

JOHN L. BUCKMASTER

Deaf and hard of hearing community of South Dakota lost one of their most prominent leaders of all time when John Buckmaster passed away on August 2, 1999. John was an outstanding example of the type of citizen that we should all strive to be. He devoted his life to an imposing array of causes to make South Dakota a better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. He wanted those being entrusted to his care to be much happier and more successful than he himself ever would be – through the benefits to be derived from high quality programs and services which he himself during his days was denied.



John was born on March 17, 1929 in Weta, South Dakota, the third of five children. He was educated at the South Dakota School for the Deaf until graduation in 1948 after which he enrolled at South Dakota State University (SDSU) with a major in Graphic Arts, 1951-1953. In 1956, he married Nancy J. Sorenson whom he met at SDSU and, in the next 44 years, the deaf and hard of hearing population of South Dakota was blessed with many immeasurable contributions from this exemplary couple.

John was a strong believer in community service – a fact attested to by the long list of positions he has held which would fill pages as thick as New York's Manhattan directory. Most notably, though, were his connections with the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Midwest Athletic Association of the Deaf (MAAD), Colorado Association of the Deaf, National Fraternal Society of the Deaf (NFSD), and South Dakota Association of the Deaf (SDAD). He served on many prominent boards and committees such as the South Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council, South Dakota Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, SDSU Advisory Council, and President Nixon's Council on Employment of the Handicapped.

In every diverse area of his life, John exercised his courage to fight for what he believed. He fought his battles with integrity and a sense of urgency and the belief that what is right must transcend. There are very few people in this world that truly spent their lives working for others. John Buckmaster was one of them ... one of the best.