

# 'Bucket' founder 'Dinghy' Sharp honored

George Patton, Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison have something in common with one Albion College Distinguished Alumni Award winner. They all had learning disabilities.

Florence "Dinghy" Spaulding Sharp, a 1984 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient is a 1950 graduate of Albion College.

Known as the inventor of the "Bucket Brigade," she completed her college education with taped textbooks and oral examinations because she suffered dyslexia, a neurological block which prohibits understanding of printed material.

Sharp, who is a learning-disability consultant in the Farmington public schools, holds four master's degrees and is working on a doctorate.

She received her bachelor's degree in education from Albion in 1950 and went on to Northwestern University, where she earned a master's in speech and language pathology and a master's in audiology and teaching of the deaf in 1951.

In 1953 Sharp attended Wayne State University, earning a master's degree

in clinical psychology. And in 1970 she earned another master's from Oakland University in reading remediation/learning disabilities.

A recognized authority and consultant by the state of Michigan on teaching and learning disabled, Sharp said she "needed to study how kids learned."

I just wanted to know how they worked."

She worked with children as a speech therapist in the Albion public school system for two years while a student at the college. She was directed by Gretchen Gorman, professor at Albion.

In 1950 she served as a graduate assistant in therapy at the Childhood Aphasia Clinic at Northwestern University. She then joined the Rockford, Ill., public school system before starting her own private speech-therapy practice in Farmington in 1953.

"I feel that the Distinguished Alumni Award is the highest compliment anyone could give me, saying that I have given service to humanity beyond the call of my profession," Sharp said.

She has served as past president of the Albion College Alumni Association.



Dinghy Sharp

Sharp continues to support the college through her participation in several events throughout the year, and by her talent of one-to-one communication and telling others about her alma mater.

At Albion, Sharp was a member of Alpha Xi Delta Sorority, where she made some of her closest friends, including Betty Jones Skulstad, now a

teacher in the Battle Creek schools, and a 1930 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. Sharp also met her husband, Larry, a Sigma Chi, while attending Albion.

In 1970 Sharp saw that there was not enough one-to-one assistance for children with learning disabilities, and developed a program to increase it.

I took all my tricks and put them in a bucket," Sharp said, originating the Bucket Brigade Tutorial Program.

The program she designed is a way of teaching learning-disabled children through fun learning games assembled in a colorful bucket brought by one volunteer adult partner.

"Parents take a bucket full of learning games to the learning-disabled classes and teach their 'bucket buddy' math, reading, spelling and other things. When a child gets a certain number of points collected he can open a 'checking' account. When his checking is full, he may start a 'savings' account, accumulating points, and interest, that can be used for mutually agreed upon rewards like a trip to the ice cream parlor," Sharp said.

The Bucket Brigade is used in 37 states, and 29 foreign countries, and hosts approximately 197 adults in the Farmington school system alone.

The volunteer adults work with a professional teacher to help the chil-

dren, and "are a lot like Hallmark: They care enough to send the very best, themselves," Sharp said.

Her interest in children has led Sharp into leadership positions in the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, the Little League organization, and Youth for Understanding. She is also a member of several professional organizations for teachers and learning-disability professionals.

Sharp has brought her Bucket Brigade to Parent Teacher Associations and educational organizations around the nation, and frequently speaks at national conventions about her learning program.

Her goal for the future is to become a learning consultant to foreign students in schools of the American embassies.

Her four publications on learning and teaching the learning disabled are written under her nickname, "Dinghy Sharp," a nickname she received as a child when she loved to sail. Her friends gave her the nickname "Dinghy" after her little boat. When she first came to Albion, Sharp said she "planned to go by Florence... it was more sophisticated and I was in college now."

But when an old friend from her hometown yelled, "Hey Dinghy, I didn't know you were coming here," across the campus quad, the name stuck. Now she happily goes by the nickname Dinghy.

"It is uniquely mine and it is memorable. All my kids at school call me Dinghy, that's just who I am," Sharp said with a wink.

## Knoll joins senior MSU Class Council

Lynda Knoll, daughter of Sue and Ron Knoll of Farmington Hills, is one of 25 students recently selected to the 1984-85 Senior Class Council at Michigan State University.

The Senior Class Council is composed of the top 25 out of the 700 students in the senior class. They act as representatives and are the decision-making body of their class.

The 1981 North Farmington graduate is also one of five students who has been selected to serve as an adviser in the communications department next year. This year Knoll was initiated into the Golden Key National Honor Society, Mortar Board, a national society honoring scholarship, leadership and service, and Phi Kappa Phi, an all-university national honor society.

To be named to Phi Kappa Phi, a student must carry a 3.8 or better cumulative grade-point average.

A member of the Kappa Alpha Theta social sorority on campus, Knoll serves as chapter secretary, and is a member of the Order of Omega, an honors and leadership society within the Greek system. Also, she is on numerous committees of the MSU Student Foundation and has demonstrated leadership skills as an undergraduate teacher's assistant in the communication department.

During her three years at State, Knoll, a member of the Honors College, has been on the dean's list every semester, and on the 4.0 honor roll seven times. Last summer she spent twelve

weeks traveling and participating in a six-week study program in Spain.

She will graduate in June of '85 with a degree in communication with minors in business and Spanish.

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