Originally Processed With FOIA(s): S

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FOIA MARKER

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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Speechwriting, White House Office of
Series: Speech File Backup Files
Subseries: Chron File, 1989-1993

OA/ID Number: 13673
Folder ID Number: 13673-005

Folder Title:
International Very Special Arts Festival 6/15/89 [OA 6264] [2]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	26	19	1	7

ID # 015043

WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

RECEIVED
MAR 10 1989
SCHEDULING OFFICE

☐ O - OUTGOING
☐ H - INTERNAL
☑ I - INCOMING
Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) 89/03/08

Name of Correspondent: Eugene C. Maillard

☐ **MI Mail Report** **User Codes: (A)** _____ **(B)** _____ **(C)** _____

Subject: Requests White House event for Very Special Arts Performance on June 15, 1989.

ROUTE TO: **ACTION** **DISPOSITION**

Office/Agency (Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response	Code	Completion Date YY/MM/DD
SC HAGI	ORIGINATOR	89/03/08	DJ		/ /
Referral Note:					
		/ /			/ /
Referral Note:					
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Referral Note:					

ACTION CODES:
A - Appropriate Action
C - Comment/Recommendation
D - Draft Response
F - Furnish Fact Sheet to be used as Enclosure
I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
R - Direct Reply w/Copy
S - For Signature
X - Interim Reply

DISPOSITION CODES:
A - Answered
B - Non-Special Referral
C - Completed
S - Suspended

FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:
Type of Response = Initials of Signer
Code = "A"
Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: _____

Keep this worksheet attached to the original incoming letter.
Send all routing updates to Central Reference (Room 75, OEOB).
Always return completed correspondence record to Central Files.
Refer questions about the correspondence tracking system to Central Reference, ext. 2590.

5/81

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ONLY

CLASSIFICATION SECTION

No. of Additional Correspondents:_____ Media: _____ Individual Codes: __.____ __.____ __.____

Prime Subject Code: __ ____-__ Secondary Subject Codes: __ ____-__ __ ____-__

__ ____-__ __ ____-__

__ ____-__ __ ____-__

PRESIDENTIAL REPLY

Code	Date	Comment	Form
C __ __	_____	Time: _____	P- _____
DSP	_____	Time: _____	Media: _____

SIGNATURE CODES:

CPn - Presidential Correspondence
- n - **0** - Unknown
- n - **1** - George Herbert Walker Bush
- n - **2** - George Bush
- n - **3** - George

CLn - First Lady's Correspondence
- n - **1** - Barbara Bush
- n - **2** - Barbara
- n - **3** - Bar
- n - **4** - Mrs. Barbara Bush

CBn - Presidential & First Lady's Correspondence
- n - **1** - Barbara & George Bush
- n - **2** - Barbara & George

MEDIA CODES:

- **B** - Box/package
- **C** - Copy
- **D** - Official document
- **G** - Message
- **H** - Handcarried
- **L** - Letter
- **M** - Mailgram
- **O** - Memo
- **P** - Photo
- **R** - Report
- **S** - Sealed
- **T** - Telegram
- **V** - Telephone
- **X** - Miscellaneous
- **Y** - Study

Very Special Arts

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

White House Performance
June 15, 2:00pm

Proposed Show

1:45	West Point Glee Club (or another military chorus performs as the delegations arrive and get into position.
2:00	TBD Master of Ceremonies (a celebrity) will introduce event and guest stars and the first performer.
2:03	VSA Group A performance by an International VSA performer/group to be selected. It will be a colorful and up tempo group.
2:08	MC Introduces celebrity performer
2:10	Wynton Marsalis America's leading jazz musician performs along with his blind pianist (presently with the #2 jazz song), Marcus Roberts.
2:15	MC Introduces U.S. VSA performers, to be determined.
2:17	VSA Group A performance by an American VSA performer/group to be selected.
2:22	MC Introduces second Celebrity performer.
2:24	Celebrity Performer (TBD)
2:28	President arrives and is seated.
2:29	MC Introduces Mrs. Jean Kennedy Smith.

2:30 Mrs. Smith
Mrs. Smith makes brief remarks about VSA and introduces a special VSA performance.

2:34 VSA Production Number
A special performance by several VSA groups from around the world. Together they are a cacophony of different talents, including mimes, jugglers, dancers, etc. performing to one group singing. This would be a specially produced number designed to show off the diversity of VSA. They then...

... get the President up to be part of their performance.

The President then makes brief remarks acknowledging the young performers, VSA, etc.

Presentation
The performers make a special presentation to the President on behalf of VSA. Thousands of red and white balloons soar.

OUTSIDE EVENT ENDS.

2:45 - 3:15 Private reception with the President.

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet
(George Bush Library)

Document No. and Type	Subject/Title of Document	Date	Restriction	Class.
01. Memo	Ellin Nolan to Shiree Sanchez, re: May 8, 1989 Meeting; Social Security information redacted. (1 pp.)	n.d.	P-6, (b)(6)	

Collection:

Record Group: Bush Presidential Records
Office: Speechwriting, White House Office of
Series: Speech File, Backup
Subseries:
WHORM Cat.:
File Location: International Very Special Arts Festival 6/15/89 [2]

Date Closed: 9/30/2004
FOIA/SYS Case #:
Re-review Case #: 2004-2265-S
P-2/P-5 Review Case #:

OA/ID Number: 06264

MR Case #:
MR Disposition:
Disposition Date:

Appeal Case #:
Appeal Disposition:
Disposition Date:

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P-1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P-2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P-5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

(b)(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
(b)(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
(b)(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
(b)(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
(b)(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
(b)(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
(b)(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
(b)(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information

Forty-five of the participants use wheel-chairs, and another twenty individuals have mobility impairments. Approximately seventy-five individuals are hearing impaired. A large number of the participants are mentally retarded. Among the four hundred international participants many do not speak English.

Very Special Arts is planning a performance on the White House lawn for all 1000 guests to enjoy. Following that performance, a group of forty dignitaries, headed by Mrs. Jean Kennedy Smith, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Dr. Ernest Boyer, and artists and representatives from the major sponsoring organizations for the IVSAF are planning to meet with the President and First Lady in one of the White House diplomatic rooms. At that time, Artist Hiro Yamagata would like to present the official Festival art work to the President and Mrs. Bush. We also hope this event will include photo opportunities.

The questions we would like to discuss with you on Monday relate to security, accessibility, staging and technical requirements for the performance, press concerns, details for the private reception, the participation of the President and First Lady, and logistical concerns.

Security 5/11*

1. What time should the delegates arrive at the White House for a 2:00PM event?*
2. What is the overall time schedule for the arrival, performance, speeches, refreshments and departure of the delegates?
3. When is the door list due, and to whom is it to be delivered? What information needs to be included about the participants?
4. How many VSA staff people will be able to attend the event along with the delegates? Where should they be located before, during and after the reception?
5. Is there a waiting area for celebrities?
6. What entrance and exit to the White House Lawn?*
7. What is the earliest arrival time of the first busload?*
8. How many persons per hour can be cleared through the Gates to the lawn?*
9. Any special procedures or rules for clearance?*

Accessibility

1. Forty-four delegates are in wheelchairs; seventy-five delegates have hearing impairments; twenty delegates have limited mobility. How can we arrange for their seating during the performance?
2. Sign language interpreters must be visible to the entire audience. How can this be accomplished?
3. How can we assist you in moving the delegates through security? Many of the delegates are persons with mental handicaps who might be confused or intimidated by the entrance procedures. Additionally, many of the international delegates do not speak English.
4. If a stage is being used for the performance do you have access to either ramps or a portable lift?

