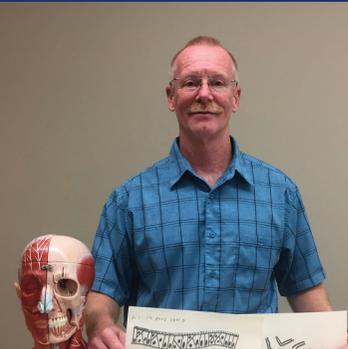


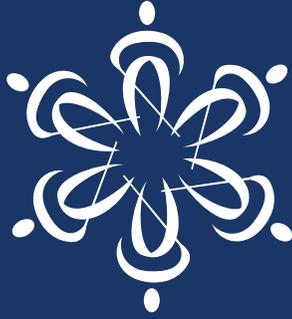


2017 DR. JACOB BOLOTIN AWARDS



The Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards are presented annually by the National Federation of the Blind with support from the Santa Barbara Foundation to recognize outstanding individual and organizational achievements in the blindness field. For the 2017 awards \$50,000 is being distributed.

Made possible through the Alfred and Rosalind Perlman Trust.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Live the life you want.

Presents the 2017 DR. JACOB BOLOTIN AWARDS

The National Federation of the Blind is pleased to recognize the most outstanding and innovative individual and organizational achievements being made on behalf of blind people in the United States by presenting the Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards for 2017. These five awards, ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000, support exemplary efforts to promote opportunity for blind Americans and to increase the acceptance of the blind as equal participants in American society. The recipients of these awards represent the innovation, determination, and values of Dr. Jacob Bolotin—the award program’s namesake—who fought ignorance and prejudice to become the world’s first physician blind from birth. More than that, Jacob Bolotin also became one of the most respected doctors in Chicago during the early part of the twentieth century. Therefore, the National Federation of the Blind takes great pride in recognizing the memory and spirit of Dr. Bolotin by honoring and financially supporting those who are doing exceptional work to help achieve the shared dream of Dr. Bolotin and the National Federation of the Blind—a society where the blind have the opportunity to succeed as productive, independent, and equal citizens.

ABOUT DR. JACOB BOLOTIN

Dr. Jacob W. Bolotin (1888-1924) was a blind physician who lived and practiced medicine in Chicago in the early part of the twentieth century. Born to a poor family of Jewish immigrants, Dr. Bolotin attended the Illinois School for the Blind and began his working life selling kitchen matches, brushes, and typewriters door to door. Although Bolotin was successful as a salesman, he dreamed of becoming a doctor, confronting the prejudice of the medical establishment and the general public to obtain a medical degree and a license to practice medicine. Even so, Dr. Bolotin struggled financially before his extraordinary medical skills—particularly in diagnosing and treating conditions of the heart and lungs—were recognized and he was able to gain the remuneration that his work deserved. By the time of his death, Dr. Bolotin was one of the most widely respected physicians in Chicago, as well as a professor at Loyola University Medical School, his alma mater. In addition to maintaining a heavy load of private patients, he volunteered his medical services in Chicago's poorest segregated neighborhoods and screened



recruits for the armed forces during World War I.

Dr. Bolotin's inspiring story made him a popular public speaker throughout the Midwest as he used his public stature to advocate for the employment and full integration of the blind into society. With language appropriate for the times in which he lived but goals more appropriate to the present, Dr. Bolotin said forcefully: "I am blind, and I am a doctor. The fact that I am standing here before you is living proof of what

we the handicapped can achieve. The sentiment held by the average person that we are helpless, useless objects of charity must be erased forever. The major problem for us is not our affliction, but the wall of ignorance, injustices, indifference and misconceptions that separate us from you who can see. We must break down that wall, but we can't do it alone. We need your help. How fortunate we all are to be citizens of this great country. Let us make its bounty, its freedoms and rights we take so for granted, available to every human being, regardless of physical infirmities, rich or poor—equal rights to education, equal rights to work, equal rights to dream and achieve that dream, to achieve lives of self-reliance, pride and usefulness to our fellow man, and to live to the fullest the life God granted him.”

