

Special Distinguished Service Award to Joel Stark

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The Special Distinguished Service Award has been presented only three times in our recognition program.

Tonight we honor a person with a long history of Council service. Twenty-two years ago at the first annual conference of the Council of Graduate programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, our next honoree presented a paper titled, "Program Management and Perspectives: Presentation of the Issues". The first issue or problem area that he addressed was that of "tired, tenured senior faculty in our programs, many of whom are completely fossilized". In contrast, the person receiving the Special Distinguished Service Award is anything but "fossilized"!

The other interesting observation about his presentation in 1980 is that the issues he discussed are still relevant today: the rapidly increasing scope of practice, competition for funding, and territoriality. He said, regarding other professions and ours staking claim to language, reading, and learning disabilities, "Many speech-language pathologists know too little about written language. Many reading specialists know too little about oral language, and many LD specialists know too little about either".

Our honoree's publication record began in 1961 with the term "language" in the title. Other areas covered in that decade included differential diagnosis, how does a speech defect affect learning, childhood aphasia, brain damage in children, non-verbal children, and the autistic child. In 1969, he published the Assessment of Children's Language Comprehension.

A highlight of the 1970s was an article in ASHA magazine, "Reading failure: A language based problem". His work continued in language-based learning disabilities and children with dyslexia.

In the subsequent decades our honoree remained a strong advocate for language/learning disabilities, presenting, publishing, and serving on many ASHA, state association, the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, and CEC committees. His passion for language was matched by his commitment to diversity and both were complemented by an incredibly long and distinguished academic, clinical, and administrative career. He acquired over a million dollars (\$1,281,562) in pre-professional student training grants from the US Offices of Education and Social and Rehabilitative Services.

Our honoree was instrumental in defining many of the ASHA definitions and statements we use today as he served on the Committee on Language, the Ad Hoc committee on Language/Learning Disabilities, the Ad Hoc committee to Study the Language Disorders Issue, and the Committee on Language and Learning Disabilities. During his terms as member and chair of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities a total of five position papers were published. He has also served ASHA on numerous convention program committees, the Scientific and professional Meetings Board and as a site visitor. (He told me last night that he must be a better site visitor than I am since he's been renewed for an entire term and I only received a one-year extension!)

Finally, as I began, we recognize with this award his wonderful service to the Council. He has always served when asked, given formal papers, and frequently given us wonderful advice from the floor. He's made us think, laugh, and he reminds us by his very presence to love life.

It's my distinct pleasure to present for only the fourth time in our history, the Council's Special Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Joel Stark of Queens College of the City University of New York.