

1972:

Construction of the Exceptional Child Center is finished. Its divisions are Training, Service, Technical Assistance and Demonstration. The facility is the first associated with a college of education rather than a medical school. Its mission is to serve rural areas.



1973:

The Exceptional Child Center is dedicated, Dr. Marvin Fifield is the director.

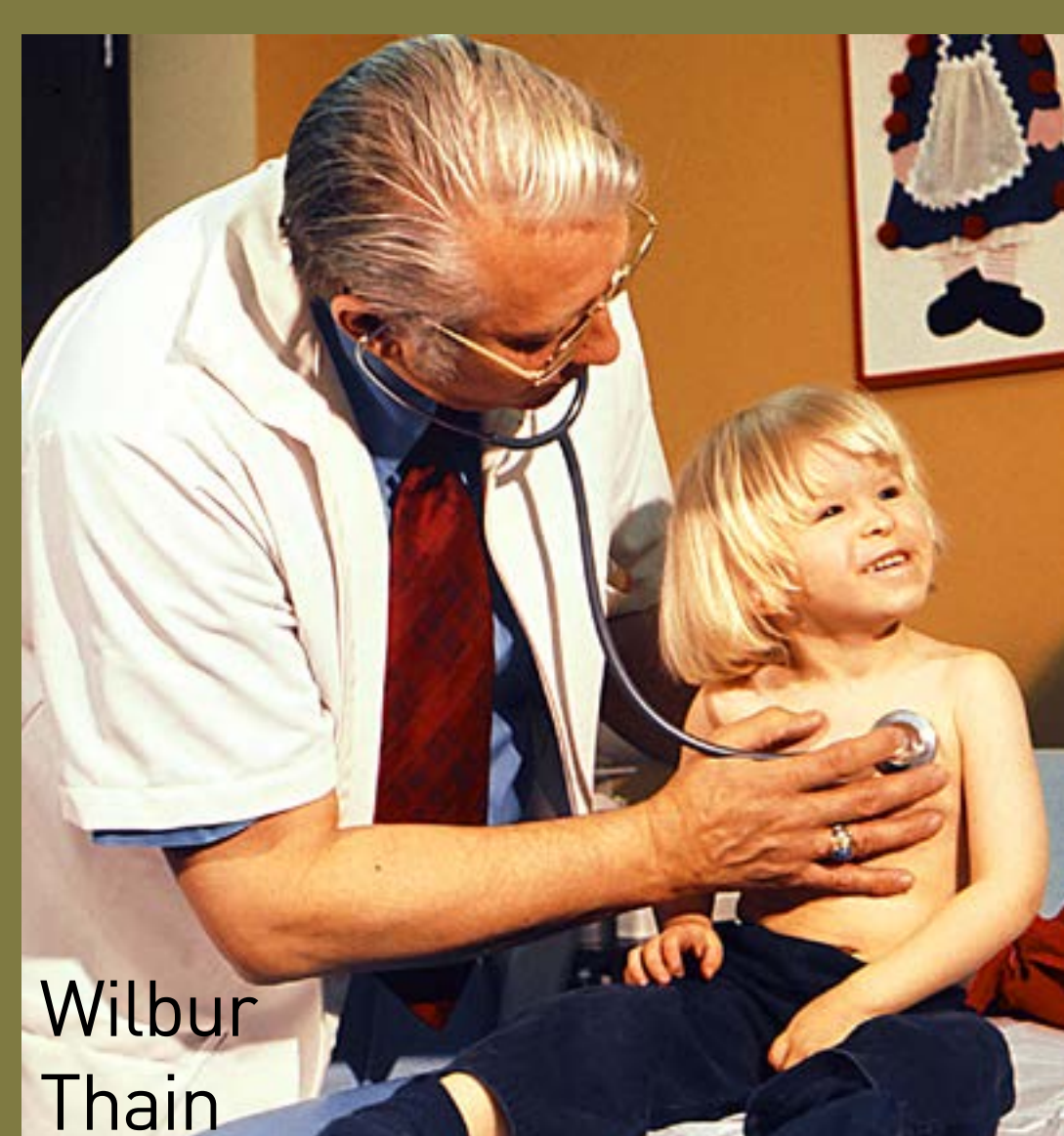
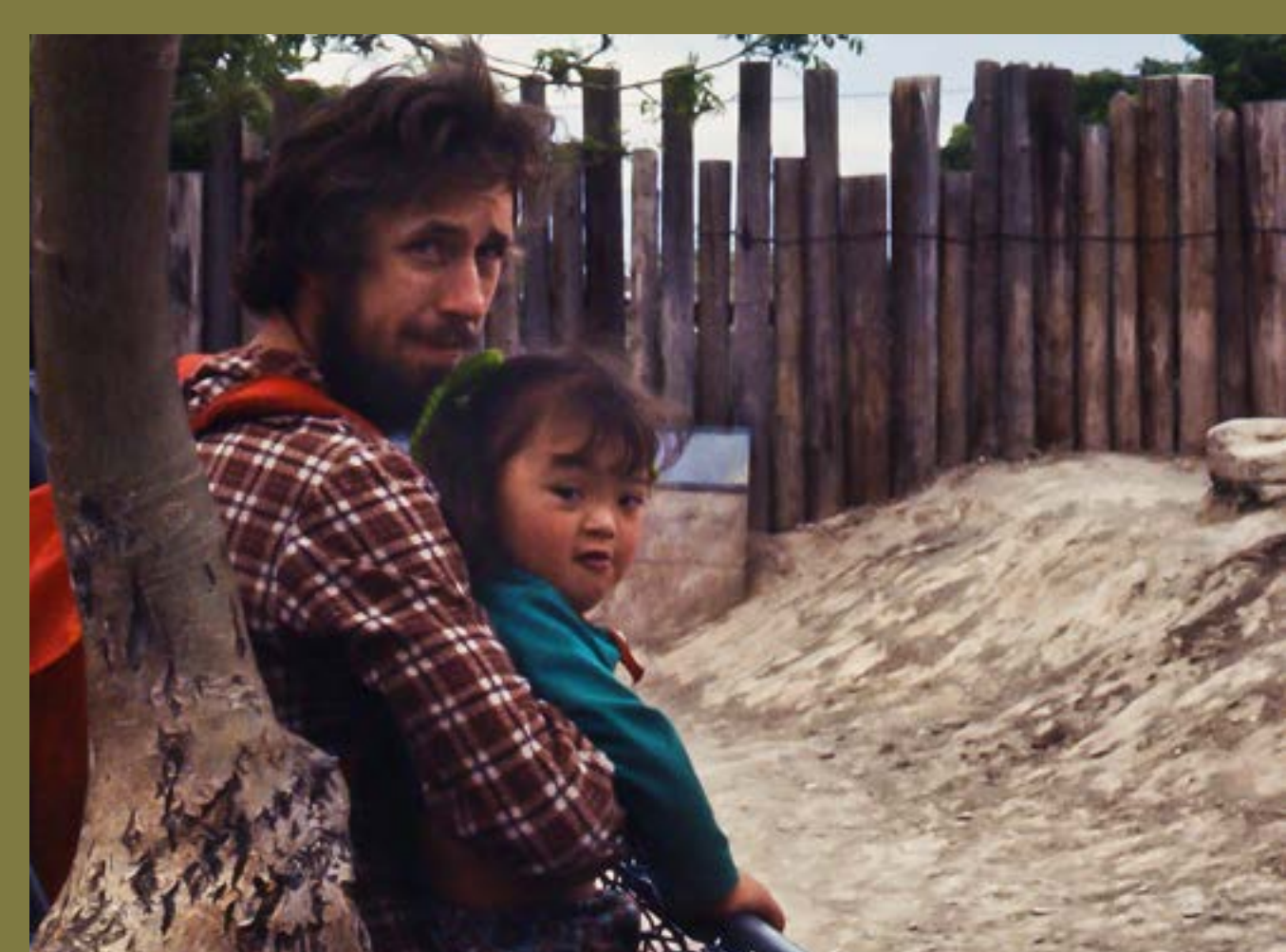
“We have succeeded in extending the number of years children with severe birth defects will live, but we have done little to better the quality of their lives.”

