



13th Annual Disability Symposium
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
APRIL 11, 2014

BIOGRAPHIES

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Adam Taliaferro, Esq. While playing football for Penn State in a game against rival, Ohio State, Mr. Taliaferro made a routine helmet-to-helmet tackle that would change the course of his life. He had broken his neck—a similar injury suffered by the late, Christopher Reeve. Given only a 3% chance of ever walking again, he fought insurmountable odds to not only walk, but to walk well. Though playing football is no longer in Adam's future, many around the nation have followed his inspirational tale of recovery, leading authors Scott Brown and Sam Carchidi to chronicle his remarkable story in their 2001 book *Miracle in the Making*. Mr. Taliaferro is currently a Health Care Advocate with Bristol Myers Squibb and holds office as the youngest Freeholder in the state of New Jersey as a member of the Gloucester County Board of Chosen Freeholders. He has also started his own foundation, “The Adam Taliaferro Foundation,” that provides financial assistance to individuals affected by spinal cord injuries which has raised over \$1 million to date. Through his foundation and his passion for motivational speaking, Mr. Taliaferro continues to provide hope for many people who may feel that there is no reason to hope at all.

Angela Duckworth, Ph.D. is an associate professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and a 2013 MacArthur Fellow. Dr. Duckworth studies non-IQ competencies, including self-control and grit, which predict success both academically and professionally. Her research populations have included West Point cadets, National Spelling Bee finalists, novice teachers, salespeople, and students. Dr. Duckworth received a B.A. in Neurobiology from Harvard in 1992 and, as a Marshall Scholar, a Master's in Neuroscience from Oxford. She completed her Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to her career in research, Dr. Duckworth founded a non-profit summer school for low-income children which won the Better Government Award for the state of Massachusetts and was profiled as a Harvard Kennedy School case study. Dr. Duckworth has also been a McKinsey management consultant and, for five years, a math teacher in the public schools of San Francisco, Philadelphia, and New York City.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Manju Banerjee, Ph.D.

Dr. Banerjee is Vice President and Director of Landmark College Institute for Research and Training at Landmark College, Putney, VT. She has over 28 years of experience in the field of learning and other disabilities. Dr. Banerjee is a certified diagnostician and teacher-consultant for learning disabilities. She has presented and published extensively, both nationally and internationally, on topics including disability documentation, technological competencies for postsecondary transition, and Universal Design. She is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability* and is a member of the Professional Advisory Board of the Learning Disability Association of America (LDA).

Loring Brinckerhoff, Ph.D.

Dr. Brinckerhoff is a nationally recognized authority on college students with learning disabilities (LD) and ADHD. He is the Director of the Office of Disability Policy at Educational Testing Service (ETS) and a consultant to Harvard Medical School, Mass College of Art & Design, and Columbia University. He is co-author of one of the leading textbooks in the field, *Postsecondary Education and Transition for Students with Learning Disabilities (PRO-ED)*. He has also written dozens of articles and book chapters for parents and professionals on high stakes testing, disability documentation, transition from high school to college, self-advocacy skills for adolescents and program planning for students with learning disabilities. Dr. Brinckerhoff is the past president of the Association on Higher Education & Disability (AHEAD) and recipient of its prestigious Ronald E. Blosser Dedicated Service Award.

Vicki Piel, Esq.

Ms. Piel is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University and Temple Law School. She is currently employed as a Team Leader and Supervisory Attorney for the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, where she has worked for over 10 years. In this position, she leads a team of attorneys and investigators in investigating and resolving complaints of discrimination based on disability, race, national origin, color, and gender and age. After graduating from law school, Ms. Piel was a law clerk for the President Judge of Philadelphia Municipal Court. Ms. Piel was also the Editorial Director of Education and Disability Publications for LRP Publications, where she managed and wrote various publications in the area of education and disability law.

Rhasheda S. Douglas, Esq.