In addition to being an early voice for the rights of the blind, Dr. Bolotin was particularly interested in the welfare of children and youth. He advocated progressive health programs, adequate play, better parenting, and an equal education for all children. His interests in the welfare of the blind and of young people led him to establish one of the first Boy Scout troops consisting entirely of blind boys. He served as the leader of Troop 300 until his death, and his brother Fred continued to be involved with the troop into the 1950s. Jacob Bolotin was also a member of Kiwanis International and was passionately dedicated to that service organization.

Dr. Bolotin's dedication to serving his patients no matter the hour, day or night, combined with his heavy speaking schedule and volunteer service activities on behalf of blind youth, distinguished him as a man of passion but almost certainly led to his untimely death in 1924 at the age of thirty-six. It was reported that five thousand people (including one thousand blind people) attended his funeral. Sixteen years later, in November of 1940, the National Federation of the Blind was founded in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, creating an organized movement of blind people who shared Jacob Bolotin's goal of breaking down the walls of misconception. Although the National Federation of the Blind did not yet exist at the time of his death, Dr. Jacob Bolotin lived life to the fullest as a modern-day Federationist.

ABOUT THE DR. JACOB BOLOTIN AWARDS

The Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards are funded by the National Federation of the Blind with assistance from the Alfred and Rosalind Perlman Trust, which was created by a bequest left to the Santa Barbara Foundation and the National Federation of the Blind by Jacob Bolotin's niece-in-law, Rosalind Perlman. Mrs. Perlman's husband, Alfred, and his mother lived with Jacob Bolotin and his wife Helen after the death of Alfred's father. The National Federation of the Blind was specifically chosen by Rosalind Perlman to make the annual awards because the Federation shares the beliefs about blindness espoused and demonstrated by Jacob Bolotin. Like the award's namesake, the National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness does not define an individual or his or her future. The National Federation of the Blind, the nation's leading authority on blindness, presents the annual awards to individuals and organizations whose efforts in rehabilitation, technology, advocacy, and other areas bring Dr. Bolotin's dream of a society where the blind are accepted as equals closer to reality. The individuals and organizations you will meet in the following pages represent creativity, enlightenment, and excellence in service to the blind.

PREVIOUS DR. JACOB BOLOTIN AWARD RECIPIENTS

Since its inception in 2008, the Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award program has honored fifty-two extraordinary innovators and leaders working in the field of blindness with awards totaling \$530,000. Award recipients have included blind individuals who have solved problems faced by blind people, organizations of blind people doing important work in their communities, sighted individuals who have developed products or apps that are of use to the blind, blindness rehabilitation programs and agencies doing outstanding work in enhancing education and increasing employment of the blind, providers of Braille books and other materials in accessible formats, technology companies, researchers, educators, and many more! For information about the award program, and to access reports on winners in past years, visit www.nfb.org/bolotin-award-main.

THE 2017 DR. JACOB BOLOTIN AWARDS

ABIGAIL FULLER AND SARAH IVY, CO-DIRECTORS OF *DO YOU DREAM IN COLOR?* JOINT \$15,000 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Carina, Connor, Nick, and Sarah were four teenagers with different dreams. Connor wanted to join the skateboarding team sponsored by his local skate shop. Sarah wanted to travel the world, and in particular to visit Portugal, her late mother's home country. Nick, an aspiring rock star, wanted to get his band its first gig. Carina, whose family immigrated from Mexico, wanted to be the first person in her family to graduate from high school. The one thing these four young people had in common was blindness.



