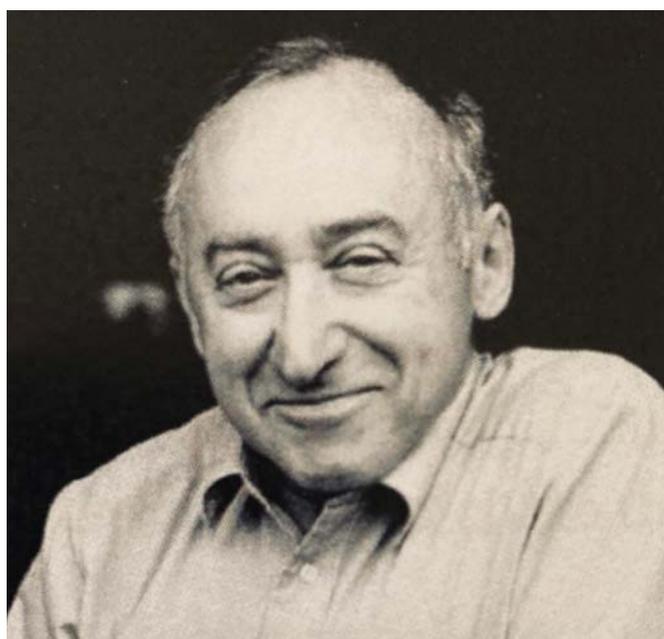


# Outstanding contribution to deaf education

Ken Carter shares an obituary tribute to Professor Harold Silver (25.10.1928–3.8.2021)

Professor Harold Silver's memorable funeral took place at St John's Chapel, Oxford Crematorium, with the reception continuing outside his house at Old Headington, Oxford. His daughters Claire and Vicki organised the programme wonderfully well, with Kieran his son-in-law giving an outstanding introduction and eulogy supported by Josef, Alf, Vicki, and Claire. He will long be remembered by his daughters Claire and Vicki as a loving father and a multi-talented individual.

Harold Silver wrote and researched extensively on educational history and policy. He and his wife Pamela collaborated on research projects and co-authored articles, reports, and books. Between 1980 and 1983 Harold Silver, then Principal of Bulmershe College of Higher Education in Reading, and Pamela Silver undertook a research project funded by the Social Science Research Council entitled, 'British and American educational strategies against poverty in the 1960s and 1970s'. This work was expanded in subsequent years and the results were eventually published as *An Educational War on Poverty: American and British Policy-making, 1960–1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). This book analysed the role of education in the American 'war on poverty' from 1964, and in Britain from the appointment of the Plowden Committee on primary schools. It examined attempts in the two countries to use education to break the 'cycle of disadvantage'. During the course of their research, the Silvers not only drew on a large number of written sources but also conducted taped interviews with a wide range of individuals, such as educationists and policy-makers in both the United States and Britain.



Harold Silver

## To show his enormous commitment to education he was involved in the following selected areas of recent professional activities:

- Consultancies and evaluation: Enterprise in Higher Education and Guidance and Learner Autonomy, North London and Oxford Brookes Universities; Fund for Development of Teaching and Learning, University of York; creation of a 'Centre for Educational Development', University of York; survey of existing research on education, ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council); Assessment benchmarking, Open University; Geography, Earth, and Environmental Sciences national subject centre.
- Funded Research Projects: External examiner research project (with A. Hannan), HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England), UUK (Universities UK), LTSN (the Learning and Teaching Subject Network) et al., current; Opinion making in higher education (Nuffield, 2000–1); Innovation in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (with A. Hannan): ESRC, HEFCE, Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), 1997–9; US student campus roles (Nuffield, 1994–5); The external examiner system, possible futures (HEQC, 1993–4); Institutional policies for students with disabilities (Nuffield 1990); Educational strategies against poverty (with P. Silver, Social Science Research Council (SSRC), 1987–9).
- Overseas: Scholar in Residence, Rockefeller Centre, Bellagio 2001 and 1990; Visiting Scholar (Inter-University Task Force on Higher Education and Van Leer Institute), Israel 1997; Chair, consultancy team, Bahamas Ministry of Education (post-secondary education) 1990–1; Visiting Fellow, Indiana University 1991; Visiting Scholar, University of British Columbia 1989; 'Distinguished Visitor', University of Alberta 1988.
- In 1982, Professor Harold Silver invited Ken Carter to become a Senior Research Fellow to a Berkshire Colleges' Consortium and to address the issues of FHE (Further, Higher and Continuing Education) for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students. Harold accepted Sandra Israel (nee David) as their first ever Deaf student with British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters, when other universities declined her applications, being ignorant of communication needs of deaf students!

