

MS WHEELCHAIR AMERICA 2010



August 24 -29, 2009
Rapid City, South Dakota

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STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
M. MICHAEL ROUNDS, GOVERNOR

August 2009

Successful pageant winners exhibit poise, confidence, and a strong sense of self. Combine that with a sincere desire to educate and advocate on behalf of individuals living with mobility impairments and disabilities, and you have a woman destined to wear the crown of Ms. Wheelchair America 2010.

I am honored to welcome you to Rapid City and the state of South Dakota for the 37th Annual National Ms. Wheelchair America pageant. Since its inception in 1972, this special event has grown to honor amazing women from more than 40 states and the District of Columbia. The contestants vying for this year's title have distinguished themselves in a variety of ways, both public and personal, viewing their mobility issues not as a limitation but as a motivation to succeed.

I offer my best wishes to all the contestants in the 2010 Ms. Wheelchair America pageant. To the organizers and volunteers who are making this year's event possible, thank you for your efforts to recognize this inspiring group of women. For the families and friends who have made the trip to South Dakota with you, I hope you will have the opportunity to take in the incredible natural beauty and one-of-a-kind attractions South Dakota and the Black Hills have to offer.

Thank you for visiting our state – enjoy your stay!

Sincerely,


M. Michael Rounds



Welcome to Rapid City!

On behalf of the Rapid City Convention and Visitors Bureau, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 2009 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant!

Rapid City, which is located in the heart of western South Dakota's Black Hills, is richly blessed. We're centrally located to everything from private wildlife attractions and family amusement parks to seasonal outdoor activities and historic gaming towns. Just outside our back door are the highest concentrations of national parks, scenic highways, caves, abundant wildlife, Mt. Rushmore National Memorial, and a mountain carving still in progress, Crazy Horse Memorial.

We invite you to stroll the streets of downtown Rapid City and enjoy our many festivities, locally owned shops and exquisite restaurants. In the heart of Rapid City you are sure to find what you are looking for whether it be boutiques, local art or a place to sit back and relax. The usual amenities of food and lodging in Rapid City are enhanced because of the superb western hospitality you will experience wherever you turn.

Once again, welcome! I hope you'll be able to have fun, relax, and enjoy the many sights and attractions our community has to offer.

Sincerely,

Michelle Lintz

*Michelle Lintz, Executive Director
Rapid City Convention & Visitors Bureau*



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

Office of the Mayor

300 Sixth Street

605-394-4110

Fax: 605-394-6793

E-mail: mayor@rcgov.org

Greetings:

On behalf of the City of Rapid City, I extend greetings to all contestants and families gathered here for the Ms. Wheelchair America 2010 Program.

Rapid City is proud to host Ms Wheelchair America and know that you will find our community to be a beautiful setting for this special event. We honor each participant for promoting the achievements, as well as the needs of people with mobility impairments. Each of you has demonstrated tireless efforts to educate citizens of the dignity, productiveness and basic ideals of disabled women.

Your host committee has worked diligently to provide an outstanding event for everyone to enjoy. This is a wonderful opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones that will last for years to come.

Best wishes for a successful competition and welcome to Rapid City and the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota.

Sincerely,

*Alan Hanks, Mayor
Rapid City, S. D.*



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MWA President Welcomes You!!

August 2009



Greetings,

I recently heard a speech given by Christine Grant, retired Women's Athletic Director at the University of Iowa. She was talking about women's basketball and said, "If you don't see it, you don't think you can be it".

When I heard that statement, I thought about all the women in wheelchairs, who will benefit by the Ms. Wheelchair America Program. And how it will change their perspective on life. They will meet women in wheelchairs from across the country that will motivate them to do things, they maybe never thought they could accomplish.

As President of Ms. Wheelchair America, I want everyone to know how this organization strives to educate the public about disability issues, and promote awareness. This week in Rapid City will be full of new experiences for all 27 state titleholders. And a week they will never forget.

I want to thank Terry and Karen Charlton for hosting this week's pageant, and all their volunteers and sponsors. I personally want to thank the Ms. Wheelchair America Board of Directors and the State Coordinators across the country, who make this program what it is.

As a woman who has been in a wheelchair for 60 years, I want to wish everyone the best. And keep dreaming those dreams!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Judy Hoit'.

Judy Hoit
President
Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

Ms. Wheelchair America
www.mswheelchairamerica.org
Toll-Free: 877- MSWHEEL (679-4335)
A Program of Advocacy, Achievement and Opportunity

Welcome Letter

Welcome,

As host to this year's Ms. Wheelchair America Program, we would like to extend a sincere welcome to all of you. We hope that while you are here you find time to visit some of the world-class attractions that this area of the United States has to offer and that you get a chance to see the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota.

This area is full of Western history from George Custer to Sitting Bull, from notorious Deadwood and the Gold Rush to national scenic highways, and of course, Mt. Rushmore and Crazy Horse. We hope that you get a chance while you're here to visit beautiful downtown Rapid City and to have your picture taken with a president – we have statues of 37 of them!

We believe you will find that although we have much to see and do here, our greatest treasure is our people. We pride ourselves in being very friendly here in Rapid City. Anyone would be more than happy to help you should you need assistance.

