



ADA TODAY



Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 4

January 2013

ODR Remembers Laura White



Laura Elaine White was born October 18, 1967 in Tulsa, OK, weighing just 3lbs., 1oz. She grew up near Kansas City, KS, attending school in the Shawnee Mission School District. Laura's interest in social work, service and politics showed themselves early. In the 9th grade, Laura received an award for excellent academics and service. While in high school Laura served on the Board of the American Red Cross in Kansas City, MO as a youth representative. While a member of the Red Cross Youth group, Laura held the offices of Secretary and President. She participated in Red Cross volunteer activities at the VA Hospital in Kansas City as was later awarded the JC

Penney Community Service Award. Another summer, she joined her sister, Kathy, as a Girl Scout Camp Counselor where she inspired the entire group under Kathy's leadership to rappel under the watchful eye of "Rappelling Master Kathy" by rappelling first herself. Laura also served on the Roland Park Community Center Board representing the disability community during high school.

After high school, Laura attended Texas Christian University (TCU), graduation in 1991 with a degree in Social Work. She remained a proud Horned Frog and often was seen sporting TCU purple. After graduation, Laura found a job at Washington, DC's CCNV as a Volunteer Staff Coordinator and moved to Washington, DC where she worked for 4-years. This was the first of several social work jobs in Washington, DC. In September 2008 Laura began working at the DC Government Office of Disability Rights as an Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Specialist for Human Services where she worked until her death. Laura lived her life to the fullest, never letting anything keep her from a music, sporting or social event. On February 27, 2011, she got to meet her idol Jon Bon Jovi at a concert. She really admired Jon for his social work and dedication to his family. Laura often cheered on her hometown baseball team, the Washington Nationals, at the stadium near her home in Southwest DC. She was thrilled this Fall when the team made the division playoffs, and her favorite team mascot, President Teddy Roosevelt, finally won the President's Race.

Laura made First Trinity Lutheran Church her faith community in March of 2008 when she was baptized at First Trinity. She was a member of the Lifeline Partnership Board of Directors and volunteered to help train Lifeline participants to be self-advocates. Laura's smile and advocacy quickly found a place within the First Trinity community and later, also the St. Matthew's community welcomed and grew to love her, too.

In November of 2010, Laura was diagnosed with cancer. After a valiant fight, she died peacefully on November 6, 2012. Laura is survived by her parents, Clara and Fred White of Austell, Georgia; her sister, Kathryn Irene Farrell, 2 nephews, Tony and Benjamin Velazquez, niece Aria Velazquez, of Luling, TX; her aunt, Leta White; uncles Ronald Todd and Byron Todd; and a cousin Deanna Jones and family of Tulsa, OK. Laura was preceded in death by her life partner Keith Thomas; aunt and uncle Theona and Bill Keller; an uncle Wilbur White and an aunt, Betty Bristow.

Laura's life was and her legacy is, advocating with unwavering ability and skill for those in and beyond the disability community.

Local News & Information

2013 Summer Internship Program deadline fast approaching! January 11, 2013 is the deadline [Click here](#), to apply. If you are currently an undergraduate, graduate, or recent graduate and self-identify as a person with any type of disability, you are eligible to apply. AAPD's Summer Internship Program is an eleven-week program (with one week of orientation) offering participants an opportunity to work in either the public or private sector. Interns receive a stipend, travel to and from Washington DC, and accessible housing.

Federal News & Information

Justice Department Settles with Law Firm over Discrimination against Individuals Who Are Deaf The U.S. Department of Justice has reached a settlement agreement with Peroutka and Peroutka P.A. to resolve allegations that the law firm violated the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA). The Maryland-based law firm allegedly discriminated against people who are deaf by refusing to accept [Video Relay Service](#) calls. Peroutka will pay \$30,000 to the complainants whose calls were refused. The company will also revise its office policies and train employees on the ADA.

The Scooter Store Settles Lawsuit for Not Accommodating Employee with Arthritis The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has charged The Scooter Store with [disability discrimination](#) under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). The Texas-based store allegedly discriminated against an employee by denying his request for a [reasonable accommodation](#). The employee has [psoriatic arthritis](#) and needed a temporary leave of absence. The store denied his request and then fired him. The company has agreed to comply with the ADA and change its leave policy.