Connor

Abigail Fuller and Sarah Ivy were film school students at the University of Southern California who wondered what blind people's dreams were like. Initially, they wanted to interview blind teens about their dreams and bring them to life through animation. They reached out to organizations in California that serve blind youth, including the

Junior Blind of America, the Braille Institute of America, and the National Federation of the Blind. It was through participating in the activities of some of these organizations that they met Carina, Connor, Nick, and Sarah, among others. They quickly realized that the young people were not defined by blindness, and that their most interesting dreams were not the kind they had while sleeping. It also became abundantly clear that these teens had the capacity and the drive to achieve their dreams.

"A BEAUTIFUL, HONEST PIECE"

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DO YOU DREAM IN COLOR?

**YOU DON'T NEED VISION
TO HAVE A DREAM.**



Blindness by itself was not going to stand in their way, but there were artificial barriers to their success. Although the filmmakers did not set out to make a film with an “agenda,” they realized that the common thread in all of the teens’ stories was how, in one way or another, they had been or were being let down by the education system.

Carina’s dream of graduating high school, a straightforward enough goal for many young people,

as the film was being made, he had been unable to start sixth grade on time because the school he was to attend did not have a plan in place to meet the needs of a blind student. Sarah ran into barriers created by the attitudes of officials at AFS Intercultural Programs, which facilitates opportunities to study abroad, who believed that her blindness, and not her interests and wishes, should determine the country in which she studied.



Sarah

was complicated by her school’s inability to get Braille materials to her in a timely manner—a problem routinely faced by blind students across the nation. Worse yet, her teachers and school officials were indifferent to the problem until Carina got a legal advocate. Although Nick was in high school

The film has already demonstrated the power to educate and persuade the public. It won the Audience Choice Award at the San Luis Obispo Film Festival and was an official selection of the Dallas International Film Festival. Reviewers both inside and outside the disability community have

praised it not only for the way it tells the stories of its four young protagonists, but also for how it highlights the educational barriers that blind students face.

Do You Dream in Color? is available through popular video-on-



Carina

demand platforms including iTunes, Amazon, Google Play, and Xbox Live. The National Federation of the Blind, with the cooperation of the film's directors and producers, is planning and encouraging public screenings of this poignant and persuasive documentary. For more information, visit www.doyoudreamincolor.com.

Through interviews with the young people and their families

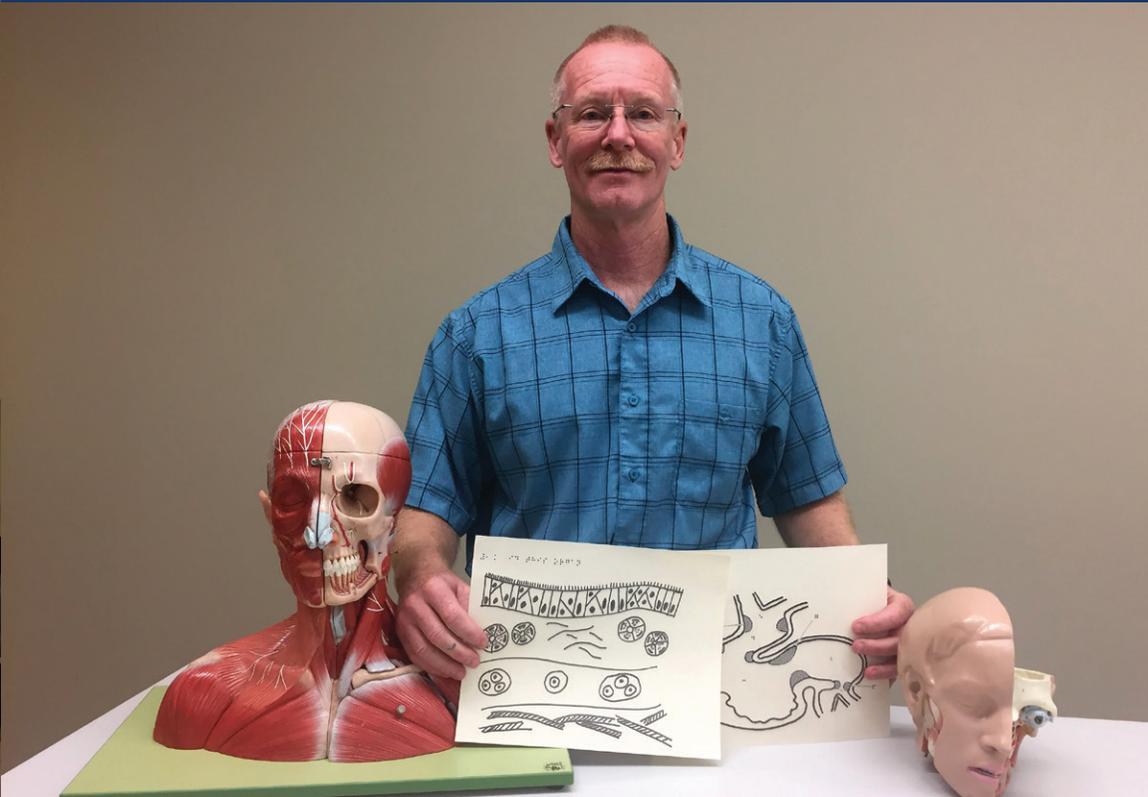
and friends, along with footage of their moments of trial and triumph, *Do You Dream in Color?* helps to accomplish the goal of breaking down what Dr. Jacob Bolotin described as “the wall of ignorance, injustices, indifference, and misconceptions” that too often still separate the blind from the sighted. Dr. Bolotin



