


*Ms. Wheelchair America*  
1995-1996  
PAGEANT

**Hollywood  
Nights**

August 12, 1995  
Anaheim, California





## Where you sit says a lot about who you are.

Your kind of action demands  
this kind of Action. Unprece-  
dented performance. Non-stop  
style. Custom sizes plus cus-  
tom options equal better fit.  
Super lightweight aluminum  
and composite frames. Action  
Superlites – the next step up  
in performance, fit and  
styling. Don't settle for any-  
thing less.

**FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN SIT WHEREVER THEY WANT.**

This photo features Scott Law (a professional Handicapped Scuba Association diver certified through DIS-A-DIVE) performing with a new Action wheelchair for the purpose of making a dramatic point. However, this nor any other wheelchair is designed or intended to be used under water or in this manner and the reader is advised that any attempt to replicate this activity is extremely dangerous under all circumstances.

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*action*  
SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

Action by Invacare Corporation  
899 Cleveland Street  
Elyria, Ohio 44036  
1-800-424-4214

# Purpose and Goals of the Ms. Wheelchair America Program

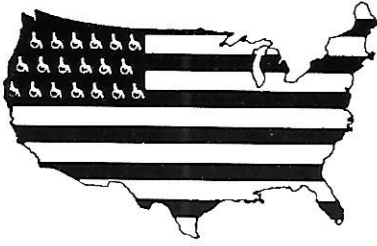
The Ms. Wheelchair Program is NOT a beauty contest. It is, instead, a National competition to select the most accomplished spokesperson for persons with disabilities. The selected representative must be able to communicate the needs and accomplishments of her constituency to the public, business community and lawmakers. She is charged with a continuing effort to educate the public regarding the dignity, productiveness and basic values of people with disabilities.

As Ms. Wheelchair America, her duties are numerous. In order to fulfill her responsibilities, she has the opportunity to travel, visit advocacy groups, make public appearances and conduct television, radio and print interviews. She must be able to promote the awareness of people with disabilities and create an understanding of the need to eliminate architectural and attitudinal barriers. It is her duty to inform the general public of the achievements of people with disabilities across our Nation.

The competition to select the new Ms. Wheelchair America is a five day event. The Program is comprehensive and includes workshops of personal enhancement including grooming, communication, interpersonal development and networking. Free time is offered to encourage the women to share information and develop friendships with each other. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program enables the contestants an opportunity to enjoy six days in a luxurious hotel treated as honored guests. This Program is a healthy competition and an excellent opportunity to see the potential within and challenge personal growth.

The planning Board for Ms. Wheelchair America is made up of volunteers from community organizations, businesses and previous title holders. There are few administrative costs to the Program. All expenses for hosting the Program, travel for Ms. Wheelchair America and expenses associated with the national Ms. Wheelchair America Program must be secured through fund-raising and donations. We welcome your assistance.





## **Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.**

### Ms. Wheelchair Creed

As Ms. Wheelchair America, I promise to do my utmost  
To promote public awareness of people with disabilities...  
To give unselfishly of my time and effort to this purpose...  
To strive to achieve the best that is within me...  
To offer my hand in friendship to everyone I meet...  
To be cheerful, honest and loving...  
To give hope to the less fortunate...  
To set an example by my attitude...  
And to do all this with grace, warmth and dignity.



# Ms. Wheelchair America

## State Coordinators

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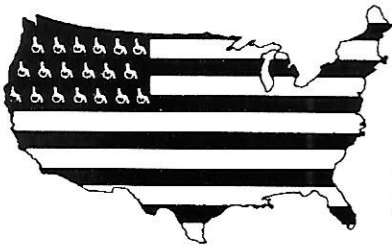
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# Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

Dawn Blodgett • MWA 1993-94 • Estetta Blodgett • National Coordinators  
1773 Hummingbird Drive • Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • (714) 434-7120

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Good Evening,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 1995-96 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant. We feel very fortunate to be hosting this celebration of achievement in Anaheim, California.

We would like to take this time to congratulate the contestants and their families for outstanding accomplishments. You are truly all winners and though we can only crown one winner tonight, we know you are all worthy of the Ms. America title.

Best of luck and have fun in California!

Sincerely,

Dawn & Estetta Blodgett  
National Coordinators 1995-96  
Ms. Wheelchair America

## • Board of Directors •

### **Interim Executive Director**

Sherry Repscher

### **Vice President**

Mary Browning

### **Secretary**

Joe Riddle

### **Executive Director**

Barbara Cramer

### **Treasurer**

Gail Mckoon

## • National Coordinators •

### **National Coordinator**

Dawn Blodgett  
1995-96 M.W.A.

### **National Coordinator**

Estetta Blodgett  
1995-96 M.W.A.





# Judging Criteria

Judging criteria has been established by the National committee of the Ms. Wheelchair America Program. The following is an outline taken from the official guidelines.

## **A. ACCOMPLISHMENTS - 40%**

1. Personal achievements / accomplishments since onset of disability in the following areas: Academic, Vocational, Personal.
2. Adjustment to disability.

## **B. COMMUNITY SKILLS - 40%**

1. Ability to deal with media, peers, civic groups, etc.
2. Public relation skills.
3. Advocacy for persons with disabilities.
4. Self-confidence / motivation / initiative / creativity.

## **C. SELF-PERCEPTION / PROJECTION - 20%**

1. Poise, demeanor.
2. Appropriate attire, personal presentation.

Ms. Wheelchair America is NOT a beauty contest and this category is not a license to choose the most attractive entrant. Instead, these qualities are simply desired in order that she has a pleasing appearance capable of obtaining a favorable response from audiences where Ms. Wheelchair America may appear.

Ms. Congeniality is chosen by the contestants for her friendly personality and helpfulness throughout the program.

