Connor Jepsen

**Electronics & Robotics Engineering:**  
Orion Kazmaier

**Emergency Medical Technician:**  
Jerrica Cheatham, C. Jake Smack

**Fashion Design:**  
Chanel Taylor, Jayme Turnbough

**Financial Services:**  
Eric Monroe

**Firefighting:**  
Justin Gozdecki, Tom Million

**Floor Layers Middle Apprenticeship:**  
Edin Sabanagic

**General Construction Trades:**  
Karim Griffin, Craig Rash

### Geospatial Technology:

DeAndre Ross, Brian Weber

**Graphic Communications – Printing:**

Lance Edwards, Jenee Caito

**Graphic Design:**

Lance Jordan, Davion Coleman

**Health Sciences:**

A’Shea Roberts, Heather Peterson

**Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning:**

Tim Conley, Jacob Gianino

**Homeland Security & Preparedness:**

Lerie Gabriel, Kyle Ortiz

**Hospitality, Tourism & Event Planning:**

Bianca Chiapelas

**Laboratory & Pharmacy Technician:**

Corshaney White

**Law Enforcement:**

John Lee, Amanda Schmidt

**Motorcycle Mechanics:**

Brandon Harper, Taylor Byford

**Network Administration**

**Cisco Networking Academy:**

Mike Jones, Justin Pickel

**Plumbing:**

Carmell Bradley

**Precision Machining:**

Cameron Dozier, Carl Lommel

**Turf Management & Landscape Design:**

Michael Feger

**Veterinary Assistant:**

Victoria West, Amanda Hansch

**Web & Computer Programming:**

George Collins, Thanh Do

**Welding:**

Dylan Parkins, Paul McManus

To read Nancy’s story in her own words, visit [www.ssd.k12.mo.us/ada.html](http://www.ssd.k12.mo.us/ada.html).