



"It's All About Expectations"

**Omni Hotel – CNN Tower
Atlanta, Georgia
February 21, 2011**

CAVEATS



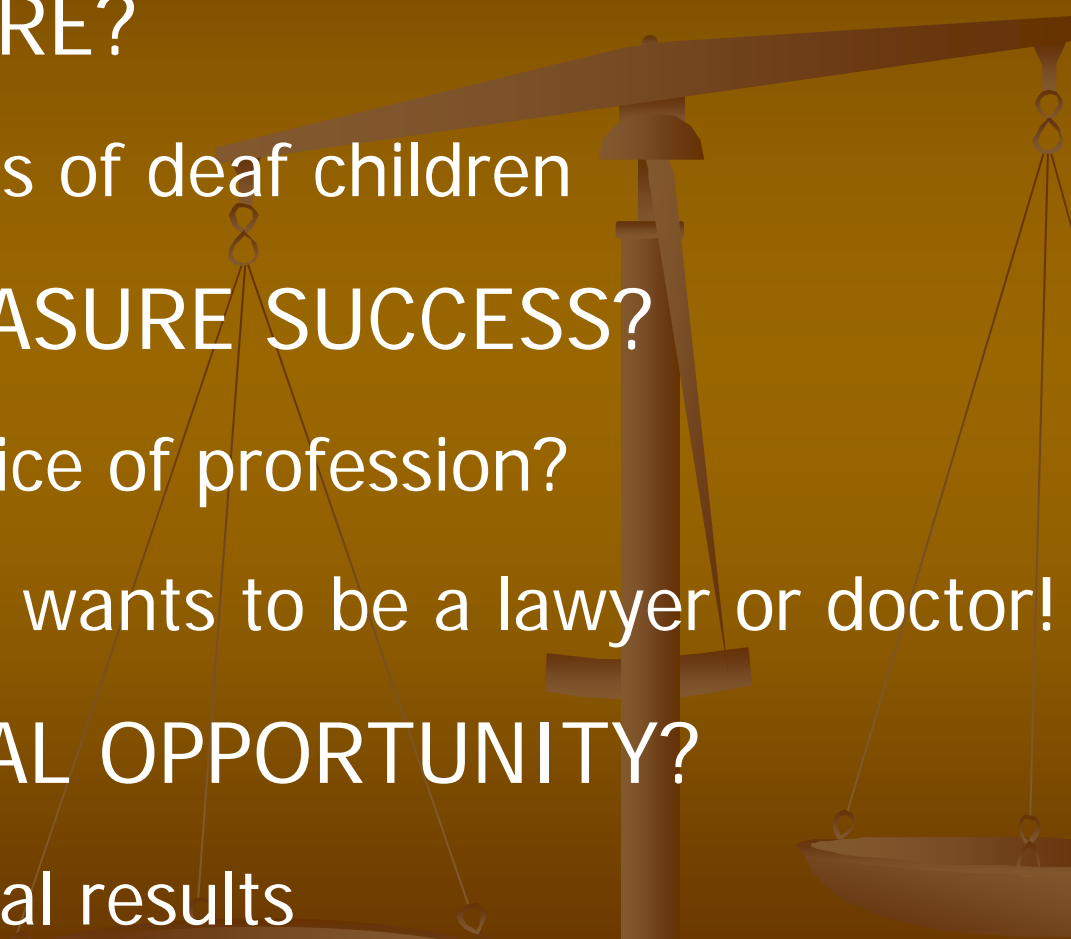
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ALTERNATE TITLE: HOW TO BREED DEAF LAWYERS

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A short story about me...

EXPECTATIONS FOR DEAF CHILDREN

- WHY ARE WE HERE?
 - To ensure success of deaf children
 - HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?
 - Measured by choice of profession?
 - But not everyone wants to be a lawyer or doctor!
 - SUCCESS = EQUAL OPPORTUNITY?
 - Measured by equal results
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BEYOND THE DETECTION

- Early detection is the start, but the proper educational intervention is the real future for every deaf child
- When parents find out their child is deaf, expectations typically drop. It's time to raise expectations!
- How do we get past the low expectations?

A STORY ABOUT LOW EXPECTATIONS

- Once upon a time, a long long long time ago, there was a class of deaf children
- A school staff person asked them what they wanted to be...
- As each child signed their dream job...
- Let's look at some fun anecdotal "evidence"

WILHELMSTADT MIT FLEISCH UND BROT?

