

## SHARON P. HEIYDT CARTER

Sharon P. Heiydt Carter's untimely departure on May 14, 2000 deeply touched every corner of Deaf America. Her career as a world class "others-before-self" public servant is to be emulated by all of us, the type that made the United States of America a great nation that it is meant to be. Her story of a small town girl making it big in the world is a commendable example of the "can do" spirit exhibited by many South Dakotans. She was a nurturing "can do" crusader who demonstrated in any and all of her pursuits the fact that deaf people can do anything except hear.



Her legacy is spelled LOVE. Along with her beloved husband, Mel, an adopted South Dakotan, she taught those who came in contact with them the true meaning of love, its place in their lives, and its role in making things better for all of them. People like Sharon and Mel are shining examples of the many good things that can be attributed to South Dakotans. As we all know, South Dakotans exhibit a caring attitude, strong work ethic, the determination to succeed, and the humbleness to remember to say "thank you" and to look for ways to return the favor reminiscent of the greatness of America of yesteryears. Sharon never forgot that it is "our roots that give us wings," as can be evidenced by her note of July 27, 1998 to the SDAD Hall of Fame members: "Nothing in my life can equal the outreach and expression of love by my own South Dakota family – all of YOU! You have been my source of strength, motivation, and love all my life."

Sharon was born in Yankton, South Dakota on July 3, 1943 and grew up in nearby Marion. She attended a public school briefly prior to matriculation at South Dakota School for the Deaf, graduating in 1960 with honors and went on to Gallaudet University where she received a B.A. degree in 1965 and teacher certification in Deaf Education in 1966. She earned her M.A. in Educational Administration from California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in 1975 and studied for her doctorate at Brigham Young University in Utah; Walden University and Capella University in Minnesota.

Her professional career includes academic teaching at the Minnesota School for the Deaf, 1966-1973, and Central North Carolina School for the Deaf, 1973-1975; and administrative work at CSUN, 1975-2000. The National Leadership Training Program, 1975-1991, which produced outstanding deaf and hard of hearing administrators, was the "crowning glory" of her tenure at CSUN.