

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ Toledo Hearing and Speech Center Records, 1920-2000 ◀

MSS-292

Size: Approximately 12.25 linear ft.

Provenance: Received from Benjamin Heywood, Marshall & Melhorn LLC, December 17, 2014

Access: Open

Collection Summary: Collection contains numerous administrative, financial, legal, audiovisual, and published materials of the organization. Specific items include minutes, agendas, reports, financial statements, contracts, photographs, films, newsletters, and newspaper clippings, among others.

Subject(s): [Disability History](#), [Social Welfare](#)

Related Collections: Disability History Archive Project collections

Processing Note:

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Completed by: Tamara Jones, April 2015

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Historical Sketch

The Toledo Hearing and Speech Center (THSC) was formed out of the personal experiences of Bessie Anderson Dewey. For some time, Dewey had been losing her hearing, and it was in the winter of 1915-1916 that she was finally forced to accept that her ability to hear was almost completely gone. On the advice of her otologist, Dr. A.L. Steinfeld, Dewey began taking lip-reading classes, traveling to Chicago to do so because no such programs existed in Toledo at the time. The lessons had a significant impact on her, and she wrote to her family that “the walls that were closing around me are opening and I can see daylight shining through.” Upon returning to Toledo, Dewey taught lip-reading classes to other deaf and hearing impaired people. After two years of teaching, she realized that nothing was being done to help Toledo’s deaf community, so she established a social service that allowed her and her students to meet once a week and discuss their concerns. Since this was not a formal organization, however, many of her students reverted to living in isolation after their lessons ended.

The idea of assisting the deaf community did not end there, however. In the fall of 1919, seven individuals plus Dewey met with the intention of establishing a social service organization. After consulting with Dr. Steinfeld, the eight organized a “League for the Hard of Hearing.” In March of 1920, the league was formally incorporated as the Toledo League for the Hard of Hearing. Almost immediately, Dewey, who served as president, began setting aside funds to establish a home for the new league. The organization’s first headquarters were small, consisting of a two-room apartment in a building on the corner of Franklin and West Woodruff. In 1921, the League became an agency of the Toledo Community Chest, and later became the fifth chapter of the American Society for the Hard of Hearing (later known as the American Hearing Society). Dewey resigned as president and served as the League’s Executive Secretary until her death in February 1923. She was replaced as Executive Secretary by Ethel Colby, who carried on the organization’s work until she resigned in August of that year. Elizabeth Brand, who had come from Pittsburgh, was appointed to replace Colby.

In January 1926, a special meeting of the board of directors was called to discuss purchasing a new, permanent home for the League. A vacant structure at 2313 Ashland Avenue known as the Law Building was considered an ideal location for the new Club House. Brand suggested having 20 people contribute \$1,000 each to fund the purchase of the building, and the Club House on Ashland was formally dedicated on December 12, 1926. In 1927, the estate of Edward Drummond Libbey gifted \$25,000 to the League to pay the mortgage in full.

The Toledo League for the Hard of Hearing, as with many other organizations, suffered severe financial hardship during the Great Depression. Nevertheless, the League managed to continue its mission to serve the city’s deaf community. In the 1940s, the League’s role as a service organization expanded. In addition to lip-reading lessons and social groups, the organization was also involved with vocational training, recreational opportunities, and providing hearing aids. The end of World War II saw the return of veterans who had suffered hearing loss and traumatic

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brain injuries; recognizing the need for speech therapy and other assistance, the League incorporated these services as well. On January 22, 1947, the organization changed its name to the Toledo Hearing League.

By the 1950s, the League realized that parents of hearing impaired children needed services of their own. Mary Roberts, an audiologist, formed a parent education group in 1952. The group formally incorporated itself in 1958 as the Parent Hearing Education Association. Through donations, the League was able to provide hearing aids for needy individuals, and a hearing aid loan service was also established with financial support from the Woman's Education Club. In the early 1960s, the organization underwent another, final name change, becoming the Toledo Hearing and Speech Center. The change prompted the Toledo Speech Clinic to file a lawsuit alleging infringement of its name, but the suit was later dismissed by a judge.

