

Alabama Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Conference

**“A S.E.A. of PEARLS:
SUCCESS. EDUCATION. AWARENESS.”**



June 1 - 3, 2022, Wednesday - Friday

Mobile Marriott ~ 3101 Airport Blvd. Mobile, AL 36606

Register at www.alrid.org/events  

ALRID is an Approved RID CMP Sponsor for Continuing Education Activities.

This conference is offered for 2.0 CEUs.

Target Audience: Educational/Community/Video relay Interpreters, and ITP Students.

Reasonable accommodations & cancellation policy can be found on the registration form on the website.

COUNCIL OF ORGANIZATIONS SERVING DEAF ALABAMIANS (COSDA) CONFERENCE will begin prior to the ALRID Conference. Registration information on ALRID.ORG.

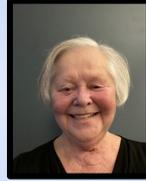
SUCCESS.



Dr. Kent
Schafer



Judith Gilliam



Sue
Graham



Belinda
Montgomery



Janice
Rogers



Sue Scott

Education.



Beverly
Bowns



Amanda
Crayton



Jason
Hurdich



Deborah
Makowski



Beth
Dorsette



Cheryl
Reminder



Keith Wann

Awareness.



Denise
Herrera



Kristi Love



Lee
Stoutamire-
Ramirez



Amber
Robinson



Cheryl
Thomas

Conference Schedule at a Glance

Subject to change

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st

9:00 am	COSDA Registration Open
10:00 - 11:30	COSDA Business Meeting
11:30-1:00	COSDA Awards Banquet
12:00 pm	ALRID Registration Opens/Exhibits & Silent Auction Open
1:30 -2:00	ALRID Welcome with President Wendy Darling and Jason Hurdich, RID Region 2 Representative
2:00 - 2:30	“Pearl in the Making” with Beverly Bownds (0.05 CEU)
2:30 - 4:30	“Influence as a Social Education Act (SEA)” Keynote, Kent Schafer, PhD (0.2 CEUs)
4:30-5:30	<i>Dinner Provided</i>
5:30 - 8:30	“Storytelling: Becoming the Surrogate” Keith Wann & Jason Hurdich (0.3 CEUs)
8:30 - 9:30	Exclusive Performance by Keith Wann

THURSDAY, JUNE 2nd

7:00-8:00	<i>Breakfast provided</i>
8:00	ALRID Registration, Deaf Vendors & Silent Auction Open
8:00 - 11:00	“DeafBlindness and the Role of Interveners” with Amanda Crayton (0.3 CEUs)
11:15 - 1:15	“Seeing Through the Eyes: Perception of Power” with Beth Dorsette (0.15 CEU) <i>Lunch Provided</i>
1:30 - 3:00	“SELF CARE: Before-During-After” with Lee Stoutamire-Ramirez (.15 CEUs)
3:30	Silent Auction ends
3:30 - 5:00	“SIGN: Mentoring Beyond the ITP” with Deborah Makowski (.15 CEUs)
5:00	Pick up Silent Auction Items
6:00 - 7:30	ALRID Awards Banquet - <i>Dinner Provided</i>
7:30 - 8:30.	Entertainment: “Nobody Does Me Like Me” by Amber Robinson (<i>Cash Bar</i>)

FRIDAY, JUNE 3rd

8:00 - 9:00	ALRID Business Meeting - Breakfast provided
9:15 - 10:15	“UNC-IRIS Project: Blooming in Rural America” with Cheryl Thomas (0.1 CEU)
10:30 - 12:00	“Pearls of Wisdom Panel Discussion” (0.15 CEUs)
12:00 - 2:00	“Randleman Program for Interpreters of Color at NTID Department of Access Service” with Denise Herrera and Kristi Love (0.15 CEUs) <i>Lunch provided</i>
2:00 - 4:30	“STEM Interpreting Through the Lens of Logic” with Cheryl Reminder and Deborah Makowski (0.25 CEUs)
4:30 - 5:00	“The World is Our Oyster” with Beverly Bownds (0.05 CEU)
5:00 - 5:30	Closing and Door Prizes

**COVID-19 guidelines will
be observed during the
conference.**

Total of **2.0**
CEUs available if
attending all
sessions.



THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE PLATINUM SPONSORS

ALRID thanks you for your generous support.



Alabama Institute
for Deaf and Blind

Deaf. Blind. Limitless.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE for ALRID MEMBERS' Hotel Rooms!

Through AIDB Special Projects generous support and sponsorship, scholarships are available to cover the lodging expenses for ALRID members! This valuable training will impact and improve services to the Deaf Community state-wide. Information is on the website.



RIT | National Technical Institute for the D
Regional STEM



PPE AVAILABLE

There will be a PPE station at our conference with PPE available to all. COVID-19 guidelines will be observed. Please bring your own masks as well. If you are experiencing any symptoms, please refrain from attending.

Workshop Descriptions & Presenter Bios

“Influence as a Social Education Act” Keynote by Kent Schafer, Ph.D.

Mental Health promotes success in interpreting. In order to help us determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices, there is a need to recognize influence as a Social Education Act. In the S.E.A., we all have grains of sands that act as irritants. This keynote is designed to elicit motivation to polish those interpreting grains into developing a clear shiny shimmering pearl that conveys meaning.

Kent Schafer, PhD, NCSP

Kent has used Interpreters in handshapes, volume and delivery for nearly four decades. He is currently employed with the Alabama Department of Mental Health. His predoctoral internship was served with rotations between Sparks Pediatric Clinic for Neurodevelopmental Disabilities at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Bryce Psychiatric Hospital at University of Alabama. He started out with his first master's in Alcohol and Substance Abuse from University of Illinois at Springfield clinically treating substance use or challenging youth to think through prevention education. He transitioned to educational side earning his second master's degree in School Psychology from University of Wisconsin at Whitewater. Every step of the way created differential registers and modalities for interpreters.. Dr. Schafer continues to be a nationally certified school psychologist promoting the consultation/collaboration model to emphasize a visual language foundation. Inside his circle, he is affectionately known as the “research man” who enjoys disseminating strategies and decisions in the process of conveying meaning. His doctoral dissertation focus was building psychometric value to Roger Williams and Charlene Crump's Communication Skills Assessment. In the past, Kent has worked on numerous media related projects for an executive agency in Illinois. As a current board-at-large member of the national deaf organizations, ADARA and ADWAS, he continues to have a vested interest in addressing policy and program concerns to change practices for deaf behavioral health. Having given over 100 presentations, he relishes opportunities to provide members of the receptive signing community the opportunity to expand the six inches of grey matter between their ears. Outside the work sphere, Kent can be found somewhere chucking round plastic objects towards metal encaged baskets in the sport called disc golf or spending time with his wife and two daughters.

“Pearls of Wisdom” Panel Discussion

Panelists:

Judith Gilliam, Sue Graham, Belinda Montgomery, Janice Rogers & Sue Scott

Join us as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary with 5 outstanding pioneers who have paved the way for ALRID. This panel discussion will include historical information on the formation of ALRID, the work that so many have done throughout the years, reflection on those who have left us and success stories. The panelists will impart their pearls of wisdom for upcoming, advancing and seasoned interpreters. Join us as we celebrate the success of our organization over the last 50 years with these distinguished guests!