–Dr. Cecil Jacobson, member of the President’s Commission on MR, during the ECC dedication.

1973:

The ECC is the host University Affiliated Facility for the Navajo program. It will provide services for seven years.

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination in Federal programs.



Wilbur Thain

1974:

A medical director is added at the ECC. Eventually the position will be filled by Dr. Wilbur Thain, who remains at the CPD through 1984. The Evaluation and Exemplary Services divisions are added.

The Tele-pac project uses the telephone to connect parents to materials that will help them teach skills to children with disabilities. It begins a tradition of delivering services to rural areas through technology.

“These were kids who showed up at the schoolhouse door and were literally told to go away. We had quite a number like that. It wasn’t until 1975 that federal law forced school to take them.”

–Dr. Al Hofmeister, former Technology Division Director, in a 2010 interview about an early project. It helped parents teach their own children with disabilities.



Alan Hofmeister



1975:

The Exceptional Child Center receives a new playground for school-age children, thanks to a donation from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Its fixtures are wood, which are thought to be safer. It is named the Physical Development Research Park.

Utah State University begins its Undergraduate Research Program. Students with ties to the CPD will take advantage of it throughout the years.

Education for All Handicapped Children passes (later called IDEA).

1977:

The longest-ever sit-in at a federal building is staged over regulations that Health, Education and Welfare wouldn’t sign. The protest culminates in San Francisco and is successful.



1978-80: The Senate subcommittee on the Handicapped finds University Affiliated Facilities “have a vague mission,” and recommends measurement and guidelines.

1978: The Utah Advocates for the Developmentally Disabled (now called the Disability Law Center) is established in Utah. Mandated by law, it is a sister organization to the CPD.



Glenn Latham

1980: The Intermountain Plains Regional Resource Center (later the Mountain Plains RRC) was established at the CPD, under the direction of Dr. Glenn Latham. It was a joint project with Drake University in Iowa. It was the first of several regional CPD programs to garner a national and international reputation.

1981: Regan-era budget cuts begin. Funding to human services programs is reduced and cost-effectiveness is emphasized.

The American Association of University Affiliated Programs (now the AUCD) sets a goal to integrate University Affiliated Facilities with the community.



1982: A “Therapeutic Playground” is dedicated at the Exceptional Child Center, made possible by the local Kiwanis club. The wooden fixtures of the Physical Development Research Park remain; the new playground is added on another side of the building.

