

Virginia Kreyer, Disabilities Ministries/Ministerio a Personas con Impedimentos Físicos o Mentales

1. Getting to Know Virginia/Aprendiendo a conocer a Virginia

Name/Nombre: Virginia Kreyer
A.B. Recipient/AB honor: 2007
Career/Profesión: Ministry/Ministerio
Color of Hair/Color de pelo: Blonde/Rubio
Color of Eyes/Color de ojos: Blue/Azul



Brothers or Sisters/Hermanos o Hermanas:
1 brother, 2 sisters/1 hermano y 2 hermanas

Birth Order/Orden de nacimiento:
Eldest/La mayor

Favorite Class/Asignatura favorita:
Math/Matemáticas

I enjoyed/Disfruto:
Church, Hi-Y, Ice Cream,
Trolley Rides/La iglesia, Hi-Y,
el helado, paseos en el trole

Mentors/Mentores:
Dr. Theodore Adams,
pastor
Dr. Wayne E. Oates,
seminary professor/profesor del
seminario

2. Prelude by Virginia¹

When a mother took her son to a mid-western vacation church school, the teacher was distressed to see that the boy, David, had only one arm. What would the other children say? How would she handle the situation?

During the week the children made some unthinking comments. David, having heard them all before, handled them easily. Finally, on the last day, the teacher gathered the children in a circle.

She said, "Bring your hands together and say, 'Here is the church and here is the steeple, and ...'" Then she remembered David.

As the teacher looked over at him, the girl next to David motioned to him and said, "Here David, take my hand. Let's make our church together."

Addressing us in our strength and in our weakness, Christ reminds us that we human beings need one another.

3. Steel-Willed Determined

Virginia is a person who sees clearly the justice issues in disability ministries. Her understanding of persons with disabilities has to do with where our rights are and the dignity of human persons, no matter their condition.

Things Virginia believed so deeply in, that had to be wrestled with, were all worth it to her mind. Some persons in the best possible health can see only the negative. She has this incredible ability to see the sign of hope and to measure even in minuscule steps the progress that she believes in.

– The Rev. Thomas E. Dipko

Tom Dipko first met Virginia Kreyer "up front." The national church executive in the United Church of Christ saw her in action on the Synod platform in the days when Avery Post was president of the United Church of Christ (1977-1989):²

I did not know her story then, but I was deeply moved that this woman who struggled to get her words expressed obviously had a mind that was pristine clear.

Whatever anyone wants to say about Virginia Kreyer, she is not a person who equivocates. You know pretty quickly where her sentiments are and what degree of passion she holds those commitments.

That began to show, Tom said, in her "steel-willed determination to get her ideas expressed, a great struggle often, and her not minding it if she had to repeat."

He noticed that she was willing to repeat as many times as it took. "And," he said, "she still is. If something needs to be expressed, you have to be patient to get it done."

And speaking of communication, for Virginia, her dear friend could get away with saying:

Some things get better communicated other than words. She could heave a sigh that was worth paragraphs to show that something can be not quite where it needed to be, but that one does not give up.

Before traveling to the "up front" Tom Dipko was referring to was at General Synod in Washington, D.C. in 1977, let us answer a question about Virginia's steel will. What made it so?

4. "A Jar of Marmalade"

The personal journey of Virginia Kreyer is told here mostly from her oral history.³ Virginia was the firstborn of Adrienne and Louis Frederick Kreyer. Her father worked his way up from yard person to president in Dykes Lumber, a company located in New York.

Difficulties at Virginia's birth resulted in a condition that disorders body, muscle and speech coordination. After a long labor, Mrs. Kreyer gave birth to Virginia. In the process, Virginia's brain was deprived of oxygen and certain brain cells died.

Her parents realized that something was wrong with her when she was still unable to sit on her own by her first birthday. She did not take her first step until she was 3-1/2 years old. She did not walk on her own until she was five.

No doctor knew what the matter. Then, when she was five, they took her to a neurological institute in New York City. A physician there with severe cerebral palsy himself recognized that she was cerebral palsied.