In 1970, the Toledo Hearing and Speech Center moved its headquarters to One Stranahan Square in downtown Toledo. An influx of funds in the seventies allowed the Center to purchase equipment and expand its services. With approval from the Area Office on Aging, the Center also began providing services to the elderly. Expansion of services continued into the 1980s and included providing interpreting on Channel 11's morning news (1982) and a summer "camp" for hearing impaired schoolchildren needing therapy (1984). In 1989, the Center opened a satellite office at Central Park West.

Although the Center continued to increase the number of services and programs into the 1990s, by the 2000s, it once again began experiencing financial difficulties. In 2013, it moved to a smaller location on Monroe Street to save money on rent. The Center's final years of operation saw a continued demand for services, but reductions in both federal and private insurance reimbursements, combined with rising costs, hampered its ability to provide services to individuals regardless of their financial status. In early February of 2014, the board of trustees held two emergency meetings to discuss options for keeping the Center open. These included cutting some programs or merging with other centers, but the board concluded that any solution would only delay the inevitable. The Toledo Hearing and Speech Center closed its doors on February 7, 2014, bringing an end to the nonprofit that had served Toledo's hearing impaired community for nearly a century.

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Scope and Content Note

The records of the Toledo Hearing and Speech Center are divided into nine series. Because efforts were made to preserve items in their original order where possible, some arrangements are different across the various series (chronological vs. reverse chronological order), and similar types of information (e.g. newspaper clippings, photographs) will be found in more than one series.

Series one, **Administrative Files**, consists primarily of materials pertaining to the Board of Trustees, including minutes and agendas. Documents concerning the governance of the organization can also be found in this series and include the constitution, by-laws, policies, and rules and regulations. Some reports are included as well, as are demographic studies conducted by the THSC.

Series two, **Events**, consists of documents pertaining to programs held by the Center.

Series three, **Financial Files**, consists of financial statements, grant materials, and materials pertaining to United Way. These materials together comprise approximately half the contents of the financial series. Other documents include correspondence and sources of service income.

Series four, **Legal Files**, contains correspondence, contracts, and agreements between the THSC and several area organizations, deeds and wills, and other legal documents.

Series five, **Publications and Printed Material**, consists primarily of various newsletters published by the THSC. The majority of these newsletters were published under the title *League-Ally Speaking*, which ran from 1927 through part of 1960, when the name was changed to *Centrally Speaking*. *Hearsay*, another newsletter published by the organization, is also included in this series. Other publications are contained in a "miscellaneous publications" folder due to limited quantities of each title. There is also a folder of newspaper clippings dating from the late 1920s to the late 1990s. There are no known clippings from the 1930s in this folder, and most years in this date span are not included. Some of the clippings are undated. Most of the other clippings in the collection can be found in series seven: scrapbooks.

Series six, **Photographic and Audiovisual Materials**, is divided into three subseries: audio and video cassettes, film reels, and photographs. Audio and video cassettes consist of a mix of advertising spots for the THSC and local news stories. The film reels contain two commercially-produced short films concerning speech and hearing, a WTOL news story featuring Gordon Ward, and a film of an undated, unidentified social event. All of the films are 16 mm, and two of the three reels do not contain sound. The third subseries, photographs, makes up the bulk of the series and contains prints of THSC personnel, classroom scenes and hearing screenings (included together under the title "Therapy Sessions and Screenings"), events, the organization's various headquarters, and miscellaneous objects such as a mobile screening vehicle and testing equipment. Very few photographs contain identifying information such as names or dates; however, the

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decades appear to cover the 1930s-1990s. Some slides and negatives are also included in this series and cover most of the same subjects as the photographs.

Series seven, **Scrapbooks**, are mostly a combination of photographs and newspaper clippings. Some of the photographs were removed from their scrapbooks and placed in folders, but are included in this series due to their original form when received. Many of these photographs also do not contain much identifying information, though some events are identified. The scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings collectively cover the 1920s-1960s. Scrapbooks labelled “miscellaneous” contain a combination of photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, and advertisements.

