



**The Learning Center for the Deaf**  
Dedication of the Marie Jean Philip Elementary School Building  
May 30, 2002

Over three hundred guests joined The Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC) on May 30, 2002, a beautiful sun-filled day, to dedicate the new elementary school building, named for Marie Jean Philip, friend, mentor, and internationally renowned advocate.

In a ceremony attended by her Excellency Jane Swift, keynote speaker, a number of people spoke of the legendary Marie Jean Philip. Marie worked at The Learning Center for over 12 years and at the time of her death was pursuing a PhD in linguistics at Boston University. Marie was instrumental in bringing the bilingual-bicultural theory of education to the children at TLC. A philosophy that continues today.

A graduate of Gallaudet University and Northeastern University, Marie helped establish American Sign Language as a recognized language. She was a life-long advocate of education for Deaf children.

Governor Swift greeted the audience by stating; "I can't think of anyone more deserving of this honor than Marie Jean Philip. Her name is synonymous with leadership, innovation and inspiration. She embodied the values of individuality, education and opportunity for all. Today is a testament to her will and spirit, this building will serve as a haven for learning and opportunity for every student that enters its promising halls."

Governor Swift was given a basket full of goodies by TLC Executive Director, Mike Bello, which included an "I Love You" pin, ASL designed t-shirts for her children, and books on learning American Sign Language.

TLC middle school supervisor, Patrick Costello, himself deaf and a dear friend of Marie's, gave a moving speech. He expressed that as "you enter the new elementary school building, and see Marie's old tty in the corner, and her quilt hung on the wall-know that Marie is 'home'." Tell everyone that Marie resides here, she still lives with us, and her spirit lives in this new state of the art building".

Tears flowed as Sue Philip, one of Marie's younger sisters explained how " we are all still in recovery". The events of September 11 impacted us all, but we have moved on, slowly, gradually, taking back our lives. The same holds true for our memories of

Marie.” “Her memory lives on”, stated Sue, “her work is not finished, we are slowly recovering from her absence, but we will thrive, we owe it to “her” children.” Students offered a poem, using the initials of Marie’s name, in pure ASL story-telling style. A quilt that was designed at the time of her death by close friends was shown. Each square told a story of Marie. The children explained to the audience some of their favorite squares, an image of Marie surrounded by children with her legs crossed telling a story, another image of her backpack that was filled with books, and a third humorous square illustrating her love for coffee.

Marie’s niece, Jessica Meehan, a high school senior at TLC this year explained, “ To me Marie was only Aunt Marie. I never thought of her as special only to myself. Today shows me how much she was loved by all, and how special she is to all of us. Her memory reaches far and wide and I am so proud to be here today.”

On hand at the ceremony were family, friends, and alumni. Also there were Design Science, Inc., the building architects and Chapman Construction the builders. The beautifully designed \$2 million dollar school will house 60 elementary students. TLC has a population of over 200 students from infancy through high school, and this year celebrates 32 years of excellence in education.