"I had many skinned knees," she said, "and speech lessons were begun because no one except Mother could understand a word I said." [Virginia's Story, 16]

In the mid-1920s, cerebral palsy was little understood. Some people advised her parents to devote themselves to doing everything for their “helpless” child. Virginia’s mother disagreed.

Once when she was about seven, her mother sent her to a nearby grocery. She was to buy a jar of marmalade. She could not make the sales clerk understand what she wanted. Finally, he sent her home with instructions to have her mother write out what she wanted:

I went home and explained what had taken place. Mother said she would not write out what she wanted. I could make the sales clerk understand me if I tried hard enough. Mother made me practice saying “marmalade” until I could say it fairly distinctly and then sent me back to the store much against my will. When I returned home the second time I had the jar of marmalade. [16]

When Virginia's grandmother tried to hide from others that she had a granddaughter born with a physical affliction, Virginia's mother told her: “You are my mother, but neither you nor anyone else is going to treat my daughter as if she were something to be ashamed of.” [18]

It was with this attitude that Mother brought me up. She kept telling me that it was not a disgrace to be born with a disability and freely discussed it in my presence. She did not want me to grow up trying to hide something which I could not. She instructed me as a child that when I was made fun of, I was to say, 'I may have a disabled body but I don't have a disabled mind, but *you* must to make fun of me!' [19]

5. "Am I able?"

After starting elementary school at age seven and a half, Virginia went on to high school, then to Westhampton College. The principal of the local public elementary school had refused to let her enter a regular class. She said she could attend the one class they had for "mentally retarded children, commonly known in the neighborhood as 'the crazy class.'"

"Mother said if I never went to school she was not going to allow me to be in that class because I was not mentally retarded," Virginia said. The principal was so annoyed that she failed to tell the family about a public school a few miles away which had classes for physically disabled children." [22]

Although it was during the Great Depression, her mother contacted several private schools in Brooklyn, New York. Each school refused Virginia because she had convulsions.

In the fall of 1932, the physician who correctly diagnosed her condition, opened a school. It was the first school for children with cerebral palsy in the city of New York. When the school proved too costly for the family, Virginia continued her education at the public school.

She was good with numbers but had difficulty reading aloud. She could not sound out words, so her teacher moved her back a grade. When Virginia told her she wanted to become a teacher, she told Virginia, "You cannot be a teacher. You are not smart enough."

From that day forward and until I reached theological seminary, I felt I was stupid and I did not believe anyone when they told me I was bright. I am sure the teacher soon forgot what she had said but I never did! In fact, I was led to believe by all my teachers until I reached sixth grade that I was limited intellectually. [24]

6. "No Way!"

In the first two weeks of high school, Virginia's mother told Virginia later that her heart sank every time the phone rang. When she realized that Virginia was capable of facing the world without being sheltered, she relaxed. The opinion of teachers that she would be unable to compete with normal children in public school had been mistaken:

However, several of the teachers and the assistant principal of girls all suggested that I take my time and complete high school in four-and-a-half or five-and-a-half years since I was entering in February 1941. I was, to say the least, annoyed. I had not begun school until I was seven-and-a-half. Now it was suggested that I complete high school and enter college at age 20.

No way! In fact, I announced to Mother and Dad that I intended to complete high school in three-and-a-half years, and in June 1944 I graduated, [having taken] two semesters of English during the summers. I worked hard on my own and learned more than I would have in school. [25]

7. A Real Friend

Virginia did well the first term of high school, but then her grades began to drop. She had found her first real friend:

We became the closest of friends and did everything together. After school, Marion would come and say, 'Let's go for ice cream' or whatever. Mother would have a fit and say, 'You better do your homework.' 'Oh, I'll do it later.'

Marion told her that she never realized that it took me longer than others to do things. She treated me just as you would any friend. She accepted me as I was. My disability did not matter to her. She was my first real friend. Friendship for all of us is extremely important and especially to a person with a disability. [26]

8. Will you?

When Virginia was in her early teens, the advisor of the young peoples group at her church talked about what had led him to become a minister.