Staging 5/11*

1. Exactly where will the event be staged? Where will the stage be positioned? Where will the chairs be arranged?*
2. What size will the stage be?*
3. Will the White House provide a crew to set up the stage or is this the responsibility of VSA?*
4. Who will provide the sound system?*
5. If we want the Army band to participate, or a military choir, who should we contact?*
6. When will the set-up begin? Will we have time to rehearse in the area? If so, when can that begin?*
7. What is the contingency plan in case of rain?*
8. Can we hang VSA logos, etc. on the set?*
9. By what date will you need the details of our program?*
10. Who are our prime contacts for very specific questions...technical, staging, etc.? Who should we contact regarding small details?*
11. At which gate do we unload and load our materials?*
12. What kind of decorations can be used on the stage?*

Press 5/11*

1. How will we handle photo opportunties? How many photos will be allowed with the President? Can we use an outside photographer to shoot general pictures of the reception or will the White House provide all photographers?
2. Will the White House press corps automatically cover the event? If so, where will they be positioned?
3. Will our TV crew be able to move freely outside the press area?*
4. Who provides power for TV and sound equipment?
5. Will we be able to invite select members of the press, or will the White House reporters be the only ones allowed to cover the event?
6. Who will be responsible for press advance?
   -credentialing
   -movement of the press at the event
   -press pen, press risers
   -mult boxes (press bridges) and other sound system needs
7. Will there be photo opportunities available for the press with President and Mrs. Bush and IVSAF delegates?
8. Can we send out a press release nationwide about the event? Does it need to be approved by White House staff?
9. Will the White House press staff list the event in their daily events calendar?
10. Who will be the contact person in the Media Relations Office for this event?*

Private Reception **5/17***

1. Where will the private reception take place?
2. How many individuals will be able to attend the private reception?*
3. Will the White House provide photographers for the private reception or is that the responsibility of VSA?
4. Will both President Bush and the First Lady attend the private reception?
5. What will be the time schedule for the private reception?*

Participation of President and Mrs. Bush **5/17***

1. Will President and Mrs. Bush be in attendance?
2. Will the President or Mrs. Bush take part in the performance?*
3. Will the President be available to make remarks? How do we record those remarks?*
4. When we reach the point in the show when the President is to enter, do we hold if he is not ready? With whom do we discuss these procedures?

Transportation **5/11***

Bus:
1. Where are the discharge, pick-up and waiting areas?

Wheelchair Vehicles:
2. Where are the discharge, pick-up and waiting areas?

Special Vehicles:
3. Where can we park the Mobile Command Center?
4. Where can we park the Video Production Van?
5. Where can we park the Musical Instruments Truck?

6. Do we need permits for these vehicles?
7. Who is the Point Person?*

Communications **5/11***

1. Is there any restrictions on walkie talkies and/or cellur phones
2. Who is the Point Person?*

Video Production **5/11***

1. Will White House Video Teams also record event?
2. Will we be able to patch into audio distribution box for recording purposes?
3. What are the security clearance requirements for the crew?
4. Who is the point person?*

Emergency Medical Care **5/11***

1. What facilities are available for an emergency?
2. Can we park ambulances at the closest gates?
3. Who is the point person?*

Your willingness to meet with us and address these concerns is deeply appreciated. We are all very excited about the White House event for the IVSAF and look forward to seeing you on Monday. If you have any further questions before that time, please do not hesitate to contact me at 662-8899.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 8, 1989
KBK

Siv (KJ) + SLS

Lange

MEMORANDUM

TO: DAVID DEMAREST

FROM: JOSEPH W. HAGIN

SUBJECT: APPROVED PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY

EVENT: Reception for The Very Special Arts

DATE: June 15, 1989

TIME: (T) 2:00 p.m.

DURATION: 45 Minutes

LOCATION: South Lawn

ATTIRE: Business Suit

REMARKS REQUIRED: Yes

MEDIA COVERAGE: Open

FIRST LADY PARTICIPATION: Yes

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

CONTACT: _____, _____

TELEPHONE: **OFFICE** _____ **HOME** _____

NOTE: **PROJECT OFFICER, SEE ATTACHED CHECKLIST**

Ed Rogers	Marlin Fitzwater	David Bates
James Cicconi	David Demarest	David Valdez
Fred McClure	Jean Lamb	USSS - PPD
Susan Porter Rose	Steve Studdert	Operations - Executive Residence
Patty Presock	John Keller	WHCA Audio/Visual
Speechwriting Office	Tim McBride	WHCA Operations
Laurie Firestone	J. Bonnie Newman	
Robert Guttman	Tony Lopez	

Scan China

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 8, 1989
KBK

Doug

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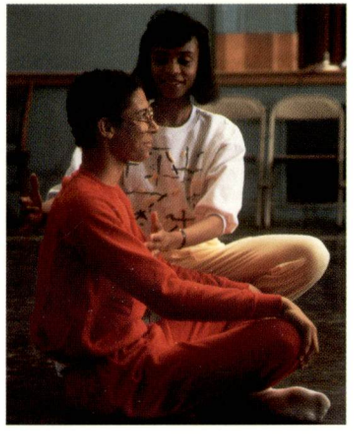
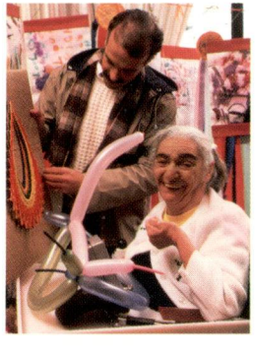




VERY SPECIAL ARTS

Very Special Arts Board of Directors

Very Special Arts U.S.A. Month, 1985

A Proclamation By the President of the United States of America

Art is one of the most important forms of human expression. Whether as creators or as spectators, Americans participate in the arts in some form almost every day, and their lives are made richer by this activity. Art also brings us into contact with the rich aesthetic tradition of our civilization, while the art of other cultures can be one of the best introductions available for those who want to learn more about them.

The importance of art makes it essential that all Americans be able to make use of this unique resource. The National Committee, Arts with the Handicapped, is an educational affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. During the past eleven years, it has served as the coordinating agency for arts programs for disabled children, youth, and adults. The Very Special Arts Program that it sponsors provides ongoing arts programs for many Americans with disabilities.

The Very Special Arts Program makes it possible for disabled Americans to participate in the arts and enrich their lives in the same way as all other Americans. Through it, they can gain the opportunity for self-expression within the context of our rich cultural tradition. This program deserves the support and assistance of all Americans.

In recognition of the importance of arts education in the lives of everyone, including those with disabilities, and in celebration of Very Special Arts Programs throughout the country, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 103, has designated the month of May 1985 as "Very Special Arts U.S.A. Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of May 1985 as Very Special Arts U.S.A. Month. I encourage the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer
Chair, VSA

"As children, we all learn the basic verbal skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. But just as important are the non-verbal ways we send messages to each other: dance, music, and the visual arts. For these enrich our lives and make us more fully human.

"Very Special Arts has helped demonstrate that the arts are a tool for learning. Programs in the dramatic arts have led many children, whether disabled or not, to be better readers. Through music, many have learned to count. Dance can teach physical coordination. The visual arts can improve fine-motor skills.

"All children should be encouraged to tap their imagination through the arts. As Margaret Mead once said, 'If we are to achieve a richer culture, we must recognize the whole gamut of potentialities.' Very Special Arts, by nurturing the creative potential of disabled children and adults, has opened a door for all to enter the cultural and educational mainstream of society."

Ernest L. Boyer
Chair, Very Special Arts
President, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The History of Very Special Arts

The goal of Very Special Arts (VSA) is this: to enrich the lives of people who are disabled around the world by encouraging creativity. The achievement of this goal thereby enriches the lives of their families, friends and communities.