Our Gang 1973-1974



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our Gang 1973-1974



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our Gang 1973-1974



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our Gang 1973-1974



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our Gang 1973-1974



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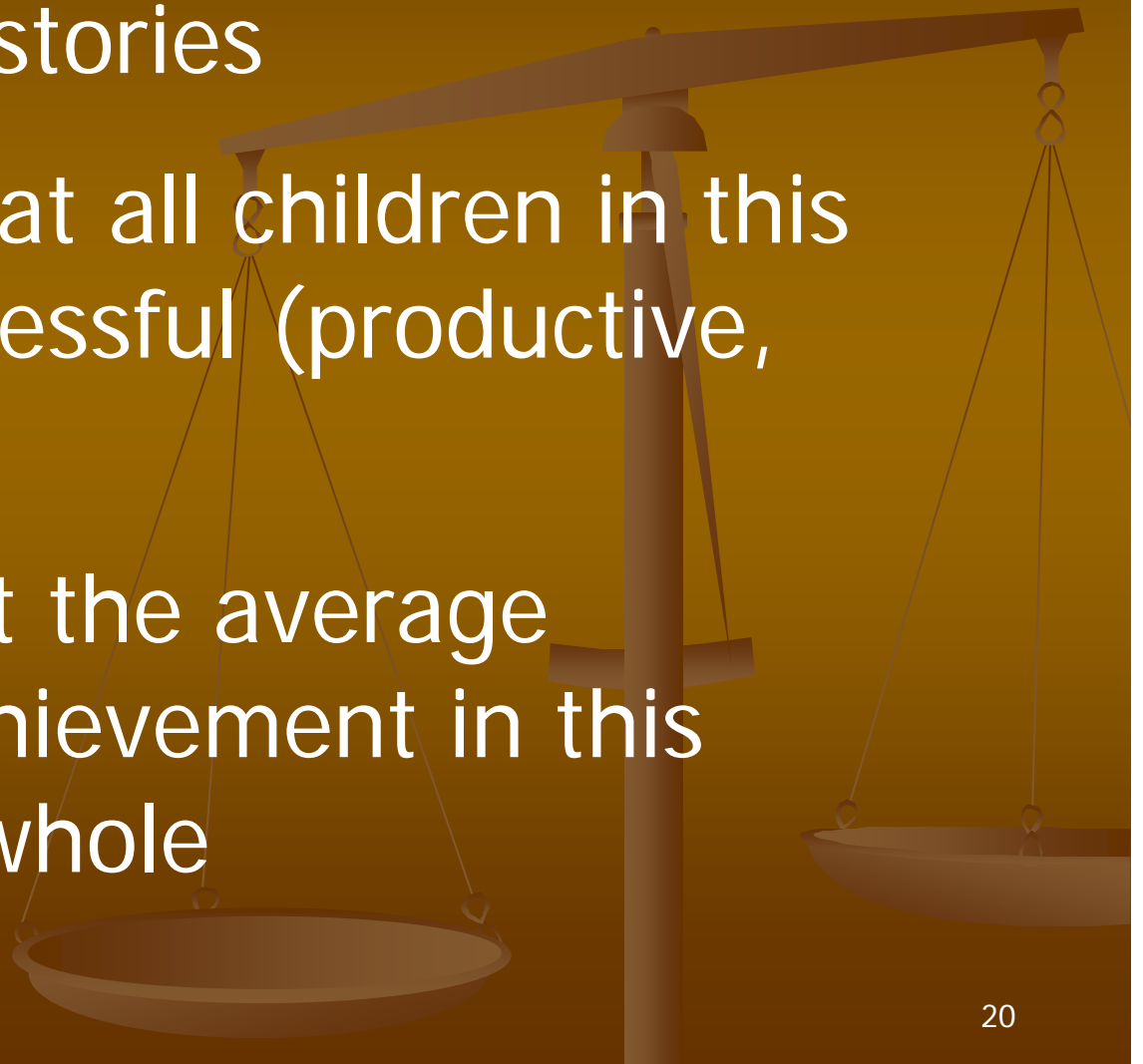
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Our Gang 1973-1974



WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS GROUP?

