

Sinders Retires as Committee Chairman; Writer Gives Profile in Courage

(Editor's note: The following article was written by John W. Sindere as he retired as chairman of the Jackson County Committee for the Employment of the Physically Handicapped.)

By JOHN W. SINDERS
My sincere thanks to the people of Jackson county for allowing me the privilege of serving on your handicapped committee for the past 4 1/2 years and representing you as chairman of the Jackson County Committee for the Employment of the Physically Handicapped.

I felt that being a member and a part of such a worthwhile committee was indeed an honor and a pleasure. The knowledge and experience I gained is immeasurable and will prove invaluable if I have the opportunity to work with such a committee in the future.

The employers here in the valley, I am proud to report, are taking giant steps forward with our handicapped program. Recent reports from the local state employment office reveal that during the past year or two the number of occasions for referral of applicants with physical handicaps has risen considerably with a like increase in the numbers employed.

Result of Own Effort

We may all selfishly look upon this as the results of our own efforts and we are partially right, but remember in combining all individual efforts we have a group effort, a team effort, a community effort, which in reality resulted in more calls and more employment of the handicapped.

We have only learned to crawl, now we must stand up and walk. Let's take those giant steps so necessary with the handicapped placement program by taking positive action to assure placement of the physically handicapped person on his productive skills and abilities.

As the community of employers, we can rightfully be proud of the results being accomplished. I am not saying that an employer should hire every handicapped person who applies.

Many Applicants

Being a personnel officer myself and responsible for recruitment, I know there are many impaired applicants who may come in looking for work who are not suitable for the existing vacancy. This is also true of unimpaired applicants.

But by placing those with skills and abilities, we have greatly reduced the number of unemployed in the physically handicapped area. What we have left are those who may be considered unemployable at this time. This group remaining may prove, and in reality will be the most difficult of the lot. Here we will need help.

There will have to be social evaluations, and the state vocational rehabilitation service will be most helpful here. With such assistance many of these remaining handicapped can be rehabilitated and placed in jobs.

Should we not take the steps to increase the employment for the physically handicapped we may find ourselves facing a picture which we will certainly hate to view.

It has been estimated that there are 30 million handicapped men and women in our population. Some 10 million are severely handicapped; half hold jobs and the other half do not.

On the veterans administration compensation and pension rolls are nearly 3 million veterans, more than half of whom are severely handicapped. Many of them hold jobs; many do not.

The office of vocational rehabilitation has said that some 250 thousand men and women who need vocational rehabilitation in order to overcome their handicaps; yet OVR's ever rising program can serve but one-third of them.

There are some 2 million Americans who could be prepared for jobs if only they had access to vocational rehabilitation. One-third of a million handicapped persons apply each year for jobs at public employment offices. Many are placed, yet many are not.

These are not numbers, statistics, they are individual human beings. Do they not have the right to hope, the right to achieve their own individual destinies, the same as all other men and women in the world? Is our job ever done so long as joblessness clouds the hope in the breast of one handicapped person?

This is the picture of which I speak. You are businessmen, with the build-up of nonrehabilitated employable handicapped persons you can see what the cost to the taxpayers could be for employment compensation, relief payment, and other items.

The question is what are we going to do? We are at the forks of the road. We may go right and follow the good principles, work with and partici-

pate in the employment of the physically handicapped. We may take the left turn and leave them by the wayside to wither and die on our economic vine.

I have heard employers and employing representatives say "in my business we just simply can not utilize handicapped employees," and give many reasons for such a statement.

How do they know? Should one of you fall in this category, how do you know? Have you tried?

Try a handicapped person in your next vacancy. Give him or her the opportunity to prove his ability and capabilities.

Continue your support of the handicapped by calling your local state employment agency today. The employment of the physically handicapped is good business.



JOHN SINDERS Transferred to Chicago

By JIM GILLAN
Mail Tribune Correspondent

From the comparatively quiet solitude of the Rogue River valley to the dynamics with piles of steel and concrete, elevated and subway rails, freeways and a spider's net of railroads; from the beauty of the salmon and steelhead and trout pools of the famous Rogue river to the shores of teeming Lake Michigan, is a long step even for those unafraid of the 1960's and the new Frontiers.

John Sindere, personnel officer at the Veterans Administration domiciliary, White City, is being transferred to the VA's Hines hospital in Chicago, according to Manager Henry C. Herzog.

The story of John and Mary Sindere is good for our times and moods, and its results have been good for innumerable people who have become

the special objects of the Presidents of the United States and the Committee for the Employment of the Physically Handicapped.

Sindere was awarded the President's citation — first in the region — for meritorious service in the field of the handicapped. The Jackson county committee, of which he is a former chairman, awarded him other citations.