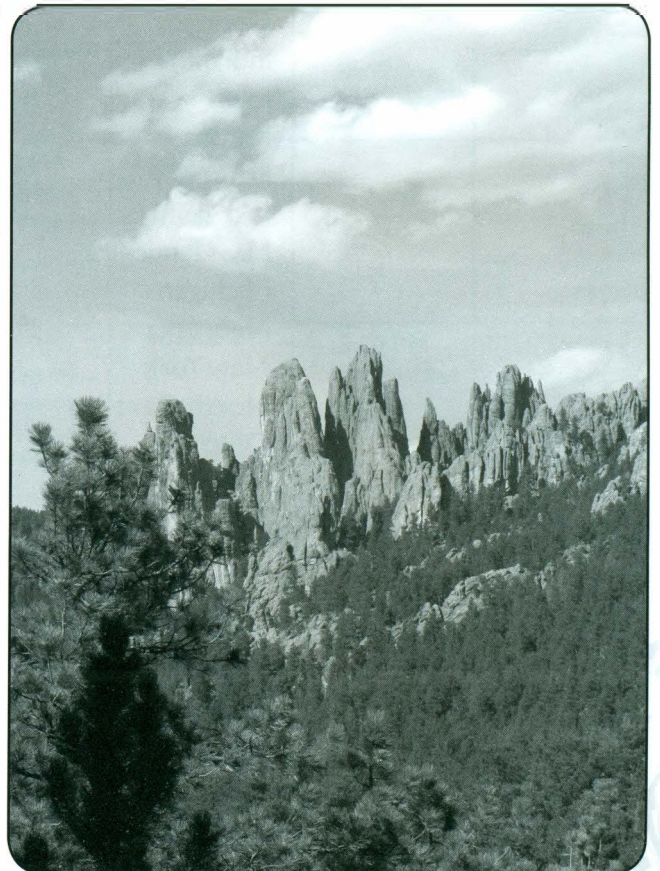
Ten years ago our daughter and our family became involved with this wonderful program when she ran for Ms. Wheelchair America. Eighteen months ago we decided to bid on hosting the 2010 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant. Needless to say, it has been a very long, and at the same time, a very rewarding journey. There have been countless changes along the way and more than a few setbacks, but we feel that the privilege to host this year's pageant has made it all worthwhile.

The contestants that you will see competing here are much more than just "inspirational," they are indeed "heroes." It has been our privilege to get to know them and we wish each of them well in this competition.

God Bless,

Terry and Karen Charlton

Terry and Karen Charlton



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Former Ms. Wheelchair America Title Holders

2009	Michelle Colvard	Texas	1991	Mercedes Rodriques-Fowler	
2008	Kristen McCosh	Massachussets	1990	Kathy Garcia-Farnsworth	
2007	Autumn Grant	Massachussets	1989	Jewell Massey	
2006	Kristen Connor	Rhode Island	1987	Peggy Simpson	
2005	Juliette Rizzo	Maryland	1986	Sandra Honbaier	North
2004	Cinda Hughes	Oklahoma	1985	Donna Cline (deceased)	
2003	Catherine Gugala	Wisconsin	1984	Lori Cottam	
2002	Candy Marsh	Colorado	1983	Gaynell Colburn	
2001	Nicki Ard (deceased)	South Carolina	1982	Barbara Crozier	
2000	Tracy Charlton-O'Connor	South Dakota	1981	Marian Schooling-Vessells	
1999	Christina Gilmore	Wisconsin	1980	Vivian Thompson	Mass:
1998	Terri Cecil	Kentucky	1979	Nancy Pudvin	
1997	Elaine Stefanowicz	Washington	1978	Marge Chmielewski	
1996	Amy Baxter-Ley	Texas	1977	Margie Sloan	
1995	Wendy Petzold	Wisconsin	1976	Beverly Chapman (deceased)	
1994	Dawn Blodgett	California	1975	Dixie Lee Etheridge	M
1993	Kim Mensi	Alabama	1974	Kathy Smith-Tiley	
1992	Deanna Green-Van Hook	Texas	1973	Janie Robinson	

Master of Ceremonies

Bob Riggio

Bob Riggio has been a meteorologist for nearly 40 years forecasting the weather for the Air Force pilots and government officials, conducting cloud and rainfall research, and studying weather's impact on air quality. He has authored numerous refereed papers and presented those papers at national and international weather and weather related conferences. These papers have addressed weather modification, droughts, hydrology, weather forecasting and atmospheric pollution.

Bob has hosted numerous charity events and galas to include "The Heart Ball," for the American Heart Association, "The Taste," for the Rapid City Children's Chorus, "Salvation Army Appreciation Dinner," for the Rapid City Salvation Army, "The Children's Miracle Network Telethon," for the Children's Miracle Network, "The Luncheon and Walk-A-Thon," for the American Lung Association, "The Wine Tasting," for the local Muscular Dystrophy chapter, "Bowling for Kids," for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, "Auction/Fund Raising Event" for the Northern Hills Casa, and volunteered to teach 4th graders about biology through Junior Achievement.

Bob is also a current Chairman of the Rapid City Salvation Army Advisory Board and Chairman of the Rapid City Air Quality Board.

Bob has been married for 27 years and has three children and two grandchildren. He loves the outdoors where he can fly fish, play golf, play tennis and ski, all weather permitting.



Purpose and Goals

MS.WHEELCHAIR AMERICA PROGRAM

The Ms.Wheelchair America Program is in no way a beauty contest. It is, instead, a competition to select the most accomplished articulate spokesperson for other persons with disabilities in the United States. The selected representative must be able to communicate both the needs and the accomplishments of her constituency to the general public, the business community and the lawmakers. She is charged with a continuing effort to educate the public regarding the dignity, productiveness and basic value of people with disabilities. She assumes the responsibility for the ongoing effort to eliminate the architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from assuming their rightful place in society.

As Ms.Wheelchair America, her duties are numerous. Each year she has the opportunity to travel, visiting advocacy groups, making public appearances and conducting television, radio and print interviews in the fulfillment of her major responsibilities. These include promoting awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, creating an awareness for the need to eliminate architectural and attitudinal barriers and informing the able-bodied public of the achievements of people with disabilities across the nation.

We plan and conduct a five-day event to select our new Ms.Wheelchair America. The program is more than just the judging panel and one 'winner' is named. We schedule workshop sessions where we offer interesting topics of personal enhancement for the women, whether about grooming, communications and inter personal skill development, networking with community programs and other educational topics. We offer 'free time' to allow for information exchange between contestants to take place. Many new friendships are started from the program, as women validate the fact they are not the only one to use a wheelchair and experience some of the things they share with each other. The program offers an opportunity to enjoy five days at a luxurious hotel setting - here the contestants are really treated as special guests. The program is much more than just a healthy competition...it's an opportunity to see the potential within and to challenge personal growth.