1983: The Brigham City Adult Day Care Learning Center for Mentally Handicapped Adults opens. It is a step toward de-institutionalization in Utah, giving families in Brigham City an alternative to sending their adult children to what was then the Utah State Training School in American Fork. It is now the Developmental Skills Laboratory near the USU campus in Logan.



Research on autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders begins in the biomedical immunology laboratory under the direction of Dr. Reed Warren.

“A former University President once remarked, ‘Few programs have been started and maintained with as many promises, hopes and expectations supported by little more than the commitment of staff, tenaciously held together with baling wire and chewing gum.’”

–Vice Provost Richard Swenson, in a letter prefacing the 1983-84 Annual Report



Glendon Casto

1983: Dr. Glendon Casto writes a grant to study the effectiveness of early intervention on children with disabilities, with the assistance of Dr. Karl White. The Early Intervention Research Institute (now the Research & Evaluation Division) is born.

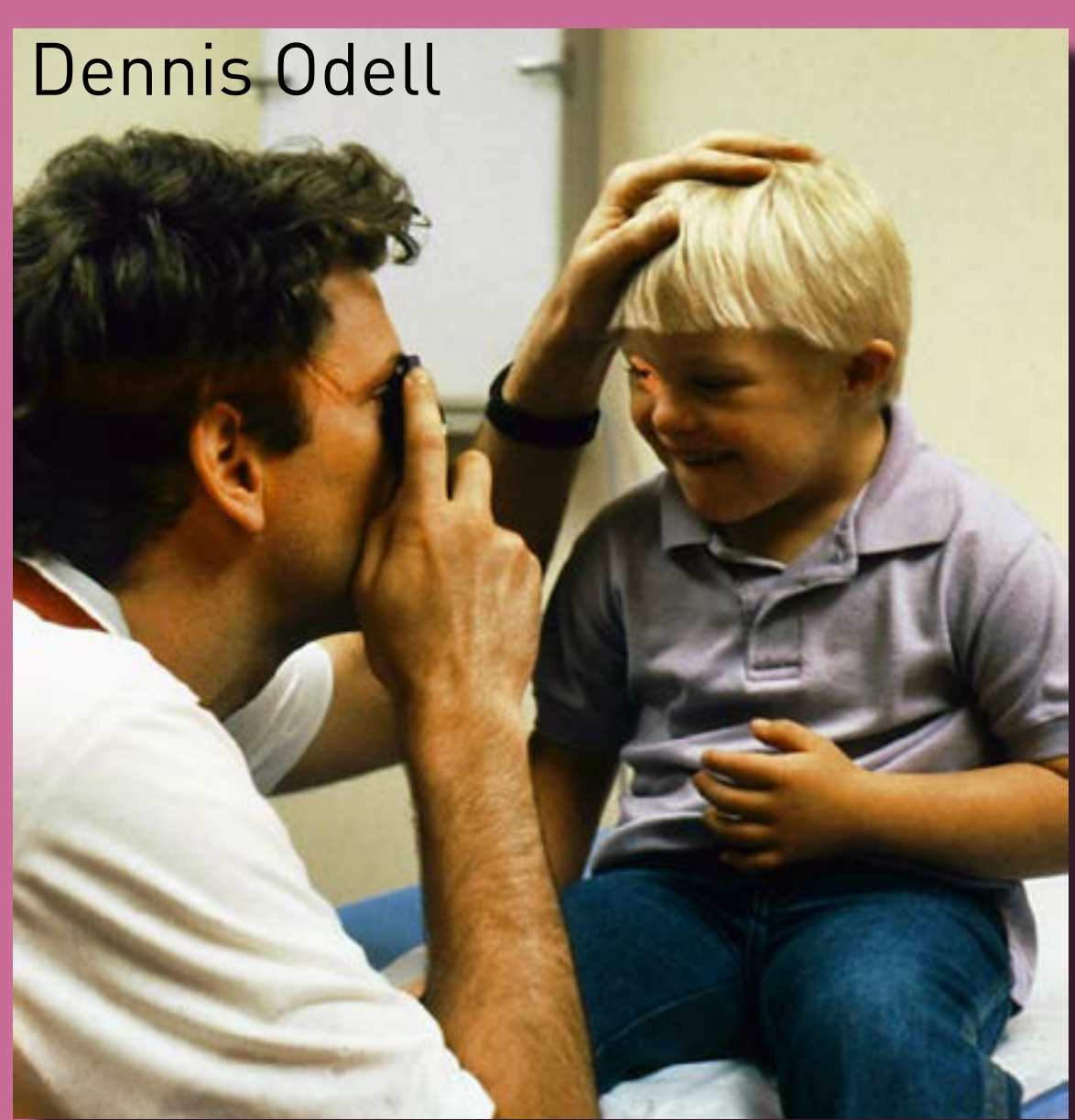
1983: The ECC begins a controversial five-year process to close the classrooms offering services to school-age students with disabilities. The students are mainstreamed into the Cache and Logan school districts.



“What would be the CPD’s greatest influence off University Hill? If you had to say it in one word, it would be ‘policy.’”
 —Dr. Sarah Rule, former CPD director

1984: The center’s name changes to Developmental Center for Handicapped Persons, reflecting the shift towards serving people across the lifespan.