Three years later in 1985, Professor Silver helped and encouraged Ken to set up Deafax as a registered charity, but to be based on the Bulmershe campus, with a remit to address and challenge the issues of information and communications technology (ICT), language, literacy, communication and inclusion for deaf and hearing

children, young people, and adults locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. When Bulmershe merged with the University of Reading, Deafax continued to offer its many innovative projects and support services to deaf and hearing personnel and students throughout the University. After a period of being the Berkshire Advisory Lecturer on Special Needs, Ken Carter later took charge of Deafax and helped the organisation at one point to generate an income of £1 million. It has continued to make considerable progress under the leadership of Helen Lansdown who attended Bulmershe as an English graduate in the areas of innovation and research. Helen and Ken owe a great deal to Harold and Pamela Silver for their outstanding selfless support.



Ken Carter, Helen Lansdown and Harold Silver

**Even though he was an enormously busy person, Harold Silver shared in a number of projects/seminars relating to deaf education such as:**

- Carter KC, Silver H, *'Deaf Graduates in Higher Education – Reflections on the use of ICT'*, pilot study report commissioned by Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)/TechDis (Higher Education Academy), Deafax, 2006.

This pilot study was able to collate valuable information from eight former deaf graduates from the last five years (2000–2005) about their views on higher education, Disabled Students Allowances, and the use of ICT on their learning and communication and subsequent careers. The group, through questionnaires, interviews, and case studies, recognised the 'barriers to literacy' and therefore were anxious to have all the support, whether human or technological, to fulfil their academic potential.

- Lansdown H C, Crombie-Smith K, Hale S, Mootoo A, Carter KC and Silver H, *'New Horizons: Interactive ICT based teaching and Learning Resources for the Development of Deaf Children's Writing and Communication Skills, report to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation'*, Deafax, 2006.

The report includes a synopsis of a small evaluative study of Teachers of the Deaf and their use of ICT in teaching. The outcomes of this study helped to create the development of ICT-based, highly visual, interactive module resources to aid teachers and pupils in the learning process. The modules cover literacy, PSHE (personal, social, and health education), library facilities, travel, numeracy, music, and Good Practice Guide and Software Review – all following the key stage levels of the national curriculum.

- Short Summary of a Deafax Seminar  
Professor Silver indicated that he was not a specialist in visual literacy, reading, or deafness, just a friend and professional evaluator for Deafax, which he thanked for

arranging this seminar. He thought we would all have taken away from this first seminar a greater understanding of what had been emphasised as 'meaning making', the 'construction of meaning' and 'picturing in the mind'. The essential message would be adaptable to the teaching of reading to deaf children, and 'How profoundly deaf children learn to read', which stressed the importance of having a language – any language – in order to be able to learn to read. There was a great deal in the seminar with which he was not familiar, but he felt he was less ignorant of them having been at the seminar and he thanked everyone for that.

**The value and importance of Medical & Educational Technology Enterprises Consortium (METEC) – some brief information about each of the charitable enterprises that Professor Harold Silver inspired.**

**Deafax – To empower deaf people of all ages to lead fulfilling lives through the use of innovative technologies [www.deafax.org](http://www.deafax.org)**

Deafax is unique in the field of deafness in that it works with technology – hardware and software



– to enable deaf people of all ages to excel and break down the barriers of isolation and communication. To date, Deafax, after more than 30 years, has worked with over 80,000 beneficiaries; this includes 45,000 deaf children, 25,000 deaf adults, 3,500 Teachers of the Deaf, and 6,000 parents. It is a charitable company with a national remit and strong international links. It pioneers the innovative use of educational research and training projects involving technology for deaf people of all ages, teachers, employers, and health professionals and has provided workshops in schools for the deaf throughout the UK. The project, research, and developmental work of Deafax is supported by a wide variety of governmental, public, and commercial organisations and is often conducted in collaboration.