The planning board for Ms.Wheelchair America is made up of volunteers from many different community organizations, businesses, private citizens, 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 various fund-raising efforts, donations, etc. We welcome your assistance.

Judging Criteria

The Ms. Wheelchair America judging is based upon criteria established by the national committee of the Wheelchair America Program. The following excerpts were taken from official guidelines:

A. Accomplishments

1. Personal achievements/accomplishments since onset of disability only in the following areas:
 - A. * Academic
 - B. * Vocational
 - C. * Personal
2. Adjustment to disability

B. Community Skills

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

C. Self Perception/Projection

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

* Ms. Wheelchair America is not a beauty contest and this category is not taken as a license to choose the most attractive entrant. Instead, the items in this category are simply to express a desire to have a pleasing appearance capable of obtaining favorable responses from any audience before which Ms. Wheelchair America would appear.

Ms. Congeniality is chosen by the contestants for this year's pageant for her friendly and cheerful personality and her helpfulness to them during the program weekend.

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 unstintingly 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.

**WELCOME MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA 2010
CONTESTANTS, FAMILY, & FRIENDS
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Judges Bios

Tom O'Bryant - Head Judge

Tom O'Bryant is retired from Champion International where he served as Vice President - Human Resources. He attended Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky, where he obtained a degree in Business Administration (Major in Human Resources). He also served in the United States Army Reserve from 1961-1970.

Tom was affiliated with the President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities in Washington, serving as Chairman of the Employer Committee for eight years, and was a member of the Executive Committee for several years. He served as Chairman of the Connecticut Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities in Hartford for several years. Other past affiliations include: Georgia Governor's Council on the Disabled; National Rehabilitation Association; Past President of the Georgia Rehabilitation Association; and Chairman of the Consortium for the Placement of People with Disabilities.

Tom was a member of the Ms. Wheelchair Georgia Board of Directors for several years. He served as the head judge in the 1984 Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant; served as head judge in the Ms. Wheelchair Maryland pageant in 1988; served as head judge for the Ms. Wheelchair Georgia pageant in 1988 and as head judge in the Ms. Wheelchair America pageant in 1994.

Tom was elected President, Ms. Wheelchair America in 1995 and held that position for five years. He currently resides in Louisville, Kentucky.

Helene Duhamel

Helene Duhamel graduated from St. Martins Academy in 1980 and Stanford University in 1984 with a degree in Communications, with emphasis in International Relations. Helene began working in broadcasting as a part-time reporter as a summer intern while still in college. Upon graduation from Stanford, Helene returned to Rapid City and was a full-time KOTA Television Reporter. Two years later, in addition to her position as a reporter, Helene began anchoring the weeknight newscasts as well as producing the newscast. In 1988 Helene became the News Director at KDUH-TV in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, a satellite station of KOTA-TV, as well as the 5:30 PM News Anchor. Additionally, she was the Assignment Editor and Producer Supervisor. It was at this time that Helene developed the Family Healthcast which continues today in the 5:30 PM and 10:00 PM newscasts. In 1989 Helene returned to Rapid City to become the Corporate News Director and continued to Anchor the 5:30 PM newscast.

In 1992 Helene was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, and after chemotherapy and radiation therapy she was declared cancer free. She returned to work on a part-time basis and continues to work part-time today as she has committed herself to be a "stay-at-home Mom". Helene and her husband, Steve, have two daughters and a son.

Gail McKoon

Gail McKoon is a native of Columbus, GA, where she still resides with her best friend, Maggie (her Jack Russell Terrier).

Gail retired from the Columbus Consolidated Government in 2006 after 23 years of service. She was the Executive Director of the Columbus Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities. Gail has been a member of numerous disability advocacy and civic organizations including the Statewide Independent Living Council of Georgia, the Georgia Rehabilitation Association, and the National Rehabilitation Association. She also served on the Ms. Wheelchair America Executive Board for many years, beginning in 1992. In addition, she was the state coordinator for the Ms. Wheelchair Georgia Program from 1992 to 2008.

In her spare time, Gail enjoys traveling, reading, and volunteer work.

Judges Bios

Dennis Foerschler

Dennis "Denny" Foerschler, is a Regional Sales Manager for the Mobility Division of Thor Industries' ElDorado National facility, located in Salina, Kansas. Denny is responsible for the marketing and sales of the Division's accessible van products to Mobility Dealers in several U.S. and Canadian regions. Denny works with retail and commercial distributors to provide them with products, information and training to effectively sell, service and support the Division's customers.

Denny has participated in several Mobility Industry events since joining the company in 2004, including presenting van product information to Abilities Expo attendees and professional OT Driver Educators for the Disabled (ADED). He is involved with his company's continuing efforts to source and develop new mobility vehicle options.

Denny lives in Minneapolis, Kansas (yes, that's right) with his wife Suzie. He has three sons, all grown and married, one in New York and two in Kansas City. Denny is active in his local community, serving as a school board member, Catholic Church choir leader, community theater actor and has been the announcer for high school football and basketball games, the "Voice of the Lions", for 20 years. In his "spare" time, Denny enjoys working in his yard, traveling with his wife and assisting with many "family projects."

Elaine Stefanowicz

Elaine has been using a wheelchair for the past 27 years due to a car accident that occurred when she was in high school. In 1996, as Washington State's first MWA state titleholder, Elaine was crowned Ms. Wheelchair America 1997. During her reign, she visited President and Mrs. Clinton at the White House and met actor Christopher Reeve. She also won a women's downhill skiing competition that year (amazingly, because she's not athletic!). Elaine went on to win a full-ride scholarship to earn her bachelor's degree. In 2003, she was chosen as a Woman of Distinction by the Girl Scouts Pacific Peaks Council.

In May 2005, she graduated with a Master of Science degree in human resources at Chapman University with a 4.00 grade point average. Elaine has been employed as full-time faculty member at Tacoma Community College since Fall Quarter 2005. She has a 10-year-old son who keeps her very busy. She is planning to pursue a doctorate degree in education.