Voting Accessibility of the Elderly and Handicapped Act ensures accessibility at polling places.



Policy work begins that will ultimately influence how children with hearing impairments are tested, identified and educated. It grows out of early intervention research commenced at the DCHP.

1985: Dr. Dennis Odell comes to the DCHP as its Medical Division Director.

Burlington School v. Department of Education finds schools not providing services must pay for the private education of children with disabilities.



1987: UAFs become University Affiliated Programs, data tracks their effectiveness, developmental disability money is provided for training.



1989: The Americans with Disabilities Act is passed.

Lisa P. v. Angus is a Utah Case that required least-restrictive environments for people with disabilities. It sends 220 people from the Utah State Developmental Center into the community.

1989: The Utah Assistive Technology Program begins, following policy work undertaken by Dr. Marvin Fifield with Senator Orrin Hatch. It results in legislation that sets up AT programs in all states.



The Community/Family Partnership, led by Dr. Sebastian Streifel, begins examining poverty and the disproportionate number of children with disabilities born into poor families. The DCHP site is one of many nationwide.



The Family Intervention Program begins under the direction of current Exemplary Services Director Sue Olsen. Now called the Up to 3 Program, it remains a strong tie between the CPD and the community.

Late 1980s: The DCHP expands its use of technology in education by introducing telecommunication in education settings and developing videodiscs. Those involved in videodisc production maintain to this day that the technology was better than the DVDs that replaced it.





1990s: Hearing testing on infants becomes standard in the state of Utah, following research begun at the CPD. It was piloted in Logan and became required statewide in 1998.

1990: The Agent Orange Family Assistance Program serves Utah, Idaho, Nevada and Wyoming veterans and their families who have children with disabilities. The \$142,000 grant was funded from \$240 million in out-of-court settlements by manufacturers of Agent Orange, used in the Vietnam and Korean wars. The US government did not recognize an association between the herbicide and disability at the time.



1991: The Developmental Center for Handicapped Persons becomes the Center for Persons with Disabilities.



The Indian Children's Program begins, partnering with university affiliated programs in Arizona and New Mexico to provide services to Native American children with disabilities. The program continues today, with the CPD playing a technical assistance role.

Jerry's Orphans, a group of former poster children, stage their first picket of the Jerry Lewis telethon.

The Utah Assistive Technology Foundation is established to help Utahns purchase AT with low-interest loans.



“Since 1975 when Congress passed HB 94-142 [IDEA’s forerunner], the nation’s school population has dropped nine and a half percent. But the population in special education programs has increased 150 percent. ... We know without question that we can keep a majority of kids in regular classrooms by doing nothing more than giving teachers better skills.”
 –Glenn Latham, quoted in the Deseret News, December 23, 1991



1993: The AT Laboratory is established with the Industrial Technology Education Department. Richard Baer, Rick Escobar, and Amy Henningsen take the lead in developing an interdisciplinary AT course.

1992: The “Mad Math” series wins an Emmy. It was developed in cooperation with the CPD’s Center of Excellence in Technology, which supplied some fast-moving graphics to illustrate concepts used in the educational series. The award arrives on the USU campus two years later and now sits in former Technology Division Director Alan Hofmeister’s office.



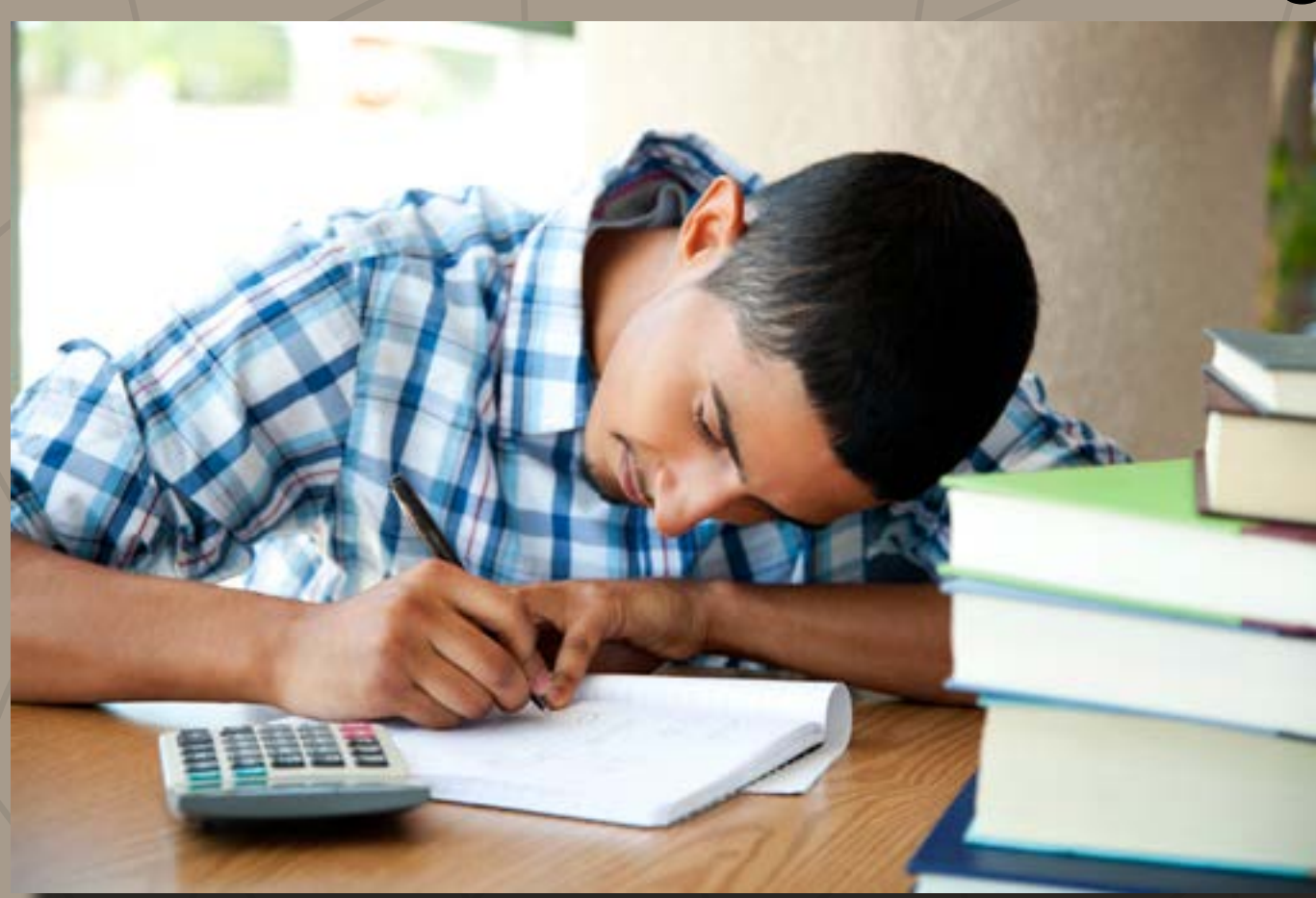
1993: Bangerter v Orem lawsuit concludes Utah cities cannot use zoning practices to keep group homes out of residential areas.