Nick

sought to break down this wall through his life and his public speeches. Abigail Fuller and Sarah Ivy have used the powerful medium of film to do the same. For that reason, we are pleased to present them with a 2017 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award.

DR. PAUL BARLETT
\$10,000 AWARD RECIPIENT



More than one hundred years ago, Dr. Jacob Bolotin was enrolled in medical school learning the intricate systems of the human body through the use of detailed tactile images that he and his family created. He understood better than all of the faculty and fellow students who doubted him that he would be able to learn and succeed as long as he had the right tools. Dr. Bolotin's anatomy professor, William Copeland, was one of the few individuals who believed that Jacob had the skill and determination to be successful, and allowed him to spend hours with the class skeletal model to memorize every nuance and detail. Professor Copeland also provided Dr. Bolotin with the spare medical charts for the other systems of the body, which Jacob's family used to create tactile versions he could use. It is with this same spirit of instruction, accommodation, and confidence in his pupil that Dr. Paul Barlett has once again made a field of medicine accessible to blind students.

Upon the realization that he would have his first blind student, Jacqueline Ouellet, at the Cleveland Chiropractic College, Dr. Barlett understood that meaningful accommodations would need to be made to ensure that Jacqueline could be effectively educated. This was a challenge he welcomed with open arms. Dr. Barlett tirelessly spent extra time to create tactile anatomical images, and then worked with his blind student to help her understand and memorize the images. Often this would involve Dr. Barlett tracing Ms. Ouellet's hands over the tactile image until it was learned. These tactile images were frequently reviewed and updated as needed so that she could understand them within the context of the material being taught in that session. In the dissection lab, Jaqueline would work in a group of other students in a similar fashion, and Dr. Barlett would take the time after the dissection to review what had been learned.

Dr. Barlett humbly admits that he was not alone in this endeavor. He would like to make clear that he is one individual on a team that works toward full accessibility for his blind student. He also credits Ms. Ouellet for helping him to understand her individual needs

and creating a system to ensure success, as well as having a genuine desire to learn. Dr. Barlett thoroughly enjoys working with students who have passion to learn and understand medicine.

Furthermore, Dr. Barlett believes that chiropractic is a hands-on discipline, and one that is particularly well-suited to blind individuals seeking to enter the field of medicine. Of his time working with and helping Jaqueline, he says that it has been fun, and that he enjoys passing his knowledge and experience on to those who are eager to learn it, without regard to any disability they may possess.

