

# Founding Philosophy of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology (ARA)

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The purpose of this paper is to respond to an invitation to present the underlying philosophy and purposes of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology when it was established in 1966. The Academy was formed in order to provide an opportunity for those directly or indirectly involved in the habilitation or rehabilitation of hearing-impaired persons to exchange information vital to the better understanding of the habilitative/rehabilitative processes. It was not meant to be a professional association or to compete with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in terms of membership or program. Included are excerpts from the remarks made by this writer as the founding President at the first open meeting held to provide an opportunity to guests to express an interest in becoming members of the Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology.

When invited to make some comments regarding the maturation of the ARA, it was suggested that mine be made in the context of the past. Thus I would like to share with you the remarks I made on November 18, 1966, as the founding ARA President. The occasion was the first open meeting of the Academy, held at Gallaudet College and in conjunction with the meeting of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The meeting fulfilled several purposes among which was to give an opportunity for those attending to express their interest in becoming members of the Academy. Prior to the Gallaudet meeting the Academy was founded and organized in conjunction with a small seminar on rehabilitative audiology held at Michigan State University. The seminar participation was by invitation and supported by the then Vocational Rehabilitation Administration. Each of the participants presented a position paper on some aspect of rehabilitative audiology. These papers brought together as a report formed the foundation upon which the Academy was formed.

My remarks made that evening at Gallaudet reflect the attitude and the thoughts of the founding members of the Academy and not mine alone.

My opening remarks were entitled "An Academy Is Born" and some pertinent excerpts from those remarks are as follows:

As I wrote to each of you some time ago, this Academy was established

in recognition of the fact that there was need for a greater emphasis on rehabilitative audiology, and that a forum should exist that would provide for exchange of information concerning problems, procedures, research, etc. in aural rehabilitation. Its purposes are:

1. to stimulate scientific research in the process of rehabilitation of auditorally handicapped children and adults
2. to provide a forum for exchange of information and viewpoints important to rehabilitative audiology concerning such things as:
  - a. the relationships of diagnostic findings to aural rehabilitation
  - b. research findings in aural rehabilitation
  - c. current clinical and educational procedures
  - d. case finding problems and methods
  - e. programs for auditorally handicapped
  - f. kinds of professional relationships with allied workers that serve to support the rehabilitative process

The Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology is in *no way* a splinter group of ASHA. It *will not* deal with professional matters that are rightfully the responsibility of *our* professional association. It *will not* detract from the annual convention program of ASHA, but conversely, should bolster the convention program by generating a greater interest in an area that has been sorely neglected. It will neither seek to compete with any existing lay or professional groups whose principal interests are in the areas of hearing or deafness, *nor will it* provide a platform or forum for those who wish to promote parochial interests in such groups.

If I am at all sensitive to the intent of those responsible for the founding of this Academy, I believe the desire is that this group be unencumbered by the burdens, concerns, and complexities that characterize professional associations, but rather that it be characterized by simplicity of structure and program — in which virtually 100% of any members' time is devoted directly to the problems of rehabilitative audiology.

The group of people responsible for the establishment of this Academy has met on several occasions throughout the past two years. At the most recent meeting, last March, each person presented a prepared paper followed by a discussion by the others in the group. These papers and discussions have been published as a report and are available to you if you wish to pick up a copy following this meeting.

Thus an academy was established whose principal purposes were to promote scientific research and the application of those findings to habilitative/rehabilitative processes. The Academy meetings were to provide the forum for exchange of information concerning clinical-scientific efforts and clinical endeavor.

The Academy was intended to be a group of invited individuals whose main activities were in clinics or schools dealing with hearing-impaired persons or in the laboratories attempting to derive a better understanding of problems of audition which cause handicap.

As an academy, which differs from a professional organization, the hope was to be able to attract a membership representing various disciplines,

psychology, medicine, sociology, etc. It was never meant to be a large group, but rather a small group, all of whom, irrespective of disciplinary backgrounds could contribute to a clearer understanding of the impact of hearing loss upon the many dimensions of human existence.