Judith Gilliam, MA, RSC, CDI, QMII

Judith M. Gilliam hails from West Haven, Connecticut. She attended Gallaudet University and has held various roles; classroom teacher, dean of girls, supervising teacher, Director of Instructional Service and Director of Primary Department (Preschool through 3rd grade) She retired after 27 years of service and became a staunch advocate for various organizations. In early 1980, Judith took the RSC exam and has been involved with the interpreting profession ever since. She was involved in various RID committees. She co-chaired the RID National Conference in Orlando, FL. She was involved in the NAD RID National Interpreter Certification for 6 years co-chairing with the beloved Gary Sanderson. Most recently, Judith has served on NAD's RID Certification Committee for six years with the last 2 terms as the chair. Judith is a certified mediator and continues to serve RID in various capacities. With her recent experience working and collaborating with the member sections and members in general, Judith wishes to continue the practice of reaching out to the RID community. She also currently serves as a Commissioner on the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education. With her vested interest in continuing the valuable work done by the committee, Judith intends to devote her deep commitment to support the interpreting profession. She enjoys attending to issues including, but not limited to, CDI but also to all issues impacting certified interpreters regionally and nationally. She resides in Alabama with her husband, Buford along with their 2 grown sons, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Sue Graham, CSC

Sue, daughter of Deaf Parents and Grandparents, has been a Nationally Certified Interpreter since 1972. For over 40 years she has shared her love of American Sign Language and the Deaf Communities through teaching Sign Language in various settings, including UAB Special Studies for over 12 years. She has also been in leadership roles with A.I.D.B., AT&T and for the last 11 years as Director of the Sorenson VRS center in Birmingham, AL. Sue was one of the original members of ALRID and worked closely with Mary Lou Bingham, who was a gracious mentor in the early days of professional interpreting. Sue and her work with a local musical sign language performance troupe, Handful of Love, was nominated for the coveted Cable ACE Award, featured on the Toni Tennille Show, PM Magazine, and CNN News. Sue was also awarded the Birmingham Professional Women "Woman of the Year" award for her work with Town and Gown Theatre and Handful of Love. Sue continues her passion through interpreting, teaching and mentoring and as Mama Lou once said, "Old Interpreters don't die – they just sign off." Sue resides in Sylacauga, AL with her husband, Johnny, 4 dogs, and 2 cats. In her spare time she dotes on her 4 Grandchildren and 2 Great Grandchildren.

Belinda Montgomery, CSC, CI, CT, NAD V Master, Certified Master Mentor, BA Troy TTP

Belinda began her practice of and involvement in the Interpreting field in 1984 and became a member of ALRID interpreting experience was within the community, but grew to be statewide in a variety of settings. She has been honored to serve for almost 20 years on the Alabama Licensure Board of Interpreters and Transliterators (ALBIT). She retired from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services in 2015. Upon retirement, she re-opened her interpreting agency, Montgomery Interpreting Services, LLC, in earnest and has enjoyed providing quality interpreter services for central and eastern Alabama. She is also currently an adjunct professor at Troy University in the Interpreter Training Program. A native of Montgomery, she enjoys traveling with her husband and gatherings of her family including her 9 grandchildren.

Janice Rogers, NAD III, MA

Janice has 39 years of experience in the interpreting field. She has had the privilege of interpreting in religious, educational, musical and medical settings. Janice holds NADIII/EIPA3.8 certification. Janice worked as an interpreter for the Mobile County School System for 19 years (K-12). She was also the coordinator of the American Sign Language Program and Interpreter Training Program at Bishop State Community College for 14 years. Janice earned a Bachelor Degree from Talladega College 1977/a Master Degree from Auburn University 1980. Janice completed 3 Interpreter training Programs: University of Tennessee, University of Alabama/ Bishop State Community College. Janice retired December 31, 2017. Wanting to keep her mind sharp she accepted a Language Coach position at the University of South Alabama where she presently assist students in satisfying foreign language requirements or elective in American Sign Language. Her desire is to help all who want to become an interpreter. or learn to converse with members of the Deaf Community. Janice finally opened her own business "JR's Interpreting Service". Contact info (251) 586 - 2995 / janicerogers73@att.net.