In challenging times throughout our lives, it can often be said that one person has the power to make a difference. These individuals work with us, they guide us, and they help us overcome some of life's challenges. In many instances, these individuals are teachers. In Dr. Jacob Bolotin's time at medical school, this teacher was Professor William Copeland. In the life of Jaqueline Ouellet, during her studies at the Cleveland Chiropractic Clinic, that teacher is Dr. Paul Barlett. For that reason, the National Federation of the Blind is proud to present him with a 2017 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award.

ROOTED IN RIGHTS, A PROJECT OF DISABILITY RIGHTS
WASHINGTON, FOR THE FILM *BOTTOM DOLLARS*
\$10,000 AWARD RECIPIENT



Tillman Mitchell

Dr. Jacob Bolotin established himself as a medical professional in Chicago by defying low expectations and tearing down the barriers they created. Yet initially, even as his reputation spread, he was reluctant to tell his story to the public. He saw himself simply as a blind person who had done what he needed to do in order to achieve his dreams. Dr. Bolotin almost turned down his first opportunity to speak to a group of doctors about his life and career. But he was persuaded to do so, and his speech was so well received that requests poured in for him to give it throughout Chicago and the Midwest. Always uncomfortable talking about himself, Dr. Bolotin nonetheless realized that speaking to audiences gave him an opportunity to improve the lives of other blind people. He told his

story, but rather than claiming that his achievements made him extraordinary, he told his audiences that every blind person simply needed understanding and opportunity.



Charles Biebl

The National Federation of the Blind has always recognized the power of storytelling to convey our message. Often, as in the *Braille Monitor* and through our Kernel Books, we have told stories in writing. Our leaders also tell them in speeches. But film and video are powerful ways to tell stories as well, and we are using them more and more. So are two of this year's Dr. Jacob Bolotin award recipients.

Rooted in Rights, a project of Disability Rights Washington, focuses exclusively on using

modern communications methods, particularly film, video, and social media, to tell stories about the issues faced by people with disabilities. One of these issues is the payment of subminimum wages to workers in segregated employment settings. These "sheltered workshops" have arisen because of an exemption to the federal minimum wage contained in the fair Labor Standards Act. Originally designed to encourage businesses to hire people with disabilities, this law allows the United States Department of Labor to authorize payment of less than the minimum wage to

workers with disabilities, including blindness. Although employers who receive the subminimum wage certificates were originally required to pay 75 percent of the minimum wage, that requirement was eventually dropped. As a result, today some workers in sheltered workshops are paid mere pennies per hour—wages that would not have been competitive even in Dr. Bolotin's time.

The National Federation of the Blind has fought against subminimum wages since our founding. Now momentum has

been building throughout the public policy and disability communities for this much-needed reform. Congressman Gregg Harper of Mississippi has introduced legislation to phase out the practice, the Transitioning to Integrated and Meaningful Employment, or TIME Act. The National Council on Disability, a federal agency that advises Congress and the executive branch on federal disability policy, has recommended that the subminimum wage certificate system be phased out. Some states, namely New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maryland have either already eliminated or are phasing out subminimum-wage employment. And during the 2016 election campaign, the platforms of both the Democratic and Republican parties called for the phasing out of subminimum wages. But some sheltered workshops and those who support them have continued to oppose this much-needed reform.

Jordan Melograna, a filmmaker with Rooted in Rights, decided that a film about subminimum-wage employment and its effects was needed. He quickly realized that it would need to be more than a short video of the kind Rooted in Rights often produces. He wanted the film to include interviews with employment experts, the stories of people who were being paid subminimum wages, and stories of people who successfully acquired or transitioned to competitive employment. He envisioned a film that would not merely criticize the current system but show how effective employment practices allow people with disabilities to work in competitive jobs for real wages. In this way, the film would counter the argument, made by some supporters of the current system, that some people are too severely disabled ever to work competitively.

