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Susan O'Hara (1938-2018): A Champion of Disability Rights and Independent Living

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Susan O’Hara (1938-2018): A Champion of Disability Rights and Independent Living

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The 150W History Project

The year 2020 marked the 150th anniversary of women’s admission to the University of California (1870), as well as the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). The intersection of these events are significant to the author, whose educational rights have been codified by generations of activists prior. Leveraging the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement, UC Berkeley women ignited national discourse on the institutional injustices confronted by the disabled community. Alumna Judith Heumann mobilized the Bay Area to oppose *de facto* discrimination in public spaces. Student counselor Zona Roberts promoted equitable opportunities alongside her son Edward Roberts, an activist who became the first quadriplegic student to attend UC Berkeley.¹ Other leaders propelled disability justice through program outreach, public policy, and grassroots organizing. Their legacies were preserved by community historian Susan O’Hara at the Bancroft Library in UC Berkeley. In celebration of 150 Years of Women at Berkeley (150W),² this essay recounts O’Hara personal relationship to disability, subsequent struggle with inadequacy, and lasting impact through advocacy.

¹ Joseph P. Shapiro. *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging A New Civil Right Movement* (Times Books, 1993), 47.

² The 150 Years of Women at Berkeley (150W) celebration is a joint administrative and academic effort to honor past and present women affiliated with the campus. The 150W History Project is an initiative to chronicle and collect content related to the achievements of women at Cal, as well as develop a resource for future scholarly use. See <https://150w.berkeley.edu/>.

Susan O'Hara: Narrative and Analysis

Susan O'Hara was a campus visionary that encouraged fellow wheelchair users to manifest their dreams of living independently. Through the trials and triumphs of living with a major physical disability, she came to realize: "*Having a disability probably has enriched my life more than it would have if I hadn't had a disability.*"³ This mindset gave rise to one of her greatest contributions: the Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement Oral History collection at the Bancroft Library in UC Berkeley. O'Hara's narrative is contextualized with milestones from the disability rights movement. This author examines her life and legacy through a cultural lens of dis/ability⁴ based on individual and societal subjectivities of able-bodiedness. Individuals are not disabled per se, but inaccessible environments are disabling. Therefore the definition, locus, and solution to the "problem" shifts from a paradigm of medical rehabilitation to independent living.⁵ The civil rights framework posits disability as a sociocultural dialectic and removes any moral judgment from the impact of unjust systems.



Susan O'Hara looks into the distance in her wheelchair.
Credit: San Francisco Chronicle obituary published July 2018.

³ Susan O'Hara, interview by David Landes, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1997, p.95.

⁴ The author uses dis/ability to emphasize the construction and reproduction of normality and impairment, which situate disability on a dynamic contingency. Dan Goodley, *Dis/ability Studies: Theorising disablism and ableism*, Routledge, 2014, xiii.

⁵ Gerben DeJong, "Independent Living: From Social Movement to Analytic Paradigm" (Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation 1979). See Document C in the appendix for a table of differences between the rehabilitation and independent living paradigm.

Early Life and Encounter with Polio

Born on May 11, 1938 to Elfreda and Joseph O'Hara, Susan O'Hara enjoyed a comfortable upbringing in the Chicago suburb of La Grange Park, Illinois. Her close-knit family lived by an "Irish sense of humor [and] a lot of common sense,"⁶ values that influenced her problem-solving optimism. O'Hara welcomed responsibility as the eldest of five children. Her relatively untroubled adolescence dissolved into fear when she contracted polio in September of 1955, before vaccines took widespread effect. Initially paralyzed from the neck downwards, O'Hara spent five months of her senior year living at the regional hospital and recovering minimal mobility in her arms. She finished her coursework at Nazareth Academy, an all-girls Catholic high school, through an intercom system conceived by "the ingenuity of the Sisters of Saint Joseph."⁷ O'Hara sought solace in the serenity prayer and her supportive family, who normalized her new needs to the extent that they sometimes "forgot [she] was disabled—in a good sense."⁸ They expressed love and affection in the most practical ways: tending to personal needs, retrofitting their inaccessible house, and creating more livable spaces. This taught O'Hara that disability was an addition to, and not the defining feature of, her identity.

Cowell Hospital: A Groundbreaking Residential Experiment

UC Berkeley was not the first college to implement services for students with disabilities. The University of Illinois set up a program in 1950 to help returning WWII veterans integrate into campus, albeit a less inclusive effort predicated on student success without aides.⁹ As a cradle of social change in the 1960s, Berkeley saw radical concepts of social integration and bodily autonomy take center stage. The counterculture movement transformed public affairs at the university and influenced the Free Speech Movement, Vietnam War protests, Third World

⁶ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 1.

⁷ "Susan O'Hara, 1938-2018." Legacy.com, Chicago Tribune, July 10, 2018.