Sue Scott, CSC, CI/CT, NAD V, BA, MHQ

Sue, a hearing child of Deaf adults, served the Deaf and interpreting communities most of her life in AL, CA, MA, MN and NC. She started in church interpreting as a teenager and then moved to CA as a freelance interpreter and substitute houseparent for the CA School for the Deaf-Berkeley. She assisted with research and compilation of an unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Effect of Early Communication and Family Climate on the Deaf Child's Development" by Dr. Kathryn Meadow University of California, Berkeley. In MA she worked as a sign language tutor for the City of Fall River Schools before returning to her home in Mobile in 1973. Recognizing the needs of the local Deaf community, she applied for federal and city grants starting the Mobile Center for the Deaf which continued until 1981. In 1981 she worked for Bishop State Community College under a federal grant to train minority interpreters, retiring in 1984. She received her BA degree from Mobile College (U of Mobile) in 1984 with a major in psychology and minor in Sociology.

Sue Scott, continued

Believing in the best standards possible in working with the Deaf community, she earned four national certifications from Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc (RID): Comprehensive Skills Certificate twice, then the two Certificates of Interpretation and Transliteration and later worked with RID on new test developments. She earned Level V Master Level Interpreter from the National Association of the Deaf, Inc., and became one of their evaluators. In the 1990s she served as a trainer for the Alabama DeafBlind Project. In 2004, she was one of the first interpreters to be qualified under the Department of Mental Health, Deaf Services.

She served as president for ALRID in 1990-92, president of the Council of Organizations Serving Deaf Alabamians in 1989, and served 6 years as RID Region II Representative in 1994-2000. She and Judith Gilliam, also on this panel, served as co-chairs for the RID national convention in Orlando FL. After her RID board tenure, Sue then served the RID Ethical Practices Committee first as a Mediator and then Adjudicator before her next "official" retirement in 2005 from doing business as Scott and Associates, a consulting and interpreting service.

Her two "retirements" did not slow her down. While living in MN during the summer months, she was a Minnesota Court Ethics Approved Interpreter and worked with the Deaf community who lived on the White Earth Ojibway Reservation. While in NC, she has served as a volunteer interpreter for Hospice and volunteers with groups related to substance abuse/misuse in western NC. In Mobile, AL she serves on the Advisory Board of Deaf Teen Quest, Youth for Christ.

She and Dr. Stephan Scott, a retired psychologist, have been married for almost 40 years, blending their family of five children, nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.

“Pearl in the Making” with Beverly Bownds

Pearls are made by sand, which is an “irritant”. Eventually, as it is polished with techniques and tools, it becomes a valuable pearl. Presenter will introduce a journaling activity that participants will utilize throughout the conference. Participants will begin the journey of exploring interpreting experiences that may start as a grain of sand but with polishing become a lustrous pearl.

“The World is Our Oyster” with Beverly Bownds

Participants will learn how their self - discovery (sand discovery) can lead to professional growth and acceptance. Participants will identify perspectives they have gleaned throughout the conference from colleagues and workshops attended. This new perspective on their work can now produce a "pearl" and affect their work in a more productive manner.

Beverly Bownds, CSC

Beverly is celebrating 35 years as an RID certified interpreter. She has been active in her field as the President of Southern California Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Member at Large for Northern California Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and currently the Alabama Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Vice President. She has worked in California, India, Texas, Hawaii and now Alabama, gaining a wealth of knowledge and experience. Beverly has worked in a large scope of environments, including community, medical, employment, education, mental health, legal and video relay service. Beverly is currently the Interpreter Coordinator at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Montgomery Regional Center. She believes in supporting the next generation of interpreters and paying it forward, offering guidance and mentoring. Beverly is a team player and is constantly working to promote the interpreting profession by example.

“SIGN: Mentoring Beyond the ITP” with Deborah Makowski

In this 90-minute presentation, the presenter will introduce the Southeastern Interpreter Guidance Network (SIGN), a new program established at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind Special Projects to provide mentor training and mentoring throughout the southeast. Interpreters will then engage in discussion about mentoring and what it means to them now as compared to their time in an ITP and share their "wish lists" for mentoring and mentor training experiences. Traditional mentoring will be compared and contrasted with preceptorships and peer mentoring paradigms designed to serve interpreters from the beginning of their careers and beyond.