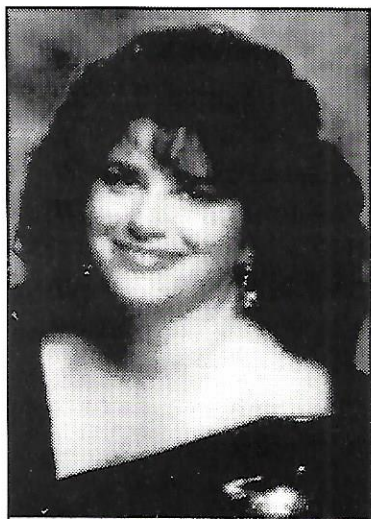


# Ms. Wheelchair America Judge's

## MARY ELIZABETH LEVIS

Sacramento, California

Judge



Mary and her husband Larry have traveled coast to coast as the Navy has demanded. During this time, Mary raised two sons, fourteen months apart, volunteered as an Ombudsman, and donated her time to the Red Cross, PTA, cub scouts and El Camino High School's Performing Arts Parents Club, where she serves as Vice President.

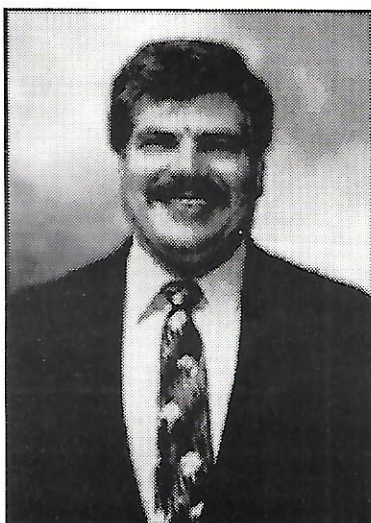
As her children entered high school, Mary became a "Reassurance Therapist" at Sutter Oaks Alzheimer's Center, where she assisted both patients and staff in coping with the devastating effects of this disease.

Mary and Larry have managed an apartment complex designed to provide quality, affordable housing for people with disabilities for the past five years. Summerfield Plaza has been a unique opportunity for Mary to follow her own Motto: "Treat People as if they were what they ought to be... and YOU help them to become what they are capable of being."

## JERRY MAZURKIEWICZ

Columbus, Georgia

Judge



In 1975, Jerry accepted a position as a Manager Trainee with Days Inn of America. Today, twenty years later, the hospitality industry is still where you can find him - As the General Manager of the Holiday Inn North, Columbus, GA.

Jerry fully realized the need for awareness for persons with disabilities when his mother needed a wheelchair while battling Cancer. His hotel has proudly hosted three Ms. Wheelchair America Pageants.

He is now involved with several other professionals on a Travelers for Disabilities Committee to bring a greater awareness to the hotel industry regarding the needs for persons traveling with disabilities and is a volunteer for the upcoming Paralympics being held in Atlanta in 1996.

# Ms. Wheelchair America Judge's

## **JENNIFER, MORRILL**

Salt Lake City, Utah  
Judge



Jennifer Morrill was born in El Cajon, California and relocated at twelve to Glendora, California. In 1988, she graduated from the University of California in Riverside with a Bachelor's in Human development. To pursue her Masters in Psychology, she continued her education in Utah at Brigham Young University. She earned her Masters in 1990 and is currently working to complete her Ph.D in Counseling Psychology at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis since eighteen months old, Jennifer knows first hand the daily trials people with disabilities face. After graduation, she plans to counsel children with chronic or terminal illnesses and their families.

Jennifer has been a member of the Utah Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities for three years, working with state legislators to enact laws beneficial to people with disabilities. She also volunteers for Easter Seals and the Arthritis Foundation. In 1993, she was named Ms. Wheelchair Utah and was 2nd runner-up to 1993 Ms. Wheelchair America Dawn Blodgett.

## **JAMES PRICE, JR.**

California  
Judge



Mr. Price was born and raised in the State of Pennsylvania. After graduating Scottdale High School, where he officiated both High School and Junior College Basketball for twelve years, he joined the United States Air Force where he trained to be an Electronic Technician.

Mr. Price was a proud member of the launch team for the highly successful SCOUT Missile which launched satellites into outer space. He faithfully served over twenty years in the Air Force and retired as a Senior Master Sergeant.

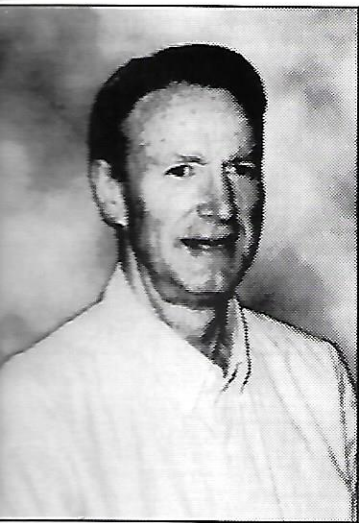
James Price has assisted his sister Norene Price in organizing the Ms. Wheelchair California pageant and has served as a judge for five consecutive years.



# Ms. Wheelchair America Judge's

## **HARLEY THOMAS**

Denver, Colorado  
Judge



Harley is a T-5 Para due to a 1982 motorcycle accident in Mexico. He is co-founder and president of Colorado Sports For The Physically Challenged, Inc., a non-profit corporation, dedicated to the promotion of wheelchair athletics for junior and adults with disabilities.

Harley is a veteran of twenty years military service, including a tour to Vietnam and is on the National Board of Directors of The Paralyzed Veterans of America. Harley holds a degree in Business from the University of Virginia and is currently employed by Cyberscience Corporation as the Manager of Technical Consulting Services in Denver, Colorado.

## **SHAUNA WILLIAMS**

Laramie, Wyoming  
Judge

**Photo  
Not  
Available**

Shauna Williams, from Laramie, Wyoming sustained a spinal cord injury in 1988 while snow tubing. The re-creation of her accident aired on Rescue 911 in January of 1993.