⁸ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 8.

⁹ Shapiro, 52.

Liberation Front, and People's Park demonstrations. Disability rights entered local consciousness in 1962 when the *Berkeley Gazette* headlined Ed Roberts' successful petition for admission to UC Berkeley. Disabled by polio but his spirit undaunted, Roberts opposed a Berkeley dean's claim that "we've tried cripples before and it didn't work."¹⁰ He found an ally in Dr. Henry Bruyn, the Director of Student Health Services. Dr. Bruyn had extensive experience with the polio epidemic and allocated the third floor of the university infirmary to accommodate Roberts' eight hundred pound iron lung. The north wing of Cowell Hospital served not only as a makeshift dorm, but also an unconventional passage to higher education for severely disabled students.



Ernest V. Cowell Memorial Hospital at 2215 College Ave. Berkeley, CA before its demolition in 1993. The building later became eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and considered a landmark of social history. Credit: National Park Service.

A Paradigm Shift from Impairment to Interdependence

The Independent Living Movement (ILM) of the 1960s asserted the rights of the disabled community to self-determination and unrestricted participation in civil society.¹¹ It co-constructed disabilities as problems of bodily impairment, activity limitation, and participation restrictions in society.¹² Berkeley activists reframed independence as the ability to maintain one's quality of life with assistance (interdependence) and not one's ability to perform

¹⁰ Shapiro, 45.

¹¹ "The Independent Living Movement 1970." *The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities*, 2021. <https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels/six/6a/1.html>

¹² Goodley, 14.

tasks in isolation.¹³ Disability was increasingly recognized as a consequence of discrimination by design, both in the built environment and institutionalized practices. Once pitied or infantilized, mobility aid and assistive technology users were acknowledged as a minority group. This paradigm shift, from patients of physical impairment to consumers of care coordination, allowed for the emergence of genuine allyship and higher qualities of life.¹⁴ Given access to the appropriate services and opportunities, disabled people also accomplished ambitious goals and added value to society much like their able-bodied counterparts.

Internalized Ableism and Anxieties About the Future

Upon graduating from Nazareth Academy in 1956, O'Hara matriculated at Rosary College (now Dominican University) in River Forest, Illinois. The campus's lack of accessible facilities forced her to commute and enroll as a part-time student, and thus she finished the undergraduate education in six years. In 1962, O'Hara completed a Bachelor's in History with a minor in French and taught both of those subjects for a decade at her high school alma mater. Despite a passion for teaching and a Master's in Education from Loyola University Chicago, O'Hara felt unsure of her life's direction. Things were "getting a little depressing [because she] couldn't see where the future was."¹⁵ Without mainstream models of independent living, her anxiety about aging parents. She struggled with internalized ableism and lamented a life in nursing homes. Even though she was disabled, she believed every stereotype of disabled people being low-energy, bedridden, uninteresting, and isolated.¹⁶ Unbeknownst to O'Hara, a magnanimous period of unlearning and optimistic future awaited her in Berkeley.

¹³ Shapiro, 51.

¹⁴ DeJong. See Table (Document C) in the appendix.

¹⁵ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 18.

¹⁶ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 20



Susan O'Hara in a motorized wheelchair.

Credit: Oral Histories (BANC MSS 2001/36 c), Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Berkeley Beckons: New Attitudes and Accommodations

As one of the most accessible cities, Berkeley was well-primed for social change. Since 1962, the Cowell Residence Program has offered an unparalleled living environment through its critical, self help approach. Student organizers at the hospital challenged prevailing medical practices by developing a model of independence based on mutual aid and coalition building. The “Rolling Quads”¹⁷ learned how to be effective advocates from concurrent social campaigns, such as the feminist and women’s liberation movement. They established the Physically Disabled Students’ Program (PDSP) in 1970 with the ethos that disabled people understood their needs best. John Hessler, the second-ever Cowell resident, was appointed as its inaugural program director. The nascent organization secured funding for services like case management, benefits advising, and academic counseling.¹⁸ PDSP provided much-needed camaraderie, freely lent electric wheelchairs, and around-the-clock mechanical assistance to the campus community. Instead of fighting for separate causes on campus, the disability community rallied together and began to embrace a collective identity.

¹⁷ Shapiro, 47. Note: “Quads” is shorthand for quadriplegics.

¹⁸ PDSP received funding from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), Associated Students of the University of California, and eventually the federal TRIO Programs. See DSP chronology (Document B) in the appendix for more details.



Staff members at the Center for Independent Living (CIL) carry a banner with an illustrated fist rising from a wheel and the words "Center for Independent Living Berkeley" through the streets of San Francisco. Credit: Ken Stein.