The first step toward achieving this ambitious task was taken in 1974 with the creation of the organization known today as Very Special Arts. This step was made possible through funding provided by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation with the purpose of providing creative participation for children who are mentally retarded.

Its staff of two, an executive director and a secretary, worked out of a small office in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. From the beginning, the organization focused its efforts on one primary activity: the "Very Special Arts Festivals." These events, non-competitive but visible to the general public, provide an opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in music, dance, drama, creative writing and the visual arts.

So strong was the nationwide response to this effort that by 1977, the organization was sponsoring 27 festivals around the country.

Although VSA continued to concentrate its efforts on school-aged children and youth, in 1978 it expanded its program again to make the arts available to adults with disabilities, as well. The success of VSA programs continued to exceed all expectations. The result for the rest of the decade was a steady increase in VSA's ability to serve the disabled—both in scope of projects undertaken and in the number of people which the organization became able to serve.

"Very Special Arts has opened a door for all to enter the cultural and educational mainstream of society."

No less significant was the growing maturity of the organization's philosophy. More and more, VSA's ultimate mission became cooperative rather than charitable. The Very Special Arts approach to programming afforded disabled participants the opportunity to have a voice in the delivery and development of programs and services.

Coupled with the organization's deepening dedication to integrating disabled people as program "personnel," was the passage of Public Law 94-142 (The Education of All Handicapped Children Act) in 1975.

This landmark legislation, as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, helped to enable VSA to break down barriers, combat stereotypes and integrate the nation's disabled population into mainstream society on a larger scale.

In this regard, VSA's new mission statement in 1980 was revealing. It now challenged itself to a much larger goal, aimed at a broader constituency, and identified the arts as a viable means of this integration:

> VSA's mission is to assure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to add value to their lives through the arts, and to provide avenues for people with disabilities to integrate into society.

In the midst of this expansion, impending budget cutbacks forced the organization to make difficult choices. Rather than reduce the funds it used in producing programs, it chose to cut its overhead expenses by thirty percent. The message was clear: If its larger goals were to be achieved, new independent, private support clearly would be necessary. To help achieve this, a multi-faceted National Awareness program was developed to increase public knowledge of VSA's achievements.

An integral part of this VSA function is to provide its State and District organizations with a broad range of services including annual grants; a wide range of program development training; public service materials for television, radio and print media; and a computerized communication network which provides the organization with the most current data regarding arts with handicapped populations. Meanwhile, each organization develops its own programs and builds its own public and private partnerships.

By mid-decade, VSA programs were operating in over 440 communities throughout each of the fifty states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools—and through VSA international programs, in 40 countries around the world as well.

Jean Kennedy Smith, VSA Founder

"The artist speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder . . . to the latent fellowship with all creation . . . and to the solidarity which binds together all humanity."

Joseph Conrad

Jean Kennedy Smith, founder of Very Special Arts, currently serves on the VSA Executive Committee and as the International Chairperson of the Very Special Arts Festival Program.

In addition to her work with VSA, she supports other organizations which serve those with disabilities. She is a trustee for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and in that capacity is chairperson of its National Education Committee. She is on the Board of Directors of the Kennedy Child Study Center and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

For her outstanding efforts with Very Special Arts, Mrs. Smith has received numerous citations, including the Spirit of Achievement Award from the New York chapter of the National Women's Division of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, the Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service from the Institute for Public Service, the 1981 Margaret Mead Humanitarian Award from the Council of Cerebral Palsy Auxiliaries, and the 1979 "Volunteer of the Year" Award from the People-to-People Committee for the Handicapped.

In a recent interview for USA TODAY, Mrs. Smith made clear the insight which constantly renews her dedication to the work of Very Special Arts:

"Last summer in Ireland, I saw a seventeen-year-old boy who was blind. He was in a pottery class. He made an incredible face from clay—absolutely beautiful. I suppose in his hands, his fingers, he has an extra sense that people who see don't understand.

"Art gave that boy the power to see for the rest of us."

Very Special Arts Festival

"Not art for the sake of art,
but art for the sake of life."

Bernard Berenson

A Very Special Arts Festival (VSAF) is a non-competitive forum, living proof that the arts have a unique power to stimulate learning among the disabled. It heightens awareness of that power among Festival participants and their parents, educators, local businesses and corporations, arts organizations, the mass media, and the general community.

National Very Special Arts Festival participants performing at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Through workshops addressing every art form held in neighborhood schools and in other community settings, there is a year-long effort to incorporate the arts into the experiences of all people who are disabled—an effort which culminates in the annual State and District Festivals.

To celebrate the success and growth of the local Very Special Arts Festivals, VSA hosted the first National Very Special Arts Festival in 1979.

Certainly one of the most memorable of these National Festivals was that held in 1984, which served in part to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Very Special Arts. For four days, Washington, D.C., opened its doors to more than 750 disabled Americans from all 50 states and a host of international participants, administrators and educators. The Festival was supported totally by private contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals.

The student and professional artists' achievements were displayed through workshops, exhibitions and performances in the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and at Gallaudet College. The premiere of participant Terrylene Theriot's play, starring George Segal, was held at the Kennedy Center. Participants had the opportunity to meet each other and exchange viewpoints and ideas. They took tours of the city's historic buildings and museums and attended a reception which included a fireworks display over the Potomac River.

Of all these events, the highlight was the concert held on the South Lawn of the White House. There, the participants were welcomed by the National Festival's Honorary Chairperson and the nation's First Lady, Nancy Reagan. The White House performance recognized the VSA participants' achievements in the arts and provided a resounding vote of confidence in the abilities of those involved.

Burl Ives with National Very Special Arts Festival participants performing on the South Lawn of the White House.

"Let each become all that he was created capable of being,
and show himself in his own shape and stature,
be these what they may."
Thomas Carlyle

VSA Participant Profile: Kenneth Mack

Among the distinguished celebrity artists who saluted the efforts of VSA participants were Bonnie Franklin, Burl Ives, Ronnie Milsap, Tony Randall, Gwen Verdon, George Segal, and "The Muppets."

An international seminar held in conjunction with this National Festival provided a forum for the exchange of ideas and viewpoints regarding issues facing disabled populations worldwide. The Organization of American States (OAS) and the international seminar brought together administrators and educators from Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

This seminar led directly to the creation of Very Special Arts international programs and thereby realized VSA's effort to spread its work around the world—an effort begun in 1982 with the OAS, and expanded in 1983 through a conference in Vienna with several European nations.

The International Very Special Arts Festival in 1989 brings together children, youth and adults who are disabled from around the world—all speaking the same language of artistic expression.

Kenneth Mack, son of a minister in Natchitoches, Louisiana, is thirteen years old. His growth is impaired.

He is a boy who has had rare performing experiences—singing for Pope John Paul II and President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan.

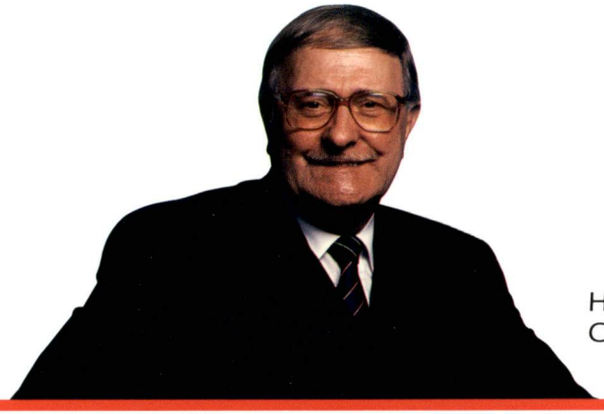
But to Kenneth, his most memorable engagement was not singing for a person, but for a symbol—the Statue of Liberty. The eyes of the world turned to Kenneth as he sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the Opening Ceremony of 1986 Liberty Weekend, commemorating the Statue's renovation. In Kenneth's own words: "Singing for 'The Lady' was one of the greatest thrills of my life."