- Some success stories
- Could argue that all children in this group are successful (productive, independent)
- Need to look at the average educational achievement in this program as a whole



AVERAGES IN THIS GROUP

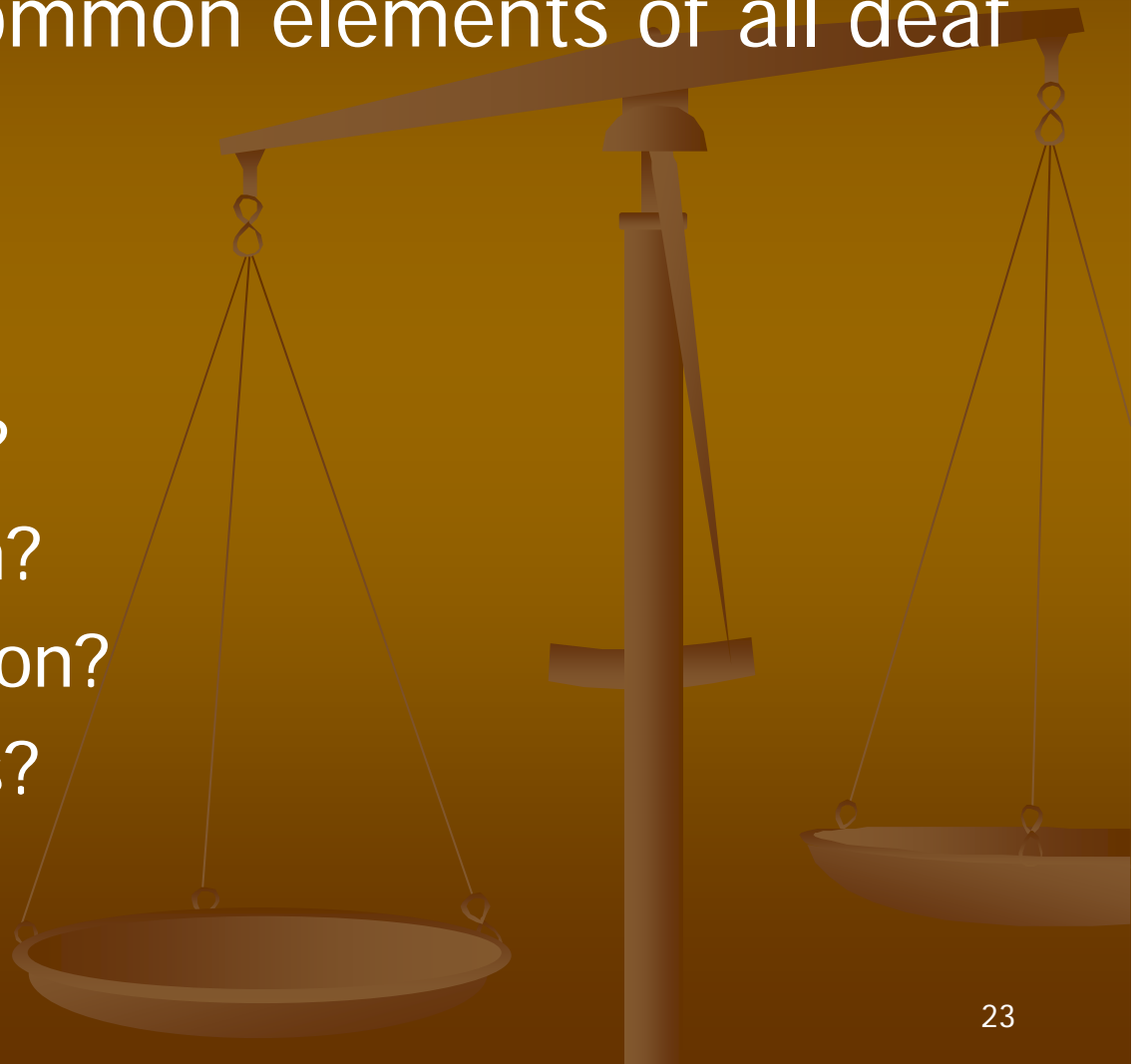
- Average of group's reading levels were either on par with or slightly below the norm of hearing peers
- But is that how we measure success?
- Do we look at their reading levels? Their careers? Other factors?

CAN WE LOOK AT DEAF SUCCESSSES FOR CLUES?