"I decided then," she said, "that I wanted to enter some type of Christian work. I believed that was a way to help make the world a better place in which to live." [31]

The summer after she graduated from high school, she had attended a church camp for the young people in her area. Learning that she would be going to college in Virginia, liberal-minded ministers at the camp told her about First Baptist Church in Richmond. As a result, when the church bus stopped on campus, she began to attend. When she became involved in the church, her loneliness lessened.



"I loved Dr. Theodore (Ted) F. Adams, his preaching and the whole church," she said. "Those four years, First Baptist Church had much to do with my spiritual growth, especially since both Dr. and Mrs. Adams became close friends in spite of it being a large church." [31]

My classmates and others at Westhampton College were good to me, but I felt they did not want me around. We had classes on Saturday mornings and they would invite me to go to a movie with them on a Saturday afternoon. I would

refuse, feeling that they could not possibly want me. This was a silly feeling as I now know.

Nearly all the girls at college had dates. I had none in high school, a few in college and a few more later on. Mother said that I pushed away every man who showed an interest in me.

Most, not all, of the boys and men after college seemed to like me but I did not care for them. They were either quite disabled or did not have nearly as much education as I. I therefore broke off contact with all of them. I felt a really decent man would not want a disabled woman. [29-30]

After college, Virginia was ready to open a gift shop until two of her professors challenged her curiosity toward a greater goal.

My New Testament professor wrote in my graduation letter, "There is something useful, very useful ahead for you in the Divine Plan of things and may you have the great satisfaction of finding the place and the work for which you are intended."

What was that work to which I felt called by God to carry out? [32]

Today, she holds degrees from Westhampton College of the University of Richmond, Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and Adelphi University. As an ordained minister and a social worker, she also led a long movement for the greater inclusion of persons with disabilities.

9. A Place of Service

Because of her disability, Virginia was unable to find a job after college. That dampened her plan to work for a year before seminary. Then she remembered an executive from the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication. He had suggested that she work on becoming a good writer. The denomination needed good writers.

She contacted him and went to work as an intern in the editorial offices of the denomination in Philadelphia:

The pay was fifteen dollars a week. Sometime in June of 1949, it was suggested that I continue as an intern for another year and then consider going to seminary.

They were sure I would be happy to receive \$20 per week. I was not happy about this arrangement. I was told that because of my disability I could never expect to earn as much money as “normal individuals.” To say the least, I was very upset. [33]

A counselor from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation suggested that she take the next New York State examination for writers so she could work for the state. She refused. "I very strongly believed that God had a place of service for me even though I did not know what that was." [34]

10. Foot-Stamping Determined

At first try, her application to Union Theological Seminary in New York was rejected. They said it was her poor college grades. She asked for help. Dr. Adams and other well-known persons wrote letters of recommendation to the seminary. After reading the letters and interviewing Virginia, the seminary president admitted her as an unclassified student:

If I did very well during the first year, I would then be given full credit for the work taken toward a degree. As I left the seminary and walked down Broadway to the subway station, I stamped my foot on the sidewalk saying, “I’ll show him!”

When she signed up, she changed from the three-year Bachelor of Divinity degree program to the two-year Masters in Religious Education program. Dean Knox disapproved. "He said, 'If you really are going to have a good theological education, you will need to spend three years to be well educated.' So I began my theological education."

At the end of the first semester, the dean notified her that she had been accepted as a full-time student. When she thanked him, he said, "Miss Kreyer, if we had not believed there was a place of service for you within the church, we would not have admitted you." [35]

During her first year at seminary, she took both group and private speech lessons. In her final year, she requested to take the preaching course. The professor asked if she were fully aware of her poor speech. She might not be asked to preach. In fact, she might not even be ordained. When she told him she was fully aware and after a letter from her pastor confirmed this, she was allowed to take the preaching class.

