

Graduates '79

# Clinton Bruno leaves security of deaf school

Fifteen years ago, when Clinton Bruno's family took him over the mountains and left him at the Oregon State School for the Deaf, the frightened four year old cried with homesickness.

Last week Clinton "signed" the closing prayer at his graduation and faced the prospect of leaving home again. For Clinton, 18, the son of Cecil Bruno, Sr., graduation means another difficult transition--this time from the school's secure environment to life in a world of hearing people.

Clinton's parents became aware of their son's hearing problem when he was a toddler and was not developing language ability. Tests at the Portland Center for Hearing and Speech revealed a "moderate" hearing loss and special schooling was recommended. School officials explain that Clinton's loss is now considered "severe."

Without his hearing aid he hears virtually nothing. With his aid, he can enjoy loud music and hear sharp warning signals such as car horns or train whistles, but he hears no speech. The cause of his hearing loss is uncertain but he is not the only one in his family who was stricken--sisters and brothers also have less severe losses and their maternal grandmother was a deaf mute.

Over the years, Clinton's silent world has revolved around the school in Salem, his family in Warm Springs and the four-hour bus ride between. A world rich with lifelong friends and a large, warm family, it is also a divided world. At home in both places, Clinton now wonders what the rest of the world has in store for him.

But somehow it's hard to worry about Clinton. Perhaps that is because Clinton himself appears unconcerned. His cheerful, devil-may-care disposition hides the "deep thinking" that counselors say he's known for. Beyond that, Clinton seems to be well-equipped-with confidence and ability--to tackle whatever he sets his mind to.

### A long list of accomplishments

His school record bears this out. If not the "big man on campus" Clinton has certainly made his mark on the school and its faculty and student body. In his senior year alone, Clinton, has racked up a long list of accomplishments.

Besides participating in the graduation ceremony, he helped design and paint the colorful backdrop for the Class of 1979. The cover of the special senior edition of the school's monthly magazine "Oregon Outlook" was another outlet for Clinton's creativity. And Clinton further helped out his class of 22 by heading up the senior will committee.

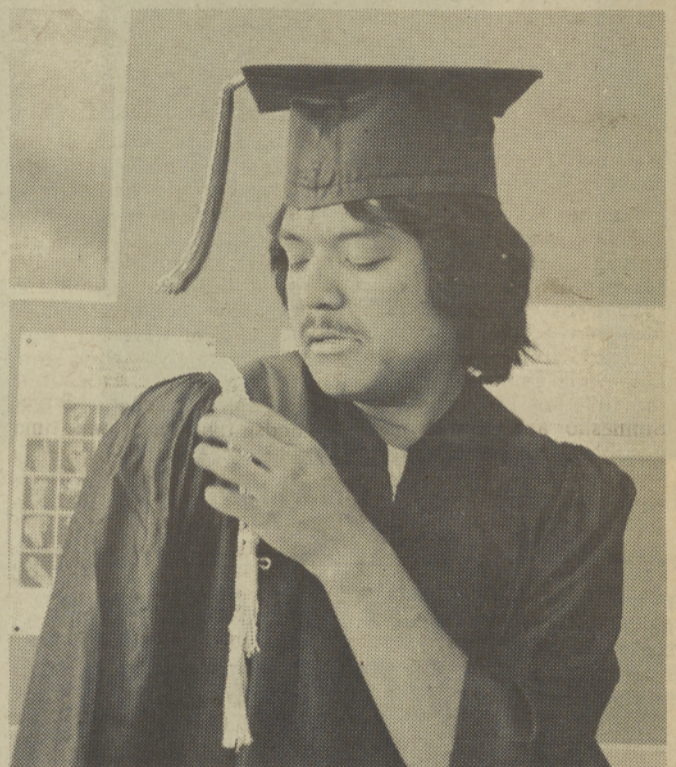
Throughout high school Clinton has proven himself to be an enthusiastic athlete. He proudly takes visitors to the trophy room where plaques recognize his skills in football and track.

Clinton's popularity is obvious, especially among OSSD's girls. The handsome young man shrugs and shakes his head when confronted with

Life for Clinton Bruno at the Oregon State School for the Deaf has been rich with accomplishments and friends. His senior year has been particularly active as Clinton has contributed much to his class.

The backdrop for graduation ceremonies that Clinton helped create (right) bears a message that he will no doubt take to heart. The days before graduation found Clinton signing yearbooks (below) and figuring out the fine points of his cap & gown (below right).

It will be hard for Clinton to leave his second family, including his "brat mom" (bottom) who has shared lunch with him daily and taken him into her home on weekends.



Story and Photos by Cynthia Stowell

his reputation as a ladies' man. And he humbly denies any dancing ability, while teachers tag him as the best dancer on campus--"better than many hearing boys," said one.

And on top of it all, one teacher commented that the Warm Springs boy was "one of the most highly respected students" in the view of faculty and staff because of his "responsibility, courtesy and politeness."

No wonder it is difficult to leave OSSD. Clinton has clearly found a comfortable niche or two, making a name for himself along the way. But it is precisely the world beyond the school's green lawns for which the school attempts to prepare students.

### More than academics

Established in 1870 as the Oregon Institute for the deaf and dumb, O.S.S.D. has grown in size and scope while still serving the state's deaf children at no cost to the families. Founded by a deaf man, the school continues to employ deaf people, including its own alumni, in administrative and teaching positions.

Clinton's class schedule for last semester is an indication of the variety of skills promoted



by O.S.S.D. He spent his mornings in traditional classrooms, studying citizenship, language and public speaking. Then it was off to the woodworking shop, followed by an afternoon of art and welding. Other students chose to pursue printing, homemaking, electronics, or business, as vocational electives.

A happy place to be, the halls of the high school are filled with the usual sights--couples stealing quick embraces, hurried visits to lockers, teasing and practical jokes, and although generally a lot quieter than most school halls, occasional hoots and hollers echo for those who can hear them. Faculty and students fraternize more than in

"regular" schools, and an atmosphere of cheerful confidence provides a welcome relief to the alienation pervading so many public schools.

More than providing students with practical occupational skills, O.S.S.D. encourages the development of

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