- Average educational achievement within the entire program is a crucial factor
- But other indicators of success may reveal clues on how to improve the average
- While lawyers are not the embodiment of success, you're stuck with my profession for today!

ATTORNEY ANECDOTES

- What are the common elements of all deaf attorneys?
 - Language?
 - Methodology?
 - Type of School?
 - Support System?
 - Early Intervention?
 - Family Business?
 - Other Factors?

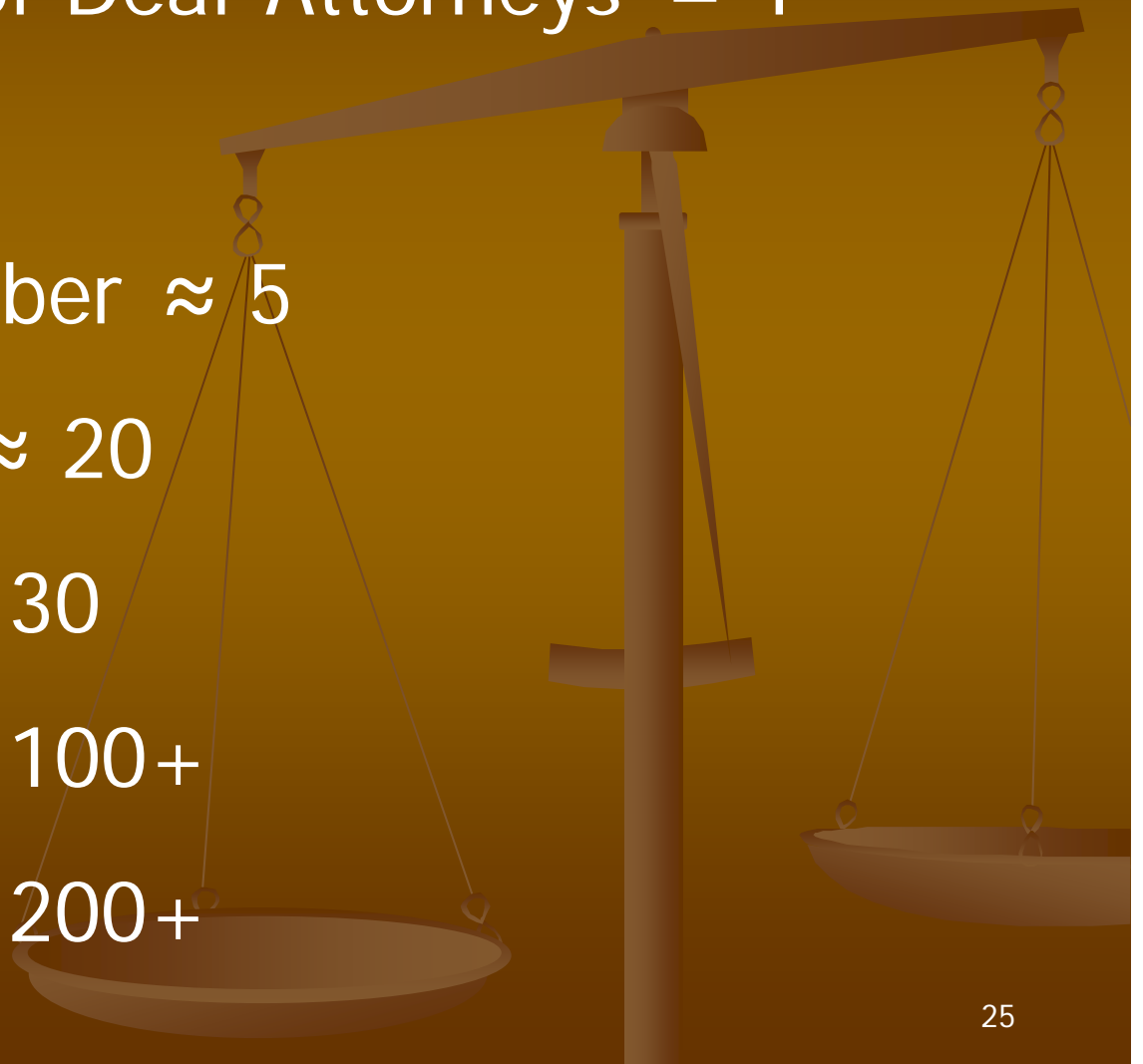


ANCIENT HISTORY OF DEAF ATTORNEYS