On November 23, 1985, Kenneth represented the United States at Italy's first Very Special Arts Festival, which was attended by 7,000 people. The setting and audience could not have been more special. Inside the Vatican's Nervi Hall, Kenneth sang "The Lord's Prayer" for the Pope, there to bless the Festival's accomplishments.

Kenneth was only two years old when he began singing for his father's church services, but now he leads the junior choir and recently made a solo gospel recording. He credits the development of his talents to his participation in the program of Very Special Arts Louisiana. In 1984 he sang at the World's Fair and also at the White House for First Lady Nancy Reagan in 1985. That year, he impressed television audiences and President and Mrs. Reagan with his spirited rendition of "Let There Be Peace On Earth" on the NBC Christmas Special.

Kenneth's mother has encouraged him to find self-confidence and express himself through his involvement in VSA programs. As she phrased it, "He just puts everything he has into his music."

VSA Festival in the Netherlands



"Art bids us touch and taste
and hear and see the world."
William Butler Yeats

Henk Hergarden
Chairman, Netherlands program

In 1985, Very Special Arts Festivals took place in countries around the world, including France, Ireland, Belgium and Panama. One such Festival was the first held by Very Special Arts Netherlands.

It happened on the Twentieth of September, 25 miles southeast of Amsterdam, in the lovely 12th-century town of Amersfoort.

For that day, Amersfoort's mayor allowed the large City Hall to be transformed into a small village of art. Its auditorium became a theater for drama, dance and cabaret, with its corridors turned into streets filled with stands exhibiting the art of VSA participants.

The day was a celebration of cooperation—with strong contributions by the artists, educators, governmental and medical institutions, as well as many Dutch business leaders.

Those at the Netherlands' National Television Foundation, NOS-TVB, were so convinced of the importance of these activities that they produced and aired an hour-long documentary demonstrating how valuable arts can be in enriching the lives of people with disabilities.

Bringing a splendid touch of royalty to the occasion was the Foundation's honorary chairperson, Queen Julianna der Nederlanden. But the theme of the day was expressed by Henk Hergarden, the Foundation's chairman, who said:

"Art does not know any limits. Art should be for everyone. Let us work together to assure that this is really true."

Then it was Mayor Schreuder's turn to put that sentiment into heart-warming action by his manner of opening the Festival. He walked to the middle of the City Hall stage where waiting for him was Corrie van Hugten, the leader of "De Raddraaiers," a team of Dutch wheelchair dancers. Together, Miss van Hugten and the mayor broke into an impromptu dance—with one dancer afoot, the other on wheels.

As the mayor stepped aside, the Raddraaiers performed their versions of European ballroom and Latin American dances. Their formations were intricate and professional. As one observer put it, "They showed what fun people can have while dancing—even when restricted to a wheelchair."

And so the day progressed, with cabaret, improvisation, and marionettes. But of all the performances, perhaps the most special was that of "The Hummingbird," a French theater group from Lille, whose members range in age from 19 to 30. All have mental retardation and originally lived in institutions.

Now as a group they create their own theatrical scenarios, direct their own productions, and design their own masks. They announced:

"Our goal is to explore all kinds of art that make people mature, to make the public sensitive to the art that is inside people who are different, and to show that we are complete people and have something to say."

The repeated ovations, following their performance, suggested they had achieved their goal. One spectator, as he was leaving the theater, told a journalist: "Please, don't talk to me for a moment. What a performance!"

To end the day's activities, Conny Vink, a leading Dutch singer, performed her nationally famous song "Samen" ("Together").

That theme was stressed afterwards by one of the participants:

"Today, all of us were incorporated into the normal process. And that's our goal: going together. Everyone, disabled or not, deserves respect and a place in society."

Since its beginning, the organization has conducted Special Projects—whereby VSA, in conjunction with prominent organizations, has created and promoted innovative model projects designed to open new doors in the arts. This important program includes the following projects:

New Visions Dance Project. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Center has made enormous contributions to American culture. Yet it may be that their most significant contribution will be for students who cannot see them dance.

Carol Penn with participant in New Visions Dance project.

"If you could just show me what to do!
Help me once, and then I can do it."

Carlton Knowles
New Visions Dance Project for Students
who are Blind and Visually Impaired

It began several years ago as an idea in the mind of Alvin Ailey. He remembered a social event:

"Several people were bopping to disco music, and I didn't know until later that they were blind. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if blind people could always do this?' "

Today, that idea is becoming a reality. VSA and the Alvin Ailey Dance Center began working with a group of students from the New York City Public Schools, a group that one year later had its debut at the Kennedy Center during the 1984 National Very Special Arts Festival.

So that this technique can be replicated anywhere, the Ailey Center, with help from VSA staff, has created a programming guide, and the New York University Film School has prepared a videotape. Already, visually disabled students in New York, Des Moines, Kansas City, Alabama, Florida, Washington, D.C., and other sites are learning from professional dancers how to express themselves through movement and music.

Henry Fonda Young Playwrights Project. It has been said that there is at least one play in the life of every person. But how can all the potential dramas exploring the lives of people with disabilities be brought into being? How can more of these people learn the techniques of drama—of how to shape the raw ingredients of experience into a communication of ardor, insight and laughter?

Scene from "Inside Out, Upside Down" performed at Henry Fonda Young Playwrights Day at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

In answer, Very Special Arts has begun an exchange program with the Royal Court Young People's Theatre in London, with the help of Omega Watch Corporation and the Mobil Foundation Inc. It invites students with and without disabilities to participate in playwriting workshops in eight states and the District of Columbia, while encouraging script-writing classes in schools around the country.

Scripts are submitted annually to VSA. One or two plays are selected for presentation at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Through the newly developed exchange program, the selected works are also presented at the Royal Court Young Writer's Festival in London. And, in return, a selected play from the Royal Court is produced at the Kennedy Center.

Members of the selection committee are:
Roger L. Stevens (Honorary Chairperson), chairman of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts;
Jack Hofsiss, (Co-Chairperson), director of the Broadway production of "The Elephant Man";
Shirlee Fonda (Co-Chairperson);

"The bells that children hear
are inside of them."
Dylan Thomas

Itzhak Perlman (right) presents Itzhak Perlman Award to Barbara Sue Martin from Louisville, Kentucky.

Jane Fonda, Academy-Award-winning actress;
Peter Stone, president, Council of the Dramatists Guild;
Wendy Wasserstein, playwright: "Isn't It Romantic?" and "Uncommon Women and Others";
Fred Zollo, Broadway producer: "Hurlyburly," "On Golden Pond" and " 'night Mother."

The Creative Writing Project. To encourage participation in other forms of writing, Very Special Arts has begun a model program in cooperation with the PEN American Center, an association of professional writers. In this project, members of PEN conduct creative-writing workshops in hospitals in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and other cities.

Many of the works coming out of these workshops will be featured in Very Special Arts Festivals—helping educators, therapists, parents and the general public to become more aware of the talents and concerns of people with disabilities.

Project REAP [Retirement with Enrichment, the Arts and Purpose]. Joining forces with the American Federation of Teachers, Very Special Arts has developed model programs in U.S. cities to enlist and train retirees—especially former teachers—to work as volunteer aides in various VSA programs concerned with all art forms. Project REAP is supported by funding from the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation.

Artists Unlimited. This model project, established in conjunction with Humana Inc., and started by its Chief Executive Officer, David Jones, enables hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions to make their environments more beautiful by selecting artwork created by Very Special Arts participants. The patients in these institutions may also participate in workshops, where they may create artwork of their own.

