



2011 GRA
Legislative Seminar—Atlanta
Georgia

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

GRA President, Larry Shedd



I want to express my admiration and appreciation to our organization for the stellar way in which we all have stood up for the causes we all hold so dear in our work together. As each of us work in this private, professional organization, it is good to see that there is a heart for doing the right thing as we work in sync to achieve our goals.

The Legislative Seminar in Atlanta showed the way we can work together to achieve the best for the people we serve and also for those that work with people with disabilities. Our goal is to advocate and educate, and we did just that in Atlanta. My hat is off to Cheryl Ussery and Cheryl Williamson for overseeing this venture, and keeping it as one of the best attended in my remembrance of that event. Others have been as well attended, but this one was best attended in terms of interest and mindset as to what we needed to hear for the future of service to others.

I believe that Commissioner Butler has raised the bar to make working with disabled people a priority and to make sure that all programs under the Department of Labor are led by the right people who have a vision and focus for those programs. Leadership, independent pursuit and self-directed thinking are the keys to our success in whatever we do, whether in public or private circles. He is willing to give the reins to the right person to do that, and that is a good sign for the future of us all. Commissioner Butler indicated changes are forthcoming in several ways, and my hat is off to him in his endeavors to make that a reality. We all must be accountable in what we do.

We now have a former client of VR as a new NRA/GRA member who is sold on our advocacy. This was done through competent and knowledgeable work of professional GRA members. Professionals who provide services to the disabled are the heroes who deserve the best for what they do. We have others in leadership and in the community who do make a difference everyday in the lives of others with disabilities, and it was good to hear from those at the Seminar in Atlanta. We must prepare for the future, and I call upon us all to get involved and make a difference in what we do and what we become. Likewise, GRA must prepare for the future to function as independently as possible, regardless of what happens in other circles. Get to know your representatives who serve your area either in the Congress or the House, nationally and locally. No one can do it but you and me.



Above— 2011 GRA Public Service Award Winner, State Representative Michael Harden, with Larry Shedd

As we advocate for all individuals with disabilities, I ask that we stay strong and like minded toward that one goal. We will not become successful if we seek personal applause. We will become successful if we work together, without regard to self, toward that higher goal of professional pride for what we do, which will inherently lead to personal reward. We all need to know that we do make a difference!

Cheryl Ussery's article on our Washington trip shows that we do make a difference even that far away from home. I appreciate her willingness to stay involved on that level, and that we have the NRA President, our own Tom Wilson there to help us work for the future.
Stay strong and..... GRer!



Right— GDOL Commissioner, Mark Butler with 2011 GRA President, Larry Shedd

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2011 GRA Executive Board

Below—Guest Speakers, Susan Sherman, GDOL/VR Assistant Director & Tom Wilson, 2011 NRA President



Below—2011 GRA Legislative Event Registration Workers



Right—Keynote Speaker, GDOL Commissioner Mark Butler and 2011 Client Guest Presenter, Dwana Baker

Georgia Rehabilitation Association

Legislative Update March 2011

2011 NRA **GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS SUMMIT**

Cheryl Meadows Ussery & Cheryl Williamson
Co-Chairs, Educational and Advocacy

The 2011 Summit was held March 20th through March 22nd in Alexandria, Virginia and Washington D.C. Welcoming remarks were made by our own Tom Wilson, NRA President and Beverlee Stafford, NRA Executive Director. I must say this was one of the best Summits I have had the privilege of attending. Patricia Leahy, NRA's Governmental Affairs Director, her committee, and NRA staff outdid themselves. The 2011 Summit was by far directed toward Vocational Rehabilitation which pertains to all of us whether we are from the public or private sector. To name only a few of the outstanding list of presenters was the Honorable Christine Griffin, Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management; Sue Swenson, Director NIDRR, U. S. Department of Education; Allison S. Levy, Departmental Disability Employment Program Manager, Department of Agriculture; Michael J. Kawczynski, Disability Outreach Coordinator, National Institute of Health, Department of Human Services; Ruth Fanning, Director of Veterans Rehabilitation and Education Services; Arron Bishop, Executive Director, National Council on Disability; and staff from offices of Senator Harkin, Senator Enzi and Congressman Miller.

All attendees went to the "hill" and visited their Senators and Congressmen. Although Georgia did not have a representative for each of the Georgia Congresspersons as we have in the past, all the Senators and Congressmen were visited and presented with small gifts. Copies of issue statements regarding Vocational Rehabilitation and people with disabilities were discussed and given to each.

The NRA Congressional Luncheon was held in the Rayburn House Office Building. Again, our own Tom Wilson, NRA President presented four "Lead on Awards".



Pictured @ Left: NRA President Tom Wilson presenting the "Lead on Award" to Kathy West-Evans, Founder Director of the National Employment Team.

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Cheryl Meadows Ussery & Cheryl Williamson
Co-Chairs, Educational and Advocacy

**General Session—
Governmental Affairs Summit
March 2011**



**2011 Georgia Delegation
In
Washington, D.C. with NRA
Executives.**

**Pictured left to right:
Larry Shedd, GRA Presi-
dent, Joy Kniskern, GA Dele-
gation, Cheryl Ussery, GRA
Education & Advocacy Co-
Chair, Patricia Leahy, NRA
Governmental Affairs Direc-
tor, Beverlee Stafford, NRA
Executive Director, Tom Wil-**