Shauna works for the University of Wyoming in a new program called WYNOT, the Wyoming New Options in Technology Resource Center, that advocates assistive technology in the public school system, work place and recreational activities.

Shauna represented the state of Wyoming in the 1991 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant where she won the Ms. Potential award.

Shauna enjoys horseback riding, dancing, camping, fishing and skiing. Her latest adventure was barrel racing with her horse "Jet."

# MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA 1995

## Pageant Program

August 12, 1995

### “HOLLYWOOD NIGHTS”

Presentation of Honor Guard - “The Star Spangled Banner”

Master of Ceremonies Jim Sharpes • Mistress of Ceremonies Melissa Sharpes

Opening and Welcome

“Hooray For Hollywood” Intro

Parade of Contestants and Contestant Introductions

Introduction of Ms. Wheelchair America 1993-94 • Dawn Blodgett

Introduction of Ms. Wheelchair America 1994-95 • Wendy Petzold

Introduction of 1995 Ms. Wheelchair America Board

*Entertainment by* Don McDonell, Frank Sinatra Impersonator

Introduction of Judges and Criteria

*Entertainment by* Swing Dancers, Jessica Cox & James Adair

Contestants in Interview

*Entertainment by* Endre Samu, Elvis Impersonator

Contestants in Review

Judges Deliberation

*Entertainment by* Jeff Davis, Magician

Farewell Ms. Wheelchair America 1994

Announcement of Winners

Miss Congeniality, Miss Achievement, Sweetheart Award

Second Runner Up, First Runner Up

Ms. Wheelchair America 1995



# The Sharpes



The Sharpes, Melissa and Jim, met in Tucson in 1986. Jim was doing the morning show on a Top-40/CHR station. Melissa the night show on the same company's Urban AM station. It was Melissa's first radio job, Jim's sixth.

The only thing Jim has ever done for a living (besides working at McDonalds) is radio. He started in his small hometown of Page, Arizona when he was 16. After on-air jobs in Flagstaff, Arizona, Spokane, Albuquerque, and Reno, Jim finally landed at KFXX ("The Fox") in Tucson.

Melissa on the other hand, has held several jobs. After a short stint at college in Stockton, California (where she graduated high school), Melissa moved to San Francisco. She worked for everyone from Subaru to Crocker Bank. After moving to Tucson, Melissa went back to school, majoring in Journalism. At night, she worked spinning records in clubs. A disc jockey from KFXX heard her and suggested she should get into radio. She cut an audition tape and was hired from that tape to do full-time on KKPW ("Power 1450").

The summer after they met, Melissa and Jim announced their engagement. Everyone at the two stations was happy, but nobody was quite as happy as their general manager, who talked them into getting married live on the air. "Whoever was on the air played White Wedding by Billy Idol," says Jim, "Romantic huh?" The simulcast (on both KKPW and KFXX) took place on morning drive on October 16, 1987. All of the TV network affiliates carried it on their news that night.

Fast-forward two years to find Melissa and Jim working on competing morning shows in Pheonix (Jim on KKFR "Power 92" a Dance/Top-40 station...Melissa on Magic 101 and adult contemporary station). It was then that they decided to take the really big plunge: team up and do a morning show together ("All our friends said we were crazy to work together!").

With no track record as a team, the Sharpes couldn't be choosy about the first gig. They weren't. In March 1990 they ended up in Omaha, Nebraska at a small "mom and pop" Top 40 station that had a bad signal (KXKT). Eight months later, they had an offer to do the morning show at the Westinghouse "Hot AC" station in Dallas-KRSR (Star 105"). They took it.

When Westinghouse sold that station less than two years later, Jim had an opportunity to go into programming management at WMXZ ("Mix 95.7") in New Orleans. They hired Melissa as the news director and the Sharpes took their morning show to "The Big Easy." This arrangement left Jim as Melissa's boss ("...he'll never do that again!").

A year and a half later, the Sharpes were opening a bottle of champagne to celebrate their new job at Viacom's "Star 98.7" (KYSR) in Los Angeles. They arrived just in time for wildfores, mudslides and of course, THE EARTHQUAKE. "Hey, I'm a California girl, says Melissa, "I'm used to this stuff. Besides, anything beats working for Jum!"



# A Fond Farewell From Wendy Petzold

## Ms. Wheelchair America 1994



My childhood dream to be "Miss America" came true in August of 1994 when I was crowned Ms. Wheelchair America. The wheelchair part was never included in the title I dreamed of having. Then again, I never dreamed of having to use a wheelchair for mobility either.

A 1989 automobile accident left me paralyzed from the waist down, having to use a wheelchair for mobility. However, I am the same person I was before my accident. I still like to swim, play tennis, shop, go to movies and out to dinner.

Since then, I have also taken on new activities. I now educate both young and old about living life with a disability. I help them to see myself and others who use wheelchairs as the people we are - looking beyond the wheelchair - seeing all we are capable of achieving, despite our disabilities.

I have brought to light disability issues to local, state and national legislatures. This enabled me to give people in power the knowledge to make educated decisions. While traveling as Ms. Wheelchair America, I was able to advise colleges, businesses and other public

entities on how to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

By taking an active role as Ms. Wheelchair America, I have brought national attention to the program. We are now recognized by more people than before, as a program that promotes the accomplishments of women who use wheelchairs. MWA has received extensive coverage in both the local and national media including: Good Morning America, USA Today and the Chicago Tribune.

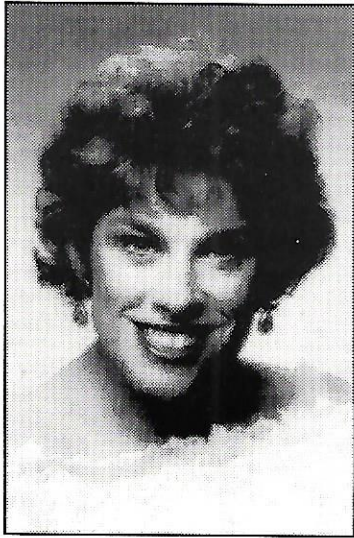
I would like to thank Andrew for all the love and support he has given me over the past year and since the day I was injured. Without his encouragement and God's will, I wouldn't be where I am today. I love you.