Series eight, **Awards and Certificates**, contains a certificate of affiliation between the THSC and the Sertoma Foundation, a certificate of appreciation from Head Start, an Employee of the Month award, two proclamations from the office of the mayor of Toledo, and a special recognition from the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. Most of these items are framed.

Series nine, **Miscellaneous**, contains a variety of materials: those concerning the Central Park West property, drawings and illustrations, a collaboration charter between United Way and its member agencies, histories of the THSC and other hearing organizations and descriptions of services offered, and various other documents.

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Folder List

Box	Folder	Item
		SERIES 1: ADMINISTRATIVE FILES
1	1	Age and Demographic Distribution and Caseload Summaries, 1977-1979
1	2	Annual Reports, 1980, 1983-1987, 1990-1993
1	3	Articles of Incorporation, 1920 (photocopy)
1	4	Board of Trustees Directories, 1937-1978, 1997-1998
1	5	Board of Trustees Agendas, 1958-1978
1	6	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1920-1935
1	7	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1935-1941
1	8	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1941-1947
1	9	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1947-1965
1	10	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1965-1973
1	11	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1974-1978
1	12	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1979-1980
1	13	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1981
1	14	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1982-1985 (folder 1)
1	15	Board of Trustees Minutes, 1982-1985 (folder 2)
1	16	Constitution, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, and Policies
2	1	Correspondence, 1950, 1953, 1960, 1964-1966, 1973, 1980-1992, n.d.
2	2	Demographic Analysis, 1972-1973
2	3	Demographic Analysis, 1974-1976
2	4	Executive Committee Report, 1969
2	5	Weekly Statistics, 1998
		SERIES 2: EVENTS
2	6	Holiday Movie Festival, 1988
2	7	Semantic Deficits and Learning Disabilities Program, April 28, 1989
2	8	Miscellaneous Events
		SERIES 3: FINANCIAL FILES
2	9	Annual Fund, 1997-1998
2	10	Contributions, 1997-1998
2	11	Correspondence, 1927-1928, 1937 1965, 1967, 1970, 1986-1991, 1994- 1996, n.d.
2	12	COSI "Sounds Sensational" Fundraiser, 1998
2	13	Exemption from Taxation, 1928, 1934, 1938, 1941, 1951, 1964, 1967, 1970, 1972, 2000
2	14	Grants Materials – THSC, 1980s-1990s (folder 1)
2	15	Grants Materials – THSC, 1980s-1990s (folder 2)
2	16	Grants Materials – Miscellaneous Organizations, 1987-1988, 1991,

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		n.d.
2	17	Head Start, 1996-1999
2	18	Internal Budget, 1997
2	19	Monthly Financial Statements, 1994
2	20	Monthly Financial Statements, 1995
2	21	Monthly Financial Statements, 1996
2	22	Sertoma Affiliation, 1991-1993
2	23	Sources of Service Revenue, 1993-1995
2	24	Statements of Accounts, Income and Expenditures, and Disbursements, 1927-1929, 1947-1950, n.d.
2	25	Strategic Marketing Plan, 1993
2	26	Summer Camp Expenses, 1995
2	27	Toledo Community Foundation, 1994-1996, n.d.
2	28	United Way – Annual Financial Documents, 1993-1995, 1997, n.d.
2	29	United Way – Campaigns, 1997-1998
3	1	United Way – Statistics, 1996
3	2	United Way – Statistics, 1997
3	3	Miscellaneous Financial Documents, 1920s-1990s
		SERIES 4: LEGAL FILES
3	4	Contracts and Agreements – Cummings-Zucker Center, 1987-1990, n.d.
3	5	Contracts and Agreements – Other, 1928, 1938, 1984-1988
3	6	Contracts and Agreements – Other, 1989-1996, n.d.
3	7	Correspondence, 1948, 1987, 1989-1990
3	8	Deeds and Wills, 1896, 1926-1927, 1937, 1942, 1982, 1988, 1990
3	9	Hearing Aid Counseling Service, 1933, 1936, 1939, 1949-1955, 1957
3	10	Miscellaneous
		SERIES 5: PUBLICATIONS AND PRINTED MATERIAL
3	11	Brochures, Flyers, Pamphlets, Programs
3	12	Centrally Speaking, 1960-1963
3	13	Hearsay, 1984-1989, 1994, 1996-1997
3	14	League-Ally Speaking, 1927-1939 (excluding 1932)
3	15	League-Ally Speaking, 1940-1946
3	16	League-Ally Speaking, 1947-1951
3	17	League-Ally Speaking, 1952-1960
3	18	Newspaper Clippings, 1928, 1946, 1964, 1971-1973, 1978-1981, 1987-1988, 1999, n.d.
3	19	Press Releases, 1973, 1977, 1980
3	20	Miscellaneous Publications, 1944, 1966, 1972-1974, 1980, 1987-1988, 1997, n.d.