Nursing Home Sued for Not Accommodating Employee with Asthma The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has charged Camden Place Health & Rehab, LLC with [disability discrimination](#) under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). The Greensboro, NC nursing home allegedly discriminated against an employee by denying her request for a [reasonable accommodation](#). The nursing home required all certified nursing assistants to watch residents during scheduled smoking breaks. The employee has [asthma](#) and the smoke made it difficult for her to breathe.

Consumer Groups File Complaint against Amazon for Not Providing Internet Captioning Several disability organizations have filed a [complaint](#) with the [Federal Communications Commission](#) alleging that Amazon.com, Inc. has failed to follow Internet captioning requirements. New rules enacted this year under the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act require television shows accessed through online video to be captioned. The suit alleges that Amazon does not caption programs in a timely manner after posting the videos.

EEOC Sues Nursing & Rehabilitation Center for Not Accommodating Employee with Cancer The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has charged Britthaven, Inc. and its

successor, Principle Long Term, Inc. with [disability discrimination](#) under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). The Henderson, NC-based nursing and rehabilitation center allegedly discriminated against an employee by denying her request for a [reasonable accommodation](#). The employee had asked for more medical leave to treat her [breast cancer](#), but the company fired her instead.

Department Store Chain to Settle Lawsuit for Requiring Disclosure of Confidential Medical Information Dillard's Inc. will settle a class action lawsuit for [disability discrimination](#) under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA). The Arkansas-based company required employees to disclose confidential medical information to be approved for sick leave. The company also fired employees for taking sick leave beyond the maximum amount of time allowed. Dillard's will compensate employees affected by its practices, train staff on the ADA and change its medical inquiry and leave policies.

HUD Charges Condominium Group with Making Building Inaccessible to People with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has charged the owner, architect, builder and designers of Valle Creek Condominiums in Pevely, MO with violating the [Fair Housing Act](#) for making the units inaccessible to people with disabilities. Several building features including steps, lack of ramps and thermostats placed too high make the units inaccessible to people using wheelchairs.

Justice Department Reaches Agreement with University to Accommodate Students with Food Allergies The U.S. Department of Justice has reached an [agreement](#) with Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, so students with [celiac disease](#) and other food allergies can have equal access to the university's meal plan and food services. Celiac disease and food allergies may be considered disabilities under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). The University has agreed to give students access to food free of allergens.

Labor Department Launches Database for Employers of Nearly 3,000 Ready to Hire Candidates with Disabilities The U.S. Department of Labor, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense, has launched the 2013 Workforce Recruitment Program database, a recruitment tool for employers looking to hire employees with disabilities. The database contains profiles of postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities, including Veterans. Federal employers can access the database [online](#) and private sector employers can access the database [online](#) or by calling (855) 275-3276.

New GAO Report Shows Increased Demand for Paratransit Services A recent report from the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO) has found an increased demand for public paratransit services and that the costs for providing these services remain high. The report also showed that transit agencies are complying with the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), but that there isn't a consistent compliance review process to make sure the requirements of the law are being met.

New Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Complaint Form Ready for Review - Comments Due February 15 The U.S. Access Board is launching an [online form](#) for filing accessibility complaints under the [ABA](#) and requests public comments. The ABA addresses access for people with disabilities and requires that federally funded facilities be accessible. The current process to [file a complaint](#) involves contacting the Board, which then investigates whether the facility in question is covered by the ABA and if it is accessible. [Comment](#) deadline is **February 15, 2013**

For Information about ODR's Newsletter call 202-724-5055 or visit the web at odr.dc.gov.



441 4th Street NW
Suite 729 North
Washington DC 20001

Phone: (202) 724 - 5055
Fax: (202) 727 -9484
E-mail:
ODR.Complaints@dc.gov

Visit us on the web: <http://odr.dc.gov>

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the District Office of Disability Rights (ODR) is to ensure that the programs, services, benefits, activities and facilities operated or funded by the District of Columbia are fully accessible to, and useable by people with disabilities. ODR is committed to inclusion, community-based services, and self-determination for people with disabilities. ODR is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the City's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as other disability rights laws.