

***Judy and Gary Wright, recipients of the Award for Service, reflect on their
36 years with ORBIDA. . . .***

Judy -- I got my teaching certificate in 1972--the "language experience" era. I had no idea how to teach reading to the 80% of the students who will learn in spite of what the teacher does, much less that 20% with learning differences. Fortunately, I did my student teaching for my master's with Dorothy Whitehead. Not only did she teach me the basics of Orton Gillingham, but she introduced me to the Orton Society (now IDA), and to the Orton Society-Oregon Branch (now ORBIDA). It was through their workshops and conferences that I learned how to teach children with dyslexia. I found out that these methods work equally well with the other 80% of the children in my classroom.

I have waited 35 years for the dyslexia laws that Oregon now has. I am hoping that never again will there be a certified teacher who does not know how to teach reading in Oregon!

Gary --All branch presidents serve on Branch Council, so both of us served in that capacity. After my term as president I was invited to serve on the BC Executive Committee, eventually as BC Chair. That gave me a seat on the IDA board (Gloria Davis is the only other ORBIDA person to serve on the board).

Judy -- As a classroom teacher (mostly first grade), a resource room teacher, a literacy coach, and finally a supervisor of PSU students, I wanted to know what works to teach reading. I wanted scientific research--not just anecdotal reports or case studies as is often the case in education.

I found IDA provided this scientific research. So, when I attended conferences associated with IDA, I found the sessions to be based on this kind of research and I knew then that the odds were great that these methods and approaches would work for my students. IDA has become the "gold standard" for dyslexia intervention.

Why was this so important to me personally? Because reading is the basis for everything in life, and "my kids" needed the best chance of learning to read for success in life. These kids are bright. And there is a special place in my heart for every child who struggles with learning to read and often concludes that he/she is dumb because of those struggles. I remember one child in particular--a first grade boy--who struggled with learning the sound symbol relationships. When he finally passed the "test" for all the sounds, I gave him a high five, and he replied with a grin from ear to ear, "Just call me Letterman!" This is what it's all about.

Gary: I first got involved as a tag-along spouse when Judy attended IDA conferences. While she was in sessions I volunteered to staff the Branch Booth in the exhibit hall where various branches would sell merchandise to raise money.

The best part of being involved with IDA both locally and nationally has been the

lifelong friendships we have both developed with folks from Alaska and Hawaii to New England and Florida.

We have been privileged to know and work with some of the real legends of IDA -- researchers and educators -- and it is always fun to see these folks at each IDA conference.

Judy recommends: *For more stories from various people in the dyslexia world, read "The Reading Glitch: How the Culture Wars Have Hijacked Reading Instruction-- And What We Can Do About It" by Lee Sherman and our own Betsy Ramsey. In my opinion, this should be required reading for every teacher.*