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		SERIES 6: PHOTOGRAPHIC AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS
		Subseries A: Audio and video cassettes
3	21	Jamie Farr LPGA Charities Video, 1997 (VHS)
3	22	"Protect Your Hearing," December 1998 (VHS)
3	23	THSC advertisement, May 14, 1999 (VHS)
4	1	THSC advertisements, n.d. (3 audiocassettes)
4	2	WTVG news story re: testing infants for hearing loss, September 19, 1996 (VHS)
		Subseries B: Film reels
7	1	"How We Hear" and "The Human Voice," n.d. (16 mm)
7	2	Unidentified social event, ca. 1920s/1930s (16 mm)
7	3	WTOL-TV news story feat. Gordon Ward, ca. 1960s (16 mm)
		Subseries C: Photographs and Photographic Material
4	3	Events – Balloon Launch, May 1987
4	4	Events – Rally by the River, June 1987
4	5	Events – Unidentified
4	6	People (folder 1)
4	7	People (folder 2)
4	8	People (folder 3)
4	9	People (folder 4)
4	10	Places and Things
4	11	Therapy Sessions and Screenings (folder 1)
4	12	Therapy Sessions and Screenings (folder 2)
4	13	Therapy Sessions and Screenings (folder 3)
4	14	Therapy Sessions and Screenings (folder 4)
8	1	Therapy Sessions and Screenings (folder 5) (oversize folder)
8	--	Photographs of Nellie Lenderson and unidentified woman (both framed) (oversize)
4	15	Negatives, various (folder 1)
4	16	Negatives, various (folder 2)
4	17	Negatives, various (folder 3)
4	18	Slides, various
		SERIES 7: SCRAPBOOKS
9	--	Newspaper Clippings, 1920s-1930s
9	--	Newspaper Clippings, 1920s-1950s
10	--	Newspaper Clippings, 1950-1963
10	--	Newspaper Clippings, 1960-1962
10	1	Photographs – Lunch with the Lions, n.d.
10	2	Photographs – Therapy Sessions and Screenings (folder 6)
11	--	Miscellaneous, 1920s-1930s (2)
8	2	Miscellaneous, 1987-1990

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5	--	Miscellaneous, 1995-1998
		SERIES 8: AWARDS AND CERTIFICATES (oversize)
5	--	Certificate of Affiliation between Sertoma Foundation and THSC, 1985
5	--	Certificate of Appreciation for Services to Head Start, 2000 (framed)
5	--	Employee of the Month photo, 1998 (framed)
6	--	Proclamation from Toledo Mayor's Office, 1988 (framed)
6	1	Proclamation from Toledo Mayor's Office, 1999
6	--	Special Recognition from Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, 1969
		SERIES 9: MISCELLANEOUS
4	19	Central Park West Building, 1968, 1970, 1983-1991
5	--	Collaboration Charter – United Way and Member Agencies, 1998 (oversize)
4	20	Drawings and Illustrations, n.d.
4	21	Organization Histories and Information
4	22	Miscellaneous