



## AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division

<http://vrt.aerbvi.org>

**VRT News**  
**Spring, 2016**

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### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR** **Ian Shadrick, CVRT, CRC**

Greetings,

I hope that you are enjoying the beauty that spring brings, and that this message finds you well. As we look toward the upcoming international conference in Jacksonville this summer, I hope you will make every effort to attend. Please be sure to visit the main AER website for registration details, keeping in mind registration is open.

I would like to encourage you to submit nominations both to international for awards, as well as to our own Division for our specific VRT related awards, which are outlined within this issue of the newsletter. I am certain that each of you know of deserving individuals for one if not all of the awards categories which we present bi-annually.

As we move closer toward a new biennial for the division, I hope that you will consider taking an active role in the division. As I mentioned previously, the board will be conducting elections for officer positions. The officers to be elected include Chair, Chair-Elect, and Secretary/Treasurer. I would also like you to consider volunteering for a committee, serving as a peer reviewer for the upcoming conference, or contributing your talents in some other way.

Anyone who may be interested in one of these areas may contact me directly. I would also encourage everyone to reach out to those in the field or who may be new to the field that are not division members, and speak to them about the advantages of joining the division.

I wish each of you the very best!

Best regards,  
Ian Shadrick M.A., M.A., CVRT, CRC  
VRT Division Chair

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

- April 11-17, 2016 VRT Appreciation Week-Please note that the dates have changed from June to April to help celebrate the birthdate of Annie Sullivan.
- April 22, 2016 Deadline for nominations for Division awards & nominations for VRT Division officers
- June 15, 2016 Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News-send articles to Jennifer Ottowitz  
[jennifer@hadley.edu](mailto:jennifer@hadley.edu)
  - July 20-24, 2016 AER International Conference, Jacksonville FL

For more information visit  
<http://aerbvi.org/>

### **Celebrate VRT Appreciation Week Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT**

It's time to celebrate! April 11-17, 2016 has been designated as VRT Appreciation Week. This is a time to show our appreciation and give special recognition to all the many people providing vision rehabilitation therapy services to people who are blind or visually impaired.

We work with people in their homes, in center-based settings, at school, at work and in the community. We provide instruction and training to teach adaptive skills in a myriad of areas and strive to help those we serve to maximize their potential, achieve greater independence, increase their confidence, and enhance their quality of life. We work long hours, travel many miles and continually find ways to make the most of limited resources. We help educate other professionals about working with those who are blind or visually impaired and also educate them on the valuable role we play. We advocate for services for our clients as well as the importance of our specialized training.

With the recent passing of actress Patty Duke, who portrayed both Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan in two versions of the movie, *The Miracle Worker*, I am reminded of the outstanding work Anne dedication of Anne Sullivan as well as the rich history of our profession. The following article shares more about the beginnings of vision rehabilitation therapy.

This week was chosen to honor VRTs in commemoration of Anne Sullivan's birthday on April 14. I encourage you to take time to show your appreciation for the VRTs with

whom you work and find special ways to recognize their valuable efforts. Take pride in being a VRT and honor the profession with a special celebration or tribute.

It's time to raise our glasses, express our thanks and give a toast to all the wonderful work done by VRT's.

### **Checking our Ancestry Bob Kozel, CVRT, CLVT, COMS**

Without a doubt if we all went to an ancestry website, as a group we would have a diverse history. Perhaps we all have common traits – the ones that lead us to become VRTs, and though this represents very good aspects of our human nature, it is not the same as a common ancestor.

If you could track our professional lineage, we do have a common ancestor – William Cooper. William Cooper was himself blind, and he was a key component in revolution that started in 1855. William Cooper was selected to be the first teacher in an organization known as Home Teaching Society of the Blind, which was started in London, England. Mr. Cooper would enjoy a 20 year career as a Home Teacher. By 1889 there were 18 Home Teachers in London, seventeen of who were blind. And, the Home Teaching movement had spread to many other cities.

Their success was due in large part to the revolutionary tactual system for reading known as Moon Print or Moon Code. It was a very easy embossed print to read. The Home Teaching Society movement was also successful because of the support of patrons who championed the cause of education of the blind.