O'Hara's younger sister started graduate studies at UC Berkeley in 1970 and discovered a remarkable reality: students with physical disabilities whizzing around campus in motorized wheelchairs—unattended. She was eager to experience this freedom firsthand. Since the Cowell Residence Program was limited to students, O'Hara decided to enroll in classes the following summer. PDSP supplied resources for disabled students to hire their own attendants, plan their own careers, and control their own lives. She witnessed “revolutionary” ideas of self sufficiency: accessible vans with electric tailgates, unhindered travel with motor wheelchairs, quadriplegic students with off-campus apartments. Commercial technology was not yet affordable, so even the old, glitchy E&J wheelchairs lent by the university were liberating. She reveled in “a whole new social dimension” of having company for the sake of companionship and not the necessity of pushing her wheelchair.¹⁹ The exhilarating experience inspired self acceptance and reflection:

I could look at my own disability a little bit more directly and accept it. I think my method of handling my disability was just to pretty much ignore it those first seventeen years. [...] I do credit the [Cowell Residence] program and the people around here for that.²⁰

- Susan O'Hara

¹⁹ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 21. Note: E&J stands for Everest and Jennings, which eventually became the largest manufacturer of wheelchairs in the United States.

²⁰ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 81.

O'Hara's return to her hometown was disheartening. Her adventures in Berkeley introduced exciting possibilities and broke down barriers she once resigned to as the status quo. With the unconditional support of her family, she permanently moved to California in 1972. She had stayed connected with former classmates and secured a teaching position at Holy Names High School in Oakland, CA. O'Hara engineered her apartment through "the power of peer learning" with creative solutions that Cowell Residence Program alumni implemented, such as remote controlled switches and lever mechanisms to use handles.²¹ During her transition, O'Hara became close friends with John Hessler who was her senior.



Susan O'Hara and disabled students pose in front of the UC Berkeley Disabled Students Program building. Credit: Disabled Students' Program photograph collection (UARC PIC 28H:209), Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Leading the Disabled Students Residence Program (DSRP)

When the Cowell Residence Program merged into the Disabled Students Residence Program (DSRP) in 1975, Hessler nominated O'Hara to be its coordinator. She was "learning in huge gulps" with six weeks before the fall quarter started to develop and execute the program.²² She successfully hired teammates, organized contracts, and transitioned newly admitted students into the retrofitted Unit II residence halls. A combination of lived experience and deep empathy

²¹ O'Hara & Landes, interview, 21.

²² O'Hara & Landes, interview, 33.

made her a strong advocate for students whose families were unfamiliar with the philosophy of independent living. She assuaged parental concerns and reiterated the supportive environment that permitted severely disabled students to confidently navigate independent living. DSRP prepared assistive and living technology, as well as resources on local healthcare providers and rehabilitative services. Knowing the “traumatic experience [of] strangers assisting you with personal care,” O’Hara gently guided students to become effective employers and communicators.²³ Many students had been home-schooled due to inaccessible facilities, so she coached them on managing bank accounts, interviewing personal attendants, and streamlining daily routines. O’Hara proudly shared that almost all DSRP students were able to live independently. She was “a role model more in the eyes of the parents sometimes than even the students...Society has very low expectations of people with disabilities...Expectation of success, combined with much learning from peers, is powerful.”²⁴



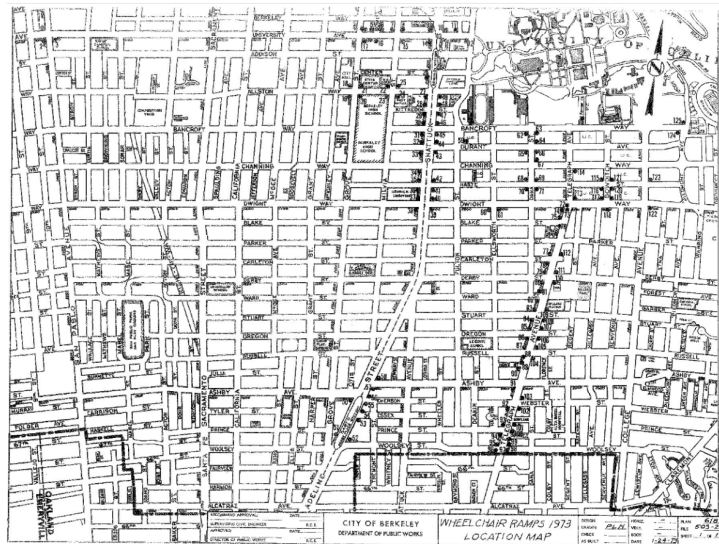
A crane lifting an iron lung through a window of Davidson Hall, Unit 2 Dormitory in 1978. Credit: Disabled Students’ Program Photograph Collection (UARC PIC 2800H:153), Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

²³ O’Hara & Landes, interview, 63.

²⁴ O’Hara & Landes, interview, 43.

