



IDA LAUGHLIN

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mrs. Ida Laughlin was born on a farm 7 mile southwest of Iroquois, SD on Jan 1st 1921. She attended a country school until her teacher advised her parents to send her to the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD), due to her being hard of hearing. While attending SDSD, she became fully deaf after being knocked unconscious during an outdoor game. After graduation in 1940 she married James K. Laughlin and they made their home in Rapid City where he established Laughlin Printing business. They raised three children.

During the 40's, 50's, and 60's before TTYs, texting, video chat, or Facetime existed, whenever new deaf persons who didn't know the area arrived in Rapid City, they would ask around downtown and be directed to Laughlin's house. Those were the days when the local deaf community would gather at each other's home, usually at the Laughlin's home. She enjoyed being a hostess and served coffee and treats. Laughlin attended every SDAD meeting and convention/banquet and loved being involved in the deaf community. She always looked forward to the summer conventions and picnics where she could meet her friends.

Laughlin was a long-time advocate for the deaf community in the Rapid City area. Laughlin served on the SDAD Board and during her tenure on the board, Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) was established in 1975. Laughlin was truly committed to improving opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing community in the West River region of South Dakota. She wanted to ensure that the rural areas were not overlooked. Laughlin asked the SDAD Board and CSD to consider establishing an office in Rapid City to provide services to the deaf and hard of hearing residents in Black Hills area. If it were not for her leadership and advocacy, CSD of Rapid City would have never been established. With Laughlin's assistance and support, the deaf community also formed the Black Hills Association of the Deaf (BHAD). She was a very active member of the BHAD and held several board positions. She passed away on November 13, 2013 at the age 92. Laughlin was a great asset for the deaf community in the Black Hills.