The Home Teaching Society also can trace its roots back to one person, Dr. William Moon. Dr. Moon was born in rural England in 1818. At the age of 4 he became partially sighted due to Scarlett Fever. He went to college to study for the Ministry and lost his remaining vision. He married and had two children. Moon struggled financially, but made a living by teaching at a school for the blind. To simplify this process he developed his own version of embossed print, at this time Braille had not been introduced to England. His goal was not only to teach reading to the blind, he also wanted to make the Bible available to them. His embossed system was used to accomplish this. The first Bible printed in Moon, was completed in 1858, containing 5,000 pages in 60 volumes.

Moon met Sir Charles Lowther, also a victim of sight loss due to Scarlett Fever. He became a patron of Moon's efforts. It was in this era Moon came up with the idea of starting Home Teaching Societies. A group would employ a teacher of the blind and then seek out blind children and adults who needed training. Patrons such as Sir Charles would support these Societies. The material came in the form of books embossed in Moon Print.

Dr. Moon's son helped with the creation of raised line drawing. He also toured with his father who spoke on education of the blind and also religion. Eventually, Robert went to Medical School and became an Eye Doctor. He immigrated to America.

Dr. Moon's daughter Adelaide worked with him and his printing enterprise. She continued to do this even after his death in 1894. She would continue this effort with the support of her brother. Both siblings died in 1914.

The Home Teaching movement for the blind came to America in 1882, due in large part to the support of an Eye Doctor in Philadelphia, Dr. Robert Moon. It continued to spread and in many ways those first Home Teachers are ancestors of the modern VRT. Moon Print still exists today, though it is not commonly used in America. The first unification of tactual print in America ended up utilizing grade 1 ½ Braille.

This article provided the briefest of history of Dr. Moon, perhaps the best biography of Dr. Moon is provided in William Moon, LL.D. AND HIS WORK FOR THE BLIND, by John Rutherford, 1898. It is available in Google Books at:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=8ykAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA82&lpg=PA82&dq=william+moon+home+teachers&source=bl&ots=4KpGsQB8tJ&sig=WvKCz9KoeDRgOCRfMH7XaNUbZOA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjL3szT-6zKAhXL7yYKHUX2CH0Q6AEIMDAD#v=onepage&q=william%20moon%20home%20teachers&f=false>

Note, the LL.D. is a Doctorate in Law in England.

Below is a picture of Moon Code, it will appear as a picture if you are using a screen reader.

Letters

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a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
	but	can	do	every	from	go	have		just
<	L	⌒	N	○	<	∪	\	/	—
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t
know	like	more	not		people	quite	rather	some	that
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u	v	w	x	y	z	wh	ch		
	very	was	it	you		which	child		

Numerals

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## Deadline Extended for Nominations for VRT Division Awards

The deadline for nominations for VRT Division awards has been extended. Please take a moment to nominate one of our outstanding professionals for all of his/her hard work, dedication, commitment to those they serve and commitment to the field of vision rehabilitation therapy. At the Biennial International Conference, the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division presents the following awards: The Bruce

McKenzie Award for lifetime achievement; The Elizabeth Lennon Award for Meritorious Achievement; The Alice Raftary Rising Star Award to recognize talented teachers who are new to their careers; and the Susan & Paul Ponchillia Publication Award for VRT division members who have written and published work regarding topics related to vision rehabilitation therapy.

**\*The Bruce McKenzie Award for Lifetime Achievement**

**Purpose:**

The Bruce McKenzie award is a biennial award established by the VRT Division to honor Bruce McKenzie for his pioneering leadership in the field of rehabilitation teaching (vision rehabilitation therapy). It is the Division's highest award, presented to an exemplary individual for outstanding contributions to the field of rehabilitation teaching and independent living services. It is the Division's Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Criteria:**

- A nominee shall be an active or retired vision rehabilitation therapist/vision rehabilitation therapy supervisor.
- A nominee must have 10 years or more of service in the field of vision rehabilitation therapy.
- A nominee shall have exceptional leadership qualities.
- The uniqueness of a nominee's contribution to the field shall be given due consideration.
- A nominee's contribution shall have been national or international in scope.
- A nominee shall be a member of the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division.

