

# **HISTORY NOTE: Universal Declaration of Human Rights anniversary is celebrated**

by [Access Press Staff](#) // December 9th, 2018

December 10 marked an important day around the world, as the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was celebrated. The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (MNCDD) joined the international celebration with a series of website features released on a monthly basis beginning in September as a countdown to the December 2018 anniversary.

This important declaration and its 30 articles remain aspirational to all too many Minnesotans with disabilities, and their counterparts from around the world. It is important to look back at the declaration and see the promises and the challenges still ahead.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 20, 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It set out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected. It has been translated into more than 500 languages and is believed to be one of the most translated documents in the world. Much history on the declaration can be found [here](#).

The MNCDD website also has a treasure trove of information about this important milestone. Click on one link and hear former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt reading from the declaration, in an appearance before the United Nations.

MNCDD has highlighted some of the declaration's 30 articles, to celebrate its history. Article 1 states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Another highlight is Article 6, which states that "Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law."

Article Seven states that "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination."

Another focus is on Article 19, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. "

As the legislative session moves toward a January 2019 start, it's worth remembering two more of the articles. Article 20 states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association. Article 21 states that "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains as relevant today as it was on the day in 1948 that it was proclaimed and adopted. It’s worth looking back at what is still an extraordinary vision for human rights.

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*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.*