To all the 1995-96 contestants, only one can wear the crown but we all can make a positive difference in the world by setting good examples and breaking down the barriers that exist in society. Only then will the world we live in be more "wheelchair friendly." As individuals, we are only one but together we can make a difference!

*Congratulations to each one of you!*



## *Ellen Ruhlmann § Arizona*



Ellen works as an Adjunct Reading Professor at Mesa Community College and consultant for an educational software company. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education from Arizona State University and received a tuition scholarship based on academic achievement to complete her M.asters in Secondary Education in Reading. Ellen would also like to earn her special education certification and work as a teacher in hospital setting. For the time being, however, Ellen spends time as a volunteer teacher at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Despite her Cerebral Palsy, or perhaps because of it, Ellen is an active advocate for the removal of architectural barriers, serving on various committees to work toward this goal. Ellen describes herself as: determined, compassionate, creative, energetic and intelligent. She might also add adventurous, for Ellen says, "I'll try anything at least once."

*"Each of us is presented with our own unique gift of life,  
tied in a ribbon of individual challenges."*

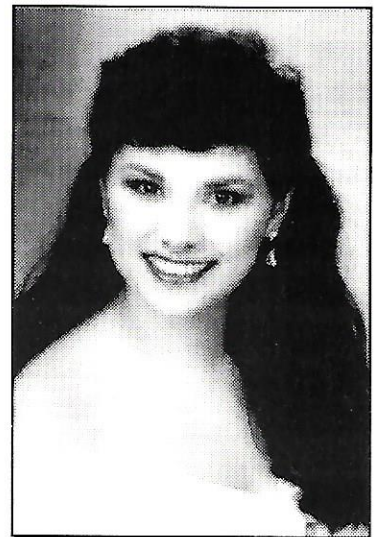
*- Kathryn Major -*

## *Debbie Anne Thompson § California*

In September 1986, Debbie was thankful to have a New beginning. As a burn survivor and bilateral amputee, she learned that she could do whatever she put her mind to. Her accomplishments are numerous and include singing on a tour throughout New Zealand and Australia, Performing at the 1988 World's Fair, Being Featured in a Orthotics and Prosthetics Documentary, Achieving a Certificate in Music Therapy in 1993, Completing a B.A. in Music in 1994, and Becoming Board Certified as a Music Therapist in January, 1995.

In addition to her academic and career achievements, Debbie continues to dedicate her time to numerous advocacy and accessibility committees, as well as to her growing family. In 1990, she married husband Matthew and became an automatic Mama to Mitchell, who is now 8. Since this time, she has had two children, 16 month son Reed, and newborn daughter Hannah, born on May 24th, 1995.

Debbie believes that her role as Mother plays an important part in breaking down attitudinal barriers as she advocates for people with disabilities. She understands that "while myths are beginning to dissolve, most people still don't picture a person who uses a wheelchair as an independent, productive member of society capable of raising a family." As Ms. Wheelchair California, Debbie has achieved much in a short time. Her goal has been "to help dispel the myths associated with people who have disabilities and encourage an attitude of acceptance and inclusion."





## Michelle J. Fink § Colorado



Originally from Wyoming, Michelle now resides in Colorado and has established a life of advocacy on behalf of the differently abled. Herself a woman with paraplegia as a result of falling off a park swing when she was seventeen. Michelle has dedicated her life to promoting awareness around her community. She is accustomed to speaking to both small and large groups ranging in age from 7 year old members of the Brownies to the student's and faculty at Colorado State University. She has also spoken to the Fort Collins City Council's Commission on Disabilities, spoken to the American Associated University women and other groups about the ADA, given inservices for physical and occupational therapy departments and has become a peer for the life skills rehabilitation unit at Poudre Valley Hospital. She has worked with various groups as they organize health awareness and disability awareness days, volunteered for fundraising efforts and has worked with youth and university wrestling programs. She also coaches soccer! In fact, Michelle is a big sports fan and enjoys skiing, horseback riding and fishing. She is currently working on the logistics of a wheelchair volleyball team.

Michelle plans to return to college to complete a Degree in Child Psychology and hopes to continue representing the positive side of disAbility. She says that her "life goal is one that many people, able or disabled may share, and that is to live the most healthy, happy, and productive life I can."

*"Happiness is a conscious choice, not an automatic response."*

*- Mildred Barthel -*

## Terri Hasty § Georgia

Terry was born with Spina Bifida but this has not stopped her from living life to it's fullest. Terry works at the Chattanooga City Police Department as a records clerk. She is a member of the Mayor's Committee for people with disabilities. She has appeared on local news shows and spoken to several schools. Terry's goal is to write a book of her life. She wants people to know you can live a normal life from a wheelchair.

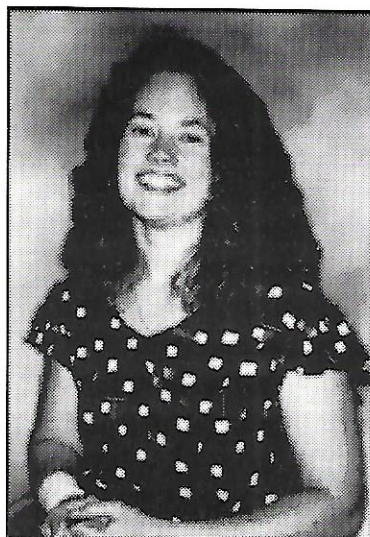
Terry's advocacy and hard work has not gone unnoticed. In 1988, she was recognized by the Georgia Rehabilitation Association as the "Achiever of the Year". In 1992, the Battlefield Pilot Club recognized Terry as the "Disabled Professional of the year".