Vicki Kerkvliet - Judge Coordinator

Vicki Kerkvliet is the Director of Independent Living Services at Prairie Freedom Center for Independent Living in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She has a B.A. in religion with a minor in psychology from Augustana College. Vicki has worked in the field of disabilities for 17 years. She was born with the disease Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI).

In 1998, Vicki was Ms. Wheelchair South Dakota. She was state coordinator for Ms. Wheelchair South Dakota for 4 years and served on the Ms. Wheelchair America Board of Directors for 3 years. Vicki has been a judge at the Ms. Wheelchair America Pageants three times. This is the second time Vicki has been the judge coordinator at the national level.

Vicki enjoys playing flute, traveling, swimming, and spending time with her family.

Ms. Wheelchair America 2009

Michelle Colvard



Growing up, I didn't have any positive examples of women in wheelchairs to inspire or guide me. I knew that I didn't want to be thought of just as "that girl in the wheelchair", and I wasn't quite sure what the future would hold for me.

I didn't know that women in chairs could hold successful jobs, be well-educated, participate in sports, have an active social life, be happily married, have children, and do basically anything else that they dream of doing. I didn't know that we could fly airplanes too - as well as snow-ski, play basketball, lift weights, race cars, or even be a cheerleader in high school! Growing up, I didn't know that we could become doctors or engineers or graphic design artists or counselors or community organizers or school teachers or researchers or whatever other profession to which we might aspire.

Ms. Wheelchair America titleholders and various state titleholders and participants have done these things - and more! And through their examples and the examples set by other state titleholders, little girls with disabilities can see countless examples of strong, vivacious

and successful women.

Each of these women - the titleholders who came before me, and the women gathered this week who represent the best of our states around the nation, are amazing women. They are inspirational not because of what they've accomplished despite having a disability - - but because of who they are and what they've accomplished. They just happen to have accomplished all of these achievements while sitting down.

Throughout my reign as Ms. Wheelchair America, I've met strong, capable, passionate women in wheelchairs. And I've been fortunate to have one amazing opportunity after another to reach out to little girls and other women both with and without disabilities - to show them what women who use wheelchairs are capable of doing.

I'd like to share some of the highlights from the past year, although there are too many to count!

In October, I flew to Washington, D.C. to participate in two major disability community event kick-offs: the Accessible America Award sponsored by the National Organization on Disability and the AARP, and the Real Economic Impact Tour (economic empowerment for people with disabilities) kick-off at the National Press Club sponsored by the National Disability Institute.

In November, I was in Sarasota, Florida, speaking to the National Foundation for Women Legislators about the health and wellness of people with disabilities.

On New Year's Day, I was very fortunate to have the incredible honor of participating in the Rose Parade. I actually rode on a float sponsored by the Kiwanis International Foundation along with Shannon Coe (Ms. Wheelchair California 2008 and 1st Runner-Up for Ms. Wheelchair America 2009).

In January, I was snow-skiing with the Black Hills Regional Ski for Light organization in South Dakota. My husband and I met some amazing people there and had the time of our lives!

In March, Ms. Wheelchair California and I traveled to beautiful San Diego to help the San Diego Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities promote economic empowerment for people with disabilities.



In April, I spoke to the Texas State Guard about how to assist people with disabilities during a major disaster like a hurricane.

And in June, at the Bombardier Learjet 500 Indy race, I had the ride of a lifetime when I got the chance to ride at blazingly fast speeds in an Indy 2-seater car driven by former Indy Racing League driver Davey Hamilton around the Texas Motor Speedway track. I even was made an honorary Team Member of Vision Racing, and met Ed Carpenter, Ryan Hunter-Reay, and several other Indy Racing League drivers, as well as my personal hero, race car driver Danica Patrick. I also got a picture with Shaquille O'Neal.

Over the past year, I've done much more, including delivering the commencement address at a community college program graduation,

emceeding the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia pageant, celebrating Valentine's Day with the kids at the Ronald McDonald House, and thanking our US troops at a military appreciation event along with Wayne Newton.

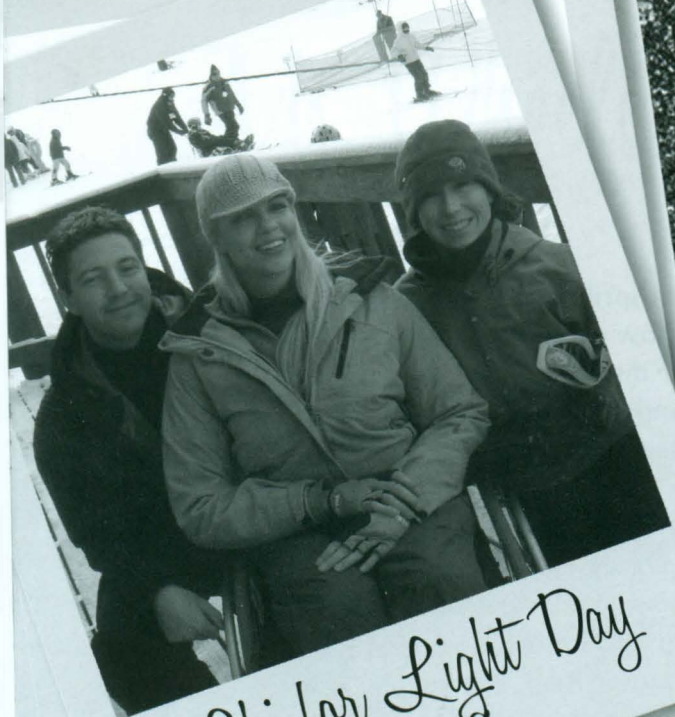
I've even had the opportunity to live out dreams that I hadn't yet fulfilled. My hope is that I've given encouragement to other girls and women who use wheelchairs to pursue their dreams with passion and voraciousness.

Ms. Wheelchair America is about celebrating the beauty and accomplishments of women on wheels. The women participating in the Ms. Wheelchair America 2010 pageant are inspirational to little girls and women with and without disabilities alike, and to everyone else. It's in part because of Ms. Wheelchair America, and state titleholders across the nation, that little girls with disabilities can see a vision of hope for their future. After all, if "she can do it, so can I."