**Past Bruce McKenzie Award Recipients:**

**1984** Linda Olson, AZ  
**1986** Scott Oliver, NY  
**1988** Julia Richardson, AL  
**1990** Susan Ponchillia, MI; Paul Ponchillia, MI  
**1992** David Search, MI  
**1994** Patricia Bussen Smith, AR  
**1996** Nancy Paskin, NY  
**1998** Don Golembiewski, WI; Anne Yeadon, NY  
**2000** Lynda Jones, FL  
**2002** Maureen Duffy, PA  
**2004** Barbara Hunt, IL; Lisa-Anne Mowerson, PA  
**2006** Margaret E. Cleary, MA  
**2008** Alvin Roberts, IL  
**2010** **B.J. LeJeune, MS**  
**2012** **Lenore Dillon, AL**  
**2014** **George Abbott, IL**

**\*The Elizabeth Lennon Award for Meritorious Achievement**

This award was named for Elizabeth Lennon in 2006 to recognize her dedication and pioneering work in preparing university professionals and supporting community programs for seniors and people with disabilities.

**Purpose:**

The award shall be presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the profession of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, Rehabilitation Teaching, general rehabilitation, or community affairs. Such contributions may be in the form of published materials, presentations, leadership experiences, or work history.

**Criteria:**

- A nominee shall be active in or retired from the field of vision rehabilitation therapy.
- A nominee should demonstrate outstanding professionalism and service to the rehabilitation field.
- The uniqueness of a nominee's contribution to the field shall be given due consideration.
- A nominee shall be a member of AER.

**Past Certificate of Recognition/Meritorious Achievement Award Recipients:**

**1984** Patricia Bussen Smith; William Farrell; Thomas Hansen; Michael Nelipovich; Paul Ponchillia; Alvin Roberts

**1986** Juliet Bindt Esterly; Sherrie Raymond; Ruth Kaarlela (special award)

**1988** Beatrice David; Dolores Fricke; Judy Matsuoka; David Search

**1990** Michelle Frazier; Lynne Luxton; Ramona Sangalli; JoAnn Search

**1992** Patty Arnold; Lenore Dillon; Michael Nelipovich

**1994** Nancy Paskin

**1996** Cheryl Richesin

**1998** Pamela Cory; Maureen Duffy; Gretchen Good

**2000** Antonina Adamowicz-Hummel

**2002** Barbara Hunt; Diane Weiss

**2004** Debra Solko-McKay

**2006** Jennifer Ottowitz

**2008** Roberta McCall

**2010** Susan Dalton; Patricia Smith

2012 Marybeth Harrison

2014 John McMahan

**\*The Alice Raftary Rising Star Award**

This award was named for Alice Raftary in 2006 due to her mentoring and support of many new professionals to this field and her years of creative and dedicated work. She

is a Living Legend and her story can be found in the APH Hall of Fame.

**Purpose:**

The award shall be presented to an individual who demonstrates potential for exceptional leadership and is expected to provide a unique and lasting contribution to the field of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy.

**Criteria:**

- A nominee shall be an ACREVP-certified vision rehabilitation therapist.
- A nominee should have no more than three years of VRT professional service.
- A nominee should demonstrate outstanding professionalism and service to the field.
- A nominee shall be a member of the VRT Division

**Past Rising Star Award Recipients:**

**2006** Sarah Heinrich  
2008 Bernadette Anderson  
**2010 Ian Shadrick**  
2012 Cammy Moraros  
2014 Joe Jorgenson

**\*The Susan and Paul Ponchillia VRT Publication Award**

This award was established in 2008 to honor VRT Division members who have written and published for the benefit of the field and the enhancement of our knowledge base.

**Purpose:**

The VRT Division is offering a Publication Award to recognize a VRT Division member whose publication contributes highly to the field of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, journal articles, books, chapters of books, and development of or significant contributions to websites. This award carries a \$250 honorarium to further encourage VRT Division members to write and publish.

**Criteria:**

Author(s) must be a member(s) of the VRT Division.  
The publication should be within the current biennium (July 2014—June2016)  
The publication submitted should contribute to the rehabilitation field and enhance our knowledge base.

