

Landmarks in the March to Equality for Those With Disabilities
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1817 American School for the Deaf is founded in Hartford, CT. It is the first US school for deaf children.

1848 First residential institution for people with mental retardation is founded in Boston. Over the next century, thousands of the developmentally disabled are institutionalized.

1860 Simon Pollak demonstrates Braille at Missouri School for the Blind.

1880 Hearing aid is invented by R.G. Rhodes.

1902 Helen Keller, the first deaf-blind person to graduate from college, publishes an autobiography, "The Story of My Life," in Ladies Home Journal.

1908 Clifford Beers' autobiographical classic "A Man that Found Himself," which deals with his three years in an asylum, is published. It generates a storm of protests over the care of people with mental illness.

1913-1920 Activists push for creation of state workers compensation programs. By 1919, 43 states have established some form.

1921 The American Foundation for the Blind is founded.

1927 The US Supreme Court, in Buck v. Bell, rules that forced sterilization of people with disabilities is not a violation of their constitutional rights.

1929 Seeing Eye establishes the first guide dog school in the United States.

1932 Disabled American Veterans is chartered by Congress to represent veterans in dealings with the government.

1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt, the first person with a physical disability to be elected president, is sworn in.

1935 Roosevelt signs the Social Security Act, establishing federal old-age benefits and grants for assistance to blind people and disabled children.

1948 United Cerebral Palsy Association Inc. is founded.

1948 Harold Russell wins two Academy Awards for his role in "The Best Years of Our Lives." He was the first actor with a disability to win an Oscar.

1950 The National Association of Parents and Friends of Mentally Retarded Children is founded. The organization is now known as The ARC.

1957 Little People of America is founded to advocate on behalf of dwarfs, or little people.

1958 Gini Laurie, originally from St. Louis, first publishes gazette on disability in Cleveland, OH.

1960 The first Paralympic Games are held in Rome.

1961 American National Standards Institute Inc. publishes specifications for making buildings accessible.

1963 President John F. Kennedy signs a bill creating a system of community health centers intended to replace the institutionalization of the people with mental illness.

1963 Robert H. Weitbrecht invents “acoustic coupler,” forerunner of the telephone modem, enabling teletypewriter messages to be sent by telephone line. The invention gives the deaf access to telephone services.

1964 The Civil Rights Act is passed, outlawing discrimination on the basis of race in public accommodations, employment and federally-assisted programs.

1968 Architectural Barriers Act, regarded as the first federal disability rights legislation, requires federal buildings and facilities to be accessible to people with physical disabilities.

1970 Nursing home resident Max Starkloff founds Paraquad in St. Louis.

1971 The Caption Center is founded at WGBH Public Television in Boston and the following year begins captioned programming for people who are deaf.

1972 The Center for Independent Living is founded in California by Edward Roberts.

1973 The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 addresses discrimination against people with disabilities.

1973 Passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act authorizes federal funds for construction of curb cuts.

1975 The Supreme Court, in O’Connor v. Donaldson, rules that people cannot be institutionalized against their will in a psychiatric hospital, unless they are determined to be a threat to themselves or others.

1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is enacted to ensure that children with disabilities receive free, public schooling that addresses their special needs.

1975 The Atlantis Community is founded in Denver as a group-housing program for adults with severe disabilities.

1976 The Higher Education Act of 1972 is amended to provide services to physically disabled students entering college.

1978 Disability rights activists block Denver Regional Transit Authority buses to protest inaccessibility of city's mass transit system.

1979 Parents found National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in Madison, WI.

1982 Telecommunications for the Disabled Act mandates telephone access for people who are deaf and hearing-impaired, at places such as hospitals and police stations.

1983 American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) is organized in Denver, CO.

1984 Voting for the Elderly and Handicapped Act requires polling places to be accessible or alternatives be found for people who are elderly or who are disabled so they may vote.

1985 Gini Laurie established International Polio Network, based in St. Louis.

1986 Air Carrier Access Act prohibits airlines from refusing service to people with disabilities and from charging higher fares.

1987 Marlee Matlin, who is deaf, wins an Oscar for her role in "Children of a Lesser God."

1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act adds people with disabilities groups protected by federal fair housing legislation. It also establishes minimum standards for adapting newly constructed multiple-dwelling housing.

1990 Americans With Disabilities Act is signed by President George Bush on July 26.

1994 Heather Whitestone is crowned Miss America. She is the first woman who is deaf to hold the title.

1995 American Association for People With Disabilities is founded in Washington.

1998 Casey Martin cites ADA to win a court decision and the right to ride a golf cart in PGA Tour competitions. An appeal is pending.

1999 The Supreme Court rules in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that confining those with disabilities to state institutions for no medical reason is discrimination and violates the ADA.

2000 Marla Runyan, who is legally blind, qualifies for the US Olympic team going to Sydney, Australia. She is a distance runner.

2000 The Supreme Court will heard arguments in October in *University of Alabama v. Garrett* on whether Title I (employment) and Title II (state and local government services) of the ADA violates sovereignty and thus are unconstitutional.