Terry is very active in her church group and enjoys spending time with family and friends. She also enjoys singing and recently obtained a copyright on two songs she composed. Terry describes herself as witty, determined, friendly and loyal.





## *Ann Elizabeth Reed & Kentucky*



As a world traveler, Ann has seen the former Soviet Union, West Germany, France, Canada and Ecuador, and has traveled to over 40 states in the USA. Yes, Ann is adventurous and she is also extremely athletic! After an automobile accident in 1987 left her with paraplegia, she continued to pursue sports, earning a gold medal for wheelchair basketball in the 1990 World Championships in St. Etienne, France. It is her goal to compete in the 1996 Paralympics, as well as to travel with the Berea Contra dance troupes, of which she is a member. While basketball remains her favorite sport, she also enjoys tennis, racing, kayaking, rock climbing and camping.

Ann enjoys sewing and making crafts and plans to write children's books. In 1993, she earned a B.A. in Elementary Education from Loyola College in Baltimore, MD. Ann has worked as an assistant teacher in a rehabilitation hospital for children with head injuries but presently teaches first and second grade.

Though Ann speaks to groups of children on a daily basis, she also speaks to the community about disability related issues. She has spoken to college students at the request of MADD, about drinking and driving, and has been instrumental in organizing disability awareness weeks and presentations to schools. This Fall she will speak at a retreat about integrating recreational sports into the lives of people with disabilities. Most of all, Ann says that she wants "to be a positive role model" for her students.

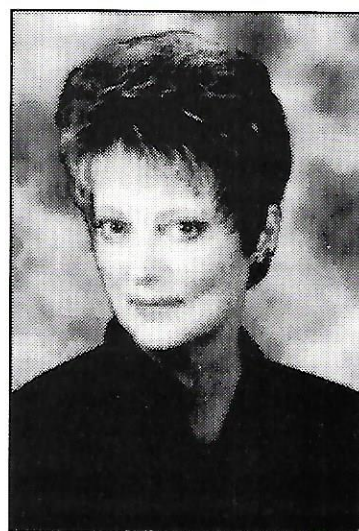
## *Karen Lynne Johnsen & Maryland*

Happily married, Karen speaks proudly of husband, Dean and teenage son, Jeremy. "My son is my joy and my husband is my rock," she says. "The three of us make a good team!" Family support has always been essential to Karen, particularly after she was diagnosed at age 12 with Fascioscapulohumeral Muscular Dystrophy, one of 40 neuromuscular diseases covered by the Muscular Dystrophy Association. To fight the isolation she felt for years, she began the first support group for FHS in the mid-atlantic region.

Karen serves on the National Executive Board of Directors and Task Force for MDA. She volunteers for the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day telethon and has received numerous awards in recognition of her achievements with the association.

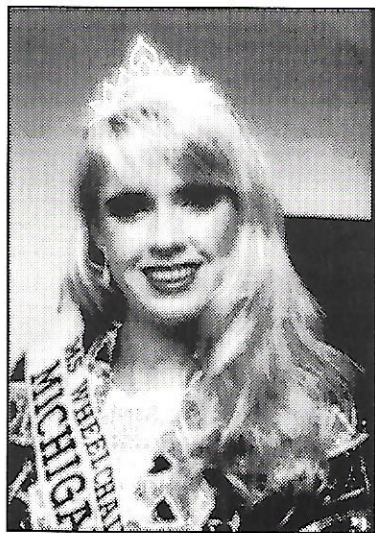
After becoming Ms. Wheelchair Maryland, Karen has had the opportunity to educate her community about MD, people with disabilities and the crucial role that love and support plays in all our lives. She has been featured in magazine and newspaper articles and has spoken to schools, churches, civic and support groups, always presenting a positive attitude.

In 1977 Karen earned an Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education from Prince George's Community College and is currently working to complete a B.A. from the University of Maryland. Karen says, "I wear many different hats and each one of them represent who I am. Karen Johnsen, a woman with a disability who has a story to tell."





## *Kimberly Ann Leahy § Michigan*



Kimberly learned at an early age how to articulate on camera and speak in front of large groups. Serving for several years as Michigan State Poster Child for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), she was given an opportunity to travel and share her experience as a person with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, a form of MD, promoting awareness for persons with disabilities. Her advocacy continued as she became the first student with a disability to enter a private, all girls high school. With her guidance, the administration saw the need to make the campus accessible, opening doors to other disabled applicants. During her high school years, her volunteer work with mentally disabled individuals earned her the National Award for Volunteerism, presented to her in 1988 by President Reagan.

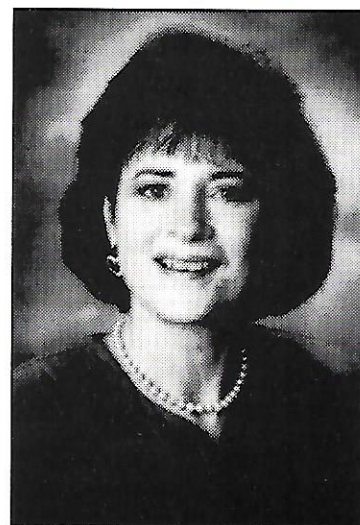
There was no stopping her as she entered college. She advocated for the implementation of the ADA, and became the first student with a disability to use the Honors Dorm, now accessible. In addition to her outstanding academic achievement, she also served on many committees to ensure ADA compliance and continued her volunteer work. She has organized fundraising and has served on the Board of Directors for the MDA summer camp program. Kimberly now holds a B.S. in Special Education from Wright State University and is pursuing her Masters. She says, "I have chosen the field of Special Education for an exceptional reason. I want to provide students with disabilities the same opportunities that I was granted as a young person."

## *Nancy Starnes § New Jersey*

As a result of a private plane crash in 1973, Nancy's world turned upside down. Facing life with paraplegia, she dedicated herself to the "demystification of disability" and has become a positive role model for the disabled and able bodied community.