**Past VRT Publication Award Recipients:**

**2008** Debra Solko-McKay  
**2010** Vision Aware  
2012 Margaret Cleary

2014 John McMahon; Kristy Swallow

**Nominating Procedures:**

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment history, leadership qualities, contributions, achievements and professional memberships.
- All nominations must be submitted and seconded in writing.
- If possible, a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae should be included.

**Nominating Procedure for Publications Award:**

- Nominations may be submitted by the author or by another member of the Division.
- A copy of the publication must be submitted to the Awards Committee. Only publications costing over \$25 will be returned, please indicate as such with your submission.
- If possible, a copy of the author's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient and the division of the honorarium, if necessary.
- Cover letter must include: Author's name and Contact Information; Nominator's name and contact information (if different than author); A Brief Summary of the Publication (no more than 2 paragraphs) of the significance of the publication; Publication date(s)/ Website date(s); and Publication title and credits.

Please send all nominations to Susan Dalton by April 22, 2016. Send nominations to [dalton.transvision@gmail.com](mailto:dalton.transvision@gmail.com)

or mail to

Susan Dalton  
20009 Rte. 176

**Marengo, IL 60152**

**Nominations for VRT Division Officers: Deadline Extended -- We Need Your Help**

Please note that the deadline for nominations has been extended until April 22, 2016. This is the time of year when we begin planning for the future of the VRT Division. We are seeking nominations to become an officer of the Division. Three offices need to be filled for our next biennial 2016-2018.

\*Chair

Due to the current vacancy in the Chair-elect position, we are seeking someone to fill the position of Chair for the 2016-2018 term. The role of the Chair includes presiding over all VRT Division Board and business meetings as well as appointing Division



committee members, working with all Division committees to develop goals and a work plan for the biennial, serving on the Council of Division Chairpersons and serving as Chair of the marketing committee. After the two-year term, the Chair will assume the two-year role of Past Chair along with the responsibilities outlined for this position in the Division's Policies & Procedures Manual.

**\*Chair-Elect:**

This person will serve the Division in various aspects of leadership over 6 years.

For the first 2 years the Chairperson-Elect shall perform the duties of Chairperson in case of the Chairperson's absence or inability to serve, serves on the Council of Division Chairpersons and chairs the Division Program Committee, Awards Committee and In-service Committee.

In the next 2 years, the Chairperson-Elect becomes the Chair of the Division.

For the final 2 years, they will be the Past-Chair.

A person who is the Chair-elect must be a voting member in good standing of the VRT Division and AER.

**\*Secretary-Treasurer:**

The Secretary-Treasurer position is a 2-year term position.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep minutes of Division business meetings, maintain official records and policies, maintain a current membership list, and manage Division finances in accordance with procedures hereinafter set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws or otherwise mandated by AER, and perform all other duties incidental to the Office of Secretary-Treasurer.

A person who is the Secretary-Treasurer must be a voting member in good standing of the VRT Division and AER.

**WE NEED to find strong leadership to help guide us in our efforts over the next few years. PLEASE CONSIDER SHARING your energy, enthusiasm, dedication and leadership skills with us.**

Nominate yourself or a worthy colleague. Please speak to them first and receive their permission before nominating them.

Please send the name of the nominee, their contact information, the position for which you are nominating them and your contact information as the nominator to Jennifer Ottowitz at [jennifer@hadley.edu](mailto:jennifer@hadley.edu)

Nominations should be submitted no later than April 22, 2016. Please also contact Jennifer with any questions you may have.

## **Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board**

Contact information

Chair: Ian Shadrick, CVRT, CRC

E-mail: [ianshadrick@hadley.edu](mailto:ianshadrick@hadley.edu)

Secretary/Treasurer: Susan Dalton, CVRT

Email: [dalton.transvision@gmail.com](mailto:dalton.transvision@gmail.com)

Past Chair: Jennifer Ottowitz, CVRT

Newsletter Editor

E-mail: [jennifer@hadley.edu](mailto:jennifer@hadley.edu)

Please let me know of any questions, concerns, corrections, or comments that you have regarding the VRT newsletter. I also welcome any articles or ideas for articles that you may have. Thank you again for all that you do as a VRT!!!