The resulting film is *Bottom Dollars*, a powerful feature-length documentary that explores not only the exploitation of workers with disabilities, but also shows them successfully working in competitive jobs and even starting their own businesses. All these people tell their own stories in their own words, with help from their coworkers, families, and friends. We meet Charles Biebl, a Baltimore man who explains that the sheltered workshop system not only kept him impoverished and wounded his dignity and self-respect, but hurt his prospects for better future employment because the training he supposedly received did not prepare him for competitive work. Tillman Mitchell finally transitions from subminimum-wage employment to a competitive job after fifteen years, but he and his family wonder about those years of missed opportunities. By contrast, Trust Jones has a well-paying job managing the social media

presence of a car dealership, and Joe Steffy starts his own business selling kettle-popped corn with the help of his family. These are just two examples of successfully employed people with supposedly severe physical or mental disabilities profiled in the film. The film also includes an extensive explanation of the subminimum wage certificate system and its pitfalls, featuring experts including Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind. It also profiles the legal battle of subminimum-wage workers at a sheltered workshop in Tiffin, Ohio, to get competitive wages.

Bottom Dollars uses interviews and real-life footage to show that people with disabilities have dreams and the capacity to make them real, if the barriers created by the low expectations of society are removed. The film shows why subminimum-wage employment is such a barrier, and the new possibilities that arise when individuals with disabilities are freed from this antiquated paradigm. The film echoes the call made by Dr. Jacob Bolotin in his speeches nearly a hundred years ago: "How fortunate we all are to be citizens of this great country. Let us make its bounty, its freedoms, and rights we take so for granted, available to every human being, regardless of physical infirmities, rich or poor—equal rights to education, equal rights to work, equal rights to dream and achieve that dream, to achieve lives of self-reliance, pride and usefulness to our fellow man, and to live to the fullest the life God granted him." It is therefore fitting to recognize *Rooted in Rights* with a 2017 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award for this outstanding work.

For more information about the film, and to find or host a public screening in your area, visit www.bottomdollarsmovie.com.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF ILLINOIS FOR ITS FREEDOM LINK PROJECT \$10,000 AWARD RECIPIENT



Participants in the FreedomLink program on Wrigley Field in Chicago.

In the earliest years of the twentieth century, and before he became the “blind doctor,” a young Jacob Bolotin had to first learn how to safely and effectively navigate the streets of Chicago by himself. Over one hundred years later the Freedom Link project, organized by the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois, ensures that the blind of the greater Chicago area no longer have to learn the city’s crowded streets alone.

Launched in 2008, participants in the Freedom Link project meet once a month on a Saturday afternoon in downtown Chicago to use the city itself as a classroom. Each session, blind teenagers connect with a blind adult mentor to take a trip to various places of interest in and around the city. Participants are required to walk or use public mass transit systems, such as buses or trains, in order to get to their destination. The exercise affords the teenagers the opportunity to safely practice their travel skills with the guidance and experience of the mentors. These monthly trips are perfect for tasks such as learning to listen for parallel traffic at intersections or finding the platform edge in the subway.

Occasionally, new participants with very limited experience will arrive at one of the Freedom Link meetings. These fledgling mentees will often have minimal confidence in their ability to perform basic activities, like riding an escalator or entering a building through a revolving door. However, through persistence and practice, some quickly gain enough confidence and skill to ride the subway into the city on their own. The Freedom Link program gives these young adults the tools they need to shatter their low expectations of

themselves and travel without trepidation.

Each year brings new and exciting experiences for participants, who provide input and feedback about places they would like to go and activities they would like to do. Participants in the program have handled live snakes at an area nature museum, examined models of buildings that make up the iconic Chicago skyline on an architectural tour, spent a day on the beach at Lake Michigan, and have taken a backstage tour during a live theater performance. In the coming months, the program has organized a tour of the world famous Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, complete with a discussion on careers in professional baseball.

