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Forum

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None

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POWRIE VAUX DOCTOR—MISS MARY E. SWITZER

By now, everyone who is affected, knows that two of the outstanding people in the area of service to deaf people have died. For many of us, the death of Powrie Vaux Doctor seems to be much more of a personal loss than the death of Mary E. Switzer because "Doc" had personal contact as a teacher and friend with so many of us. Mary was a friend equal to virtually any other one may think of, when we think of her in terms of what has been made possible through her visionary efforts during her years of service in Vocational Rehabilitation.

During the many years while Mary was "The Administrator" of the Social and Rehabilitation Service (regardless of her official title or the official title of the agency) the problems of deaf people were of particular concern to her. Fortunately, she was more than "concerned," she made it possible for things to happen. It was she who encouraged Boyce R. Williams in Washington to plan for services to deaf people, to instigate research, implement recommendations for service, and to give, for the first time, official sanction to the "voice of the deaf." Without Mary, there would have continued to be an insensitivity to the needs of deaf people in government rehabilitation service. Her place in history is assured. We can only hope it is recognized and will be continued to be recognized, especially in the history of services for deaf people.

The accomplishments of "Doc" and Mary may seem of a different order, and perhaps this is true. The impact of each, while of a different nature, is not measurable and may only be measurable long after we, too, have passed from the scene. Our task now, is to recognize and be glad for the fact that these two people had gifts which they shared for the betterment of deaf people. Ours is not to give simple thanks for having had these two, but to express our thanks through what we do in the same vein. "Doc" helped open

many doors for many deaf people through his teaching and deep personal involvement with them. Miss Switzer enabled many doors to open because of her sensitivity to the needs of deaf people and her ability to see that those needs could be met. "Doc" and Mary gave the priceless gift; they gave themselves. Can we do less?