

# SINCE THE 1940s, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN A LEADER IN RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS IN DISABILITY RIGHTS AND DISABILITY STUDIES

1946

The **Department of Education for Exceptional Children** is established. The first director of this department is William Cruickshank, a pioneer in the education of children with brain injuries and later learning disabilities and cerebral palsy.



1953

SU opens **Hoople**, one of the first special education buildings on a university campus in the nation.

1995

SU establishes a **disability studies** program, the first in the nation. Offered through the Cultural Foundations of Education department, the program examines a range of issues confronting people with disabilities including race, gender, policy, law, the media, and cultural representations of disability.



1991

SU sponsors the first national conference on gender and disability and becomes the first research university to create an **inclusive teacher training program**.

1992

The **Facilitated Communication Institute** opens, to study and promote communication by people with autism and other developmental disabilities. In 2010 the Institute is renamed the Institute on Communication and Inclusion (ICI).

1988

At the request of Madeleine Will, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, faculty and staff convene a **Leadership Institute on Community Integration for People with Developmental Disabilities** in Washington, D.C. to make recommendations to advance the inclusion of people with disabilities in community settings, schools, and workplaces.

2001

Students form the **Beyond Compliance Coordinating Committee** to advocate for changes in SU's disability policies and procedures and to sponsor disability educational and cultural events.

2004



CNN broadcasts the documentary *Autism is a World*, which is co-produced by SU Professor **Douglas Biklen**.

It is subsequently nominated for an Academy Award.

2005



The University creates the **Burton Blatt Institute** to advance the civic, economic and social

participation of persons with disabilities worldwide.

2009

The School of Education establishes the **Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education** to promote the participation of students with intellectual and other disabilities in postsecondary education.



1971

The **Center on Human Policy** is founded by Burton Blatt in response to widespread discrimination against people with disabilities in society. It is the first national institute for the study and creation of open, inclusive settings. Blatt's 1966 book **Christmas in Purgatory** revealed the shocking truth of the abuse of people with disabilities in state institutions.



1972



Professors participate in formulating the famous **NYSARC vs. Rockefeller** case that led to a court decree mandating reforms and deinstitutionalization at the Willowbrook State School, the largest state institution housing people with mental retardation in the nation. Noted historian David Rothman writes that the Center on Human Policy's ranks included "the most radical thinkers in the field" at the time in the book *The Willowbrook Wars: A Decade of Struggle for Social Justice*.

1973

SU faculty and students are **innovators in creating inclusive preschool and school programs** serving students with significant disabilities (e.g. autism, Down syndrome) and students without disabilities together.



1987

School of Education faculty produce the first national film on school inclusion, **Regular Lives**. It airs on PBS and wins numerous awards.



1981

With funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Center on Human Policy **hires two self-advocates who are former residents of state developmental centers** and becomes the first university institute nationally to include people with intellectual disabilities among its professional staff.



1975

The Center on Human Policy establishes **Syracuse Disabled in Action**, the first advocacy group in Central New York led by people with disabilities.

1979

The Center on Human Policy issues **The Community Imperative: A Refutation of All Arguments in Favor of Institutionalizing Anybody Because of Mental Retardation**, supporting the right of all people with disabilities to community living.



2011

The **Disability Cultural Center** is established. The DCC coordinates campus-wide social, educational, and cultural activities on disability issues for students, faculty, staff, and community members with and without disabilities.

2014

Center on Human Policy receives a **Community 4 All grant** to create digital toolkits to help people with intellectual disabilities live in, and meaningfully engage with, their communities.

2015

InclusiveU, an initiative of the Taishoff Center, receives federal funding as a **Model Transition Program**, which leads to new opportunities at Syracuse for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be fully included on campus.

2019

With increased University priorities around diversity and inclusion, over 85 InclusiveU students, support for national conferences on inclusive education in secondary school and beyond, and new funding to support a Center on Disability and Inclusion, the **School of Education's work continues to thrive.**



**"IF WE HAVE LEARNED ONE THING FROM THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, IT'S THAT WHEN OTHERS SPEAK FOR YOU, YOU LOSE."** ED ROBERTS