I want to thank my sponsors over the past year, including Houston MINI Motoring Society, Momentum MINI, CCB International, Dillard's, Active American, Kuschall, Vision Racing, Sarasota Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 24 Hour Fitness, FrogLeg, and the numerous friends and family members who sponsored and supported me during my reign and travels. Thank you also to the organizations that included me in their activities and supported my travels. And lastly (but really "firstly"), I want to thank my husband, Brian Colvard, for all of his support and love.

I am grateful for the opportunities that I've been given as Ms. Wheelchair America 2009, and I am delighted to celebrate the state titleholders and help crown our new Ms. Wheelchair America 2010, as she embarks on her own "ride of a lifetime."





Ski for Light Day
2008



Accessible America Kickoff
DC 10/2008



REI Tour
2008



South Dakota



Royal Soiree



South Dakota

REI Tour
2008



Michelle Colvard

☒ Makeup

☒ Dress

☒ Shoes

☒ Crown

☒ Sash

☒ Speech



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Lynn Charlton
A Piece of Cake
Target
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M.G. Oil
Orange Julius
The Taffy Shop
Inland Truck Parts
Gunderson, Palmer, Nelson & Ashmore
Boyd's Drug Mart
Casa Real
Pink 629

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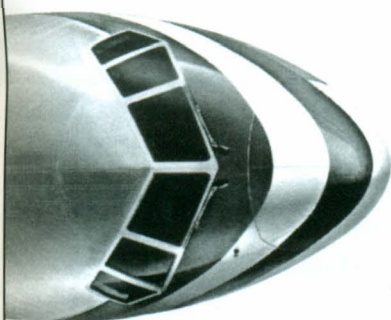
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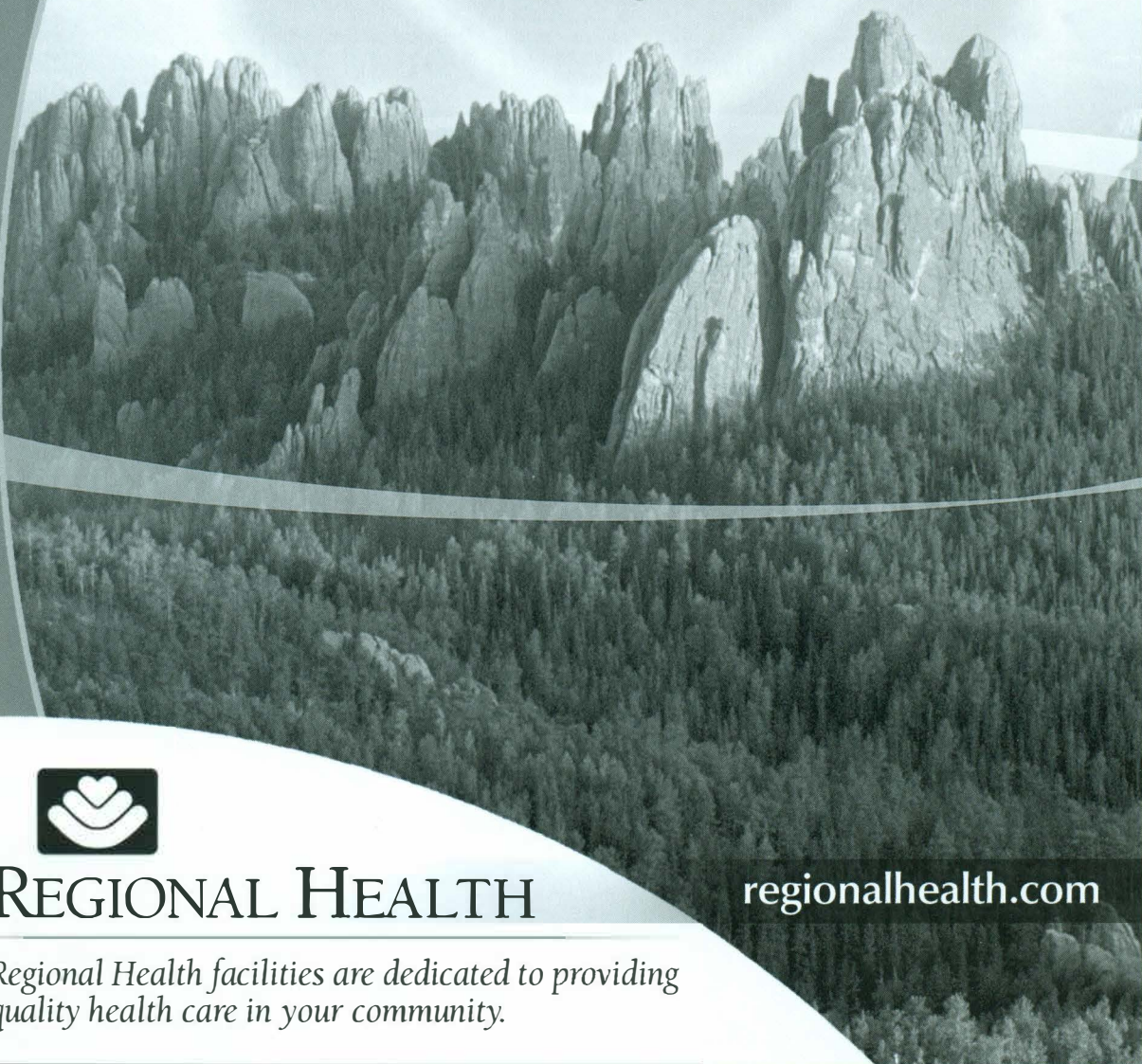
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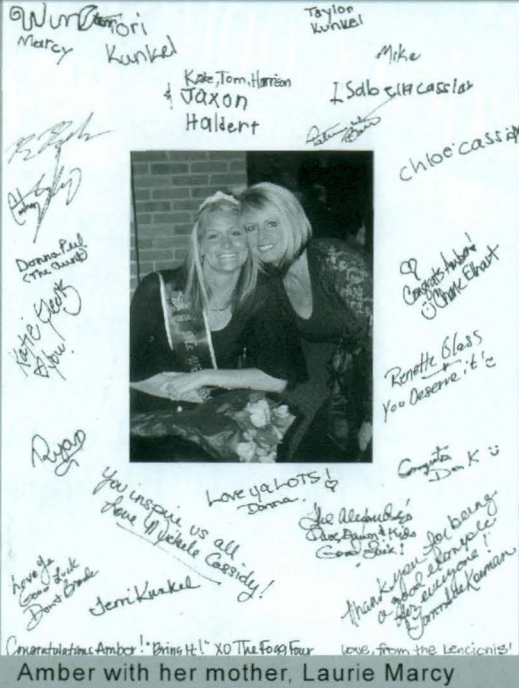