One of Freedom Link's highlights is the annual Career Day. Each year, NFB members from across the country talk to the mentees about their jobs and what it takes to be employed. This gives the teenagers the chance to interact with and learn from highly successful blind adults who have had to overcome similar struggles and thrive in the ordinary competition of life.

Mentors in the Freedom Link program take care to craft strong and lasting relationships with



mentees, which often endure long after the program ends. From the time the program started, organizers have kept in contact with the mentees as they go on to college and successful careers. Many former mentees have become active and engaged members of the National Federation of the Blind, including the current president of the Illinois Association of Blind Students.

For blind Americans, many skills must be developed and honed in order to succeed. One of the most important is the ability to access information that allows a person to make safe and confident travel decisions. Dr. Jacob Bolotin had to learn how to access and gather this information by himself, but today, the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois's Freedom Link project ensures that young blind adults need not develop this skill without guidance and mentorship. The spirit of Dr. Bolotin and his independence are carried on through the NFB of Illinois, and for that reason the organization is deserving of a 2017 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION \$5,000 AWARD RECIPIENT

In the context of blindness, the term “accessibility” is most often used to discuss ways in which information, particularly electronic information, can be used by the blind. Access to information normally presented visually has always been a challenge for the blind. In Dr. Jacob Bolotin’s time, he used Braille to read and write, and he acquired visual information presented in diagrams or drawings through tactile models that he made himself or that were made or provided by his family and others. Today, Braille is still used, and it can now be displayed on electronic devices. Tactile drawings and graphics can also be made electronically. Other technologies, such as text-to-speech screen readers, also help blind people access information.

It is increasingly well understood that websites, apps, and digital content must be coded in ways that allow them to be interpreted by screen readers and other technology used by the blind. However, the responsibility for making sure this happens does not lie solely with developers. Organizations must make a commitment to accessibility to ensure that all the content they produce can be used by everyone. They must also consider the needs of all persons with disabilities by making sure to eliminate physical access barriers and to provide services such as real-time captioning or sign language interpreters for the deaf when needed. To make sure that all of this is done well and consistently, organizations must set clear expectations and promulgate clear guidelines so that everyone from the chief executive officer to the coder of digital content or the conference organizer knows what is required. Many organizations fail to do this well, even if officials within them have the best of intentions. Too often, making information accessible is seen as an afterthought and certainly a good thing to do, but only, if ever, after everything else is done. Moreover, almost without exception, organizations don’t make an effort to train the staff and contractors to implement accessible information plans or to put a system in place to hold them accountable if they do not. When an organization takes steps to ensure accessibility, and to



President Linda Klein

hold itself accountable if or when it fails to do so, that organization deserves recognition.

The American Bar Association (ABA), the professional association for lawyers and judges, has done just that. At the urging of Scott LaBarre, an active member of the ABA; the National Federation of the Blind; and other disability advocates, the organization has taken a number of affirmative steps to make sure that it serves all of its members in the legal profession, including lawyers with disabilities.

In December of 2014, Jack Rives, the executive director of the ABA, appointed a staff task force to examine the current accessibility practices across the organization, identify best practices, and develop recommendations on how to enhance accessibility for its members with disabilities. The task force recommended sensitivity and accessibility training throughout the organization and created a repository of accessibility resources on the organization's intranet. These were necessary first steps, but a recent incident

demonstrated that more was needed.

In February of 2017, at the midyear meeting of the ABA, a blind lawyer and Federationist named Deepa Goraya was to chair a panel she had organized on access to the courts. The panel included a deaf lawyer from New York. Despite the fact that Ms. Goraya had organized the panel well in advance and had informed ABA staff of the need for an American Sign Language interpreter in November of 2016, no interpreter was present. Ms. Goraya was urged to continue the panel without the deaf participant, but she rightly refused to go forward unless everyone could participate. Mr. LaBarre informed Jack Rives of the incident, suggesting that ABA staff be reminded of the accessibility resources created by the staff task force. Mr. Rives responded swiftly, and went even further.