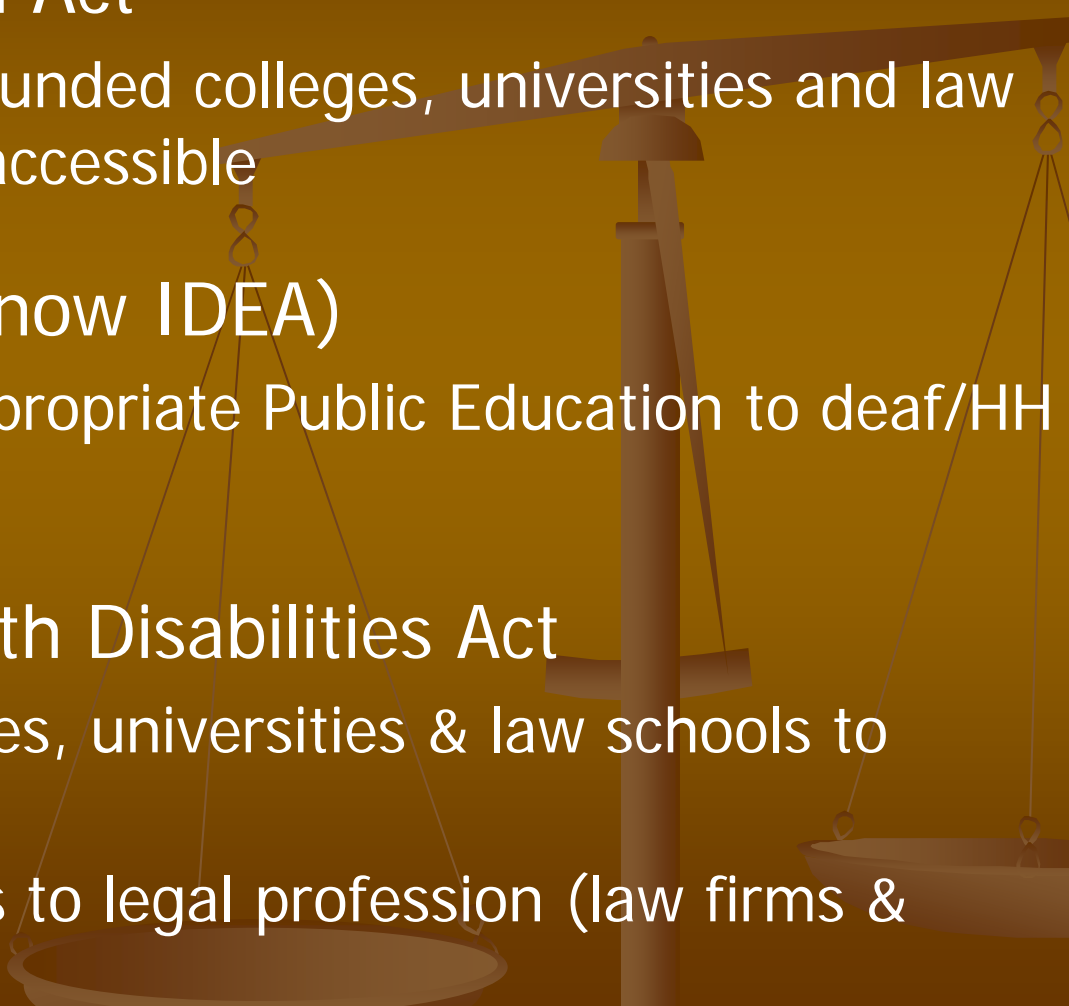
- 1829: First Deaf Barrister in England (John William Lowe)
- Individual deaf attorneys after Lowe:
 - 1870's: Archibald & Duncan MacLellan brothers (Canada)
 - 1896: Theodore Grady (California)
 - 1904: B.F. Round (Wisconsin)
 - 1908: Roger D. O'Kelly (Connecticut?)
 - 1912: Henry C. White (Arizona)

RECENT ADVENT OF DEAF ATTORNEYS

- 1960's: Number of Deaf Attorneys = 1
(Lowell Myers)
- Late 1970's: Number \approx 5
- 1980's: Number \approx 20
- 1992: Number \approx 30
- 2006: Number \approx 100+
- 2011: Number \approx 200+