1993: The journal Early Education and Development devotes an entire issue to the Early Intervention Research Institute's research on the effectiveness of intervention programs for very young children. It challenges assumptions about early intervention, generates some controversy, and eventually helps inform current evidence-based practices in early intervention.



“*Our conclusions challenged some things. There was a lot of skepticism.... In reality we were kind of at the forefront of the evidence-based movement.*
—Dr. Mark Innocenti,
current director CPD Research and Evaluation Division, in a 2011 interview

1995: Interagency Outreach Training Initiative (IOTI) is established to address gaps in training already offered in Utah. It is administered by the CPD.



Videodiscs are developed at the CPD to teach math concepts to English language learners at the high school level. They are used in Odgen, Puerto Rico and cities all over the United States.

1996: Federal funds for the Utah Assistive Technology Program are cut by 40 percent. The CPD helps the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation obtain state funds to take over the operation of the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) in Salt Lake City.



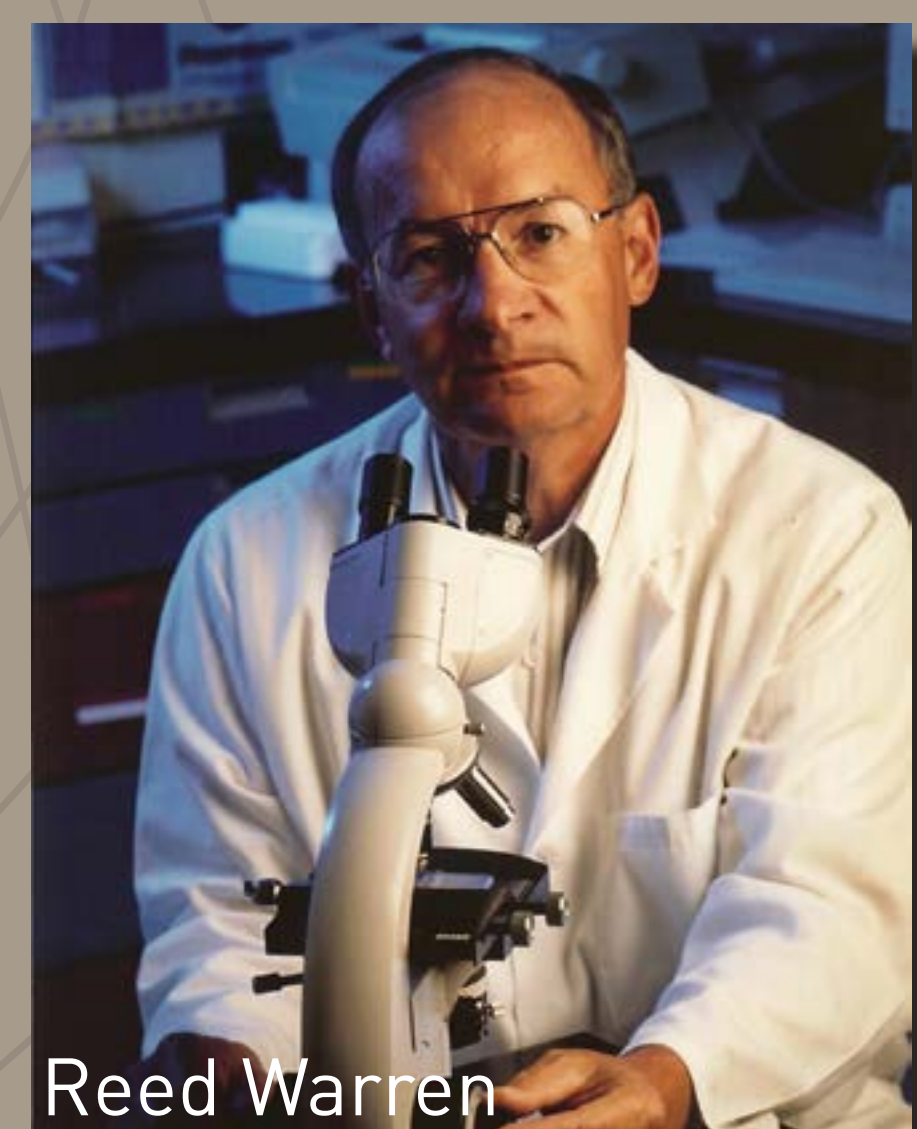
1997: The Disability Law Center's Citizens' Democracy Project teams up with IOTI and establishes eight disability action teams. The Tri-County Independent Living Center grew out of this effort; so did transportation for people with disabilities in Cedar City.