Only a week after the incident, Mr. Rives sent an email to all ABA staff, which he also shared with Mr. LaBarre. The message not only reminded his colleagues of the available resources and included links to them, but announced a new mandatory accessibility training program that every staff member

must complete by the end of the association's fiscal year. The steps that had to be taken to complete the training were specifically outlined, and included reviewing a toolkit on organizing accessible conferences and learning how to create accessible documents. Mr. Rives, while providing encouragement by reminding the staff of its mission to serve all of the ABA's members, also made it clear that no excuses would be accepted for failing to complete the training by the end of the 2017 fiscal year.

Mr. LaBarre was both professionally pleased and personally moved by Mr. Rives' decisive and swift action, but also credits Linda Klein, the ABA president, for her leadership, without which such decisive action would not be possible. He notes that the ABA was not always so welcoming. In an email thanking and commending Mr. Rives for the training initiative, Mr. LaBarre recalled an incident early in his career when he was pulled by the arm from the doorway of a room where an ABA meeting was taking place while being loudly told "You're in the wrong place. This is a meeting for lawyers!" When Mr. LaBarre explained that he was indeed a lawyer, the person

who had accosted him was incredulous. In an email to Mr. Rives about the mandatory accessibility training initiative, Mr. LaBarre said in part, “Your action today loudly proclaimed that I and others like me do in fact matter! You cannot know how much this means to me and how deeply I am moved. I thank you and the ABA from the bottom of my heart for standing up for what is right!”

Dr. Jacob Bolotin experienced his own struggles to be accepted into the medical profession. He encountered hostility from some officials at his medical school, as well as from other students. He had to establish his own practice and accept unpaid work early in his career in order to gain a foothold and establish his reputation. Fortunately, early mentors like Dr. William Copland took steps to make sure that he received his education and eventually thrived in the profession. A hundred years later, attitudes toward the blind and others with disabilities have come a long way, but still have a long way to go. The American Bar Association is taking the inclusion of all of its member lawyers, including those who are blind, seriously. In doing so, it sets an example for other professional associations, as well as all other businesses and organizations, whether they serve discreet groups or the general public. That is why the American Bar Association is a worthy recipient of a 2017 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Award.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.

WHO WE ARE

The National Federation of the Blind is the largest organization of blind and low-vision people in the United States. Founded in 1940 by sixteen individuals from seven states, the Federation now has tens of thousands of members and consists of affiliates and local chapters in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Members gather in chapter meetings each month, and there are state conventions of Federation affiliates every year. All affiliates are represented at an annual national convention, which typically draws between twenty-five hundred and three thousand delegates. We also do our work through special interest divisions and committees. Blind teachers, blind lawyers, blind entrepreneurs, blind students, blind clerics, blind engineers, blind people in the social sciences, parents of blind children, and others provide each other with information and support. By providing public education about blindness, information and referral services, scholarships, literature and materials about blindness, specialized aids and appliances, adaptive equipment, and support for blind people and their families, the members of the National Federation of the Blind strive to spread the word that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on equal terms with their sighted peers. Together, with love, hope, and determination, we transform dreams into reality.

WHY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND?

As the original and largest nationwide organization of blind people, with over seventy-five years of expertise and experience, the National Federation of the Blind is able to speak with authority and legitimacy about what it really means to be blind. While many other organizations purport to speak for the blind, only the National Federation of the Blind can authentically speak for the blind because it is the blind. Other organizations cannot fully represent what it means to be blind in twenty-first century America, how much we are capable of, and the challenges we still face. This is why a strong National Federation of the Blind is important.

*Announcing the
2018 Dr. Jacob Bolotin Awards*

*Application materials will be
available beginning October 1, 2017,
and must be received electronically
or postmarked by March 31, 2018.*

Please see www.nfb.org for details.



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

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