

A friend is gone

Our friend, Bob—Dr. Robert E. deKieffer—died September 23, 1999, in the Hospice of Boulder County, Colorado, at the age of 83. He was born in Evanston, Illinois, son of Dr. Otto and Irene deKieffer.

Most of you know Bob as the immediate Past President of the ECT Foundation, as an annual presence at AECT Conventions, and as a very important person in the history of AECT. We will describe why he was historically important, but first here

is a side of Dr. Robert E. deKieffer only a few of you know.

EARLY YEARS

By the time he was 14, Bob was giving critically acclaimed violin recitals – and serving as a lifeguard on a Lake Michigan beach. After graduating from Evanston High School in 1935, he attended a summer session at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, specializing in German and music and becoming Concertmaster of their orchestra. He continued his studies in the fall session at another German university, the University of Freiburg. But war was approaching, and he returned home to attend Northwestern University in Evanston.

At Northwestern he continued his interests in music and swimming. He lettered on the University's water polo team, was named to the All-Conference Team in the Big Ten Conference, and qualified for the 1940 Olympics that were never held because

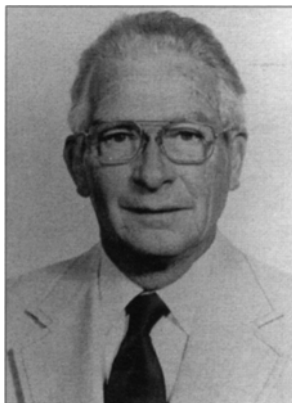
of the outbreak of World War II in Europe. In 1940, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern, having majored in social studies and education, with minors in German, geography, and speech. The next year he completed a Master of Arts in Education, also at N.U., and in 1948, a Doctor of Philosophy at the State University of Iowa.

WAR YEARS

In December of 1941, the United States was drawn into the war. Bob volunteered for the Navy, receiving a commission as ensign the day before his marriage to Melissa Hibberd on March 19, 1942. His name and his fluency in German attracted the attention of the Office of Naval Intelligence. He was assigned as a counterespionage agent in the Caribbean. Later, all he would say about his "spy" experiences was that he received "rigorous on-the-job training." For Melissa, this was a time of anxiety. Bob was not allowed to send her any messages in any way.

Bob was reassigned to a training division in Portland, Maine. The following July, he was transferred to Newport, Rhode Island, where he continued as a Training Aids Utilization Officer until his discharge in December of 1945.

Thus Bob became a member of a small cadre of educators who served their country during WWII by providing training. Films taught new recruits how to handle the weapons of war and how to act under fire. This wartime use of train-



Robert E. DeKieffer

The passing of a mentor

The death of Robert deKieffer witnesses the passing of one of our field's truly great mentors. If one looks in the pages of the history of our profession, Robert's name will be footnoted many times as a person who shared his time, talents, and resources with those he mentored. Mentoring was the mantra of people like Robert who shared common goals of bringing new faces to the profession. The unselfish giving of his expertise is reflected in those who proudly state that Robert deKieffer was their advisor, mentor, and professional parent. His wife, Melissa, always at his side, shared his passion for developing leadership, scholarship, and professional development.

Never one to be placed on a pedestal, Robert was a trench fighter. He carried the message of media and technology from the highest reaches of academia to where it counted: the classroom. This included taking long auto rides to remote school districts to perform inservice training, pushing for better classroom instruction through the use of media and technology, lobbying for legislation, and writing many articles and books on media, technology and education. Robert deKieffer was, in the truest sense, a dedicated professional.

Perhaps the best lesson for all of us that comes at this time of loss is to reflect on the message that Dr. deKieffer and his generation of mentors constantly preached. It was a theme of becoming a mentor to others who were aspiring to this field of educational communications and technology. It was their considered opinion that attaining professional respectability obligated each professional to also repeat the mentoring process by taking promising students under wing, thus assuring the next generation of professionals.

— David L. Little

ing materials provided proof that visual materials could teach and helped to promote their use in colleges and public education.