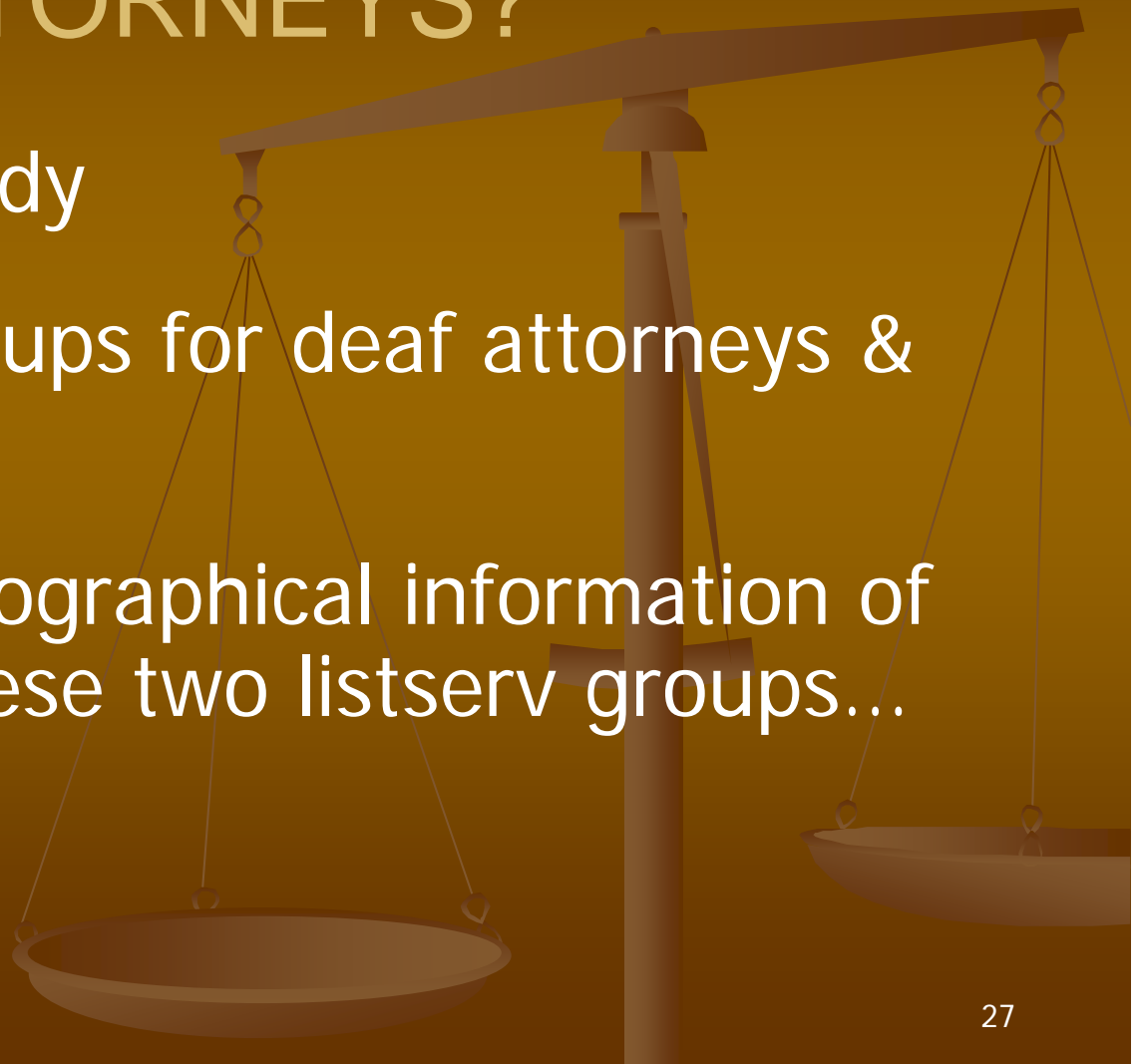


POSSIBLE REASONS FOR HUGE INCREASE IN DEAF ATTORNEYS

- 1973: Rehabilitation Act
 - Required Federally funded colleges, universities and law schools to become accessible
 - 1975: P.L. 94-142 (now IDEA)
 - Established Free Appropriate Public Education to deaf/HH children
 - 1992: Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Required ALL colleges, universities & law schools to become accessible
 - Also required access to legal profession (law firms & courthouses)
- 

BUT WHAT WERE THE COMMON ELEMENTS FOR DEAF ATTORNEYS?