Veterans Administration Hospital Arts Workshops. This model project brings artistic experiences to hospitalized veterans and encourages their participation in local Very Special Arts Festivals. These workshops in music, dance, drama, creative writing, and the visual arts help the veterans develop important learning and living skills.

The Itzhak Perlman Award. Named for the internationally acclaimed violinist and VSA Board Member, this award is designed to encourage careers in the performing arts. Each year, a distinguished panel of judges focuses on a single area of performers—such as singers, actors, or instrumentalists. The panel selects the recipient from nominees who have disabilities and who are between the ages of ten and twenty-one.

"It is only with the heart
that one sees rightly. What is essential
is invisible to the eye."

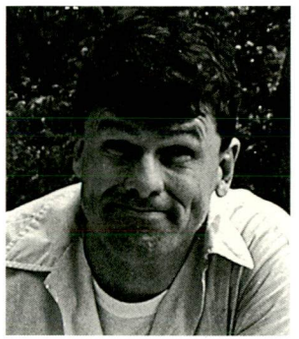
Antoine Saint-Exupery

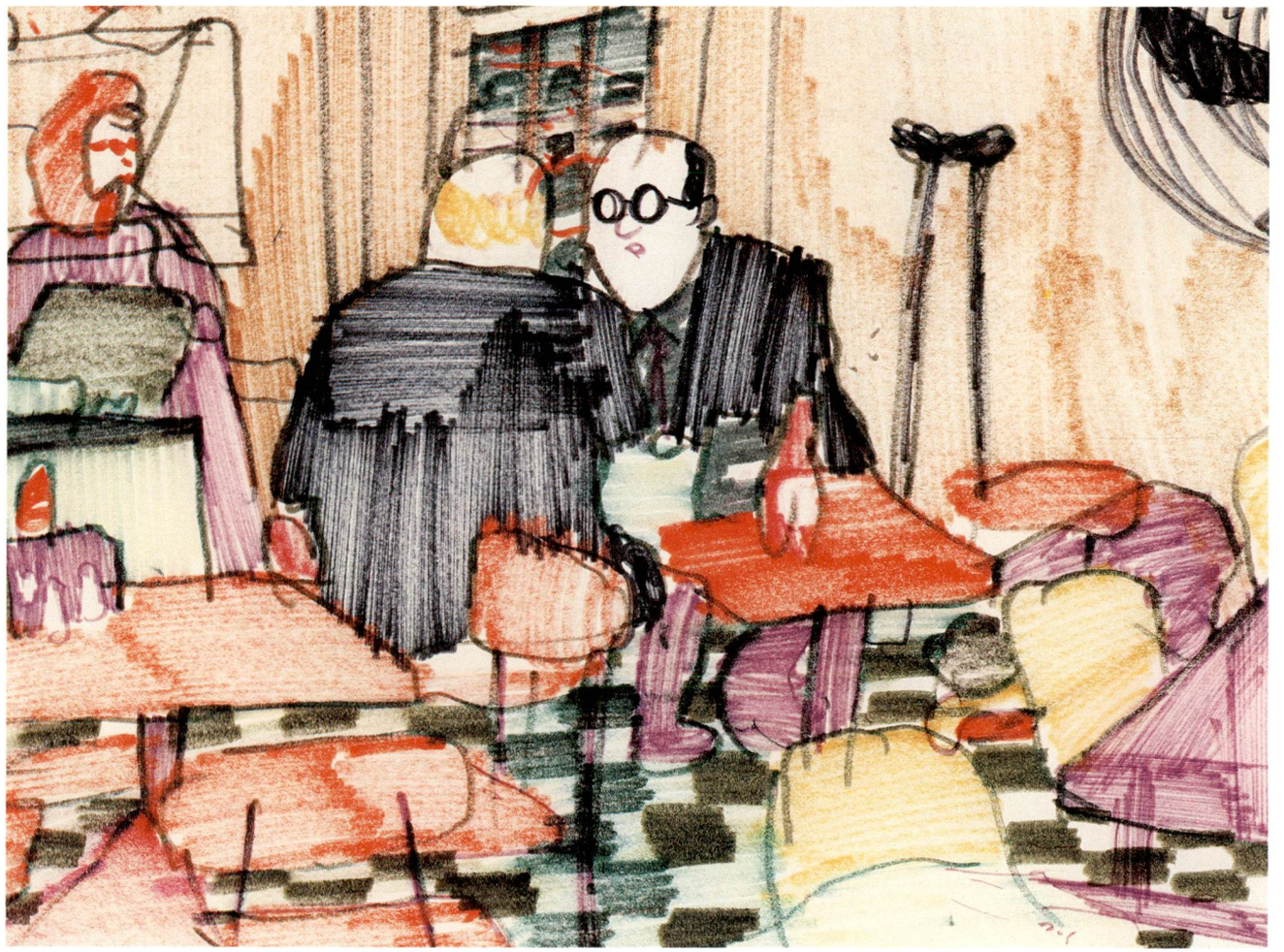
Tracy Beavers is an artist with a learning disability. She is a student at the Mills School in Mills, Wyoming, where her teachers proudly report that, since receiving special education, the artist is making great gains.

Burst of Joy
By Tracy Beavers

"Creativity is a necessary sequel to being."
Rollo May

Micky Doolittle is a resident at the Southbury Training School in Southbury, Connecticut. Doolittle, an artist who is educably mentally retarded, began practicing his art at the age of 20. Since then, he has carried drawing materials wherever he goes. He is a frequent visitor at Mainstreet, his school's cafe, where he likes to sit and draw people while they have lunch.