Deborah Makowski, BA

Deborah is the Coordinator for the Southeastern Interpreter Guidance Network, a new program established at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB), Special Projects. She is RID certified, and holds a Bachelor's degree in ASL/English Interpreting from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Prior to accepting the position with AIDB in December 2021, Deborah worked primarily in post-secondary education, specializing in the STEM disciplines. Deborah's greatest joy aside from interpreting has been mentoring students and colleagues. She is trained in the Peer Mentoring Model and self reflective practice and has presented workshops on preparation strategies, ASL to Spoken English, Chemistry concepts, strategies for navigating work in STEM and proprietary environments, goal setting and interpreting models.

“Seeing Through the Eyes: Perception of Power” with Beth Dorsette

This workshop will discuss the perception of power when it comes to power, privilege, and oppression. With today's society, the Deaf community often rely on interpreters for communication purposes and receiving information through ASL: who is the dominant and who is not? Check your privileges and how to be an ally.

Beth Dorsette, BA

Beth is a Deaf Support Specialist at Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Beth has been working with ADRS since September 2011 and loves providing support to the Deaf community and empowering individuals to be job ready. Her role focuses on empowering Deaf individuals on pursuing their future and provide support including job readiness training, job development, and job coaching so they can become successful in their lives. Not only consumers are her primary focus, but she also works with the businesses in the community when it comes to Deaf Culture training and how the businesses can provide better support for their employees with hearing loss.

She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Leadership Development in Fall of 2021 from Troy University. Beth is also very involved with few organizations such as Alabama Association of the Deaf and Council of Organizations Serving Deaf Alabamians, raising her family, and hoping to get in graduate school pursuing her Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling.

“DeafBlindness Overview and the Role of Interveners” with Amanda Crayton

DeafBlind children have unique access needs with significant implications for learning. During this session, participants will discuss how DeafBlindness impacts education in a cumulative way. The workshop will explore concept development, sensory learning channels, and availability for learning. The group will discuss various support roles that DeafBlind individuals encounter in schools, defining, comparing, and contrasting each. Participants will learn about the foundational concepts and strategies that Interveners employ in providing access for DeafBlind students, including hand-under-hand, positive touch access, responsive environments, pacing, student-led exploration, and interpreting communicative behavior. This session will include hands-on and interactive learning experiences around adapted materials, student videos, and sensory simulations to foster empathy, observational skills, and critical thinking that are crucial in the Intervener role.

Amanda Crayton, MS&Ed., DeafBlind Specialist NYDBC

Amanda has worked for over 10 years with students with multiple disabilities, including DeafBlindness. She was one of the first certified Interveners in New York State before becoming a teacher and opening a classroom for DeafBlind children. During her time as an educator, Amanda mentored several interveners in training, provided professional development in multi-sensory learning and developed materials and adaptations for her classroom. She was a finalist for the Helen Bach Moss Memorial Better Beginnings award in 2020 based on the work she did developing this classroom and building knowledge of DeafBlindness across her team and school. Amanda continues to develop learning materials for students with visual impairments, DeafBlindness and multiple disabilities. She has extensive knowledge in AAC, pre-symbolic communication and intervener strategies and is an avid 3D printer and maker. Amanda also works closely with the DeafBlind International Youth Network, especially on the Friends in Touch global letter exchange for DeafBlind youth. Amanda believes in building communication as a pathway to community.

“Randleman Program for Interpreters of Color at NTID Department of Access Service” with Denise Herrera and Kristi Love

The Randleman Program is a two-year preceptorship that focuses on intersectionality and inclusion. We offer an intentional, individualized, holistic program to support and develop interpreters of color. Learn about this program and our many initiatives!

