



WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF  
HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Department of  
Communication Sciences  
and Disorders

## HISTORICAL STATEMENT

Wichita State University began in 1895 as Fairmount College when the Congregational Church opened the doors to 16 students and 3 faculty members. In 1926, the City of Wichita assumed the financial support of the college and renamed it the University of Wichita. It became the first municipal university west of the Mississippi River. In 1964, the University of Wichita became one of the six state-supported universities in Kansas and was renamed Wichita State University. The 330-acre campus is now the educational home for 14,000 students and 1,031 faculty members. The programs span 180 areas of interest in six degree-granting colleges. In addition, the Graduate School offers a program leading to the Ph.D. degree in Communicative Disorders and Sciences along with nine other doctoral programs.

In the spring of 1934, Dr. William Jardine became president of the University and on June 1, 1934, Martin Palmer, the founder of the present program in Communicative Disorders and Sciences, had his first appointment with the new president. On June 4, 1934, Palmer was informed that he and his ideas had been accepted and that the University was offering a contract for nine months at a salary of \$1,600.00. It was agreed upon and in September of 1934 the program began.

Martin and his wife Mary worked cooperatively to create a sound financial base for the developing program. The first substantial contribution was used to establish the Flo Brown Memorial Speech Laboratory in one small room on the fourth floor of Jardine Hall on the WSU campus. This room served as office, classroom, research laboratory, and speech clinic.

The new program began modestly with 12 students but by the fall of 1936, Palmer had a staff of seven people. The fourth-floor facilities presented problems to the handicapped but a spirit of cooperation prevailed and football players, R.O.T.C. members, and even cab drivers carried children to and from the fourth floor for their lessons. In 1939, the building now known as Morrison Hall was completed and the library was moved into that structure. As departments continued to move into larger spaces, the building on the southwest corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and Fairmount became available to the new Department of Speech Science. A gift of \$10,000 from the A.A. Hyde Benevolent Fund (derived from the invention of mentholatum by A.A. Hyde of Wichita) was used to remodel the building for use as a speech clinic.

Clinical services expanded and this became a source of concern to the administrators of the University. They supported the laboratory requirement of clinical practicum but could not justify using University space for service to those outside the university. It was suggested that consideration be given to developing a separate organization for the primary purpose of rendering clinical services. In 1940, Palmer caused the advisory board to form and they began plans for a clinical facility. By November of 1945, that advisory board reconstructed itself as a Board of Trustees and the Institute of Logopedics came into existence. At that time, the University was asked

to change the name of the department to the Department of Logopedics and from that point until his death in 1965, Palmer was both the Chairman of the Department of Logopedics and the Director of the Institute of Logopedics.

The early understandings between President William Jardine and Martin Palmer provided that Palmer was to ask little of the University and that he was expected to raise funds for programs he wished to initiate. Even the hiring of new faculty required only a notification sent to the Dean of the College that the individual was to be appointed to the faculty and that the Institute would provide the salary. During this period, the Institute and the University's programs became fiscally and physically inseparable.

Graduate degrees were possible, but students had to meet the requirements of other established degree-granting programs in addition to the requirements in speech science. Within a relatively short time, the speech science major had been approved and the first Master of Arts Degree in speech science was granted in 1944. The need for larger facilities was clear and plans were initiated to develop an independent Institute of Logopedics to be housed in its own buildings. A \$2 million loan through the Federal Housing Authority was possible because the plans were viewed as a housing development with the main building constituting the business section. The Department of Logopedics and the Institute of Logopedics moved to the new facilities at 2400 Jardine Drive on September 19, 1949.

Mary and Martin Palmer continued to believe in the triad of education, service, and research. Palmer aspired to a program that could offer a doctoral degree but the University of Wichita was authorized by the North Central Association of Universities and Colleges to grant degrees at the baccalaureate and master levels only. Historically, the University was well prepared to teach but there were many who felt that the University was not prepared to support the research component necessary for a doctoral degree. The proposal for offering a doctoral degree was approved by a slight majority. Both the Department and the University engaged in the self-studies required to achieve approval by the North Central Association to offer a terminal degree. The North Central Association's evaluation of library holdings indicated that substantial improvements would be needed. The Ablah family and the Derby Refining Company decided to provide a larger library. A building was constructed in downtown Wichita (the Colorado Derby Building) and was donated to the University. This served as collateral, which enabled the University to sell bonds and use the money to build the existing Ablah Library.