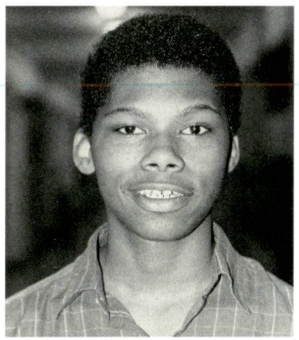


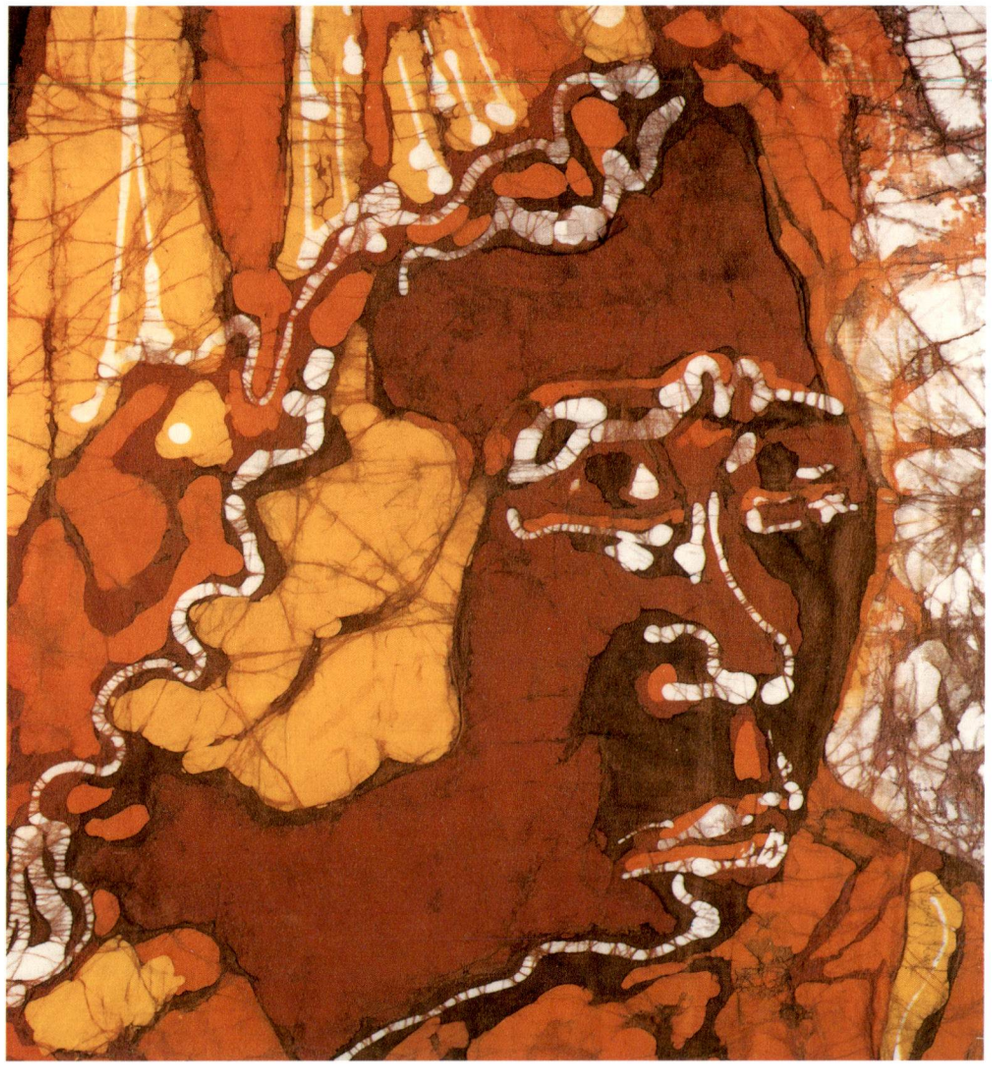
Main Street
by Micky Doolittle

Perry King is an artist with a learning disability. A senior at Waggener High School in Louisville, Kentucky, Perry has been winning awards for his artistry since he was in the third grade.

This work is Perry's first batik, an art form using cloth and dye. He asked the school librarian to pose for him on Halloween day, when all the teachers and students were in costumes. The librarian was dressed as a clown. And so, "Batik Clown" was born.

Perry claims that art gives him a satisfaction and pride beyond words.





Batik Clown
by Perry King

VSA Participant Profiles

Jason Ellsworth

Jason Ellsworth is a ten-year-old third grader who is blind and has cerebral palsy. Those who have heard him perform know why USA TODAY named him one of 1985's "People Who Made a Difference."

A country music singer and pianist from East Windsor, Connecticut, Jason has sung on stages across the United States—from the Grand Ole Opry to the White House. In May 1984, Jason performed at Washington's Kennedy Center during the National Very Special Arts Festival. The response was electric.

After that appearance, Jason sang before 3,000 people at the World's Fair in New Orleans. Helping Jason were three "pretty good back-up singers," country music greats Tammy Wynette, Eddie Rabbitt and T.G. Sheppard. After Jason's renditions of the songs of Hank Williams and George Jones, the amphitheater audience gave him standing ovations and calls for encore performances.

Later, during Country Music Week, he performed on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry.

But one appearance ranked above all the others. In September 1985, Jason joined other VSA participants in a concert at the White House. There, accompanied by the Gatlin Brothers, he played and sang "Long Gone Lonesome Blues" and "All the Gold in California" for First Lady Nancy Reagan.

After another standing ovation, the audience enthusiastically answered Jason's question, "Don't I get to do another one?" Larry Gatlin quipped, "We've decided we're getting him a shaving kit and jeans and taking him on the road."

At the end of the performance, Mrs. Reagan commented to the audience, "If anybody got through that entertainment with a dry eye, you did better than I!"

Once again, Jason had made a difference. And the opportunity to perform made a big difference to Jason.

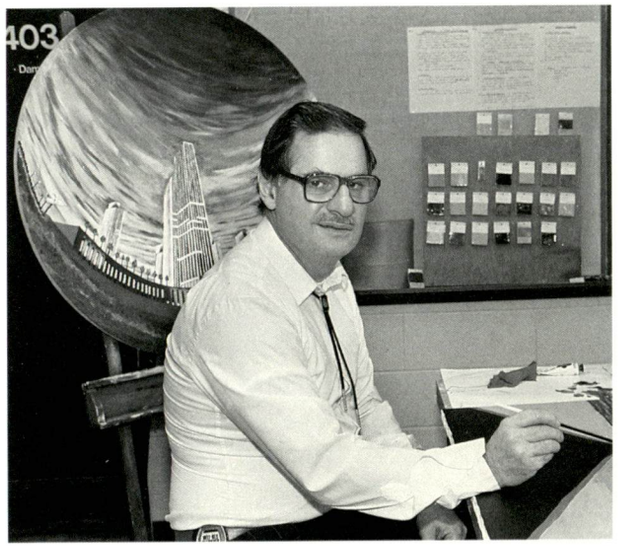
Jason Ellsworth sings with the Gatlin Brothers at the White House.

"We've all been so busy doing things for disabled people that I think we've lost sight of the fact that these are wonderfully able, talented, competent people."

Jean Rusch-Wesley, Wisconsin
teacher and director of a singing group featured in the 1984 National Very Special Arts Festival.

William Britt

Until 1974, William Britt lived most of his life at Willowbrook, a New York State institution for the mentally retarded. He was regarded as an angry, easily frustrated person who spent most of his time in solitude.



Shortly after Britt entered the Margaret Chapman School in Hawthorne, New York, school officials decided to see what they could do to help him become more trusting, more interested in others. Noting his skills and interest in drawing, painting and woodworking, they gave him the use of a workshop. A change began to take place.

The 1976 annual VSA Southern New York Regional Festival was in May. William Britt saw the joy and appreciation of all the spectators and for the first time knew the true value of his work. Since then, he has refined his technique and his self-confidence has increased.

Britt has studied art at Westchester Community College with Professor John Halsall, and shared his skill with other students in workshops of the VSA New York program.

According to Britt, one of his "best paintings yet" was a depiction of a large, familiar mansion with a fountain and a long sweeping green lawn. The mansion in the picture was the White House, and it was there, in a special ceremony, that William Britt presented his painting to Nancy Reagan.

The following May, he gave a large circular canvas of the Nelson D. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza to Governor Mario Cuomo. And it is his painting "Sandals" that is on the cover of the 1986 Very Special Arts calendar.

Renowned artist, Robert Berks, has said that Britt's talent "captures the sensitivity of texture and the feeling of fundamental relations—all in a fresh manner. And that, after all, is what art is all about."

But perhaps the most telling detail about William Britt's artistic career is his newly won independence as a human being. In December 1984, he left his Chapman School dormitory to live in a community residence with five others.

"When I was young, God gave me the gift of painting. My goal is to sell my paintings and some day to buy my own home."

In April 1986, one of Britt's works was sold at the prestigious Sotheby's in New York City.

"Love's the gift which God has given....
It is the silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart and mind to mind.
In body and in soul can bind."

Sir Walter Scott

Terrylene Theriot

"When I was very young—maybe four or five—I saw a woman dancing on TV. Of course there was no sound. My whole family is deaf. But I ran and got my mother who turned the volume up as loud as it would go. And suddenly I realized there was music."

She did not hear the music as most people do. She heard only a humming, sometimes a rhythmic beat. But it was enough for Terrylene Theriot to fall in love—with music and dance and with the possibility that somehow she might use them to communicate within a silent world.

Growing up in Chicago and then Texas, she often felt excluded from the hearing world. If she tried to talk, people recoiled from her as if, she remembers, "deafness was catching."

When she was 15, she inherited a friend's pen pal, an inmate in a Texas jail.

