

# Foreword

Katherine M. Hamilton

Throughout my life, I have always been different. I found connecting with people to be extremely difficult, as if I were always on the other side of a glass wall. Then in high school, I found my way into an American Sign Language (ASL) classroom and my world changed forever. Not only had I found people, like my teacher Ms. VanTrease, who understood and made an effort to connect with me, I found an amazing language that made more sense to me than spoken words.

As a first-generation college student, I had no idea what I was doing when I graduated from Sam Houston High. I decided to test the waters at Tarrant County College in the interpreting program, until I met Dr. Kathy Quesenbury, who introduced me to rhetoric and the passion of teaching. I realized I could use my writing skills to communicate with the hearing world and tell them about the wonders and joys of Deaf Culture and ASL. Then I wrote my first collegiate research paper on that topic. When I began looking at universities to transfer to for an English BA, I was saddened to find out most do not recognize ASL as a language acceptable for an English degree's requirements. UTA is unique in that aspect and embraces ASL, so I transferred here without a second thought.

At UTA, I met Dr. Lisalee Egbert, a Deaf professor. Many programs actually offering ASL and Deaf Culture do so without Deaf faculty; UTA is again unique in this way. I had been accepted into the McNair program, so I shared my research ideas with Dr. Egbert and she became my mentor. With the McNair program's funding, I was able to conduct a study in the Deaf Community to understand more about misrepresentation in mass film media. This research has already influenced the hearing world, just by introducing Deaf Culture to those who were previously unaware it existed.

Being part of a campus and community that accepts and validates all languages and cultures has been vital to my success. As a hearing person privileged enough to work for the Deaf Community, I understand the importance of cross-c/Cultural collaboration. Collaboration benefits every party involved; the sharing of c/Culture opens worlds of knowledge, friendship, and possibilities.

Thank you to the Deaf Community for allowing me to write about your Culture, and thank you to *Global Insight* for sharing this information with the world.

—Katherine M. Hamilton, Winter 2024