KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

JANET L. LABRECK
Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education

Although Commissioner Janet LaBreck lost her vision by the age of ten, she has never let her disability get in the way of her dreams. In 2007, after more than 20 years as an advocate for the blind community, LaBreck was appointed Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind by Governor Deval Patrick. As an ambassador for more than 30,000 legally blind residents, LaBreck has organized campaigns that have effectively increased employment opportunities for the blind. There is no better testament to her profound influence than the Commission’s award-winning internship program which is being replicated throughout the country. In August of 2013, the United States Senate confirmed Commissioner LaBreck as the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) within the United States Department of Education.

KATHLEEN WEST-EVANS
Director of Business Relations for the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

Kathleen West-Evans has more than 30 years of vocational rehabilitation and employment experience and is fluent in American Sign Language. Kathleen worked within the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as a VR counselor, assistant regional administrator, and a regional business relations specialist before moving to the federal level with Region X office of the RSA, where she worked until 2005. Currently, she is the founder and lead staff person for development of the National Employment Team — the national Vocational Rehabilitation-Business Network. The network serves business customers, VR consumers with disabilities, and the 80 state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

ROB HODAPP
Western Operations Business Service & Outreach Specialist

Rob Hodapp is the Western Operations Business Service & Outreach Specialist with the Bureau of Central Operations of the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Rob has a Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and is a CRC and LPC. He has worked in partnership with people with disabilities and employers in maximizing competitive employment settings for over twenty years.

JUDITH GROSS
Assistant Research Professor, University of Kansas

Judith Gross has worked as a special education teacher, direct service provider, and advocate. After seeing the challenges that families faced when trying to access services for their children, she completed her Ph.D. and is currently employed as an Assistant Research Professor at the Beach Center on disability.

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH E. KURTZ, D.D.
President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Archbishop of Louisville, Ky.

Elected President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 12, 2013, Archbishop Kurtz serves on the executive and administrative committees of that body. He is the vice chancellor of the board of the Catholic Extension Society and serves on the boards of numerous organizations, including: Catholic University of America, the National Catholic Bioethics Center, St. Charles Seminary, Leadership Louisville, and the Advisory Board to the Cause for Archbishop Fulton Sheen’s beatification.


KAM S. WONG
Vice President, Diversity & Inclusion Planning and Administration, Prudential Financial Inc.

Kam S. Wong is Vice President, Planning & Administration, with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Prudential Financial, Inc. (Prudential). In this position, Kam ensures the compliance with federal and state laws relating to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action mandates, and oversees day-to-day departmental administrative functions. Additionally, she is Chief of Staff to Prudential’s Chief Diversity Officer. Kam attended Harvard College. She completed her J.D. at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

GRACE FRANCIS
Assistant Research Professor, University of Kansas

Grace Francis collaborated with colleagues from the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas and Families Together, Inc. to conduct and evaluate the Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) program. Currently she works as an Assistant Research Professor serving on the Family/Community Engagement Team of the School wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Center.

JUDY McFARLANE
Author

Judy McFarlane is a writer in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, and a graduate of UBC’s MFA Creative Writing program and former lawyer. Her fiction and non-fiction stories, one of which was nominated for the Journey Prize, have been published in Canadian literary journals and newspapers, and has been broadcast on CBC radio. Judy’s memoir, Writing with Grace, describing how she was transformed by her experience helping a young woman with Down Syndrome write a book, is published by Douglas & McIntyre.

Special thanks to all of our sponsors

The Jesuit Center, The University of Scranton
The mission of the Conference on disABILITY is to positively influence the quality of life and wellness of individuals and families living with disabilities to achieve optimal quality of life requires multi-disciplinary interventions, education, research and leadership. The mission of the Conference on disABILITY is to positively influence the quality of life and wellness of individuals and families living with disabilities by promoting in its deliberations the foundational principles of individualization, self-determination, productivity, employment, independence and full participation in community life by creating an effective learning environment, collaborative and focused discussion.