"I was angry inside, but I had no one to tell. Because he was staying in one cell, I thought maybe he would understand. I'd write and share my anger and my dreams. I told him I was deaf. But if the world were full of laughter I could hear that."

The prisoner's replies made clear that he shared her anger, but not her dreams. He mocked her innocent idealism.

Terrylene knew she must choose. She could remain a prisoner of her bitterness. But instead, she says, "I chose to see a beautiful world."

That same year, she entered the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD), a federally funded demonstration high school on the campus of Washington, D.C.'s Gallaudet College, the world's only accredited liberal arts college for the deaf.

While there, she wrote a play. She wrote it in American Sign Language. Her drama teacher translated it into written English idioms. She called it "Imagine." Based on her pen-pal correspondence with the prisoner, its theme was isolation:

"Just because I'm deaf doesn't mean I'm isolated. Anyone can have that. Some hearing people talk all day long and feel 'No one understands me.' Talk isn't necessarily communication. People have different kinds of isolation."

"Imagine" was entered in the 1984 Henry Fonda Young Playwrights Project. It was produced at the Kennedy Center, and starred actor George Segal as the prisoner.

The following spring, Terrylene was graduated from MSSD, and spent the summer with her fellow student actors touring the United Kingdom in a production of Godspell. After appearing at Ireland's first Very Special Arts Festival, the student company opened with great

The Chain of Involvement

success in London's Sadlers Wells Theatre.

What of the future? Her teacher, Tim McCarty, has high hopes for her:

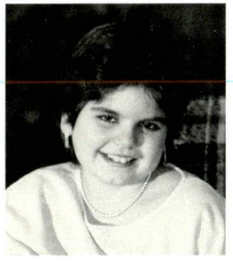
"I see Terrylene as the future of deaf people. She could go ahead and perform for small community groups for the deaf. But I see her potential impact as much more. She's a crossover. I think she's that good."

Perhaps it is better to let the last word belong to her. Terrylene's boyfriend is a hearing person. One day he was driving with her in a car with rock music playing over the radio. He spoke of the memories those songs evoked for him and said to her, "You don't have that."

Terrylene said:

"Look at the wind on my face. The wind on my face is my music. I'll know the wind the way you will never know the wind."

The Participant



Kathy Sale, fourteen years old, is a student at Kraemer Junior High School in the Placentia School District of Orange County, California. Kathy has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. She says:

"Being part of the Very Special Arts Festivals has given me the chance to express my true emotions. Through the Festivals, I've been recognized as having talent. I've been given the opportunity to show the world that 'I Can.'

"I've met so many nice people in my experiences in the Festivals. Everyone has been so supportive and willing to go that extra mile to let me shine."

The Parent

Eugene J. Sanchez lives in New Mexico. His ten-year-old son, Aaron, was born with Down Syndrome. Mr. Sanchez says:

"Aaron is a very special child. As a parent, I feel that all children—including Aaron—will learn and grow only as much as we have patience to teach them, and only as much as we make facilities available to them.

"Very Special Arts New Mexico has given Aaron a chance to reach his maximum, to express himself, to have an attitude of self-worth and self-confidence, to have a genuine feeling of accomplishment.

"I applaud this very important program. There was a void there, which now has been filled—for the benefit of all children. but especially for my son, Aaron."

The Volunteer

A native New Yorker, Martha Grinell is a retired teacher who found herself drawn to the local Very Special Arts Festival Program. Grinnell initially was involved in VSA's Project REAP and eventually became interested in other aspects of the organization. She raised funds, helped to acquire materials for the program's special artists and has been instrumental in developing new projects. She says:

"One of the special projects in which I'm involved unites artists and craftspersons with disabled teenagers and institutionalized elderly people. It provides a structure for meaningful communication between and among all three groups.

"I feel fortunate to have found an organization which allows me to combine my interest in the arts with an opportunity to serve disabled populations in my community."

The Teacher

Joseph E. Amato is a teacher at the Dunwood School in Fox Point, Wisconsin. He sees his involvement with Very Special Arts Wisconsin as being the link between VSA and "those who just happen to be handicapped." He says:

"An experience I remember most vividly followed a mime workshop I presented. A hearing-impaired 12-year-old boy refused to let the session end, insisting that it continue. He helped with the next session, and while he did I realized that this may have been the first time he was ever involved in an activity that was really second-nature to him.

"He had used forms of mime all his life, but no one had ever treated it as an art form. Suddenly, his disability had become his ability! Today, he continues to perform and work with other hearing-impaired students."

The Coordinator

Michal Anne Lord is Program Coordinator for Very Special Arts Texas. She says:

"The VSA program can provide the spark for igniting a sense of community—within the arts and within the larger community—because the arts are for everyone. They allow us to say who we are.

"For me, VSA has meant new friends and associations, many miles travelled, an ever-growing 'bag of tricks' (art activities I can take back home), memories of the excitement and joy on the faces of VSA Festival participants as they try to create or perform for the first time, and the knowledge that the arts allow ALL people to learn and grow—as individuals and as members of society."

Very Special Profile: Gayle Foy

The Sponsor

Dee Wing is New York Telephone's Community Representative for Potsdam, not far from the St. Lawrence River which divides Upstate New York from Canada. The telephone company makes annual contributions to VSA New York's North Country Regional Festivals. Mrs. Wing says:

"New York Telephone has a long tradition of supporting cultural activities and helping to improve the quality of life in the communities it serves.

"The Very Special Arts Festival not only meets those goals, but it also serves to prove—through the dedication of its volunteers and the enthusiasm of its participants—that the arts truly belong to everyone."

Gayle Anne Foy is President of the Board of Directors and a founding member of Very Special Arts Indiana. As a wife and mother, actress, community advocate, and professional educator of children with disabilities, she is one of those people whose diverse interests have an uncommon singularity of purpose.

A graduate in speech and drama from St. Mary's College in Notre Dame (Indiana), she became a professional actress, a member of Actors' Equity, and toured the nation with Mary Martin in the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera production of "Annie Get Your Gun."

To raise her family, which eventually grew to ten children, Gayle set aside her theatrical career for a while.

Yet various experiences eventually led her to a life seemingly far from either the homemaker or the musical actress. She was to become President of the State Board of Directors for Art Education Training for the Handicapped, a member of the Indiana Governor's Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, and a member of the board of directors for a professional lending library of toys for disabled children.

Foy received the 1986 Volunteer of the Year Award from Very Special Arts Indiana. According to Gayle, her destiny was inevitable and utterly natural:

"I've always felt a child's education should incorporate the arts. Theater, dance, music and visual art have always been a part of our life.

"The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

T.S. Eliot

Paint and crayons and blank paper were more important than toys from a store. The 'dress-up chest' was always full of cast-off colorful clothes and shoes and hats. And make-believe plays were going on constantly.

"When Christopher was born with Down Syndrome, life went on as it always did, and Chris was swept along with it, incorporated into it. He became another actor on the stage of our lives. We have motivated him with drama, music, movement and color. They have made the difference in his life.

"My challenge has been to find in my own art form, drama, the keys for activating a child's learning process. After all, learning and creating are closely related: both struggle with 'what if' and 'what can be.'

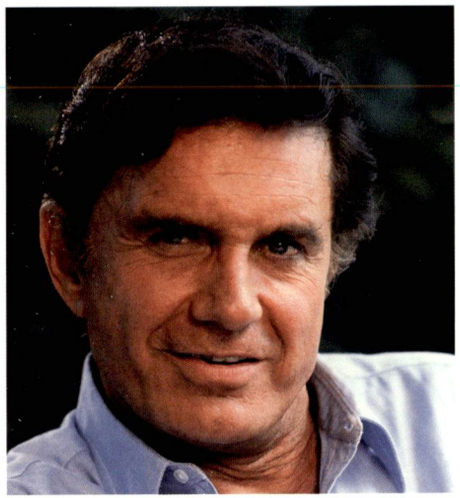
"I started to use my skills as an actress for that purpose when Chris went to a Special Education pre-school. Once a week, I went as an unpaid aide and tried to pick up the methods and techniques. For years, I continued to go into the classroom, sometimes teaching a class by using puppets, play-acting and art.