Denise Herrera, BS

Denise Herrera hails from Queens, New York City and has been working as a Staff Interpreter at NTID Department of Access Services (DAS) since 2007. She is a proud alumna of Rochester Institute of Technology with her B.S. in Psychology (2004) & ASL-English Interpretation (2007). She participated in several staff committees and won the Presidential Outstanding Staff Excellence Award as a member of the DAS Diversity Outreach Committee. Denise is honored to have an extensive interpreting portfolio which ranges from academic courses, performing arts and extracurricular areas. She is most proud of her work as not only a founder of the Randleman Program for Interpreters of Color, but the current Program Coordinator. She is thrilled to share her experiences as a Trilingual Queer Interpreter and support fellow BIPOC interpreter colleagues as they navigate the field of interpreting in a post-secondary environment

Kristi Love, MS, CI/CT

Kristi Love has been an interpreter in the NTID Department of Access Services since 2005. She became nationally certified in 2008 and has served in several roles in the department. Currently, Kristi is the manager of the Professional Development and Diversity Outreach Interpreting team. Prior to this role, she served as the Randleman Program Coordinator since its inception and was one of its four founders. During Kristi's time on staff, she won the Presidential Outstanding Staff Excellence Award twice and was nominated a third time. Two of those times were for her work on diversity, equity and inclusion. Outside of the Department of Access Services, Kristi serves as a Commissioner on the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) and a board member of the University of Rochester Medical Center Home Health Care division. She completed her M.S. in Criminal Justice from Rochester Institute of Technology and her B.S. in Signed Language Interpreting from the University of New Mexico.

STEM Interpreting through the Lens of Logic (LoL) with Cheryl Reminder and Deborah Makowski

This workshop will engage interpreters in active learning and practice with the STEM content areas of basic Engineering, Math, and Computing. The framework of metacognition will be introduced and modeled as an approach to effective interpreting of STEM content. Interpreters will engage in hands-on practice and explore ways of accessing STEM content through everyday experiences. We will also engage in self-reflection, and discussion of the work using non-evaluative language, that will bolster comfort and confidence when interpreting STEM content.

Cheryl Reminder, B.S., CI

Cheryl has been interpreting professionally since 1995. She completed an Associate of Applied Science in 1994 and a Bachelor of Science in 2016, both in ASL-English Interpretation from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Cheryl received her Certificate of Interpretation (CI) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf in 1998.

Cheryl has worked at RIT her entire professional career, specializing in STEM, crisis, student conduct, Residential Life, and a variety of high visibility and high impact scenarios. In addition to her interpreting role, Cheryl was also the academic coordinator for two (2) of the colleges that make up RIT, managing all of the interpreting requests for the College of Science and the College of Health Sciences and Technology.

In her current role, Cheryl supports and leads the NRSC Outreach Interpreting Team. This national role has given Cheryl the opportunity to mentor and partner with interpreters, while simultaneously sharing her love of STEM interpreting with her peers through a variety of workshops and presentations.

Amber Robinson

Amber is an Alabama licensed interpreter, ASL performer, and social media content creator who lives in Birmingham, Alabama. Raised in Talladega, Alabama, she is the proud daughter of Black Deaf parents who gave her the freedom to create her own story and the strength to continue the legacy of her Deaf and hearing family members.

She graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Troy University Interpreter Training Program. While in this program, she noticed the lack of diversity and representation in the interpreting field in Alabama and developed a passion for bringing more awareness to the skills and talents of Black interpreters. Also, during her time at Troy, Amber was able to develop a collaborative partnership with the Troy University Department of Theatre and Dance for the production of "Once On This Island" in 2017. The production, that predominantly featured minorities, showcased the talents of Black interpreters and celebrated the usage of ASL within the creative world.

Amber is currently an educational interpreter for K-5 students within inner city schools. She strives to be a role model to those aspiring to be a part of the ASL community through interpreting, as well as to the students she interprets for. As a community interpreter, Amber has participated in and interpreted several social justice events (i.e. Black Lives Matter protests) where she demonstrated her role as a trailblazer for the representation of ASL. As one of very few Black interpreters in the State of Alabama, Amber has raised awareness regarding what Black interpreters face in the field and community each and every day through music, dance, and performances - both live and on various social media platforms.