- No scientific study
- Two listserv groups for deaf attorneys & law students
- Based on the biographical information of attorneys on these two listserv groups...



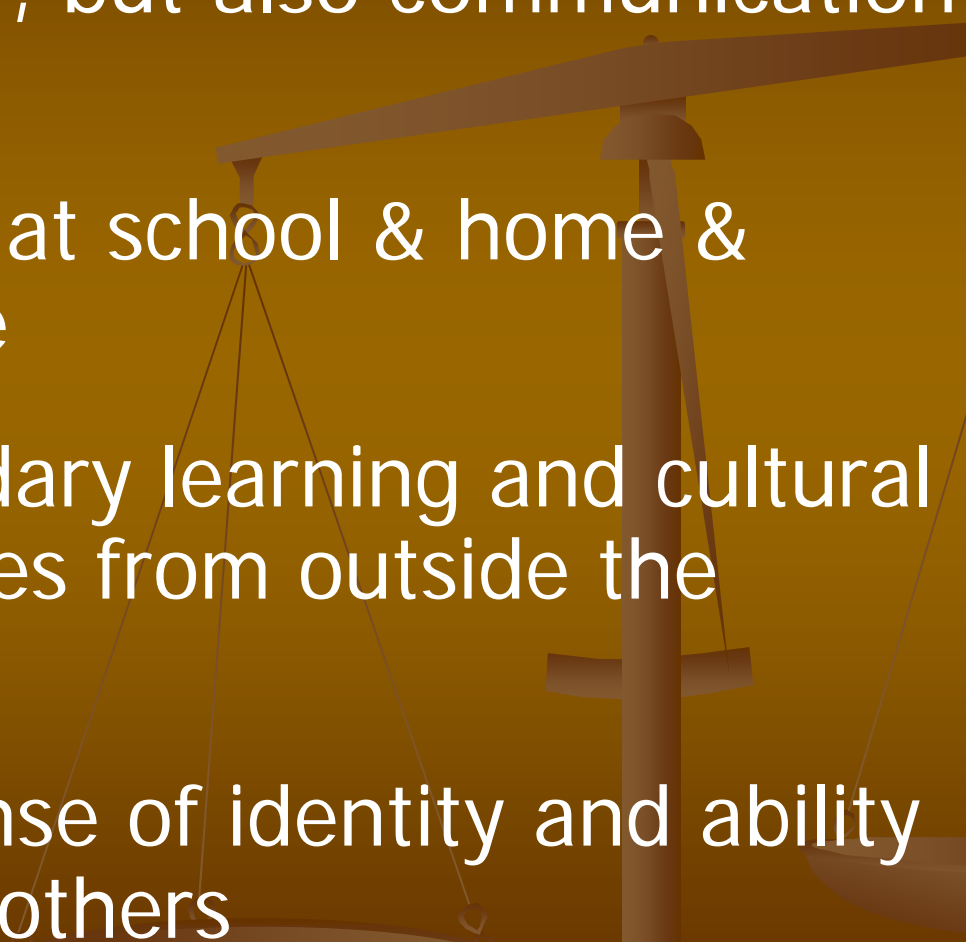
NO OBVIOUS COMMON ELEMENTS

- All kinds of methodologies
- All kinds of schools
- Most had significant family support & varying levels of early intervention
- Most faced some degree of doubt from educators or other professionals
- Main commonality = high level of literacy & exposure to role models

SUCCESSFUL DEAF CHILDREN: WHAT DO I THINK?

- LITERACY, LITERACY, LITERACY!
- How do we promote better literacy in deaf children?
 - Many ideas
 - My love for reading came from...
 - Comic books!
 - Television (captions)

WHAT ELSE DO I THINK?