Program

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

7:45–8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30–8:45 a.m. Presentation of Colors
The University of Scranton Royal Warrior Battalion, R.O.T.C.
Conference Poem: Margarette Quinn
Opening Remarks
Kevin P. Quinn, S.J., President, The University of Scranton
Debra A. Pellegrino, Ed.D., Dean, The Panuska College of Professional Studies
Edward R. and Patricia Leahy, Honorary Conference Chairs
8:45–9:00 a.m. Greetings and Legislative Update (Invited)
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr., United States Senator for Pennsylvania
Introduced by J. Joseph Grady, Esq.
9:00–10:00 a.m. Opening Keynote Address
The Honorable Janet L. LaBreck, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education
10:00–10:15 a.m. Networking Break
10:15 a.m.–11:15 a.m. Opening Keynote Address—Working Together to Drive Innovation and Opportunity: A panel discussion
Kathleen West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Opening Keynote Address—Building the Dream of Employment
Judith Gross, Assistant Research Professor, University of Kansas
Grace Francis, Assistant Research Professor, University of Kansas
12:00–1:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m. Afternoon Keynote
The Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D., President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Archbishop of Louisville, Kentucky
2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. Afternoon Keynote—Beyond Regulations and Laws: Making the new Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program’s Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act regulations work for your organization
Kam S. Wong, Vice President, Diversity & Inclusion Planning and Administration, Prudential Financial Inc.
Kathleen West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
3:00–3:15 p.m. Networking Break
3:15–4:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions (60 min.)
1. Family Employment Awareness Training: A knowledge-based program designed to increase expectations for competitive employment
Judith Gross, Assistant Research Professor, Beach Center on Disability, University of Kansas
Grace Francis, Assistant Research Professor, Beach Center on Disability, University of Kansas
2. JOBS 1st PA Overview: Resources for Employers
Ralph Roach, Division Chief, Business Service & Outreach, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Erik Clare, Field Director, Special Olympics for Pennsylvania
4:15–4:30 p.m. Networking Break
4:30–6:00 p.m. Evening Keynote Presentation: Writing with Grace: A Journey beyond Down Syndrome
Judy McFarlane, Author
Writing with Grace is the inspiring story of the journey Grace and Judy have taken together. Told with honest introspection and keen insight, Judy McFarlane relays the history of Down Syndrome and delves into what it takes to face one’s own prejudice, what it means to live a full life and believe you are worthy. From a young woman who is marginalized by society, Judy McFarlane learns how much courage it takes to follow a dream when everyone tells you it’s impossible.

Posters and Vendors
will be available in the ballroom throughout the day
Royal thanks to the Deans of The University of Scranton for sponsoring the refreshments
Brian P. Connell, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences
Charles E. Kreut, Dean of the Library & Information Fluency
Michael O. Mensah, Ph.D., Dean of the Kania School of Management
Debra Pellegrino, Ed.D., Dean, The Panuska College of Professional Studies
Grace Francis, Assistant Research Professor, University of Kansas
W. Jeffrey Welchs, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Graduate and Continuing Education

For additional information:
Contact Lori A. Bruch, Ed.D. at lori.bruch@scranton.edu / 570-941-4308 or Rebecca Spirito Dalgin, Ph.D. at rebecca.dalgin@scranton.edu / 570-941-7819

Scranton.edu/disabilityconference

Registration

Online Registration:
scranton.edu/disabilityconference
Payment for online registration may be made using Visa or MasterCard.

To Register by Mail:
Complete and return this form. Or print out the form online and return it with your check or money order. Visit www.scranton.edu/disabilityconference

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City State Zip

E-mail

Registration Cost
❑ Professional: $99
❑ Student/Individual with a disability/Family: $40

Method of Payment
❑ Check or money order payable to “The University of Scranton”

Lodging

A Jesuit University in Pennsylvania’s Pocono Northeast region, The University of Scranton is known for its outstanding academics, state-of-the-art campus and technology, and exceptional sense of community. Founded in 1888, The University has a student population of approximately 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

Conference Mission

The University of Scranton believes that disability is part of the human experience and that assisting individuals and families living with disabilities to achieve optimal quality of life requires multi-disciplinary interventions, education, research and leadership. The mission of the Conference on disABILITY is to positively influence the quality of life and wellness of individuals and families living with disabilities by promoting in its deliberations the foundational principles of individualization, self-determination, productivity, employment, independence and full participation in community life by creating an effective learning environment, collaborative and focused discussion and the identification and sharing of effective practices useful in the United States and around the world.

Conference Planning Members

Honorary Chairs
Edward R. Leahy
Patricia Leahy
Lori Bruch, Conference Co-Chair
Victoria Castellanos
Valerie Clark
Rebecca Spirito Dalgin, Conference Co-Chair
Patricia Connolly
Elizabeth Geera
Mrg. Hambrose
Mary Lou Knabel
Allied Service
Fr. Ryan Maher, S.J.
Diane Muniz
Ralph Pascinelli
Debra Pellegrino
Ray Schwenn
Ryan Sheehan
Susan Unwarsky
Prudential

Additional Information

For additional information:
Contact Lori A. Bruch, Ed.D. at lori.bruch@scranton.edu / 570-941-4308 or Rebecca Spirito Dalgin, Ph.D. at rebecca.dalgin@scranton.edu / 570-941-7819

Scranton.edu/disabilityconference