



John W. Hudson, Jr.

October 26, 1940 – January 9, 2013

John W. Hudson Jr., former superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD) and a lifelong supporter of Deaf education, passed away at his home in Danville, Kentucky, on January 9, 2013, at the age of 72.

A native of Greeneville, Tennessee, Hudson first gained recognition as an outstanding athlete at the University of Tennessee, where he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in education. A standout football player, he played end for Tennessee from 1960 to 1962, participated in the 1962 Blue-Gray

Game and the 1963 Senior Bowl, and later briefly played professional football with the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football League.

Following his playing career, Hudson devoted himself to education and coaching. At the Tennessee School for the Deaf, he served as a teacher and coach and helped lead the school to national championships in both football and track and field. He later held leadership roles at the Louisiana School for the Deaf as supervising teacher for junior and senior high programs and became superintendent of the Kentucky School for the Deaf before coming to South Dakota. After leaving SDSD, he continued his work in Deaf education as superintendent of the Central North Carolina School for the Deaf.

Hudson became the tenth superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf in August 1973. When he arrived, SDSD faced aging facilities and growing needs across the state. He quickly focused on improving campus safety and modernizing buildings while also expanding statewide outreach services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their families.



During his five years in Sioux Falls, Hudson strengthened educational programs, added needed administrative support positions, and improved collaboration among staff, families, and the Deaf community. He also supported outreach efforts that helped communities across South Dakota better understand Deaf education and the services available to students.

One of Hudson's most important accomplishments was his determined effort to secure state legislative funding for a new educational facility to replace outdated campus buildings. Working with supporters across the state, he helped gain legislative approval in 1977 for construction of a new school facility. Groundbreaking followed soon after, and the Berry-Wright Educational Facility,

completed shortly after his tenure, became the foundation of the modern SDSD campus still serving students today.

Hudson left SDSD in 1978 to continue his leadership in Deaf education. Throughout his life, he remained active in education and community service.



John Hudson is remembered in South Dakota for guiding SDSD through a critical period of change, helping move the school from aging facilities toward a modern campus, and strengthening services for Deaf students and families across the state. His work continues to benefit generations of students who have followed.