Meanwhile, she worked with a student at Teachers College who was training to become a speech teacher or therapist:



I shall never forget the day during our last semester at Union when we each had to make a recording. The men were delighted with my recording and by the time I reached the refectory for lunch it seemed that everyone knew that I had made myself understood. There was great rejoicing! [39]

She graduated near the top of her class. As she received her Bachelor of Divinity certificate and turned to go back to her seat, she said, "I saw the faculty all seated on the first row smiling." [40]

11. "You are not to question this."

Years later in 2001 in the United Church of Christ, she was given the first Virginia Kreyer Award for persons who have shown a pioneering spirit in the work the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries. She said in response:

When I was a teenager, I felt as if I wanted to do work for the church but wondered how God could use a person with poor speech and a disability. When I arrived at Union Theological Seminary, I asked a very dear minister friend, as follows: "Do you really feel that there is a place of service for me within the church?" Very slowly [Dr. Earl Adams] said, "I really do not know."

The next few weeks [at seminary] were very difficult for me. I spent much time in prayer, and then one morning at chapel, I felt God place his hand upon my shoulder and say, "I have called YOU, and I will use YOU. You are not going to question this calling again."

Then in 1971 I became a member of this denomination. You put me to work. I thank the entire denomination and, above all, I thank God for calling me and using me and for allowing me to be a servant of the Lord.⁴

12. "But who would ordain a disabled woman?"

In 1951 in the time between her second and third years of seminary, the friend who had urged Virginia toward seminary nudged her again. She could do so much more if she were ordained.

"Of course this would be wonderful," I said, "but who would ordain a woman with a disability and what would I do?"

Knowing firsthand about the needs, desires and frustrations of persons with disabilities and their families, she could as an ordained woman then attempt to educate churches about the important role they had to play in this ministry. [45]

She discussed the possibility of ordination with several ministers in the American Baptist Church. All, to her surprise, thought it was a good idea. But she needed a field of work.

She found a social work position at a new treatment and rehabilitation center for children and adults who were cerebral palsied. In September, 1952, four months after graduating from seminary, she began as chaplain of the Nassau United Cerebral Palsy Center.

She soon learned the center was not interested in her offering spiritual guidance to clients or their families. They wanted a model of what a person with cerebral palsy could accomplish:

To show that I could be and was more than a model, I went to the School of Social Work at Adelphi University, in Garden City, New York, receiving a Masters Degree in the spring of 1960. At that time I officially became part of the Department of Social Work. [48]

She was at the Nassau Center until retiring in 1984, but she was not happy. She still considered herself a minister first.

In late April of 1952, she went before the Ecclesiastical Council of the Long Island Baptist Association. She had taken care to prepare for justifying a woman being ordained:

God created men and women as equals. Jesus, our Lord, had women around him, there were women among the seventy sent out to preach and so, if a man says a woman cannot be ordained in that instance he is telling God who He can and cannot call. [42]

She learned later that the one man who opposed her ordination had said, "I have no use for women in the ministry but I feel we are going to have to ordain this one."

13. After Ordination

After ordination, Virginia began to approach churches about making their places open for everyone. However, no matter what she tried, the ideas were not well-received. Clergy attitudes, she said, still ranged from "This [that is, a disability] is the sins of the parents being visited upon the children and nothing should be done!" to "There are so few persons with disabilities that making buildings accessible is a waste of money." [48]

In the meantime, she remained active in a local American Baptist church. She also held positions of leadership on area and national boards.

14. The United Church of Christ Task Force on Disabilities

In early 1971, Virginia left the American Baptists and became a member of Garden City Community Church, a United Church of Christ.

At the conclusion of the rather lengthy paper she presented to the Committee on Ordination and Standing, she suggested that the Association begin a committee on persons with disabilities. The Association asked her to start a task force in the New York metropolitan area.

"She did," said the Reverend David Denham in "The UCC DM Journey." "Furthermore, she led what was to become a movement." The former United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries consultant describes the Reverend Virginia Kreyer as one of the two "saints in disabilities ministries." The other person was the Reverend Dr. Harold Wilke.⁵ "Virginia set this ministry rolling in 1977," he said.

