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AGGIE MYSTORY

Aggie Helps Interpreters For Deaf Bridge Communication Gap

By Brian Hudgins

When a massive summer thunderstorm rumbled through Atlanta, Ga., Cori Dossett '94 started racing from room to room in a downtown hotel.

It is part of Dossett's daily effort to keep the lines of communication open between deaf people and those who are able to hear. She is the director of meetings for RID – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, based in Alexandria, Va.

Dossett's fast dash down the hallways of an Atlanta hotel in July was designed to alert RID members that a power outage caused by the storm would temporarily affect the audio-visual equipment being used at the organization's national conference.

"There were 2,000 RID members on hand in Atlanta," Dossett said. "We have 200 members who are certified deaf interpreters and we have a group of people who are deaf/blind. They are part of the National Association of the Deaf, which is a strong sister organization with us."

In the middle of the interpreters, security staff, hotel workers and college student volunteers was Dossett, who keeps the RID regional and national meetings running. She is



Dossett

responsible for five regional meetings, the national conferences and organization business meetings.

"I sleep, eat and breathe the national conference for about eight months," she said. "At the end of the conference, it is emotional. There is a letdown and some sadness, but there is also relief."

Although Dossett spent a week in Atlanta, checking out the outdoor attractions of Georgia's state capital was not on her schedule when the conference was in full swing. One of Dossett's duties for RID is to scout potential sites for meetings. When she walks into a hotel in Atlantic City or San Francisco, she has to try to see into the future—to project how a conference will fit into a certain facility.

"I have to think a lot about ADA laws [Americans with Disabilities Act laws] and accessibility for attendees," Dossett said. "We use a lot of audio and visual equipment. We use a lot of screens."

The equipment is a necessity so multiple people can communicate and be seen at the same time, whether a person is speaking aloud or using American Sign Language.

She did not have to look far to find the models that helped build her core values of integrity and selfless service.



Cori Dossett '94 with her cousin, Carla Carey Brand '88, at a work event in New Orleans. "She is the reason I went to A&M," Dossett said.

"That is certainly instilled from both of my parents – Jimmy Dossett and June Zauber," she said.

Dossett had a strong interest in education before she eventually made a career plan switch.

"I wanted to be a high school English teacher forever when I was a kid," Dossett said. "I started grad school and I really enjoyed working in the corporate world."

Before Dossett joined the RID staff, she worked as a technical writer and took a job as a trade show manager, which enabled her to participate in medical trade shows. That piqued her interest in working in the nonprofit sector. Her first management experience came in College Station.

"I worked in the Career Center at A&M for a couple of years. I loved it. I managed a team of five on the evening shift. It allowed me to observe a work environment and it gave me experience developing schedules.

Considering that RID has a staff of 18 employees, Dossett also counts on the excellence of others as she makes schedules, acts as a liaison between RID and hotel managers and completes reports on post-convention bills and expenses.

"We truly have to work as a team to make RID function." 🍎