With a degree in Business Administration from the University of Texas, Nancy is now the Director of the Morris County Office for the Disabled. Holding this position allows her the opportunity to organize and take part in numerous workshops and presentations concerning current issues among the disabled community. She has also been instrumental in establishing other offices addressing the needs of persons with disabilities, has been actively involved in the Handicap Parking Preservation project in New Jersey Chief of Police and has been certified as a N.J. barrier free subcode advocate.

Additionally, Nancy has had the opportunity to appear on television programs including CNN's "Sonya Live" in 1992. She was also heard on radio programs and has been featured in newspaper and magazine articles. Nancy has served as Councilwoman and Mayor for the Sparta Township between 1982-1984. And, just for fun, she entered the National Handicap Skiing Championship Competition in 1981 and played in a semi-professional bluegrass band for ten years following her accident!





## *Catherine Leigh Graham § South Carolina*



Catherine holds a B.S. in Computer Engineering from Clemson University and a Masters in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Virginia. In addition to designing a technologically advanced seating system, now being marketed as the Graham Modular Support System for wheelchair and geriatric chairs, Catherine works on a daily basis to improve the lives of people with disabilities. She is employed as a Rehabilitation Engineer where she provides assessments, prescriptions and training in the use of assistive technology to the 450 residents at the Midlands Regional Center, a rehab facility.

Providing rehabilitation assistance hits close to home, for Catherine sustained a spinal cord injury in 1987 and has had to learn how to live with paraplegia. For both personal and professional reasons, she has attended conferences on rehabilitation, has participated in workshops on attitudinal training, ADA compliance and accessibility, and has had numerous opportunities to speak to large groups, often appearing on television and

radio programs to discuss disability related issues. Catherine believes that "everyone should concentrate on what they can achieve," and she is delighted to be a part of a program which celebrates those achievements.

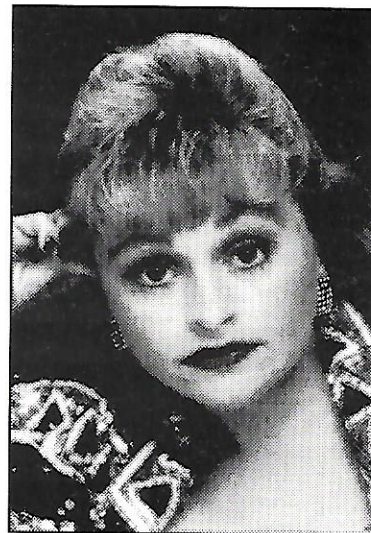
## *Amy Lynn Baxter § Texas*

Born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a rare bone condition which causes brittle bones, Amy and her family lost count of the number of hospital stays she endured while growing up. Remarkably, Amy has maintained her optimism, an attitude which earned her the title of Ms. Congeniality twice in the Ms. Wheelchair Texas program.

With a Bachelors in Marketing from Texas Wesleyan University, Amy earned a position with American Airlines as senior crew planner at JFK International. This has given her the opportunity to serve as a trainer and facilitator on the American Airlines Department of Transportation Task Force where she has trained airline employees about "disability awareness."

Amy has been keynote speaker during many presentations, such as the Texas Woman's University B.I.O.N.I.C. (Believe it or not I can!) week, and O.I.F. National conventions. For the past three years, Amy has served as the Vice President of the Board for the Handicapped Resources Association and has been a member of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities.

Through it all, Amy has been able to travel (one of her favorite hobbies!) and promote awareness on an international level. She hopes to earn her Masters in Marketing, allowing her more opportunities to promote awareness and believes that the "Ms. Wheelchair America program is a wonderful catalyst to continue to spread the word."







## *Mary Lynn Van Hulsten § Utah*

Mary Lynn Van Hulsten works at the Utah State Tax Commission and has earned recognition as Outstanding Public Employee of 1995. She earned her high school diploma in 1957 and proudly continued her education at "the school of hard knocks," as she affectionately refers to the years spent learning and growing in her role of Wife and Mother.

Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in May of 1972, Mary continued to successfully raise four children with her husband of 35 years. She describes herself as: Independent, compassionate, hard working, friendly and happy. While Mary Lynn has a delightful sense of humor, her vision of the future is very serious, including a society where "people see that we have abilities not just disabilities."

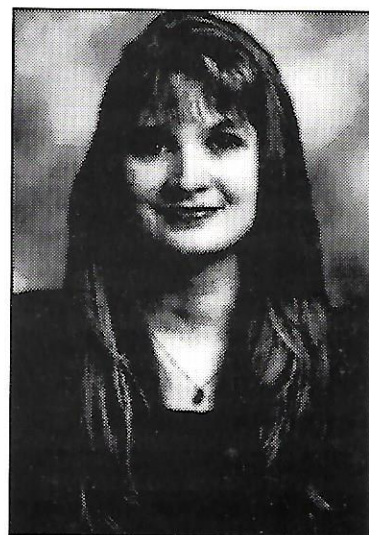
*"Life is not about having and getting, but Being and Becoming."*

*- Anonymous -*

## *Jennifer Stommel § Wisconsin*

In 1991, Jennifer sustained a spinal cord injury. Since that time, she has strived to help others become educated on the needs of people with physical disabilities. Jennifer has spoken to her community and local church groups, holding herself up as an example of how we can all overcome misfortunes. Jennifer has participated actively in educating physical therapy students on the capabilities and limitations of someone with a spinal cord injury.

In 1993, Jennifer set out to make her life more accessible. She built her own home and currently lives independently with two friends. Jennifer works as a data processor and plans to attend University of Wisconsin in the future to obtain a B.S. in Vocational Rehabilitation. Her goal is to educate, counsel and train those facing physical challenges.