1998: Dr. Reed Warren, autism researcher, passes away at age 55. The CPD's biomedical lab now bears his name.



Cyndi Rowland and WebAIM staff

The WebAIM program is established under the direction of Dr. Cyndi Rowland, focusing on the new field of Internet accessibility. Its influence will be felt worldwide as it helps web developers to make their information available to people with disabilities.



Reed Warren

“*You can't today operate very well in society if you don't have access to the web. It cuts across all strata and just about every function.*
—Dr. Cyndi Rowland, in a 2010 interview on Utah Public Radio.



2000: Dr. Sarah Rule becomes director of the CPD after serving as the Outreach Division Director for many years.

Early 2000s: The Reading for all Learners program, which grew out of CPD research, is implemented. Today it exists as a private company and is used all over the United States as a way to boost reading for children of all abilities.



2001: URLEND comes to the CPD through the efforts of Dr. Judith Holt, who enters a partnership with the University of Utah to co-administer the program. It provides training for future health care leaders in Utah. Over time, URLEND grows from 12 to 47 trainees and reaches professionals in Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, North Dakota and Montana—thanks to distance education.



The CPD begins work on traumatic brain injury, assessing needs and laying groundwork for policy that will follow.



September 11 attacks occur. Many people with disabilities are unable to evacuate the twin towers in New York City after hijacked planes ram into them. The attacks kill nearly 3000 people in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

The “Opening Utah’s Doors” project begins at the CPD. It later becomes “Utah Clicks,” allowing people to apply for services with a single application. It also is the basis for a new small business run by CPD alumna Adrienne Akers.

2002: CPD researchers, led by Dr. Anthony Ron Torres, identify an association between the fourth complement C4 null allele and autoimmune problems. Their studies also show that families with those problems are more likely to have children with autism.



Construction begins on Angel’s Landing, an inclusive playground in Logan’s Willow Park. It is spearheaded by Keith Christensen, a CPD faculty fellow. It is completed in 2005.

2003: The Autism Support Services: Education, Research, and Training (ASSERT) program begins under the direction of Dr. Thomas Higbee.



2004: The National Center for Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE) was established at the CPD, the basis for the CPD’s national policy work revising Web accessibility. It also prompted CPD international work with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

The CPD, the Disability Law Center and the state Elections Office work to ensure accessibility at voter polling places in Utah.



“The Council is in consensus that the current response and recovery system must continue to improve so that the tragedies experienced by members of the disability community... during and after Hurricane Katrina will not be repeated.”

–US Department of Homeland Security report, “Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness,” September 2006

2005: Hurricane Katrina hits the Gulf area around New Orleans. Its effects are especially devastating to people with disabilities, who had trouble evacuating and accessing shelter, medications and care.

2005: USU's Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation is ranked 19th nationwide by US News and World Report, thanks in part to the CPD's support of its programs for people with disabilities.



2005-2007: CPD research focuses on building and landscape design that enables people with disabilities to escape in an emergency.



2006: UATP receives a seed grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeves foundation to establish the Citizens Reutilization Assistive Technology Equipment (CReATE) program in Salt Lake City. It is a collaborative venture with the Utah Center for Assistive Technology to provide mobility devices to Utahns who need them.

2007: The Center for Technical Assistance of Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) is created under the direction of Dr. John Copenhaver. It is the CPD's technical assistance division, and the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center falls under its umbrella.



John Copenhaver



Bryce Fifield

2008: Dr. Bryce Fifield becomes the CPD's director. Fifield worked at the Center in the late 70's and early 80's while doing undergraduate and graduate work at USU.



IOTI training programs focus on helping people with disabilities and their families prepare for an emergency.

2010: Rosa's Law passes, striking the words "mentally retarded" from federal law.

The United States signs the UN Convention on Rights for Persons with Disabilities.



Pres. Obama hugs Rosa Marcellino after signing "Rosa's Law".

The National Children's Study begins. The CPD is one of many sites nationwide dedicated to study the effects of the environment on children's development and disability. It is slated to collect data for 20 years.



