

McKeithan To Receive Human Relations Award

The Charlotte Chapter of B'nai B'rith Women is proud to announce Deborah Crouch McKeithan as the recipient of its 1985 Human Relations Award.

To qualify, recipients of the award must be residents of North Carolina and have given of themselves above and beyond their paid profession, in the betterment of human relations.

Ms. McKeithan is recognized as the founder of HOW (Handicapped Organization Women), a nonprofit organization founded in Charlotte in 1979 to meet the unique needs of women who are disabled. A self-help support network based on volunteerism, HOW is reaching across the U.S. assisting in the development of Chapters to provide emotional support assisting each woman to reach her fullest potential by developing a positive self-image through education, shared experiences, and becoming a part of mainstream activities in the community. Ms. McKeithan is attempting to teach women, who happen to be disabled, to be as independent as can be, as dependent as need be, and challenged to understand the difference.

"...For we are women who just happen to be handicapped," Ms. McKeithan said in a recent interview. A native of Charlotte, Ms. McKeithan who, "just happens to be handicapped," is legally blind, has cerebral multiple sclerosis, is partially paralyzed from a

stroke, and has epilepsy. These handicaps would deter most other people.

But, she has stepped above her handicaps, receiving numerous awards and honors for her work in establishing HOW. The W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation "Endow a Dream Award"; Distinguished Woman of N.C., 1984; and Handicapped Professional Woman of the Year, 1984, are just a few.

Ms. McKeithan, through her efforts, has reached out to those in need, giving courage and support. Those efforts are evident with one of our own members, Ellie Katz. Ellie wrote in the August, 1984 issue of *The Charlotte Jewish News*: "I have decided it is time to concentrate on my abilities, not my disability. This is without a doubt most important to me."

With all her awards and honors, Deborah McKeithan was overwhelmed when Beverly Greenwald, Human Relations Award Chairwoman, notified her of the award. Ms. McKeithan said, "I have received many awards, but I have never received one in my own home city."

The award will be presented at a luncheon Wednesday, Feb. 20, 11:30 a.m. at the Adam's Mark Hotel. The keynote speaker will be Mary Olive Johnson, architect and partner in the firm of Peterson and Associates. Ms. Johnson became acquainted with Ms.



Deborah McKeithan
Photo/Paul Epley

McKeithan after volunteering her services to the Mecklenburg Association for the blind. Since then, they have become close friends and have worked together in developing architectural designs for buildings for handicapped people.

Cost for the luncheon is \$9; checks must be received no later than Feb. 15. Your check is your reservation and should be made payable to Charlotte B'nai B'rith Women. If more than one reservation is made, please include the names of people attending. All checks are to be mailed to: Human Relations Award, 3607 Huckleberry Road, Charlotte, NC 28210. For more information call: Beverly Greenwald, 365-3489 or Tobey Silber, 542-9935.

— Cheryl Simons

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