The degree Doctor of Philosophy was finally authorized in 1958, but several years passed before there was a candidate for the degree. Palmer's interest was international. He traveled to Japan and India to advise about starting rehabilitative speech and hearing work in those countries. He developed scholarships that would enable persons from those countries to study in Wichita. A Japanese dentist, Goro Kamiyaya, was the first person awarded a doctoral degree in 1963 from the University of Wichita. In 1965 the second degree was awarded to Wesley L. Faires who later served as Chair for the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences at Wichita State University.

The leadership position held by Dr. Martin F. Palmer was transferred to Dr. William E. Miller, who became Acting Chairman of the Department of Logopedics, and to Mr. Charles Wurth, who became Director of the Institute of Logopedics at the death of Martin Palmer in August, 1965.

During the three-year period that William E. Miller served as Acting Chairman he was able to attract established scholars to the program and the beginning of direct financial support of the academic portion of the program by the University emerged. Dr. J. Keith Graham came to Wichita in 1967 and in cooperation with the Institute of Logopedics continued the faculty development program. At that time, the Institute had two internationally recognized individuals in residence. One was a former president of the American Speech and Hearing Association and former Director of the program at Northwestern University, Clarence T. Simon. The other was Orvis C. Irwin, who was engaged on a full-time basis in research. Simon developed initial documents regarding graduate degrees and formed a positive liaison with Wichita State University. Graham was the first faculty member in Logopedics to receive full salary from the University. All subsequent Logopedics faculty was fully supported by the University.

Financial obligations of the Institute of Logopedics required some reorganization and the development of a plan whereby the University gradually could assume full cost of its training mission. Robert L. McCroskey, who came to the University in August of 1967, was asked in 1968 to assume the role of Director of Professional Services at the Institute, along with Neil Richards, former Vice-President of KG&E, who became the administrative head. By the end of the first year, the Institute was at a break-even point financially and both Richards and McCroskey, (who served half-time with the Institute and half-time with the University), continued in their appointments. Under Graham, the first public school practicum was provided for students of the Department of Logopedics in the fall of 1969.

During the 14-year span from 1966-1980, the faculty grew from five to fifteen, plus part-time and adjunct professors, and the full financial commitment by the University to the program became a reality. Between 1968, when only five Master of Arts degrees were awarded, and the spring of 2002, over 900 master's degrees have been awarded. Since 1968, a total of 72 doctoral degrees have been awarded.

The physical proximity of the Institute and the Department, as well as the common use of the word Logopedics, continued to create confusion in the minds of individuals who sought clinical services or searched for a program where they could receive training in a professional career. In the fall of 1979, the name of the Department of Logopedics was changed officially to the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences. In 1993, the Institute of Logopedics was renamed Heartspring. In the fall of 1979 serious attention began to be given to the Committee for the Expansion of Corbin Education Center. This committee had been formed in the summer of 1970 by Vice-President John Breazeale and charged with the responsibility of determining the amount and kind of space required to accommodate the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences and to permit some relief of space requirements in the Corbin Education Center. The first meetings with an architect took place in May of 1980 and continued through the fall of 1980 at which time approval by the Board of Regents was given. The projected date of occupation of the first floor of the Life Sciences Building (now renamed R. Dee Hubbard Hall) was August 1981. Upon relocation to Hubbard Hall, the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences expanded from approximately 5300 square feet to approximately 13,000 square feet.

When the building now called the Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex (fondly known as the MX) was purchased and donated to Wichita State University, University departments were given the opportunity to write proposals describing why their department or unit should be allowed to move

into the complex. The Clinic took advantage of this opportunity and submitted a proposal to the University committee. When this proposal was written, emphasis was placed on the Clinic acquiring the wing of the facility that had once housed a day care, thus reducing the amount of renovation needed to meet the needs of the Clinic, students, and clients.

In 1998, the Clinic was given approval to move their facility into the MX. Plans were developed for the renovation of that space and construction was completed. The speech-language services of the Clinic moved in the fall of 1999. The audiology services of the Clinic moved into the MX in January 2000. In 2005, two important events happened for the department. First, the department changed its name to the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. This change reflected the department's belief that clinical services to individuals with communication disorders have as their foundation the results of scientific research in our disciplines. Science, then, guides the services we provide for individuals with disorders. Second, the department moved from the College of Education to the College of Health Professions. The move was initiated to increase visibility within and outside of the university while also recognizing the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology as related health professions. The move also resulted in a relocation of the department to Ahlberg Hall. The Department is proud of its heritage and what it has accomplished and looks forward to increasing its presence in the community, the state, and the nation.

Contributors:

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