The StartSmart project begins in New Mexico, with the aim of evaluating the benefits of an extended school year on learning.

“There are still children who go to school in segregated settings. Less than one quarter of people with disabilities are engaged in integrated employment. Others live and work in segregated facilities and are paid sub-minimum wages. There continue to be inequities in individuals' access to health care, housing, transportation, and employment.”

–A. Anthony Antosh, president-elect of the AUCD Board of Directors, in 2011



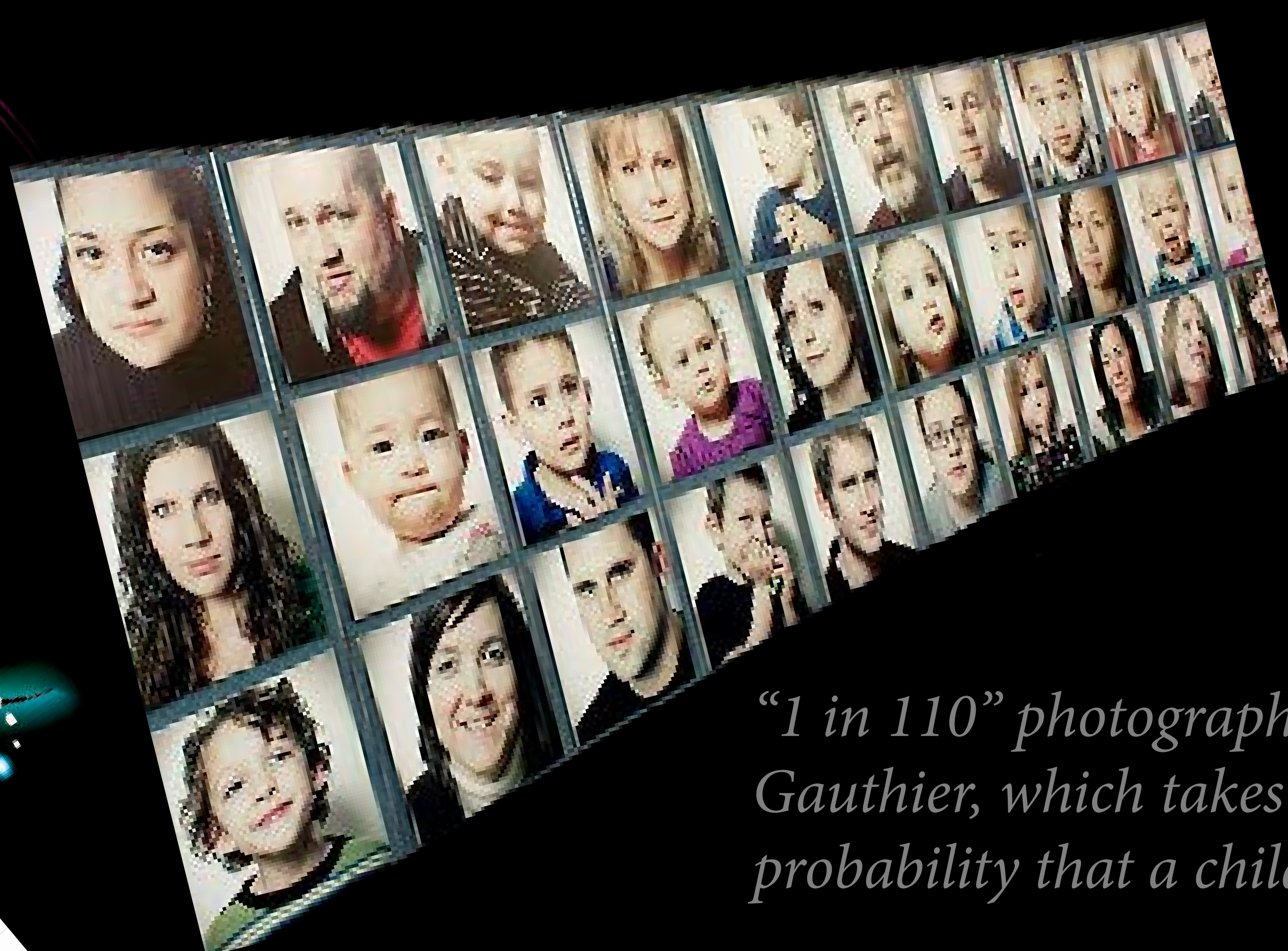
of the many physical, social, and emotional benefits of a well-designed play area. Private donors played an important part in making the playground a reality.

2011: The Developmental Playground is dedicated. The vision of the playground for young children came from CPD experts who are well aware



2012: The CPD commemorates 40 years with celebrations throughout the year.

USU Homecoming parade



"1 in 110" photography exhibit by Christopher Gauthier, which takes its name from the statistical probability that a child will be diagnosed with autism.

A visit from Temple Grandin was sponsored by the CPD and the College of Agriculture. Grandin lectured to a packed auditorium on autism.



Celebration of Human Rights Day, featuring month-long poster exhibit highlighting disability and advocacy at the Merrill-Cazier Library.

Performance of Handel's Messiah by the American Festival Chorus and Orchestra dedicated to the CPD, and enhanced by the American Sign Language interpreters for the Deaf.