“UNC-IRIS Project: Blooming in Rural America” with Cheryl Thomas

Access to quality interpreting services in rural areas across the country is undeniably challenging. Generally overlooked by training entities and professional organizations, rural interpreters are too often unable to attain the necessary and appropriately sequenced training that recognizes existing competencies, accumulates academic credentials, or acquires professional certification. The needs are great, and the resources are limited. As the field of interpreting continues to professionalize, rural interpreters are being left behind, which ultimately results in systemically inadequate, even discriminatory, communication access for individuals who are deaf in rural areas.

The Improving Rural Interpreter Skills (IRIS) project, a \$2.1M, five-year interpreter training grant project awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to the University of Northern Colorado, aims to address this need. IRIS recognizes that opportunities to support and connect rural interpreters where they are deeply rooted, in their respective communities, are far and few between.

During this 60-minute interactive presentation, IRIS will share its passion for cultivating this vital interpreting workforce demographic by describing the various factors that contribute to our current reality, and how IRIS proposes to address these factors. In doing so IRIS will outline its 5-year objectives, hybrid learning program development process, and desired outcomes.

Cheryl Thomas, NAD V, CI, CT, NIC Master, SC-1, BEI Court

Cheryl is a freelance interpreter in Mississippi. She has been a facilitator with both Project CLIMB and the IRIS Project. Cheryl began her interpreting career in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada prior to moving to Arkansas in 1999. A Deaf-parented interpreter, and raised in a large Deaf family, Cheryl lives in Louisville Mississippi with her husband and has 4 children and 6 grandchildren. For fun, she enjoys riding her motorcycle, volunteering with veterans programs, and spending time with her grandchildren.

“SELF CARE: Before - During - After” with Lee Stoutamire-Ramirez

This workshop will discuss the causes of injuries in the field of sign language interpreting. Presenter will demonstrate a variety of techniques that can be utilized to decrease or alleviate pain associated with working in this profession.

Lee Stoutamire-Ramirez, CI/CT, QMHI, LMT

Lee is currently the Interpreter Coordinator for Region III with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Office of Deaf Services. Lee is also a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter (QMHI) for Alabama. Staff member at the University of South Alabama in the Lesser Taught Languages department. Lee began his career in deafness as the manager for Onderdonk Cottages (for deaf and hard of hearing) and staff interpreter at Volunteers of America in 1996. Employed by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (1998) as a staff interpreter for seven years before joining the Department of Mental Health in 2005. Lee is an evaluator/interviewer for the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) program. Lee formerly held a position an adjunct instructor in the Interpreter Training Program for Bishop State College in Mobile, AL. When not using his hands to provide language access Lee provides tranquility as a Licensed Massage Therapist. His introduction to the deaf community began in the mid 80's. Lee is also a Phi Theta Kappa. Showing proof that there is intelligence hiding beneath the outspoken zaniness

“Storytelling: Becoming the Surrogate” with Keith Wann and Jason Hurdich

Storytelling has the ability to transport the participants to another world. By looking past the words of a story to the meaning, an interpreter can ensure the same experience for Deaf audiences. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to the analytical process utilized by ASL storytellers to ensure concept retention and character personification. The presenter will discuss the importance of developing a meaning based interpretation and the use of character perspective.

Keith Wann, CI/CT, NIC Master

Keith Wann has been interpreting since 1991 and became certified in 1996, CI,CT. He has traveled the world as a working ASL Interpreter, living in California, Alaska, Florida, NY, Pennsylvania and even overseas in Germany with the Department of Defense. In 2006 he passed his NIC:Master and made a home in NYC working with Broadway shows and Deaf actors. He is also involved with Churches providing access instead of interpreting.