In his church histories and reflection, Albert Herzog, Jr., wrote:

The movement within the United Church of Christ to integrate persons with physical, developmental and emotional impairments into its life and into society is borne out the conviction that both are necessary for the denomination to be an effective witness to all people.⁶

Virginia has been a key player in seeing that this inclusion comes about. In the production of The New Century Hymnal, the working committee submitted several hymns to the Task Force on Disabilities. One hymn caused particular concern. "Amazing Grace"

carries the line, "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see."

According to Tom Dipko, the particular issue was, would a person with that disability see the use of the word "blind" negatively as a put down of persons with visual compromise?

The Task Force looked at the hymn. Virginia sent us back counsel. We did not need to change the language. The word "blind" was within the hymn being used symbolically. There are other kinds of blindness besides lack of 20/20 vision.

Though we were struggling with difficult concepts here in relation to hymns, the Task Force was elastic in their pastoral understanding of those lyrics. That is a classic case of the kind of person Virginia is.⁷

Years later when the United Church of Christ was building the church house and hotel in Cleveland, the building committee invited the Task Force on Disabilities to provide insights for making a hotel that would be friendly to all people.

They incorporated many Task Force suggestions, from the properly graded ramping between the two buildings to the relief area for assist animals in the inner, half moon garden. They also more than doubled the number of accessible rooms.

"With their help, we covered all the territory that could be called to our attention. Virginia was part of the conscience of the church in on that consultation," he said.

15. Change: Step One

The first meeting of the Task Force on Disabilities was held on November 9, 1971. "From then until 1976," Virginia said, "we did everything we could to get the UCC churches of the New York area involved in this work. We spoke at various functions and published a resources guide, but nothing seemed to work."

Even so, the committee was to become a movement within that Association and within the whole denomination. That movement began when the Task Force on Disability brought the resolution to the New York Conference. The resolution requested the commitment of the United Church of Christ to begin work with persons with disabilities:

- To recognize the distinguished contributions persons with disabilities are making to society
- To be aware of the suffering of persons with disabilities due to rejection and insufficient support
- To be aware of the wealth of new understandings about societal attitudes to persons with disabilities
- To observe that a direct result of our high-risk technological society is increasing the number of persons with disabilities, and
- To affirm a positive attitude and behavioral response to persons with disabilities.

The document arrived late, the very day the New York Conference meeting was to start, David Denham said. It would not be considered until the last conference session.

The moderator of the gathering told Virginia there was no room on the agenda for the resolution to be presented. However, she was to be present at every minute of the meeting. If an opening arose, she could speak to the resolution.

"That was Friday evening," Virginia said.

The following morning a courageous visiting missionary from Japan spoke. During his speech he said, "I have traveled 2,300 miles in this state and have not seen one person with a disability. Where are they?"

When he concluded his speech, the moderator said, "We have a resolution on disabilities!"

I jumped to my feet and ran to the nearest microphone and I just talked. When I had finished I ran back to our church's delegation yelling (while the other delegates were applauding) "I do not know what I said!"

All weekend people came to me and said, "You must have worked a long time on that speech." No, I truly believe it was God or the Holy Spirit speaking through me. [58-59]

16. Step Two: A Journey to General Synod

The New York Conference passed the resolution unanimously and referred it to the next General Synod.

At General Synod in Washington, D.C. the following summer, Virginia defended the resolution on persons with disabilities at a

delegate hearing. The delegates were rather negative, she said, and asked several questions:

When they were satisfied with the information, they went into executive session. I cannot remember at what hour in the afternoon the hearing began. All I can remember is that at 9 p.m., I was sent for to answer more questions.

At that time I was in the communications office at Dr. Harold Wilke's request. Harold wanted us, persons with disabilities, to march from the Hilton Hotel to the National Cathedral where the major Sunday worship service was to be held.