**Decibels – Enabling through sound, music, the arts, performance and technology** [www.decibels.org.uk](http://www.decibels.org.uk)

Decibels advances the above by providing facilities, equipment, and research with the view to include those with special needs/disabilities (deaf, hard of hearing, blind, learning difficulties, gifted, autistic etc) and older people into the community, and the musical and artistic worlds. It also establishes a spirit of innovation by incorporating technological development into various aspects of research, training, and music practice.



**Ability2Access – Enabling and providing education, training, resources and research for inclusive environments** [www.ability2access.org.uk](http://www.ability2access.org.uk)

A2A is a registered charitable company dedicated to advancing the education, knowledge, research, and understanding of the public in the physical, environmental, economic, and social dimensions of the built environment, particularly in the manner in which it affects those with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities. It also promotes the welfare of such persons by co-operating with voluntary or statutory research, or other organisations with projects concerning the built environment, so as to improve the conditions and quality of life of these people.



**SpecialKidz – empowering and transforming the lives of children and young people with disabilities**

[www.specialkidz.org](http://www.specialkidz.org)

SpecialKidz aims to promote the use of information and communications technology to advance the education, research, and inclusion of children, young people, and adults with speech, language, and communication-related disabilities. It therefore sees technology as a unifying approach to removing communication barriers for all with this wide range of disabilities. In seeking to improve understanding of these barriers and the potential of technology for overcoming them, SpecialKidz addresses the needs both of those with disabilities and of those who work with and relate to them.



**EASiTEC – Easy access solutions for inclusion, technology education & communications**

[www.easitec.co](http://www.easitec.co)

EASiTEC strives to enhance public understanding of the social and technological needs of people, young and old, who have disabilities in the UK, with a view to global expansion. It also advances first class training, product awareness, and access to technology for all people with a variety of disabilities, by working with individuals, charities, local authorities, educational establishments, training agencies, mainstream commercial companies, and others.



**Access-Ability Communications Technology – Sharing ways IT overcomes communication disabilities**

[www.aact.org.uk](http://www.aact.org.uk)

Our mission is to enable information technology to be used to help



people with communication disabilities and to promote the wider understanding of such disabilities.

**Deaf Aspirations – We aspire to achieve through education, training, technology, creative activities, sport, entrepreneurship and business skills**

[www.deafaspirations.org](http://www.deafaspirations.org)

It assists and enables deaf people of all ages to achieve through education, technology, creativity, employment, entrepreneurship, and business skills. We're advancing the public understanding of the needs and aspirations of deaf, hard of hearing, and deafened people worldwide.



**Deaf Sports & Football Foundation – To encourage & promote the well – being of deaf people through sport** [www.deafsportsfootballfoundation.org](http://www.deafsportsfootballfoundation.org)

DSFF wants to address the shortage of support, both practical and financial, that is currently being provided for all deaf sports players wishing to progress with their personal ambitions in achieving success in their chosen sport. As ambitious sports players, deafness sometimes gets in the way in preparing their plans for training or taking part in matches or competitions. The obstacles that are often highlighted, concerning low levels of educational attainment and difficulties with communication, can dampen any enthusiasm individual sport players may have, reducing the passion for their chosen sport and potentially lead to ill-health through anxiety, frustration, and mental illness.



**GOALS4LIFE – Global online assisted learning & support** [www.goals4life.org.uk](http://www.goals4life.org.uk)

The aim is to create an innovative virtual information and communications technologies teaching and learning environment. Disabled people have the right to choose how they learn and how technology can enrich their lives. We are working together with individuals, local authorities, governments, educational establishments, and other online learning enterprises to advance education, research, and inclusive learning by distance communication activities locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, via different forms of video online for children and adults with a variety of disabilities associated with speech, language, and communication. We're advancing the understanding of the public into the social, educational, and technological needs of people, young and old, who have disabilities in the UK and worldwide. ■



*Ken Carter is a former Lecturer/Teacher of the Deaf and is now involved in nine educational and technological enterprises.*

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