Ms. Douglas is a supervisory attorney/team leader with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, where she leads a team in the enforcement of federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, disability, gender, and age. Prior to joining the U.S. Department of Education, she practiced commercial litigation for approximately five years with a local law firm in Philadelphia. She earned her B.A. in English from Boston University in 1997 and a J.D. from Rutgers Camden School of Law in 2002. Ms. Douglas was selected as a “Rising Star” in the field of

education law in 2008 by Philadelphia Magazine's edition of Pennsylvania Super Lawyers. In October 2012, she was awarded the Block "R" Award for Excellence in Alumni Leadership by Rutgers University.

Tracie DeFreitas, M.S.

Ms. DeFreitas is a lead consultant for the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), the leading national source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. She is one of JAN's most senior consultants and has been employed since 1994. Ms. DeFreitas has served in multiple roles during her tenure with JAN. She currently supports all JAN specialty teams as Lead Consultant and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Specialist, providing expert disability-related federal employment law and workplace accommodation consultation regarding a broad range of medical impairments and ADA issues. She is an experienced national speaker who specializes in ADA Title I compliance and the interactive accommodation process.

Tanya M. Gallagher, Ph.D.

Tanya M. Gallagher, Ph.D. holds a doctorate in speech-language pathology and is the Dean of the College of Applied Health Sciences, the college that houses the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Gallagher has held several leadership positions including serving as the President of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation, as an advisor to the National Center for Treatment Effectiveness Research in Communication Disorders, as the President of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics and as a Delegate to the World Health Organization (WHO). She has published extensively and is an internationally recognized scholar in rehabilitation and treatment outcomes. She is currently extending the services offered by the University of Illinois by establishing a Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education on the Illinois campus.

Mitch Nagler M.A., LMHC

Mr. Nagler is the Director of the *Bridges to Adelphi Program*, and the Assistant Director of the Adelphi University Student Counseling Center. Mr. Nagler also founded and developed the Adelphi Social Training Center, a community clinic which provides individual and group therapy to young adults with ASD and their families. He has authored several articles on college programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and presents on the same subject regularly. Mr. Nagler has a private psychology practice specializing in young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and related conditions. He is affiliated with Spectrum Services, and the Asperger Center for Education and Training, in NYC, and has worked at the New York University Child Study Center, Asperger Institute.

Valerie Haven, M.Div., MTS

Ms. Haven is the Academic Technology Coordinator for the University of Massachusetts Ross Center for Disability Services. She specializes in the areas of distance education and Universal Design for Learning. Ms. Haven is adjunct faculty for the Instructional Design Master's Program at UMass and the Special Education Master's Program for the University of Maine. She received the Sloan Consortium's President's Special Award for outstanding achievement by an individual in the field of on-line learning in 2010 and the Campus Technology Magazine's 2012 Innovators Award.

David M. Joseph, Ph.D.

Dr. Joseph is a clinical psychologist and the Team Leader of the Oakland Vet Center in Oakland, CA where he provides treatment for veterans with readjustment stress and combat or military sexual trauma. Dr. Joseph is the creator of the *Welcome Home* training that is available to community college campuses through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Dr. Joseph has also developed POST certified trainings for police officers, first responders, and providers on effective interventions for veterans with PTSD.

Cheryl Ashcroft, M.Ed.

Ms. Ashcroft earned her B.A. from Kutztown University in 1968 and her M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology in 1978. After attending Lehigh University, she obtained her psychologist license in Pennsylvania in 1990. She has over thirty years of experience in disability services in higher education. Since 1993, Ms. Ashcroft has been the Assistant Dean of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities at Lehigh University. She has presented both nationally and internationally at conferences and is a consultant on disability related issues in higher education.

Lisa Ruebeck, M.A. Ed.

Ms. Ruebeck earned a B.A. in Education from the University of Michigan and an M.A. Ed. from Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1991. She has supported students with learning disabilities at the postsecondary level for the past twelve years, and is currently serving as Director of Learning Disability Support at Lehigh University.