

# Brush Up on Some Disability History During the New Year

by [Access Press Staff](#) // January 9th, 2015

With the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) being celebrated in 2015, make a New Year's resolution to learn some ADA history.

Many good print and online resources are available. One new publication has been issued by the national ADA Legacy Project. It is titled Equal Access, Equal Opportunity and is a fascinating read for anyone interested in the ADA and the disability rights movement. Find the link [here](#). This publication is available online and in accessible versions. Sponsors are being sought to provide a print edition.

The ADA Legacy Project celebrates the impact of the ADA on disability rights, and honors the contributions of individuals with disabilities and their allies who persevered in securing the passage of this landmark civil rights legislation. In order to fully realize a world where all people are accepted and valued, it is crucial to preserve and promote the history of the ADA and the disability rights movement. The project's vision is to have a world in which all people are accepted and valued for whom and how they are; where all are welcomed with respect and given equal opportunities to contribute to the human experience.

The mission of The ADA Legacy Project is to honor the contributions of people with disabilities and their allies by preserving and promoting the history of the disability rights movement; celebrating the impact of the ADA, as well as other related disability rights legislation and accomplishments; and creating opportunities for inclusion, access, and equal rights for the future.

The ADA Legacy project counts the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities as one of its partners. Another partner is Georgetown University, which has not only compiled many ADA historical documents in its collection, it also has produced more than two dozen presentations about ADA history. These valuable lessons in history can be easily accessed online. The selection of Moments in Disability History features cover a wide range of audio and video clips, historical documents, images and slides from over a span of decades. These chosen moments draw upon seminal work from the past that laid the foundation for the ADA and other disability policy.

They are the moments every self-advocate, parent and professional advocate should know and be literate about in order to create future policy. For purposes of focus and specialization, the moments selected do not include activities, events, programs and projects that are about the delivery of programs and direct services.

The selection of Moments in Disability History provides a common ground and foundation for the study of disability history. They have left an indelible mark on public policy and reflect many defining moments of the last 50 years. These are events that have contributed to the forming of American society as we know it today. The events, or aftermath of the events, changed history and their impact still resonate today.

The moments cover topics including the birth of the movement, the rights to education, watershed moments such as the changes at New York's Willowbrook institution, the Olmstead decision and stories of discrimination. One presentation features Minnesota U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank.

The latest Moments in Disability History presentation is Behind the Scenes in the Reagan and Bush Administrations – Stories from No Pity. In his award-winning book on the disability rights movement, *No Pity*, Joseph Shapiro told many background stories about overlapping events and processes through which the ADA became law.

Find the link to the moments series [here](#).

*Access Press is interested in reader submissions for the monthly History Note column, to complement the articles written by Luther Granquist and other contributors. Submissions must center on events, people and places in the history of Minnesota's disability community. We are interested in history that focuses on all types of disability topics, so long as the history has a tie to Minnesota. We are especially interested in stories from Greater Minnesota. Please submit ideas prior to submitting full stories, as we may have covered the topic before. Contact us at [access@accesspress.org](mailto:access@accesspress.org) or 651-644-2133 if you have questions. The History Note is a monthly column sponsored by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.*