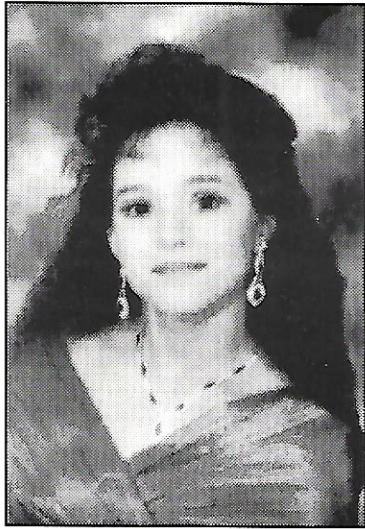


*"Patience and Perseverance pave the pathway to all goals."*

*- Kathryn Major -*



## *Deanna Birch § Wyoming*



On May 23rd, 1992, just a few short days after graduating from Lyman High School, Deanna fell asleep at the wheel and suddenly had to decide how she would face life with paraplegia. While some might have chosen to give up, Deanna chose to become an active advocate for the rights of people who have disabilities. She has spoken to local school children about the differently abled and has counselled local businesses and city owned museums about ways they can improve access.

Deanna describes herself as: helpful, independent, head strong, loyal and friendly. She might also add family oriented, for she began a family before her accident but in 1994, she and her husband had their second son. Happily married, she and her husband continue to dispel myths and unlock perceived mysteries surrounding the family life of people with disabilities.

*"The lessons most difficult to learn are those with the greatest rewards."*

*- Anonymous -*

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# Now That's Entertainment!

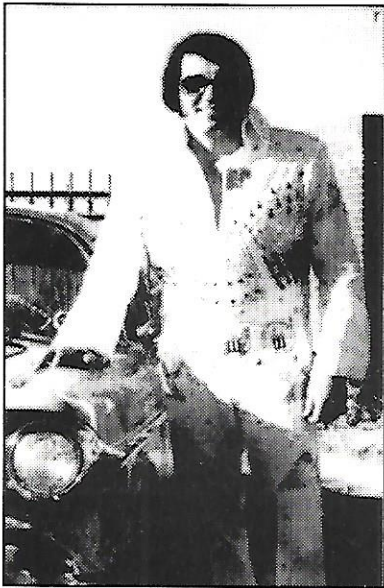
## "ELVIS" – Endre Samu

Endre was born to Hungarian immigrants on March 14, 1959 in Sharon, Pennsylvania. In a family with eight children, Endre remembers being quite shy, as he only learned English when he began school.

Endre, rather "Elvis," began singing in the 7th grade and belonged to a barbershop quartet and musical group called "Young and Alive."

As a Military Police Squad Leader, Endre recalls belting out cadences while marching to adapted Elvis' songs. After his duty in the service, he accepted a job as a Corrections Officer for the State of Colorado where he currently serves as Lieutenant and Judge in the Limon Correctional Facility.

Mr. Samu has three children ages 14, 11 and 9. His wife, Gail, is supportive as she has jumped right in to sing back up for "The King!"



## Milan Vidovich

Milan Vidovich is a 20 year old Yugoslav pianist and entertainer who left his Native, war-torn country February of 1994, to start a new life in Southern California. He started playing piano when he was 7 and since then has been trained in piano, voice and orchestral conducting.

Mr. Vidovich's appreciation for music began early. At the age of three, Vidovich joined the National Children's Choir in Yugoslavia where he acquired an affinity for the piano. Although he has been trained in classical piano,

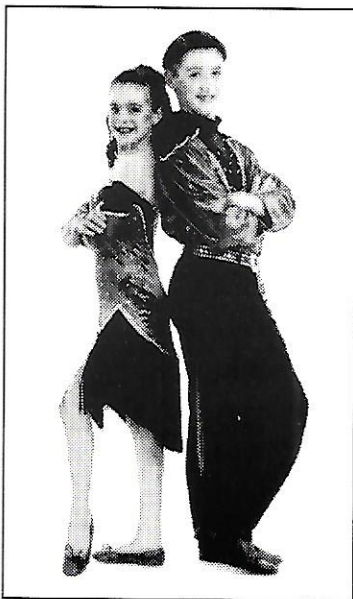
Vidovich has learned to play American love songs, Broadway and other International favorites.

Milan sings in seven languages and is studying composition at California State University in Long Beach.



*See next page for more Entertainers!*





## Jessica Cox & James Adair

Jessica (12 years old) and James (13 years old) have been dancing together and entertaining audiences throughout Southern California for the past 6 years. The two made their dance debut in 1989 at the US Open Swing Dance Championship held annually at the Disneyland Hotel. To date, they have won first place in the Young America Division of this premiere dance competition three times and are the current Swing champions.

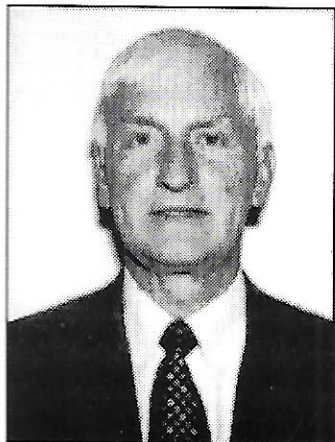
In addition to Swing dancing, James is involved in karate and football and Jessica studies ballet, tap and jazz dance. These two youngsters are great performers, and they are excited to share their love of dance with you!

## Jeff Davis

Jeff Davis is a unique entertainer who combines expert sleight-of-hand with large doses of laughter. Born in Dallas, Texas on Christmas Day 1957, his interest in magic began when he was just 7 years old. He performed his first paid engagement when he was only 12! When he was 17, he performed at the grand opening of the largest mall in the country, Red Bird Mall, where he magically produced, appropriately enough, a red bird.

At 19, he moved to Los Angeles where he was later accepted as one of the youngest members of the most exclusive magic club in the world. Hollywood's famous Magic Castle. Just after his 24th birthday, he formed his own company which uses magic to create unique marketing strategies for corporations. Since then, he has performed in virtual every major city in the country.

