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# University leader dies at 50

■ Hill will be remembered as a community-builder dedicated to getting kids to attend college

By Maggie Young  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Former University Upward Bound program coordinator Pearl M. Hill died of heart failure Wednesday at the age of 50.

From 1972 until 1992, when funding was cut, Hill served as the director of the University Upward Bound program, a federally funded program that encourages college enrollment to at-risk students.

"Pearl M. Hill will be remembered as an indomitable spirit, a fierce, strong, proud and determined black woman," Carla Gary, former Upward Bound counselor at the University and sister-in-law said. "She was a force to be reckoned with."

Born on April 7, 1949, Hill was raised in Portland, by her parents Vincent and Jessie Hill.

As a high school student she took part in Upward Bound and

had been involved ever since. She began a career in the Upward Bound program as a counselor in 1968 and continued working for the organization at various levels until 1992.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Sociology from the University in 1971 and her Master of Science in Counseling Psychology in 1973.

Hill was actively involved in the United Way Board, the Martin Luther King Jr. Planning Committee and the National Association of Colored People. On campus, Hill was a very important connection for students, said Jan Oliver, associate vice president for institutional affairs and close friend.

"Pearl was a natural community-builder," Oliver said. "She had a way of bringing people together."

The community doesn't have another person who would be there for the kids, close friend Anita Johnson said.

"She worked tirelessly for kids because she wanted to

make sure that kids had the opportunity to get an education," Johnson said. "She was a college-bound minded person. She wanted to make sure that every child could go to college and succeed."

In 1979 Carla Gary, director of the office of multicultural affairs, worked under Hill as an Upward Bound counselor. She will remember Pearl for her sheer commitment to the power of education to change lives.

"Her effect was so profound, it was like a ripple on a pond," Gary said. "Her life's work is an inspiration for all of us to make a difference in the lives of people we come into contact with, especially those who have less opportunity than the rest."

The funeral service will be held on Tuesday at 1 p.m. at United First Methodist Church, at 1376 Olive St.

She is survived by daughter Marla Hill of Seattle, Wash., her brother Samuel G. Hill of Eugene, foster sisters Renae Allen and Michelle Allen of Portland and Denise Allen of Seattle, Wash.

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# Students silent but not voiceless

■ Deaf and hearing impaired students face challenges in hearing oriented classrooms

By Simone Ripke  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Imagine sitting in a classroom in silence — silence, not because nobody is talking, but because you are deaf.

Andrea Roberts, a junior majoring in English, is one of only about five identified deaf students on campus. A hearing aid that utilizes the little hearing Roberts has and reading lips closely enable her to get an education designed for people who can hear.

"Sometimes it can be embarrassing since I often times mistake what is said by people around me," Roberts said. Her sense of humor, however, helps her laugh rather than get frustrated in those situations, she said.

"Sometimes it doesn't make sense at all and we produce some hilarious results," Roberts said.

Molly Sirois, assistant counselor for students with disabilities, said Roberts is the only deaf student at the University who currently takes advantage of interpreting services provided by academic advising. Sirois said interpreting services is just one of the options deaf or hearing impaired students can use to access University programs.

The size of the deaf community on campus has declined over

past years or students are choosing not to identify themselves as deaf, which can be considered an entire culture of people, she said.

Jo Larsen-Muhr, sign language instructor at the College of Education, was born to deaf parents and knows that the word deaf encompasses an entire culture rather than just lack of hearing.

Larsen-Muhr learned how to speak English after learning how to communicate using sign language. She wants to raise awareness of sign language, deafness and the deaf culture because of the experiences she had as a child.

She frequently tries to invite guest speakers, including Roberts, to her classes to reverse sides and have the hearing students be the outsiders when she and the guest speaker communicate fluently in sign language.

For Roberts, visiting Larsen-Muhr's classes provides an opportunity to communicate with students who have some sign language skills and are aware of the problems and isolation deaf students often face.

Larsen-Muhr said that the hearing population usually expects deaf people to make efforts to communicate.

Roberts learned to use sign language after she experienced a lack of acceptance by other deaf people. Her parents raised her as a speaking deaf person with the help of cued speech, which involves utilizing all the hearing

and speaking abilities a deaf person might have.

"She [Roberts] has an idea of how it feels to learn sign language as a second language," Larsen-Muhr said.

Sirois said that although academic advising makes every effort to accommodate deaf students, they have a harder time getting their higher education. She said that the education system targets hearing students, and it is therefore harder for deaf students to be accommodated in learning conditions not designed to meet their needs.

"I don't think that accommodations are enough to make it an equal kind of opportunity," Sirois said. However, many instructors do take extra measures to make learning for deaf students easier by using visual presentations in their lectures, Sirois said.

Sirois and Larsen-Muhr said that developing the deaf community on campus is like a "catch-22." Deaf students look for a group of deaf people on a campus and in the community when choosing a university. However, the existence of deaf students on a campus is a prerequisite to draw more students.

Larsen-Muhr hopes that deaf people will have a broader choice of options on this campus in the future when it comes to services, the interpretation of speeches and events and telephones.

"Deaf people should not have to make a special request," she said.

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