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## The Boyce R. Williams Award

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## THE BOYCE R. WILLIAMS AWARD\*

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### Presentation made by Rex Purvis

When we look at deaf leaders in the United States, we note that many are involved in rehabilitation, either as direct service providers or as members of consumer advisory boards. When we look even more closely at this impressive group, we also note that many are Gallaudet College graduates, including the person whose name is given to this award.

The person who is receiving this award is a graduate of Gallaudet College. This person has also had a profound effect on Gallaudet graduates since 1952. Many would not have graduated without his help and guidance. In fact, many of today's deaf leaders will acknowledge readily his great positive influence on their lives both during and after their Gallaudet days.

Our award recipient became deaf at the age of four. A native to Indiana, he received his B.S. degree from Gallaudet in 1940 and returned to Indianapolis where he was head supervisor for boys at the Indiana School for the Deaf and later became a specialist for the deaf and hard of hearing with the Indiana Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. While completing his M.S. at Butler University, he joined the staff at Gallaudet College in 1952 as an instructor, counselor, and rehabilitation liaison. Boyce R. Williams was instrumental in this position being established at Gallaudet. Our award recipient had not been at Gallaudet very long before he was made the Dean of Students in 1954. He still maintained his association with rehabilitation counselors, however, and to this day maintains an active interest in the rehabilitation needs of Gallaudet students.

Our award recipient was probably the first Gallaudet student to receive rehabilitation assistance. While an undergraduate, it is rumored that he used his transportation money from VR not to travel home, but instead to travel to Texas to see his then girl friend and present wife and mother of four children. As you can see, from his days as a client he knew the ins and outs of the rehabilitation system. The number of rehabilitation clients he has assisted may be outnumbered only by the number of students he has taught how to abuse their VR support. To say he has represented the rehabilitation field at Gallaudet since 1952 would be an understatement.

In 1969, our award recipient received his Ed.D. from the University of Maryland and became the first Gallaudet graduate to earn a doctoral degree.

By now I'm sure you know the name of our award recipient. It is fitting and proper that the Boyce R. Williams Award this year is given to one of the most well respected deaf men in the world and a man whose career has been influenced by Boyce Williams. But before I give you his name formally, let me read to you what the students at Gallaudet said about him in

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\*This ADARA award is made biennially during ADARA Conference Meetings to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the rehabilitation of hearing impaired persons. Selection of the recipient is made by a committee appointed by the president.

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their dedication of the Tower Clock, the Gallaudet Yearbook, in 1969:

“We remember and appreciate that you have helped us gain wisdom by your patience with our foibles; that you have been a refuge when our brash and errant youthfulness brought disasters real or fancied; that you have been a friend, counselor, and confidant, and for being a man of unwavering moral and intellectual integrity, who has inspired in us a sense of values and ideals; that you have nurtured hope for those of us for whom the future seemed to hold no promise.”

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pride and pleasure that the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association presents, for the first time to a deaf person, the Boyce R. Williams Award for outstanding contributions to the rehabilitation of deaf people, to the Dean of Student Affairs at Gallaudet College, Dr. Richard M. Phillips.