

## History of the Department of Speech Communication & Dramatic Arts – CMU

In 1921-22, when the department was called “Reading and Speech”, under the leadership of I.A. Beddow, There were only 12 courses listed in the Bulletin (then called “Year Book.”) Included were two courses in Public Speaking, a course in rural school reading, one in Pedagogy given only in the summer, one called “Modern Plays”, 3 various courses in the teaching of Literature, Oral Language and Reading, and 2 courses in Dramatic Reading...all of which were taught by Dr. Beddow himself. This amazing generalist even added a 4 hour Debate to the curriculum in 1922.

By 1924, a new course in Speech Correction had been added, and since no record seems to remain as to who taught it, and since no new faculty positions were listed in the Year Book, it must be assumed that Dr. Beddow was also the instructor of that course.

That summer, tuition for Michigan residents was \$3.00 (\$6.00 for non-residents.) One wonders whether any young female speech student came to live in the newly opened Ronan Hall dormitory in the summer of '24.

Courses in Interpretative Reading, including the reading of Shakespeare, began in 1925. In 1926 the name of the department was changed to “Speech and Reading”, and by the summer of 1928 a new course in “Speech Training” was offered as further training in “Diagnosing speech difficulties. A survey of the literature dealing with the causes and cure of speech defects. Study of speech cases of defective speech.”

1928 also saw the addition of a course in Play Production and additional debate courses. However the faculty listing that year also showed the addition of Etta M. Paulson to the faculty, so it can be assumed that Professor Beddow now had teaching help. (No doubt, the English department had also helped in this regard during those early years, but the records do not show that.) The arrival of Mayme. V. Smith in 1930 must be a welcomed addition to this tiny department.

The department remained fairly static during the entire decade of the thirties under the stewardship of Beddow and Smith. However, in 1940, with the arrival of Wilbur E. Moore, Fred R. Bush, a member of the English Department faculty for many years, joined the Speech faculty on a part-time basis to assist in the development of the theatre program. Under Moore's aggressive leadership, things began to change rapidly. (Bush had taught English and directed the plays for many years and continued to do so until his retirement. It was not until after his death that a new theatre was built and named in his honor.)

That first year in the forties saw a jump in course offerings from 14 courses in 1939 to 20 courses in 1940. And the university was changing rapidly also: the Yearbook had become the “Bulletin” by 1942 and the institution had again changed its name (this time to Central Michigan College of Education.)

By 1946 the department was offering such courses as Theatre Laboratory, Parliamentary Law, Introduction to Logic, and Semantics. One merely has to peruse the course offerings list to note the influence of the new department chairman, Moore, and his colleagues during the early post-World War II years. The summer of '46 saw the inception of the speech clinic, and its camp for children with defective speech. By 1947 Herbert L. Curry had joined the department, which that year listed 28 courses in the Bulletin. The following year saw the arrival of Emil R. Pfister to join a growing list of important contributors to the rapidly broadening influence of this department. That also was the year in which the department again changed its name. This time to "Speech and Drama."

In 1952, Elbert R. Bowen joined an increasingly prominent list of qualified scholars/professors who, still under the leadership of Wilbur Moore, brought the department to the statewide influence as one of the leading departments in the state of Michigan. This was also the year in which Jean B. Mayhew joined the faculty as a part-time clinician, moving into a full-time position in 1954. By 1957 J. Alan Hammack and Keith L. Maxwell had joined the others who helped to bring the department to the forefront as a driving force on the regional scene in the 1960's. The faculty were serving on many state committees, chairing many programs and accepting offices in the Michigan Speech Association (Pfister and Mayhew both served terms as President of the MSA.)

Over the years many instructors were hired to serve the department but their tenure was brief. The people who built the department as it is known today, those who wore the hard hats and trod the girders as Moore Hall and Bush Theatre were built, are largely those whose names appear above. Their contributions to the growth and development of the department were immense and long-lasting.

In addition to developing CMU's speech correction program, as well as enlarging the public address, radio and theatre areas of the department before he left the department to become vice-president of academic affairs (under president Judson Foust), Wilbur Moore was instrumental in helping CMU to secure funds from the Ford Foundation to develop the Teacher Education Project. Gilbert Rau joined the staff in 1959 to help in Public Address and in the development of what was to become known as the landmark experimental program in televised instruction in speech in this country. Catalog offerings now numbered 81. Emil Pfister took over the chairmanship of the department with Moore's move to the Provost's office in 1960-61 and the department continued to grow and prosper under his guidance until he left the chair in 1969.

The decade from 1960 to 1970 saw a continued departmental expansion. The beginning course, Speech 101, through the televised closed circuit instructional program, became the "bread and butter" course of the department, servicing up to 1,800 students each semester until the supervision of Jean Mayhew, who served both as director of the course and television lecturer for a ten year period. It was also during these years in the 60's that such people as Richard Powell, Eugene Rydahl, Les Gruber, William Valle and Doris Ramsey joined the faculty. By this time, Over 114 courses were listed in the Bulletin. Up to ninety sections of the Speech 101 were offered each semester, plus multiple sections of

many other courses. Thousands of students were enrolled in Speech and Drama curricula (Mayhew alone had over 30,000 students in that 10-year period), hundreds of majors were graduated in various areas, and the graduate program came to fruition.

