

# COMMUNICATOR

KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
632 Versailles Road \* Frankfort, Kentucky 40601 \* kcdhh.ky.gov \* 800-372-2907

37th Year  
Winter 2019

## KCDHH Remembers Pioneer Norma D. Lewis



*Virginia L. Moore*  
*Executive Director*

When a true legend comes into your life, you know it from the start. They have a way about themselves, a way they interact with others and a way of looking at life that creates an impact. Norma Lewis was this person—a true icon for the deaf community. We lost Norma November 24. She was 97 years young.

In the Spring, 2015 Communicator, we said anyone in Kentucky involved with the deaf community knows the name Norma Lewis and her service as a sign language interpreter.

To me, then and now, she had that star quality. I was awestruck when I met her. SHE was “THE” person as a sign language interpreter, giving her all interpreting for the President of the United States to Broadway plays to one-on-one doctor’s office visits. She was, and will always be, my role model and hero of my profession.

Norma was one of the oldest working sign language interpreters in the United States and a pioneer in the field. She was active until 2017 and one of the first interpreters to give deaf people a voice in the court system. Her work with the deaf community began when she was nine years old interpreting for her deaf aunt and uncle, who raised her in Connecticut.

Before returning to Kentucky to become an interpreter, Norma joined the Navy in 1943. She grew up in Connecticut and remembers the day that changed everything in 1941. She said when they heard the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, everyone said, “Where’s Pearl Harbor?” No one knew where it was, but they would soon enough; young boys would enlist while women worked at the home front and in factories. But Norma wanted to serve in another way, like the men, and heard that the Navy was ready to enlist women. She did her naval training in Iowa, after which she was assigned to Naval Intelligence and was stationed in Charleston, S.C., tracking German submarines off the coast of the United States.

Her aunt and uncle were very proud that she served in the Navy during World War II. In June, her wartime service was celebrated with an honor flight to Washington, DC.

She said she could hardly believe the trip was happening and was glad she lived to see it. Right after that trip, Norma was one of 106 World War II Veterans to be honored during the 75th D-Day Anniversary in Louisville on June 6.

Norma was funny and a wonderful person. She was a mother, a friend, a mentor and a person of the highest standards of professionalism. We have lost a legend.

For me, the passing of Norma Lewis is something to be celebrated. That’s the way she would have wanted it. She is more than just a person who gave to so many. She is the person who saw in us the potential for more than we could see in ourselves. If it wasn’t for Norma, many of us would not be in the interpreting business. As a mentor, she meant everything to KCDHH, and we are committed to growing the number of interpreters in Kentucky by becoming a test site for the National Interpreter Certification in 2020.

During this season of giving, it is only fitting that one so dear to so many, who lived giving of herself for others and her country, be remembered. In that same spirit, KCDHH will also dedicate and name its interpreting testing room after Norma.

Rest in peace my friend, my hero. You are, forever, the internal dialogue for what life can be if you work to help others.



*Norma D. Lewis*

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JANUARY  
*National Birth Defects  
Prevention Month*

JANUARY 1  
*New Year's Day*

JANUARY 20  
*Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday*

FEBRUARY  
*American Heart Month*

FEBRUARY 2  
*Groundhog Day*

FEBRUARY 12  
*Lincoln's Birthday*

FEBRUARY 14  
*Valentine's Day*

FEBRUARY 17  
*President's Day*

FEBRUARY 22  
*Washington's Birthday*

MARCH  
*National Kidney Month*

MARCH 8  
*International Women's Day*

MARCH 17  
*St. Patrick's Day*

APRIL  
*National Autism Awareness Month  
National Child Abuse  
Prevention Month*

APRIL 1  
*April Fool's Day*

APRIL 10  
*Good Friday*

APRIL 12  
*Easter*

## Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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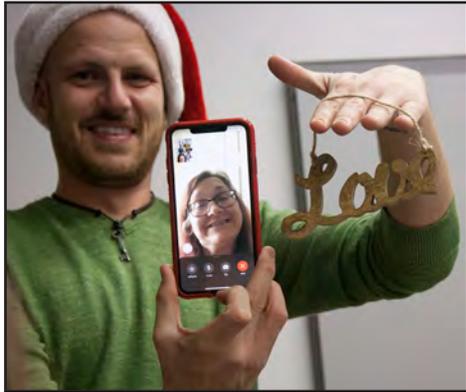
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# KCDHH Annual Ornament Exchange/Open House





# KCDHH

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*Happy Holidays!*