John L. Buckmaster

March 17, 1929 – August 2, 1999



John L. Buckmaster, 70 died August 2, 1999, at the Brookings Hospital after a lengthy battle with cancer.

John was born March 17, 1929, in Weta, SD, to Harold and Ina (Doss) Buckmaster, Sr. He attended school in Murdo, then attended the South Dakota School for the Deaf in Sioux Falls and graduated in 1948.

He then attended South Dakota State College in Brookings from 1951 until 1953. He married his college sweetheart, Nancy Sorenson, March 17, 1956, in Brookings, SD. He spent many years working in various newspapers and print shops including the Argus Leader in Sioux Falls. John was a proud member of the ITU Printers Union for most of his life.

While living in Colorado, John was employed at the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, the Free Press in Colorado Springs and also served as vocational printing teacher at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind in Colorado Springs.



From 1970-1987, he and his wife operated a family potato farm and small grain business near the Erwin, SD, area. From 1987 to 1990, he was employed by a non-profit organization, Communication Service for the Deaf, in Sioux Falls, and served as an Independent Living Services Coordinator. Throughout these years, John dedicated a lot of his time to volunteer service and was honored as the Volunteer of the Year in 1982 for the Sioux Falls Volunteer and Information Center.



He was a member, officer and past board member of numerous organizations of and for the Deaf, including: the National Association of the Deaf; the American Athletic Association of the Deaf; the Midwest Athletic Association of the Deaf; the National Bowling Association; the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf; the Colorado Association of the Deaf; the South Dakota Association of the Deaf; the South Dakota Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf; as well as several local clubs and associations in Sioux Falls, Denver, and Colorado Springs, among others. He was a long time member of the Sioux Falls Sertoma Club and an honorary member of the Kappa Gamma fraternity.

John was frequently recognized for his efforts and involvement with the Deaf and hard of hearing and was

considered one of our state's greatest advocates in this area. He served as the chairman of numerous conferences, tournaments, celebrations and competitions on a state, national and international level. He was a player, founder, commissioner and hall of fame honoree in numerous athletic events such as the World Games for the Deaf, the National Softball Tournaments of the Deaf. He was also responsible for the founding of a myriad of human services programs, agencies, and projects to increase awareness and accessibility for people with disabilities.

In 1972, John was appointed by President Richard M. Nixon to serve on the President's Council of the Handicapped and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped in Washington, D.C. He was appointed by the governors of Colorado and South Dakota to serve on various advisory boards and committees including the SD Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the SD Independent Living Council, and the SD School for the Deaf Advisory Council.



He was survived by his wife; mother-in-law, Alvilda Myre Sorenson; his brother and wife, Harold and Bessie Buckmaster of Martin, SD; their children, Gary and Gwenda Buckmaster of Rapid City, Betty Lou and Jack Mansfield of Ord, Nebraska, and Robert and Jean Buckmaster of Kearney, Nebraska, and their families; a sister, Lavonne Burge of Houston, TX and her family. He was also survived by the Myre and Sorenson families; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews scattered all over the USA.

Preceding him in death were his father, Harold, Sr.; mother, Ina (Doss); and sister, Rena Buckmaster Summer of Vandenberg AFB, Lompoc, CA.

Celebration of the Life was held Thursday, September 2, 1999 at 2:00 PM at the First Presbyterian Church in Brookings, SD. John was buried at a Committal Family Serve on Saturday, August 21, 1999, at Erwin Cemetery, Erwin, SD.