He is an authority through self-experience. A Texas Marine, he and some 8,000 others were on Corregidor in the Philippines when the invading Japanese hit. On May 7, 1942, Sindere was one of those captured.

Amoebic dysentery attacked him almost immediately, and within less than 30 days his weight dropped from a husky 198 to 113 pounds. Within a short time later he noticed that he had trouble

seeing the fences at Cabanatuan prison camp. Next, he could not make out the buildings, and after four months could not read the only two books he still had—the Bible and a Spanish textbook which he had been studying during his Philippine duty.

His captors believed in the principle of no work, no eat. Since seeing meant working and working meant eating, his chances for survival were not in his favor. He learned to find his way as a member of a gardening detail through his senses of hearing and touch.

However, the last year of his imprisonment was in Northern Japan where he hauled logs and worked in a copper mine.

The end of the war saved him from the impending doom of knowing he could not survive another winter. It was

a three-mile hike from camp to the mine and there the moist air was merciless.

On Sept. 14, 1945, after 3 1/2 years, he was started toward stateside. At Oak Knoll Naval hospital, Oakland, Calif., he learned that the dysentery and malnutrition had killed the optical nerves in his eyes. He had less than five-two hundredths vision — and that portion came from the peripheral nerves. Treatment started and with it the adjustment necessary to make a living-somehow. He was taught Braille and given a whitened cane.

And then he met Mary, a Wave at nearby Camp Shoemaker—a jumping off station for Pacific sea going sailors. They were married in less than a month.

Sindere was sent to Philadelphia and then to the Institute for the Blind in New

York City for testing and rehabilitation. Discharged, he and Mary went back to Texas where both entered Clifton Junior college and later Baylor university. Both eventually took law degrees through Mary's eyes principally. After examinations and ratings, he entered the Veterans administration service at Waco; then

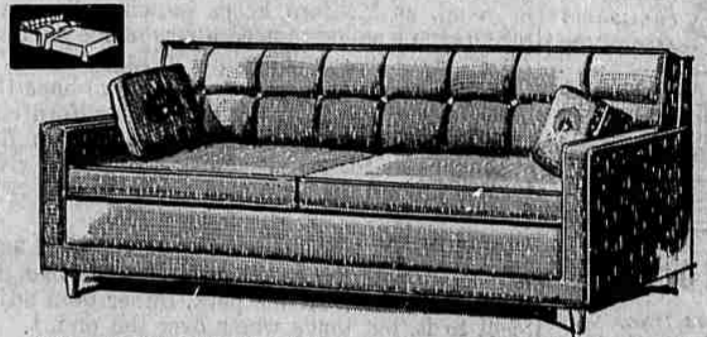
at VA hospitals in Salisbury and Durham, N.C. Since college days he has learned to use telescopic lenses which give him eight inches of sight. Another lens allows him to view distant objects and such spectacles as football games and movies but mostly with one eye at a time.

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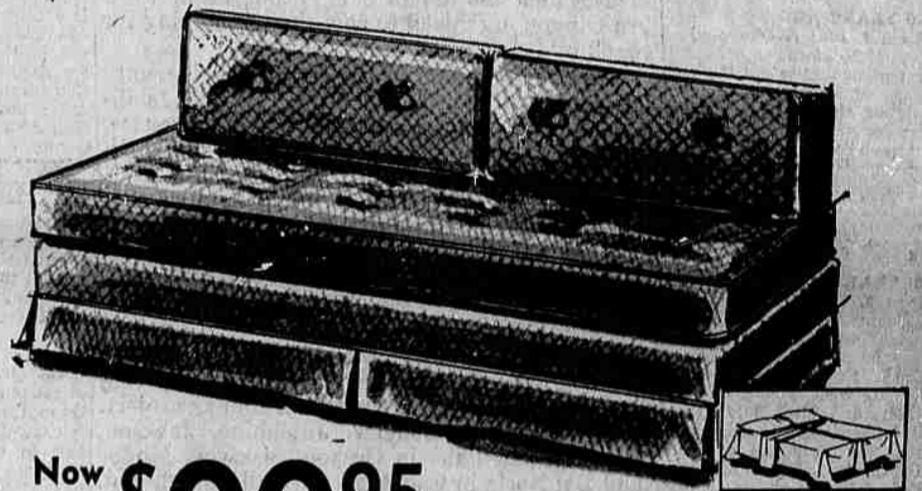
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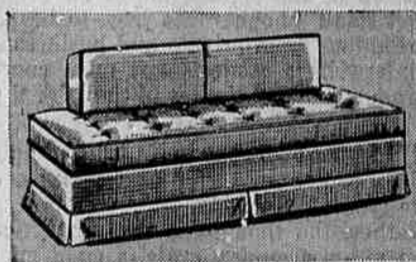


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