Due to the late hour, security could not be arranged for a march. Instead, Virginia was asked to lead the banner procession at the beginning of worship.

On Monday, Dr. Harold Wilke and I each were given two minutes to address the entire Synod. I used my time to remind delegates, visitors and staff that Jesus spent his ministry teaching, preaching and healing. We were teaching and preaching but were not spending time on the ministry of healing. The healing I was referring to was ministry to and with persons with disabilities.

On Monday, July 4, 1977, the Eleventh General Synod adopted the resolution entitled "The Church and the Handicapped."

17. Living the Promise

With the passing of this resolution, the United Church of Christ took as one of its priorities the commitment to wholeness in Christ and to becoming a church accessible to all.

With the passing of the resolution, Disabilities Ministries began. In 1978, Harold Wilke as chair called to order the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Church and the Handicapped. He and Virginia worked together nationally in the ministry's formation.

The 1977 resolution had opened up a one day a week consulting position. The position was offered to Virginia. She accepted with vigor. As Consultant for Persons with Disabilities, Virginia worked with churches. She attempted to educate them about the needs of persons with disabilities, particularly focusing on what they should be doing to make their church buildings accessible and welcoming to all, including persons with disabilities.

Additional resolutions⁸ have been passed affirming full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the church. "All were significant changes, changes attributable to Virginia's leadership," said Gay McCormick, a current officer on the UCC DM Board of Directors.

Virginia has traveled over the country preaching, teaching, and giving workshops to help people understand the 'how' and the 'why' of welcoming persons with disabilities.

In 1991 she attended the Consultation on the Disabled in preparation of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Then she served as a UCC delegate to the World Council, working on issues of disability rights. From 1977-1995, she was a member of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) Committee of the Disabled, and then a member of the Board of Directors.



Tom Dipko, with whom we began this story, concludes it with excerpts from his words to Virginia as he presented her the Virginia Kreyer Award for Disabilities Ministries:

Decades before contemporary authors reminded us that the God we worship came among us in the broken body of Jesus Christ, you were a "pioneering, prophetic, persevering" witness to the "disabled God" in whose image and likeness we are all made. Your ordination to Christian Ministry almost fifty years ago challenged the prevailing attitude of church and society that for so long rendered persons with disabilities invisible.

Virginia, no one who has ever been in the same room with you would ever describe you as invisible! When you set your chin in a certain way and look the insensitive in the eyes with your vision of things yet to be, even indifferent hearts melt.

You taught us anew the wisdom of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together."

And lest any of us yield to the base temptations of pride and paternalism, you said to us with transparent eloquence, "There is a ministry of the

disabled to church and humanity. Our presence is a reminder that Christ was a suffering servant.” [77]

18. Postlude by Virginia⁹

We finally have come to understand that we cannot be an inclusive church unless all people, regardless of their disability, color of their skin, or national origin are welcome in Christ’s Church. Let us give thanks for our individual uniqueness and for Christ who binds Christians together as different pieces of cloth are brought together to make a quilt.

19. So What about You?

- Read Ephesians 3:7-21 about the power of a dedicated life.

How does this scripture relate to Virginia's journey?

How does it connect you with your journey of finding your voice?

When you are rejected or ignored, where or how do you gain strength?

- Virginia felt that her experience with a disability gave her an understanding of the needs of others with disabilities and a call to ministry. Read 2 Corinthians 1: 1-7 about managing the "Why" of a disability with God as a team mate.

What are your thoughts about "Why", a first question when people experience disabilities? Who were the people in Virginia's life who helped her to accept her disability and move beyond the need to be consoled?

What is your personal (self, family member, friend) experience with disabilities?

How about the change from having to be comforted to seeing one's self as a whole, valid person who can speak to the needs of others?

What do you think Virginia's hope might be for you and for your church?

- Read 1 Corinthians 12: 14-26.

What are the distinctive gifts that you bring to the church? If being a person with a disability is among those gifts, in what ways has it been a gift?

How does God speak through the gifts of persons with disabilities?