"We found that letting the children act in plays helped their attention span, verbal skills, memory, patience, and ability to work together. But it was also fun, and the kids were *good* at it. That's why I started the Rainbow Players, a drama troupe of disabled students.

"My involvement with the handicapped and their families, like all loves, has grown like Topsy. I've tried to help parents with the process of coping—to educate them in all aspects of their children's lives. I've become an advocate and tried to teach the *parents* to become advocates. I've gotten into governmental programs at the state level.

"But the most fun is when I'm with a group of children, and by 'turning them on' with drama, I help them learn."

Very Special Artist Committee



Cliff Robertson,
National Spokesperson/Chairman
Very Special Artist Committee

"The disabled are just like us—with the same dreams and ambitions. They just have to be braver and work harder to overcome the barriers in their paths. But overcome them they do, and by their achievement, they bring a greater sense of fulfillment to their lives and to ours."

F. Murray Abraham
Alvin Ailey
Pearl Bailey Bellson
Robert Berks
Harry Blackstone
Bernard Bragg
Tom Brokaw
Diahann Carroll
Lynda Carter
David Cassidy
John Curry
Peter Duchin
Jane Fonda
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Phyllis Newman Green
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Tony Randall
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Neil Sedaka
George Segal
T. G. Sheppard
Beverly Sills
Tom Sullivan
Joni Tada
Elizabeth Taylor
Richard Thomas
Cicely Tyson
Andy Warhol
Eli Wallach
Barbara Walters
Henry Winkler
Jamie Wyeth
Tammy Wynette

Corporate Friends of Very Special Arts

Humana Inc.

With program sites in over 440 locations across the country, Very Special Arts encourages the creative talents and artistic self-expression of disabled children, youth and adults through the development and promotion of visual and performing arts activities.

Recently, Humana Inc. had the opportunity to host one of the many special projects of Very Special Arts, the Artists Unlimited Project, at Humana Hospital—Unversity, in Louisville, Kentucky.

Humana looks forward to working with Very Special Arts in many more sites across the country, encouraging the establishment of the Artists Unlimited project in a greater number of Humana health care facilities. We are confident that the Project will continue to bring the beauty of artistic inspiration to our patients.

David A. Jones
Chief Executive Officer

International Business Machines Corporation

IBM has always recognized that ability, rather than disability, is what counts. By providing people who have disabilities with opportunities to develop their creativity, VSA extends this principle to the arts. VSA's programs not only enhance their lives but also enrich the lives of all of us.

John F. Akers
Chairman of the Board

MCA Inc.

We at MCA are proud to support Very Special Arts (VSA).

MCA has made a commitment to support VSA and to help encourage other corporations and foundations to provide financial assistance. We are very pleased to report that VSA has continued to grow in both the number of disabled persons it serves and in the amount of funds it raises. In addition, in 1984, VSA international programs began and now VSA works with affiliates in 40 countries.

Lew R. Wasserman
Chairman of the Board

Mobil Oil Corporation

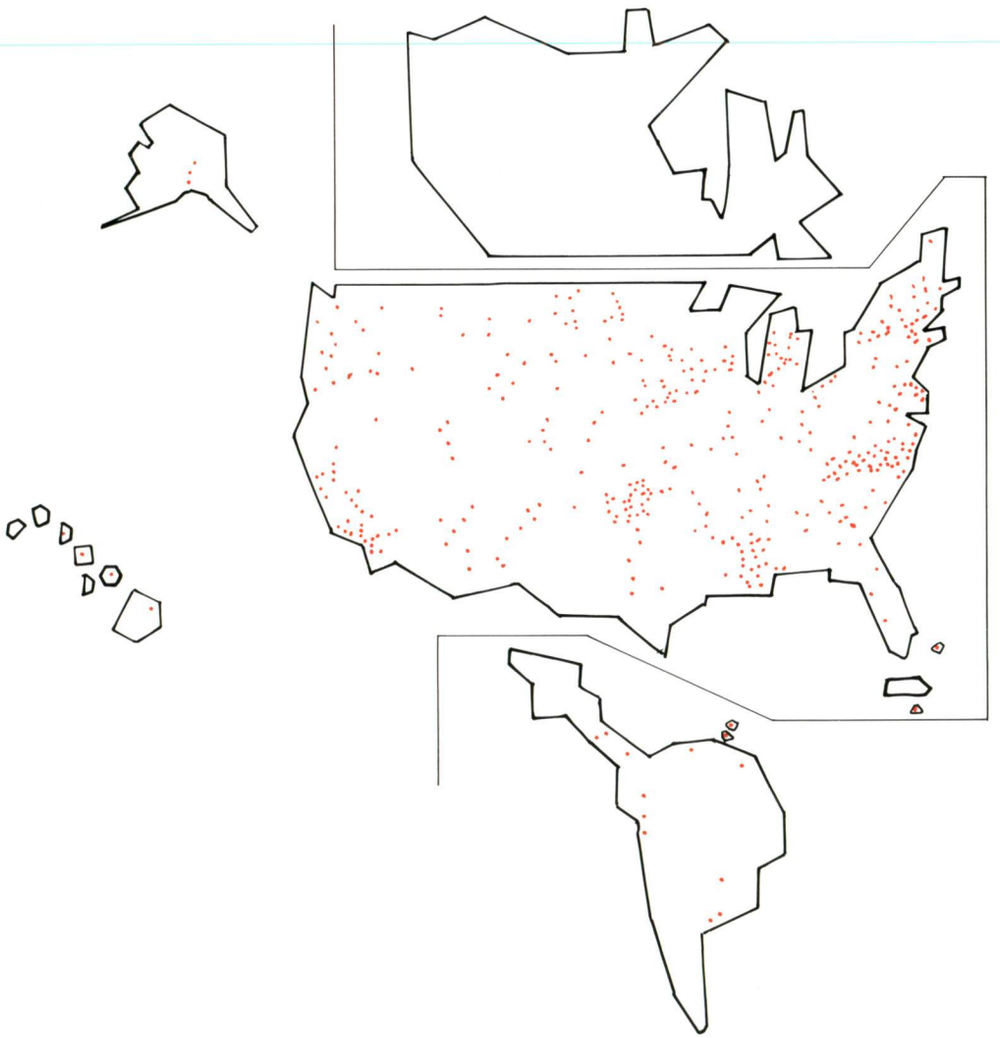
Mobil has helped VSA achieve its goals of serving persons with disabilities through the arts in a number of ways. In addition to providing general support, Mobil produced two public service announcements which aired during *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1983 and *King Lear* and *Two By Forsyth* in 1984. Through these announcements, millions of people learned about VSA; and there was increased interest on the part of parents and teachers of students with disabilities. So many people wrote to Mobil, in fact, we felt it necessary to place an advertisement in major newspapers around the nation asking people to write to VSA directly.

However, more work needs to be done and we hope that other individuals and organizations will join Mobil in supporting the work of VSA.

Herbert Schmertz
Vice President

Very Special Arts Program Sites

National



International

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Photography: Bob Coburn
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John Whitman

Typography: Cynthia Del Vaglio
Your Type

Paper: Champion International Corporation

VERY SPECIAL ARTS

Enriching the lives of people with disabilities

Very Special Arts
Education Office
John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts
Washington, D.C. 20566