EDUCATIONAL POSITIONS

While still in school at Northwestern, Bob assisted in the reorganization of the Curriculum Laboratory in the

School of Education. Also, he developed a Curriculum Laboratory for the "New School," an experimental unit of Evanston High School. Thus at this early age he became interested in the selection and management of educational materials. Upon receiving his MA, he spent the fall semester as Librarian at Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, where he had a collateral assignment as producer and announcer of a daily radio program. It was in the spring of that year that he volunteered for the Navy.

In 1948, after receiving his Ph.D. from Iowa, he returned to Stephens College as Librarian and Assistant Dean of Instruction. During his four years at Stephens College, he gave audio-visual workshops at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He spent one summer teaching at the University of Iowa and two summers teaching at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles.

The University of Oklahoma at Norman called him in 1952 as Associate Professor of Education and Educational Materials Specialist. He stayed for two years until a new title – Director of the Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction, Extension Division, and Professor of Education – lured him to the University of Colorado, at Boulder, Colorado. He continued to serve the University of Colorado in several capacities: as Chairperson of the Library Media Program, School of Education, 1974-1982; as Associate Dean, Continuing Education, 1977-1983; and as Visiting Professor, 1983 to his retirement in 1987.

LEADERSHIP

Walking through all these dates and places was a capable, personable leader, in demand wherever he went. While at Stephens College Bob was

elected President of the Film Council of America, President of the Audio-Visual Division of the Missouri State Teachers Association, and Chairman of Radio and Visual Education of the Missouri Parent-Teacher Congress.

Bob had an early opportunity to display his leadership skills. In 1955 he attended the First National Leadership Conference on Instructional Materials at Lake Okoboji. DAVI – which was later to become AECT – sponsored the conference the second year, changing the name to the Lake Okoboji Audio-Visual Leadership Conference. Bob was a Co-Chairman of this second Conference. In 1955 he was appointed to his first office in DAVI: Chair of the College and University Section. He was elected Vice-President of DAVI in 1956 and President the following year. He also served on the Board of Directors and as chair of various committees and task forces.

From 1962 to 1968, Bob was a member of the Educational Media Council and Chairman of the Dissemination Committee. He became Vice-President in 1969 and President in 1972. During the 60s and 70s, he served on numerous national councils and as consultant to various educational organizations. He was much in demand as an advisor, serving on four task forces making recommendations on technology and education in the state of Colorado.

At the time DAVI reorganized and changed its name to the Association of Educational Communications and Technology, 1969 to 1973, Bob was chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee. He chaired the Leadership Development Committee at the time the Educational Communications and Technology Foundation was formed. He was a member of the ECT Foundation Board from the beginning and President from 1981 to 1992. Upon his retirement in 1998, he was awarded Emeritus status.

PUBLICATIONS AND GRANTS

Bob's list of publications and articles includes eighty-seven titles. His early topics focused on the selection, management, and utilization of audio-visual materials. Early research, in 1948, was *The Status of Teacher-Training in Audio-Visual Education in the Forty-eight States*. He repeated this study in 1958 and again in 1968, providing a 30-year view of the use of audio-visual materials in teacher training. With Lee Cochran, he co-authored *Manual of Audio-Visual Technique*, in 1962, which was translated into Spanish as *Técnicas Audiovisuales* in Mexico, 1968. It was Bob's vision to form the National Center for Audio Tapes, 1973, a national library for educational audio tapes. In the 1970s, his topics included leadership and telecommunications. From the University of Colorado, he taught one of the first distance learning classes via TV. He was listed in eighteen "Who's Who" publications and received the Distinguished Service Awards from the Colorado Educational Media Association in 1986 and from AECT in 1975.

Bob enjoyed and respected people. His friends remember him as a gentle person. We shall miss him. Over the years Bob has had a voice in providing direction for AECT. He was a part of the movement for educational technology from visual education and training aids during WWII, through the Audio-Visual, Audiovisual, Educational Media years to Educational Technology. Bob set an example for all of us in dedication to a cause and devotion to an organization. He did not miss an AECT Convention in 50 years, once attending in a wheelchair pushed by his wartime bride. To honor Bob, his friends can contribute to the Robert deKieffer International Scholarship Fund, c/o the ECT Foundation.

— Lida M. Cochran