In 1969 Jerry M. Anderson assumed the chair, and the graduate program continued to grow, supporting the rapidly diversifying areas of a very large department. Area coordinators were appointed for the following (4) divisions: Broadcast and Cinematic Arts; Communication and Public Address; Speech Pathology, Audiology and Speech Sciences; and Theatre Interpretation. Leo Kipfmüller joined the area of Pathology, Audiology, and Speech Sciences that year, and Peter B. Orlik had joined the area of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts as coordinator. The department got a new classroom building, appropriately dedicated to the man who had moved Speech from a tiny department of two people to a major department of dozens, and Moore Hall became a reality.

The mid-seventies brought John W. Schmidt to replace Anderson as Chair along with such people as Richard K. Allen and David Ling in Public Address, and Mary Ellen Brandell and Robert E. Poyner in the Pathology, Audiology and Speech Science area, which by now had become “Communication Disorders.” Public Address was now called “Interpersonal and Public Communication”, and majors/minors were offered in each area of study as well as a Generalist major on the Elementary and Secondary Education curricula. The department meantime had lost two of its most promising scholars/teachers who had been here a short time. Irvine Smith, a talented theatre director, and William Valentine, a speech education specialist, both died prematurely.

By 1977 Schmidt had been replaced by Albert L. Lewis as Chair, and William R. Haushalter, Jerome D. Henderson, H. Greydon Hyde, Marie Kopin and Linda Seestedt had joined the faculty. The Bulletin stated that the Department offered courses designed for a program of general education in teacher preparation, applied arts, fine arts, liberal arts, business, and preprofessional curricula. Undergraduate programs stressed opportunities in the theory and behavior of oral communication in its various forms.

That decade ended with the Bulletin which listed over 140 courses offered by an increasingly diverse department. The winds of change were blowing, and, by the end of 1980, Broadcast and Cinematic Arts had separated from the department (which was housed within the School of Arts and Sciences) and joined the School of Fine and Applied Arts. Jill Taft-Kaufman had joined the theatre faculty that same year. The Academic Senate had instituted a General Education Program requirement with far-reaching ramifications for the department. Many curricula no longer required Speech 101. Some continued to require a “general course” defined loosely to give the student many options. One of these was a theatre course in Interpretive Reading, whose enrollment skyrocketed. Voice and Diction also grew in popularity.

It would not be long before the area of Communication Disorders would follow Broadcasting in breaking away from Speech and Dramatic Arts. After all, the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinics were now offering ancillary programs at various facilities

in the central Michigan area. They were servicing complete programs in evaluation, diagnosis, and rehabilitation of children and adults with communication disorders' programs which were and are nationally recognized by full accreditation from the Professional Services Board of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (The university program was and is also accredited by the Education and Training Board of the ASLHA as well.) Since its inception in 1946, the summer clinic population had risen steadily to an enrollment of approximately 150, with the staff composed of faculty, speech, language and hearing professionals, graduate students and selected undergraduates. Students completing the Master's degree program in Communication Disorders fulfilled both academic and clinical requirements for certification by the ASLHA. Dr. Moore's clinic had come a long way in 34 years.

But so had Speech and Dramatic Arts. Additional important faculty members have joined the nucleus of the movers and shakers who shaped the future of the department: Nancy Buerkel-Rothfus, Pamela Gray, Janet Yerby, and Denny L. Bettisworth (who replaced Al Lewis as Chair in 1981) were among them.

By the Fall of 1983 the inevitable had happened. Interpersonal and Public Communication and Theatre Interpretation were the only two areas left in Speech and Dramatic Arts (which, the next year, changed its name once again—to Speech Communication and Dramatic Arts.) Communication Disorders had left both the Department and the School of Arts and Sciences, joining the school of Education, Health and Human Services, with a sub-title of "Speech Language Pathology and Audiology." Brad Swartz, and others who had joined the staff in recent years, went with them.

Meanwhile, the two remaining areas of the department flourished under the guidance of Bettisworth and his colleagues, none of whom had known Wilbur Moore personally but who, nonetheless, carried on in a rapidly changing academic environment as the final decade of the twentieth century arrived. Steve Berglund and Tim Connors had joined Theatre and William Dailey, Edward and Shelly Hinck, and Dawn Weber had joined the IPC faculty. The very end of the eighties decade brought three new additions in the persons of Mary Ann Renz in IPC, and Samuel Williams and N.J. Stanley in Theatre.

Only the future will tell how all of these latest additions to be distinguished faculty will fare. Will they remain with us for 30 year, as Moore, Pfister, Bowen, Currey, Mayhew et al. did during the last half century? The answer of course rests with the next chronicler. Many of the significant contributors to the department in the past are deceased as of 1991: all of the very early ones, of course, plus Wilbur Moore, Les Gruber, J. Alan Hammack, Keith Maxwell, Richard Powell and Gilbert Rau.

As the 1991-92 academic year approaches, the Department of Speech Communication and Dramatic Arts has a full time equivalency of 34 faculty positions and boasts the largest number of majors and minors in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Significant contributions were made by people who are not listed here because their tenure at CMU was short, they moved on, retired, or died, having been here only a short

while. Nor are temporary faculty listed, although some of them taught here for many years, and their contributions were considerable. No intent to denigrate their contribution to Speech Communication and Dramatic Arts should be inferred or implied by the absence of their names in this document. The limitations of space to list them all simply precludes their inclusion in an exhaustive listing of all faculty who helped to bring the department to its place of prominence in today's university.