Summer picnic and swim party

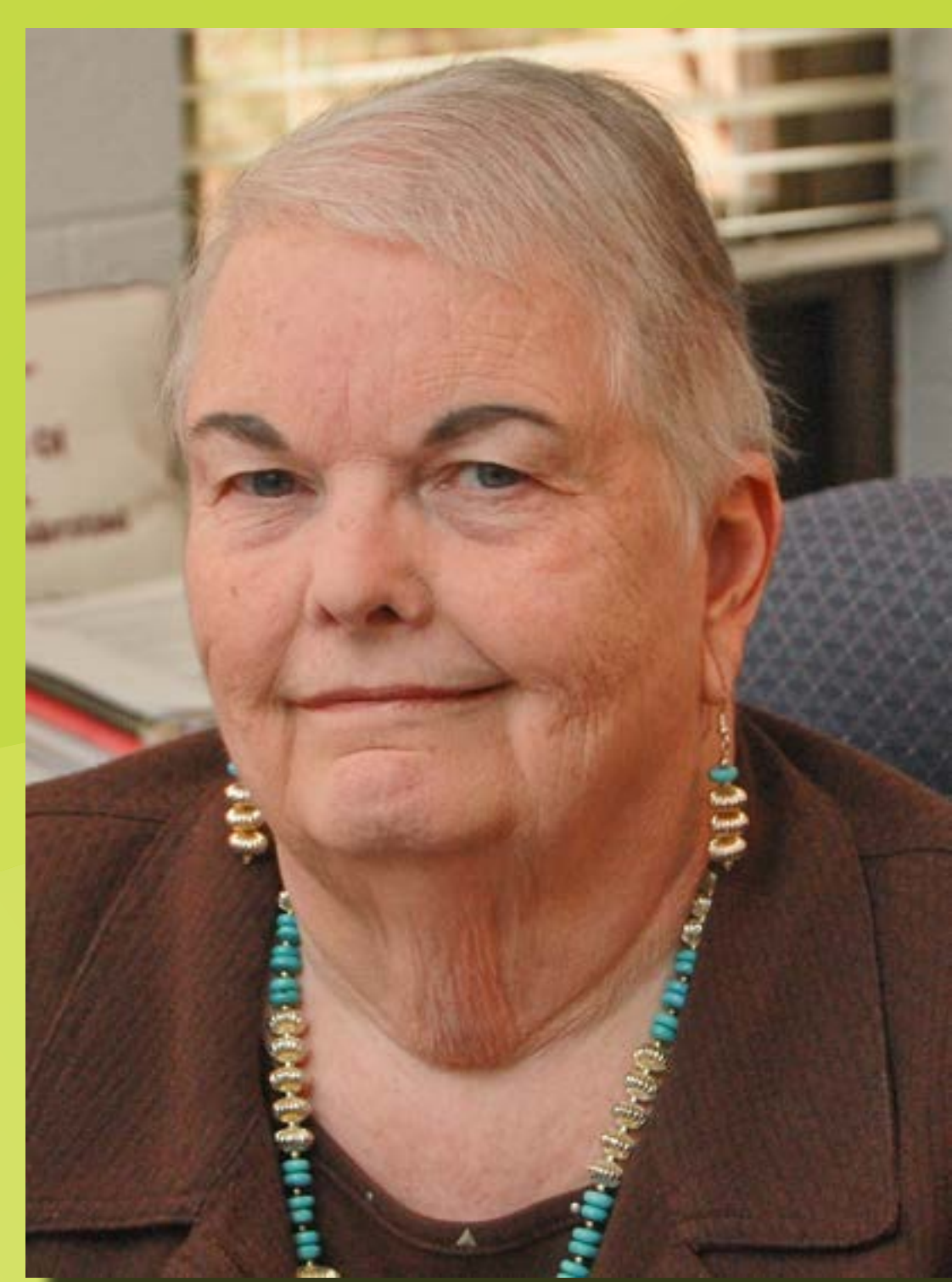


2013: Sachin Pavithran, director of the Utah Assistive Technology Program, is appointed as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (commonly referred to as the U.S. Access Board) by President Barack Obama. He later serves as vice-chair and chairman.

2014: Aggies Elevated, a CPD pilot program offering an inclusive college experience for young adults with intellectual disabilities, makes history when it welcomes its first cohort. The two-year certificate program was the only one of its kind, though opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities have rapidly expanded in the past few years.



2015: Dr. Judith Holt, who has served as Interdisciplinary Training director for more than a decade, is named Interim Director. She shepherds the CPD through moving in anticipation of the original CPD building's demolition to make way for the new Center for Clinical Excellence, which will integrate various USU clinics and services, including CPD clinical projects, in an interdisciplinary environment.



2016: The original CPD building is razed. Staff and friends bid farewell to the structure with a graffiti party. The building that houses CPD staff since demolition began is renamed the Center for Persons with Disabilities.



2017: Dr. Matt Wappett takes the reins as CPD Director. Wappett's background is in special education and disability studies; most of his research has been directed at creating inclusive environments to accommodate the needs of diverse populations. He leads the center through two years of pandemic and an institutional name change.

2021: The Center becomes the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice. The widening scope and nature of the original center's programs qualified it for new designation as an institute, clarifying its organizational hierarchy and increasing its overall visibility and impact. The change in designation was reviewed and approved by the USU Board of Trustees in 2021.