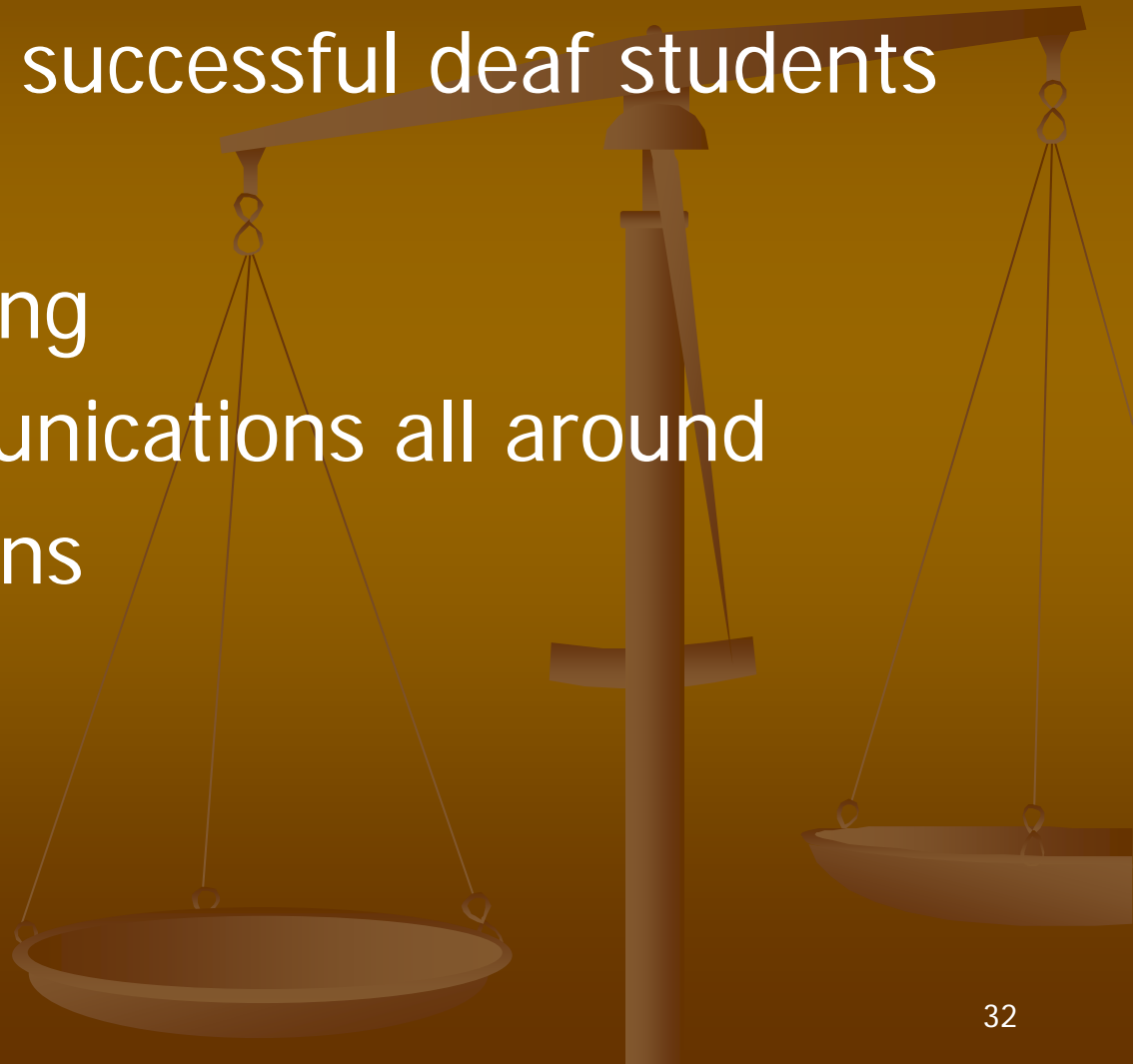
- Not only literacy, but also communication & social skills
 - Communication at school & home & everywhere else
 - So much secondary learning and cultural knowledge comes from outside the classroom
 - Need both a sense of identity and ability to interact with others
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FINAL THOUGHTS

- ROLE MODELS!
 - How my Jewish mother succeeded in elevating expectations for me
- Raise hopes & expectations
 - Not only within deaf children
 - But also parents and teachers
- Even if the child does not succeed in reaching the dream, striving for it will usually raise the bar

GO FORTH AND BREED...

- Entire classes of successful deaf students
- Encourage reading
- Maximize communications all around
- Raise expectations



THANK YOU

- For listening to a lawyer from Chicago...
- And for all that you do to ensure the success of our deaf children! Keep up the hard work!
- Do not despair when they end up suing the school district!

