



Dean W. Keefe

Community Service

Dean W. Keefe, born in Faulkton, South Dakota and raised on a farm in Seneca, S.D., was a valedictorian of the 1957 graduating class of the South Dakota School of the Deaf (SDSD). He is one of many graduates before and after him who attributed their successes in higher education and the workplace to the school's model student-centered academic curriculum which integrated with the future-focused after-school activities.

To quote him: "Like many other successful residential schools for the deaf during my formative years, my SDSD education provided me the opportunity to grow up as a whole, rather fragmentary, person that I am today. For that, I am eternally grateful!"

Deaf education across America during this period placed heavy emphasis on the need to treat academic and non-academic activities as one indivisible whole, each building on the other in developing students to the maximum extent humanly possible. The popular concept here was that all deaf students had potential for leadership and intellectual growth greater than they were led to believe. Administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders pulled together to educate a whole deaf student.

A talented person with a great capacity for work, Keefe attained the highest grades in his academic pursuits, yet managed to participate significantly in the vitally important extracurricular activities. He lettered in the school's varsity sport of football, basketball, and track and field. Academically, he was a honor student throughout his high school career as well as a campus leader of more than passing merit.

Keefe is remembered by his SDSD peers as an industrious, innovative, and insightful peer leader with proper sympathy and expertise. He had amazing confidence in his capabilities, always seeking and inviting challenges – a long distance achiever ever so ready to find ways and means to be fully present and alive in living up to his potential. A peer role model to be emulated.

Keefe mentioned some of his most memorable SDSD accomplishments as follows:

1956: He was a member of the SDSD Pheasant track and field track team that placed second in the Little Sioux Conference under Howard Hovland;

1956: The Pheasants football team, coached By Clyde Ketchum of which Keefe was the captain, finished its league season in second place in the Little Sioux Conference; 1957: The SDSD varsity track and field team, also coached by Clyde Ketchum, captured the Little Sioux Conference Championship and the Region V competition for the first time in the school's history. Keefe was an outstanding distance runner, participating in the mile run (now known as the 1600 meter run): 880 yard run (now identified as the 800 meter run), sprint medley and, when needed in special situations, the 440 yard run (known today as the 400 meter run).