20. Church Family Project

With your youth group, talk about the following questions. Then fill out the survey below that was prepared by early disabilities ministries. Add up the points. Then show the result to the women's group and the church board responsible for the building.

- ✓ If your church were completely accessible to all, what difference would it make?
- ✓ What ways is your church already welcoming to people with disabilities?
- ✓ What barriers exist to true inclusion of persons with disabilities in your church?
- ✓ What are the ways that your local congregation has lived out the commitment to be a church accessible to all?

Survey:

Parking spaces and curb cuts	(2 points)
Ramps and elevators to sanctuary, fellowship hall, and education building	(15 points)
Aisle and pew arrangements for persons using wheelchairs	(2 points)
Sanctuary accessible including both chancel and pulpit	(5 points)
Washrooms accessible to persons using wheelchairs	(6 points)
Interpreted services for deaf persons	(5 points)
Technological devices (e.g. audio loops) for hearing-impaired persons	(5 points)
Hymnals in Braille or large-print worship service and hymn sheets	(5 points)

- Ushers and staff trained to deal with persons with disabilities (5 points)
- Symbols, images, color and sound used for persons who with intellectual disabilities (4 points)
- Non-use of sexist and “handicappist” language (4 points)
- Outreach in advocacy (sponsoring halfway houses, celebration of Access Sunday, etc.) (5 points)
- Wholistic approach in education, for example, for persons with intellectual disabilities (9 points)

21. Still Curious?

1. Virginia Kreyer. Virginia's Story. Available through the United Church of Christ. Contact Parish Life and Leadership Ministry. 216-736-3800.
2. Harold Wilke, “Signs of Liberation and Access,” Any Body, Everybody, Christ’s Body: A Congregational Guide for Becoming Accessible to All, edited by Jo Claire Hartsig, available online at www.uccdm.org/A2A/anybody.pdf.
3. The resolutions of the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries and Mental Illnesses Ministry. For texts of these General Synod resolutions, visit www.uccdm.org/menu.html.

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¹ From "The Church: The Caring Community," an address given at a Women's Conference at Penn State, September, 1985, as published in Virginia's oral history, Virginia's Story: An Autobiography. (Assisted by Sandy Lenthall, Janet Lenthall and Karin Clamann Oral Histories). Book updated 2009.

² Excerpt of author's phone visit with the Rev. Tom Dipko, November 11, 2008.

³ From "The Church: The Caring Community," an address given at a Women's Conference at Penn State, September, 1985, as published in Virginia's oral history, Virginia's Story: An Autobiography. (Assisted by Sandy Lenthall, Janet Lenthall and Karin Clamann Oral Histories). Book updated 2009. The writer is grateful for Virginia's permission to quote large segments of Virginia's autobiography in this chapter.

⁴ From Dallas Brauninger. "The Virginia Kreyer Award – 2001." From UCC DM Newsletter Archive. See <http://www.uccdm.org/2001/09/21/the-virginia-kreyer-award/>

⁵ "The UCC DM Journey" <http://www.uccdm.org/2006/11/02/the-ucc-dm-journey/>

⁶ Albert A. Herzog, Jr. Disability Advocacy Among Religious Organizations: Histories and Reflections (Routledge, 2006) as summarized by David E. Denham in a synopsis of the book. See www.uccdm.org. Search Herzog.

⁷ From November phone visit with Tom Dipko.

⁸ Texts of all UCC Disabilities Ministries and Mental Illness Ministries resolutions can be found on www.uccdm.org.

⁹ Virginia Kreyer. "In God's Image: A Patchwork Quilt" in Women's Mosaic Series 2002. Peg Slater, Editor. [Http://www.uccdm.org/2007/05/24/mosaic-series-a-patchwork-quilt/](http://www.uccdm.org/2007/05/24/mosaic-series-a-patchwork-quilt/). First given as a sermon, "A Patchwork Quilt," at Garden City Community Church in New York.

Dallas (Dee) A. Brauningner. *Antoinette Brown Women: Finding Voice*, July, 2008