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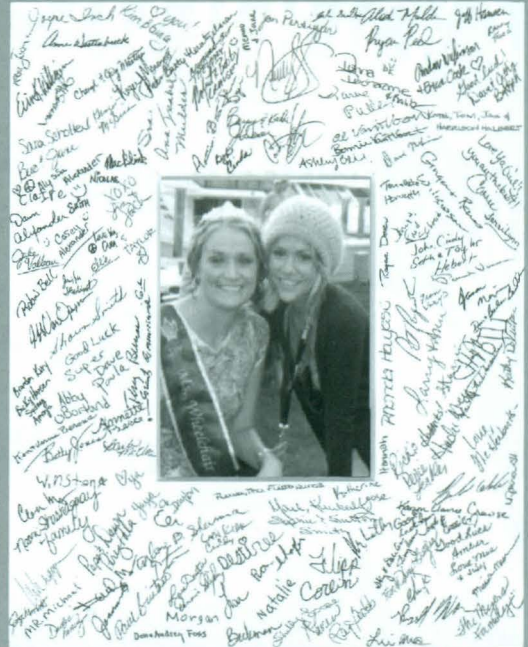
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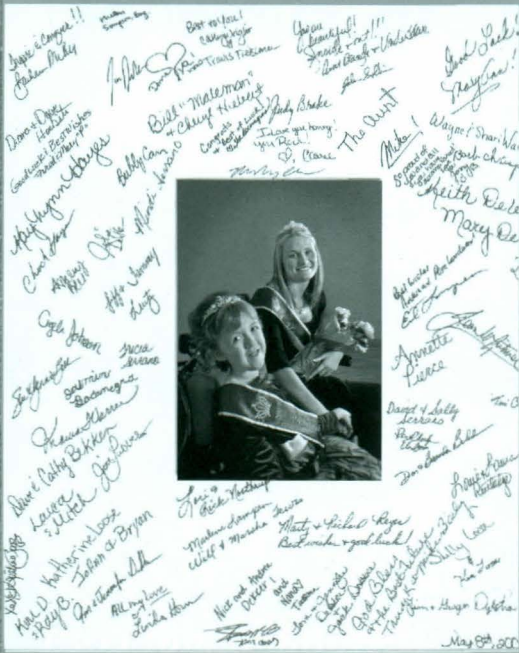
Good Luck Amber Marcy
Ms. Wheelchair Michigan 2009



Amber with Kirsten Haglund Miss America 2009



Amber at Royalty Day and with
Malorie Fox, Miss Wheelchair Michigan 2009



Amber with State Representative Bob Genetski on the floor of the House of Representatives.

from your family, friends and supporters!
These were signed at some of Amber's fundraisers.





Amber... proves the sky is not the limit!!!

Health Partners would like
to wish the best of luck to
Amber Marcy and all the contestants
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Amber,

*Everyone at Health Partners would like to
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luck!! You are an inspiration to everyone!!*

We are all so proud of you!

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Best of Luck Amber Marcy!!! Ms. Wheelchair Michigan 2009

Contestants



MS.WHEELCHAIR ARIZONA

Jolene DeTiege

Jolene lives in Tempe, Arizona, where she is pursuing a degree in organizational management. She volunteers at Improbably Theater Company and enjoys acting and all performing arts. Jolene uses a wheelchair due to congenital myopathy. She describes herself as positive, ambitious, and compassionate.

MS.WHEELCHAIR ARKANSAS

Jacqueline Bettis

Jacqueline lives in Little Rock, Arkansas. She enjoys working with children and their families to help them accept and cope with their disabilities. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Central Arkansas. Jacqueline uses a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy. She describes herself as outgoing, determined, and resilient.



MS.WHEELCHAIR CALIFORNIA

Alyson Roth

Alyson lives in Foothill Ranch, California. She is employed at Free Wheelchair Mission, an agency that helps people with disabilities in developing countries. Alyson received her Master of Science degree in Elementary Reading and Literacy from Walden University. She has used a wheelchair since 2000 due to an automobile accident. Alyson describes herself as balanced, cheerful and compassionate.



Contestants

MS.WHEELCHAIR COLORADO

Kelly Shellman

Kelly lives in Brighton, Colorado, where she is an active volunteer at a local hospital. She received her degree in Automated Accounting from Mansfield Business School. Kelly plans to become a rehabilitation counselor. Kelly uses a wheelchair due to a traumatic brain injury she sustained in 2000. She describes herself as happy, intelligent, and confident.



MS.WHEELCHAIR D.C.

Angela Miller

Angela lives in Washington, D.C., and works completing medical billing and clerical duties. She volunteers at the National Rehabilitation Hospital and enjoys serving as a mentor for other people with disabilities. Angela has used a wheelchair since 1997. She describes herself as dependable, engaging and lovable.



MS.WHEELCHAIR FLORIDA

Shanda Crommel

Shanda lives in Tampa, Florida, where she is employed with UPS as a customer service agent. She is studying criminal justice at ITT Technical Institute and plans to become a probation officer. Shanda uses a wheelchair due to a gunshot injury she sustained in 1997. Shanda describes herself as outspoken, patient, and kind.



Contestants



MS.WHEELCHAIR GEORGIA

Kathleen Rice

Kathleen lives in Conyers, Georgia. She volunteers at various nursing homes and serves as an adult mentor to children with spina bifida. Kathleen has attended Brenau University and the University of West Georgia. Kathleen uses a wheelchair due to spina bifida. She describes herself as sincere, passionate and outgoing.