Wann has also been performing since 2002, starting with a Sign Language Improv group (with Crom Saunders), and then in 2004 his solo career quickly took off due to several parodies of interpreting music videos going viral. He turned to storytelling when he had the opportunity to be mentored by Peter Cook for several years.

He semi-retired his live stage comedy show in 2017 to focus on web/studio projects with Signing time and Signed Stories, and now is working on finding faith inspired stories within the ASL Community. He has also done several commercials for Pepsi, appeared in High Maintenance, Quantico, Law and Order, and several short films with Deaf Directors and Actors.

Jason Hurdich, M.Ed, CDI, Region 11 Representative

Jason Hurdich (Name Sign: J.H.), a Deaf native ASL signer, hails from New York City, the Big Apple. He attended the Lexington School for the Deaf. Mr. Hurdich has instructed college-level ASL and Signed Language Interpretation classes for twenty-eight years at several colleges and universities. Mr. Hurdich received his B.A. degree in Political Science at Boston University. Mr. Hurdich received the Master of Education degree in Signed Language Interpretation from the University of North Florida (UNF) in 2013 as the first Deaf graduate from the program.

Mr. Hurdich is a Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID) Certified Deaf Interpreter since 2013; he has been interpreting professionally for twenty years as a DI. Mr. Hurdich has been active in the interpreting field as a pupil for close to twenty-five years, going back to the mid-1990s while he was a student in Boston. Mr. Hurdich was the first-ever Lead Call Center Manager of Spanish VRS services in U.S. history via ASL Services, Inc. They then contracted with Hands-On VRS (HOVRS- preceding becoming Purple Communications today). He supervised two call centers in Florida and Puerto Rico, where he could train and work with several trilingual and ASL-English interpreters and Deaf managers. He also was the Professional Development Coordinator for ASL Services, Inc. during the early 2000s supervising and mentoring interns from different colleges and universities.

In his other career, he has worked as a researcher for almost ten years as a team leader of Sign Language Projects for Vcom3D, Inc., a research firm developing signing avatars. Mr. Hurdich was responsible as a scientist to create STEM content material in American Sign Language. Mr. Hurdich, as a Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator, has written over six million dollars' worth of federal and state grants focusing on improving STEM and literacy knowledge among Deaf and Hard of Hearing K-12 children and post-secondary settings.

In 1996, he received the Boston's Citizen Award: “For Outstanding Contributions towards the Quality of Life for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing youth; and Promoting Deaf Awareness in the City of Boston,” Presented by now-deceased Mayor Thomas M. Menino.

Jason Hurdich, continued

Mr. Hurdich has been awarded the 2017 Marie Griffin Interpreter of the Year Award by Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness, the first Deaf interpreter to win the award.

Mr. Hurdich was named the 2021 Palmetto Goodwill (South Carolina) State Champion for his work on behalf of individuals with disabilities, including the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, by empowering them to overcome employment barriers.

Throughout Mr. Hurdich's career, he has been fortunate to have worked with numerous Deaf and hearing mentors that have guided his career from the early 1990s to today. Without these individuals, he would not be here.

Mr. Hurdich is currently a Lecturer of American Sign Language at Clemson University. He currently resides in Greenville, South Carolina, a charming city in Upstate South Carolina that everyone must visit someday. Mr. Hurdich enjoys watching college sports as an avid fan.

During off duty, Mr. Hurdich enjoys spending time with his family and checking out local coffee shops in Greenville and Western North Carolina, especially Asheville. He enjoys creating social media content as a creator on TikTok and Instagram.

Photo credit: Will Crooks, The Greenville Journal

Deaf Vendors

Come shop the Deaf Vendor booths at our conference and help support the Deaf Community!



Silent Auction

We will have a silent auction during our conference. All proceeds will go to the Louise Wohlford Memorial Scholarship Fund. These scholarships are for our members to help with costs to attend workshops, trainings and conferences! All donations are tax deductible.