

## **Did you ever wonder about the history of people at DSDE – Lamar University?**

You can find some of the history of the Deaf Studies and Deaf Education department at Lamar on the DSDE Lamar website (search for DSDE Lamar and go to the about us tab). However, some important people are missing from this history. This post focuses on the contributions of Dr. Gabriel (Tony) Martin, who was vital in creating many of the changes in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As a high school teacher of Deaf students, coach, and drivers' education teacher, Dr. Martin, or Tony as he was called, entered higher education as a faculty in teacher-training in deaf education. With a dual MS in Deaf Education and in Audiology, and an Ed.D. in Administration, Tony quickly rose up in the ranks from faculty to administrator due to his management skills and easy-going personality. Tony was well loved by the students for his dedication and advocacy. He was referred to as a "hard-working faculty (and) a visionary department chair" (Cardinal Cadence, Oct. 2006, pgs. 14-15) when the new BA in ASL was added to the department. With this new ASL major came a surge in undergraduate enrollment. As a result, under the leadership and direction of Dr. Russ Schultz, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, the Deaf Education division and Speech and Hearing divisions divided into two separate departments after obtaining approval from The Texas State University System Board of Regents.

Dr. Zanthia Smith recalls that Tony was a strong instructional leader who was helpful in growing both departments (Speech and Audiology as well as Deaf Education) when they were together. Tony was seen as a problem solver who would listen and help students and faculty overcome their stumbling block and help them to find a solution; maybe not the original one they proposed but he found ways to provide professional development for the faculty. Jean

Andrews, retired faculty, remembers that Tony always had time to listen to faculty and students enjoying his interacting with them. At the lunch hour, Tony was frequently found at the nearby Kampus Korner, Subway, or LU cafeteria chatting and sharing lunch with students and faculty. He and his wife were often seen in the stands at football and basketball games with students they had invited. He also frequently hosted BBQs for faculty and students at his home during the holidays. On campus, faculty reported that he was a strong recruiter for the Deaf Education program and relished sharing information about the department with students and their parents. He was welcomed at the Schools for the Deaf as well as community colleges, and at professional conferences in Texas and around the country to encourage students to come to Lamar. He established the student group, *Signing Cardinals*, to engage with students who then in turn engaged with the local Deaf community. In terms of his professional development outside of Lamar, Tony was highly involved with the Association of College Educators – Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACE DHH) and worked with them on gaining accreditation for Deaf Education teacher programs. He would often mentor and present at ACE DHH as well as other conferences with his students. He also worked with students on research projects, conference proceedings, and publications to advocate for Deaf prisoners to ensure that their rights were provided during their incarceration. Tony was also a competent sign language interpreter. When needed he provided sign language interpretation at university events. As a skilled administrator, Tony made it a point to hire Deaf professors and Deaf professionals of color during his tenure at Lamar. Many of these Deaf faculty moved on to other university and school for the deaf positions after getting mentoring and training from Tony and his faculty at LU.

Together with Dr. Robert Moulton, Dr. Olen Pederson and Dr. Jean Andrews, they established the EdD program in Deaf Education and Deaf Studies to support advancement

of Deaf individuals into positions of leadership. Moreover, together with their colleagues (Robert Moulton, Zanthia Smith, Mary Ann Gentry among others) they brought in over 11 million dollars in grant money from Federal, state, and private sources to support students with scholarships, travel money for conferences and to develop instructional multimedia technology. Tony and his department hosted a Deaf Artists exhibition in collaboration with the Art Department that brought in over 15 Deaf artists around the country to show their work. This attracted hundreds of Deaf community members from Beaumont, Houston, and surrounding counties.

In addition, Tony set up several scholarships to provide support for students. Several years ago, Dr. Tony Martin passed away – sadly much too early. His wife, Dr. Damara Paris as well as his family and friends have established a scholarship in his name as they knew these efforts were critically important for him. Three DSDE students have benefited from their generosity – please watch our website for their videos on the importance of this scholarship for their own educations.

Three DSDE students have benefited from their generosity – and here are some brief messages from our three scholars. Dr. Delgado was the first student to be given the award. She has completed her degree and her dissertation focused on Latinx parents of deaf children. Currently she is the Coordinator of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach for Early Intervention at the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD). The second student to be given the award is Misty Sides who is working on her dissertation on the impact of the Reggio Emilia approach to preschool and how it impacts Deaf preschooler's language acquisition who have limited to no language access in the home. She is a teacher in Utah. The current student to be given the award is Megan Wimberly, who teaches English at LSD and is in her first year in the

doctoral program here at DSDE. Here are some brief messages of thanks from these DSDE alum and students. Now to their personal message:

**Dr. Natalie Delgado**



Without Dr. Tony Martin reaching out to me years ago about the Deaf Studies and Deaf Education department at Lamar, I would not be where I am today. I thank him for the establishment of the department that has molded me and many other educators, and Dr. Damara Paris for her efforts in keeping his legacy alive through the scholarship in his name.

**Misty Sides**

(Transcript) Hi, I am Misty Sides. I am a third-year doctoral student here at Lamar University in the DSDE department. I wanted to take the time to thank you for your support in continuing my studies. I, unfortunately, was never able to meet Tony Martin. However, I am thankful for his support and influence in the field of Deaf Education especially with the department here.

I just wanted to tell you a little bit about myself. I graduated from Utah State University with both my Bachelor of Science and Master's degrees under Dr. King. I know King and Tony Martin were very close. My dissertation research topic is on the Reggio Emilia approach to

preschool and how it impacts Deaf preschooler's language acquisition who have limited to no language access in the home.

I hope to add to Tony Martin's impact and influence on the field of Deaf Education. Thank you again for your support. I appreciate it.

**Megan Wimberly**

(Transcription) Hi! My name is Megan Wimberly. I am a first-year doctoral student in the Deaf Studies and Deaf Education program at Lamar University. Now I have been teaching for around 9 years at Louisiana School for the Deaf in Elementary. I am a mother of two boys. I am deaf. I want to thank Dr. Damara Paris for this opportunity, this scholarship which will help me throughout this journey. I see that I am growing as a person and a researcher. I also want to thank Dr. Tony Martin for establishing this leadership program. I see that I benefit from this program. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

DSDE would not be what we are today without the groundbreaking efforts of Dr. Martin (Tony) Gabriel. We value his contributions to our field and keep his memory in our hearts. Sincere thanks to all who support his scholarship---we will never forget him.