Jeff's client list reads like the Fortune 500. Mobil Oil, IBM, AT&T and Eastman Kodak to name a few. He used magic to change ATM cards into cash for a 7-11 TV commercial and produced a real Macintosh computer from thin air at a sales meeting for Apple Computer. Today, Jeff Davis resides near Los Angeles in the charming community of La Crescenta, California where he is in demand throughout the country for trade shows, sales meetings, hospitality suites and other promotional functions.



## "FRANK SINATRA" - Don McDonnell

Don McDonnell is originally from the Midwestern United States. Born in Chicago, Illinois, he has been living in the charming city of San Francisco for the past 10 years.

Don began singing when he was in grammar school. He, no doubt, added a delightful sound to the church chorus and various social events where he sang. Today, Don continues his affinity for music as he performs in Karaoke events throughout the country.

For the past 5 years, Don has been expressing himself through 'Sinatra' style music. He believes he is one of the few to preserve those "old sweet sounds." He says, "music is very revitalizing, and the farther back I go, the younger I feel."



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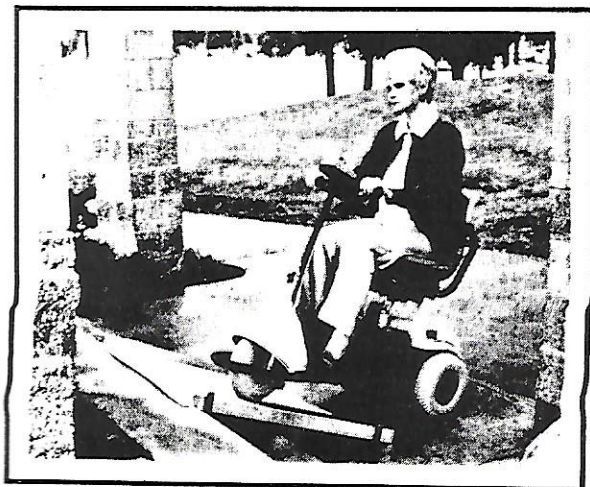
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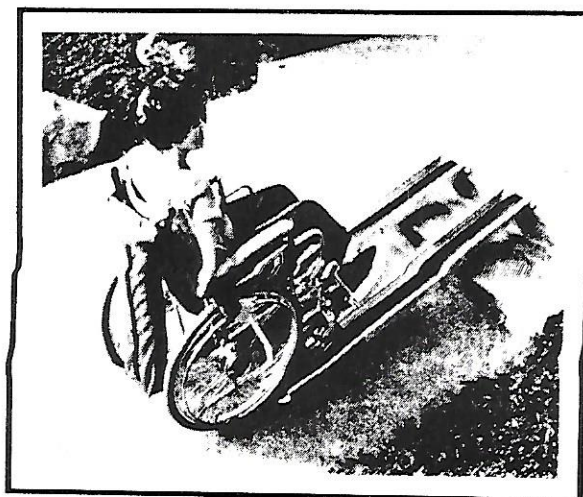
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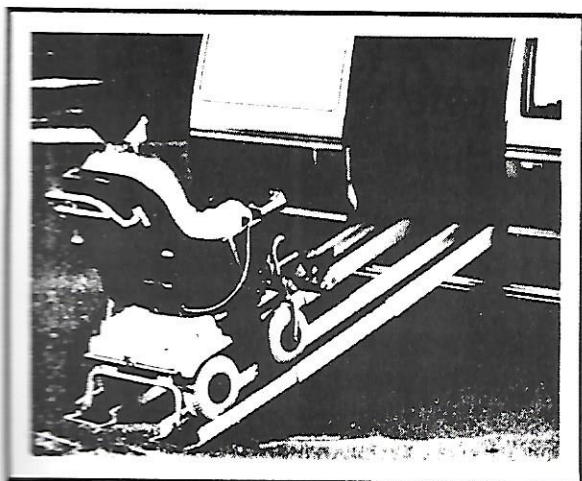
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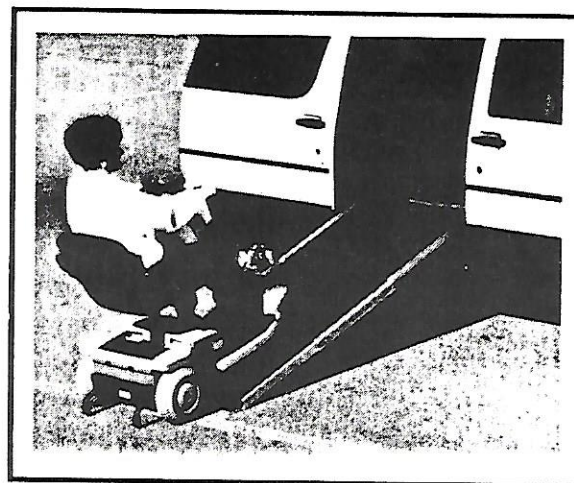


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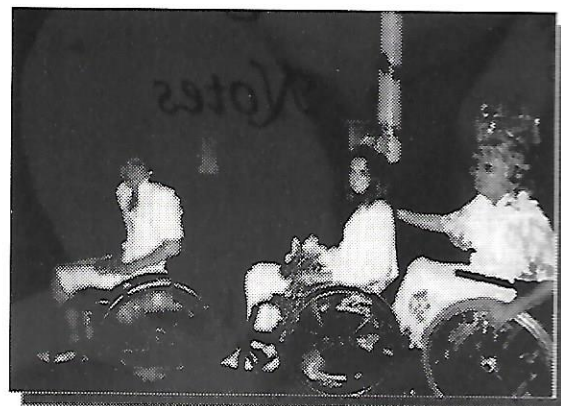


Wendy Petzold § Wisconsin  
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Kim Mensi § Alabama  
Deanna Greene Van Hook § Texas  
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