

IN MEMORIAM

Robert E. deKieffer

1916 - 1999

Dr. Robert E. deKieffer died September 23, 1999, in the Hospice of Boulder County, Colorado, at the age of 83. His birthplace was Evanston, Illinois; his parents were Dr. Otto and Irene deKieffer.

Most of you knew Bob as immediate Past President of the ECT Foundation, as an annual presence at AECT (Association for Educational Communications and Technology) conventions, and a very important person in the history of AECT. Here is another side of him.

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 specializing in German and music, and a fall session at the University of Freiburg before returning to Evanston to attend Northwestern University.

There, he continued his interest in music and swimming, 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 war in Europe. In 1940 he graduated from Northwestern with majors in social studies and education and minors in German, geography, and speech, completing a master of arts in education at Northwestern in 1941, and in 1948, a doctorate at the State University of Iowa.

In December 1941, Bob joined the Navy, receiving his commission as ensign the day before his marriage to Melissa Hibberd on March 19, 1942. He was assigned as a counterespionage agent in the Caribbean, and then in November 1943, was reassigned to the Training Aids Division, Bureau of Personnel. He served in Portland, ME, and in Newport, RI, as Training Aids Utilization Officer until his discharge in December 1945.

Thus Bob became a member of a small cadre of educators who served their country during World War II by proving that visual materials could teach new recruits how to handle the weapons of war and how to act under fire. This successful training with visual materials during the war promoted their use in colleges and public education.

After receiving his Ph.D., Bob served Stephens College as Librarian and Assistant Dean of Instruction, giving audio-visual workshops at Butler University, Indianapolis and at the University of Wisconsin. He spent one summer teaching at the University of Iowa and two at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

He was Associate Professor of Education and

Educational Materials Specialist at the University of Oklahoma in 1952, and then in 1954 became Director of the Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction, Extension Division and Professor of Education at the University of Colorado, serving there in a variety of capacities, including Associate Dean Continuing Education, 1977-1983, and Visiting Professor from 1983 until his retirement in 1987.

He held leadership positions at every stage of his career, attended the First National Leadership Conference on Instructional Materials at Lake Okoboji in 1955, and when DAVI sponsored the second conference, renaming it the Lake Okoboji Audio-Visual Leadership Conference, Bob was co-chairman. He served DAVI as president in 1957, and the Educational Media Council in 1972.

At the time DAVI reorganized and changed its name to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1969-1973, Bob was chair of the long-range planning committee. He was a member of the ECT Foundation board from the beginning, president from 1981-1992, and upon retirement in 1998, Emeritus.

Dr. deKieffer initiated the International Fellowship Award in the 1980s, with a grant to be administered by the ECT Foundation, and awarded by the AECT International Council, to recognize professional leadership in the field outside the United States, and to provide financial assistance to outstanding educational faculty and graduate students from other countries to attend the annual AECT Conference, meet their counterparts and national leaders in the United States. The award has been given every year since 1989.

Bob's list of publications and articles includes 87 titles. Early research in 1948 was repeated in 1958 and again in 1968, providing a 30-year view of the use of audio-visual materials in teacher training. He taught one of the first distance learning classes via television, from the University of Colorado; was listed in 18 "Who's Who" publications; received the Distinguished Service Awards from the Colorado Educational Media Association in 1986; and from AECT in 1975.

Bob deKieffer enjoyed and respected people. His friends remember him as a gentle person. We shall miss him. Over the years, Bob had a voice in providing direction for AECT, and 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.

*Lida M. Cochran
Jenny K. Johnson*