MS.WHEELCHAIR INDIANA

Emily Munson

Emily lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she is attending law school. She expects to complete her law degree at Indiana University in May 2010 and plans to use her degree to improve the status of persons with disabilities, particularly concerning civil rights advocacy. Emily uses a wheelchair due to spinal muscular atrophy. She describes herself as tenacious, intrepid, and inquisitive.



MS.WHEELCHAIR IOWA

Angie Plager

Angie lives in Cambridge, Iowa, where she is employed at United Medical Providers as a territory manager. She has earned Associate degrees from Des Moines Area Community College. Angie volunteers for many organizations, including the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Iowa. She uses a wheelchair due to a motor vehicle accident in 2003. Angie describes herself as optimistic, organized and resourceful.



Contestants

MS.WHEELCHAIR KANSAS

Marie Clement

Marie lives in Mayetta, Kansas. She is the proud caregiver for her son, grandchild and grandnephew. Marie also volunteers at Three Rivers, Inc. Independent Living Center. She enjoys serving as a role model for others with disabilities. Marie has used a wheelchair since 1997 due to incomplete quadriplegia. She describes herself as engaging, loving and strong.



MS.WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY

Amy Foster

Amy lives in Louisville, Kentucky, where she is a full-time student. She expects to graduate in May 2010 with a degree in the area of forensic anthropology. Amy has volunteered as a cheerleading coach for elementary school students and served as a teacher in the Mock Trial summer law institute. She has used a wheelchair since 2004 due to an automobile accident. Amy describes herself as driven, curious, and flexible.



MS.WHEELCHAIR LOUISIANA

Tiffanie LaBlanc

Tiffanie lives in Lafayette, Louisiana, where she works as an assistant unit manager training new real estate agents. She received her SLCC and Insurance license in May 2007. Tiffanie also volunteers at Good Will of America. She enjoys reading spiritual books and learning more about her faith. Tiffanie uses a wheelchair due to quadriplegia. She describes herself as ambitious, responsible and energetic.



Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR MARYLAND

Hayley Waters

Hayley lives in Bethesda, Maryland. She received her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Public Affairs degrees from the University of Texas. Hayley enjoys reading spiritual books and is an active volunteer in her church. She uses a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy. Hayley describes herself as loyal, funny, and thorough.

MS. WHEELCHAIR MASSACHUSETTS

Ashley Speicher

Ashley lives in Lynn, Massachusetts. She works as a community transition coordinator at an Independent Living Center. She also volunteers with the New England Organ Bank. Ashley received her Bachelor degree from Southern New Hampshire University and plans to return to school for a graduate degree. She uses a wheelchair due to glycogen storage disease. Ashley describes herself as independent, loving, and dependable.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MICHIGAN

Amber Marcy

Amber lives in Saugatuck, Michigan and works at The Center for Women in Transition. She also volunteers at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital. Amber hopes to return to school to complete her education and pursue a degree in counseling at Western Michigan University. She uses a wheelchair due to an automobile accident. Amber describes herself as generous, adventurous, and outgoing.



Contestants

MS. WHEELCHAIR NEBRASKA

Carrah Cotton

Carrah lives in Omaha, Nebraska. She is attending Metropolitan College and works in retail sales. Carrah plans to obtain her degree in speech-language pathology and would like to continue serving as an advocate for others who have disabilities. She uses a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury she sustained in 2007. Carrah describes herself as ambitious, kind-hearted and stylish.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEW JERSEY

Santina Muha

Santina lives in Branchburg, New Jersey. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications and Sociology from Rutgers University. Santina volunteers for the NJ State Independent Living Council and enjoys public speaking. She uses a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury sustained in a motor vehicle crash in 1989. Santina describes herself as loyal, confident, and good-humored.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEW YORK

Deanna LaBuzzetta

Deanna lives in Saratoga Springs, New York. She volunteers at Cornell Cooperative Extension for the Master Gardeners, and is a member of Unlimited Gardens, Where Abilities Grow. She enjoys serving as a peer mentor for other women who are adjusting to disability. Deanna has used a wheelchair since 1986 due to a stroke. She describes herself as generous, fun, and outgoing.



Contestants



MS.WHEELCHAIR NORTH CAROLINA

Erika Bogan

Erika lives in Huntersville, North Carolina. She is employed by Medical Mobility Center and is working towards her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. She is proud of her children, and enjoys serving as a positive role model and advocate for people with disabilities. Erika uses a wheelchair due to an automobile accident in 2002. She describes herself as articulate, motivated and intelligent.

MS.WHEELCHAIR OHIO

Danielle Brown

Danielle lives in Danville, Ohio. She has training in business technology and office technology from Knox County Career Center. Danielle volunteers at Aktion Club and enjoys traveling with her family. She uses a wheelchair due to spina bifida. Danielle describes herself as sensitive, persistent, and optimistic.



MS.WHEELCHAIR OKLAHOMA

Lynda Miller

Lynda lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is a full-time student working towards a Masters in Divinity. Lynda also volunteers at her church as a chaplain of adult education. She would like to run her own hospice program to help families with end of life issues. Lynda uses a wheelchair due to Frederick's Ataxia. She describes herself as curious, non-judgmental, and inclusive.

Contestants

MS.WHEELCHAIR SOUTH DAKOTA

Mindy Williams

Mindy lives in Canton, South Dakota. She is a student in an animation program. Mindy enjoys volunteering at her son's school and extracurricular activities. Mindy plans to continue campaigning for stem cell research. She uses a wheelchair due to a motor vehicle crash. Mindy describes herself as smart, courageous and persistent.



MS.WHEELCHAIR TENNESSEE

Lorrinda Mabry

Lorrinda lives in Antioch, Tennessee and is employed at Disability Coalition. She received a Liberal Arts degree from Middle Indiana State University and plans to pursue a Masters in social work. Lorrinda enjoys volunteering and has served on several community non-profit boards. She uses a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy. Lorrinda describes herself as passionate, happy, and ambitious.



MS.WHEELCHAIR TEXAS

Ana Calvo

Ana lives in Houston, Texas, and is employed at Shriners Hospital for Children as a transition coordinator. She received her Bachelor of Arts and Masters in Social Work degrees from the University of Houston. Ana enjoys singing, acting, and serving as an advocate for others with disabilities. She has used a wheelchair since birth. Ana describes herself as reliable, efficient, and loyal.



Contestants



MS. WHEELCHAIR UTAH

Kimberly Yeoman

Kimberly lives in Cedar City, Utah, and works at the Disability Law Center. She received a Bachelor in Social Work and International Development from Brigham Young University. She has volunteered for Operation Smile and Best Buddies. Kimberly enjoys playing wheelchair sports and plans to attend graduate school. She uses a wheelchair due to spina bifida. Kimberly describes herself as effervescent, open-minded, and compassionate.

MS. WHEELCHAIR VIRGINIA

Joan Manley

Joan lives in Lexington, Virginia. She is employed at Valley Associates for Independent Living and works in advocacy and peer counseling for people with disabilities. Joan has attended the University of Rhode Island and James Madison University. She is a founder of the Volunteers at Rockbridge Area Transportation System and Rockbridge Advocates for Community Involvement. Joan uses a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury sustained in 1984. She describes herself as particular, positive, and powerful.



MS. WHEELCHAIR WASHINGTON

Janette Saxton

Janette lives in Lakewood, Washington. She is employed at Mobilization and Deployment Program, Fort Lewis. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Walter Cronkite School of Journalism, Arizona State University and a Master of Arts degree from the University of San Diego. She plans to pursue her National Counseling Certification. Janette uses a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy. She describes herself as intelligent, witty and ambitious.



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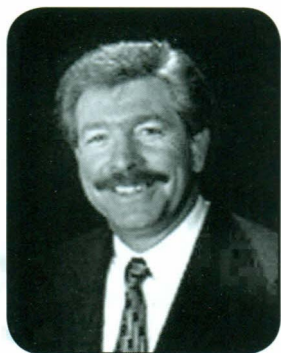
Indian Dancers

Sara Frankenstein

As Miss South Dakota 1998, Sara Frankenstein served as a state-wide speaker in schools teaching students Law Related Education. Sara also spent her year of service singing and serving as an emcee, motivational speaker, and charity fundraiser. She won a Bert Parks Non-Finalist Talent Award at the Miss America Pageant for her rendition of "In His Eyes" from the Broadway musical "Jekyll and Hyde." Sara is a litigation attorney with Gunderson, Palmer, Nelson & Ashmore, LLP, a Rapid City law firm. She produces the Miss Rapid City pageant, and remains active in the Miss America Organization. Sara and her husband Lew have three children.



Ted Seaman - For your listening pleasure



Ted Seaman was born in Huron, South Dakota in 1954. He started singing at an early age with his family, primarily in churches. Throughout high school and college he continued singing with choral groups, performing in many states. In 1974 Ted became the bass singer for the Riverside Boys Quartet in Wichita, Kansas. He traveled and performed with them for 2 ½ years before returning to South Dakota. During those years he shared the stage with notable singers such as Donna Fargo, Sunny James, The Oak Ridge Boys, as well as many of the well known southern gospel quartets. Ted has been a member of the Black Hills Gospel Quartet since 1989. They have performed in nine states over the years performing many concerts each year. Ted has participated in numerous recordings with both the Riverside Boys Quartet and the Black Hills Gospel Quartet, and has sung at many weddings and funerals throughout the years. Ted is a Service Man for Black Hills Power, where he has been employed for 29 years.

Entertainers

Sheltered Reality

This group is definitely high energy. Began in late 1996 as a 501 © (3) nonprofit organization, Sheltered Reality (SR) has dedicated itself to being a youth-oriented project, where youth members from 6 to 18 years in SR use music and education as a way to reach out to audiences, motivating them to advocate for those in need, especially children and families. The educational message presented focuses on facts, statistics, and real-life stories, and culminates with character education and ideas for action. SR's unique percussive approach to performing music inspires the audience members to 'take on the world' and ensures that the message 'doing good is fun' is remembered by all in attendance. The group is dedicated to helping those who are less fortunate, including the homeless, runaways, victims of domestic violence, or drug and alcohol abuses. They combine high energy music with an educational message to inspire volunteerism. If you always wanted to play the drums, tonight's your night. The Rapid City SR site has been in existence since the fall of 2004. Find out more about Sheltered Reality at www.sheltered-reality.org.

Dallas Dietrich

Mutch Usera



Shihan Julio Usera with the late Grand Master Kenneth L. Penland, (1997).

Shihan Julio "Mutch" Usera has studied the art of Ju-Kite Ju-Jitsu since 1972 (37 years) under the leadership of Grand Master Claude Woodson, 10th Dan, Ju-kite Jujitsu. With an 8th Degree Black Belt (Hachidan) in the art of Jukite Jujitsu, he continues to study under Grand Master Woodson and Grand Master George Alexander, 10th Dan, Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu. Usera's rank is also recognized and certified by the:

- United States Jujitsu Federation
- International Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu Federation
- American Jujitsu Association
- American Federation of Jujitsu

Usera is also a Black Belt student in the art of Shorin Ryu Karate where he studies in Rapid City under the direction of Grand Master George Alexander.

As an instructor, Usera focuses most of his Martial Arts expertise in growing the art, developing his Black Belt students and mentoring his instructors in the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) programs that are offered at the club. He is a proactive supporter of Mix Martial Arts with a focus on safety, ethics and community responsibility. He has also supported MMA students in training and competition. Dynamic Martial Arts operates one of the most respected MMA programs in South Dakota.

He and his wife, Charlene, have four children: Joshua, 29; Amber, 26; Mathew, 25; and Ryan 24. He also has six grandchildren: Paige, 12; Raven, 8; Jasmine 8; Nathaniel, 3; and Damion, 2; and Skyler, 18 months.



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