Landmark Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 set precedent for the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, which guaranteed access to meaningful employment, government services, and public accommodations. This anti-discrimination law prohibited organizations receiving federal financial assistance from complicit inaction. Section 504 mandated institutions of public education, social services, and public works to reevaluate existing facilities for incongruence in universal design. People with disabilities fought for some of the accessibility features that are taken for granted today, such as elevators, automatic doors, and ramps. Creating a more accessible society yields positive externalities, such as the upstream effect of inclusive economies and social mobility. This phenomenon, deemed the “curb cut effect,”²⁵ exhibits how investing in marginalized (disabled) communities can produce a healthier society overall with human-centered policies.



The “Wheelchair Ramps 1973 Location Map” by Ruth Grimes, urban planning student at UC Berkeley, shows where the City of Berkeley would install 125 new curb ramps—based on surveying by disability activist Hale Zukas and his attendant/collaborator Eric Dibner. Credit: Council of the City of Berkeley, Resolution No. 45,605 (1973).

²⁵ Angela Glover Blackwell. “The Curb-Cut Effect.” Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2017.

Disability Compliance and Accessibility Audit

To ensure compliance as a federally funded entity, UC Berkeley administrators created the Coordinating Committee to Remove Architectural Barriers (CCRAB). O’Hara was the advocate for change spearheading committee efforts to retrofit campus spaces without cutting corners. She reviewed tedious remodeling plans and programmatic changes, from installing curb ramps and wheelchair seating space to documenting student complaints and library procedures for alternative learning materials. Having experienced quadriplegia, O’Hara adeptly identified potential challenges for the diverse needs of the disability community. She thought of installing additional push buttons to open automatic doors at foot level, since the standard design (about thirty inches off the ground for a person in a wheelchair) was inaccessible to people without arm mobility. She also familiarized architects with the campus layout and “little gizmos” they had invented.²⁶ Perhaps O’Hara’s proudest undertaking was redesigning the ticket counters, carving out disabled seating, and adjusting prices for inaccessibility in Zellerbach Hall—although not all modifications endured. When PDSP expanded to serve students with invisible disabilities, such as mental health and neurodivergence, the organization was more accurately renamed the Disabled Students’ Program (DSP) in 1982.



City Planning Professor Raymond Lifchez led the earliest architectural studios on accessible design in the 1970s and recruited “user clients” for feedback. Credit: Susan O’Hara, “Fertile Ground: the Berkeley Campus and Disability Affairs.”

²⁶ O’Hara & Landes, interview, 52.

Documenting the Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement (DRILM)

O'Hara sensed a historic shift in the public perceptions of disabilities and contacted Willa Baum,²⁷ the director of the Regional Oral History Office at the Bancroft Library, with a proposal to curate an archive of primary sources from contributors to the Disability Rights Movement. Baum agreed that disabled student protests, a turning point in American culture, warranted proper documentation. Few historians and social scientists recognized the promise of disability studies, yet O'Hara and Baum presciently developed oral history methodologies in this academic discipline. Funding this collection of oral histories and artifacts was frustrating. After a series of rejections from three federal grants, Baum secured a modest donation from the Prytanean Alumnae Society at UC Berkeley²⁸ for two pilot interviews in 1984 and 1985. However, fundraising efforts and project development slowed when O'Hara became Director of the Disabled Students Program in 1988.



Susan O'Hara and community members from UC Berkeley and the Center for Independent Living (CIL), 1987. Credit: Disabled Students' Program Photograph Collection (UARC PIC 28H:229), Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Administrative Advocate: the Transition from Working with Students to Staff

O'Hara's reputation as an avid problem-solver led to a formal invitation to assume the directorship of the Disabled Students Program, which she had initially declined. She loved

²⁷ Willa Klug Baum, an oral historian with pioneering work in methodology and interview techniques, was the inaugural Director of the Regional Oral History Office at UC Berkeley (serving from 1958-2000).

²⁸ Prytanean Honor Society, the first women's honor organization in the U.S., was founded on the Berkeley campus in 1901.

working directly with students and preferred to stay behind the scenes, recalling her impression of the role as “very stressful with very little reward.”²⁹ Despite reservations, O’Hara accepted the role after much persuasion. Her day-to-day engagements transformed from an intimate group of DSRP students to an institutional spread of staff members. She formed a student advisory board to solicit feedback on program improvements. Unfortunately, overall funding for the university steadily decreased during her tenure and budget cuts downsized student services. The unhealthy pressure forced O’Hara to retire in 1992 for “a more measured pace”³⁰ of living. Throughout her sustained support of DSP, the organization grew from serving only seventeen students to seven hundred.



Students with disabilities protest to protect People's Park in 1970s Berkeley, CA.
Credit: Disabled Students' Program photograph collection (UARC PIC 28H:003), Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Retirement and Renewed Focus on the Oral History Project

O’Hara’s passion for the Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement (DRILM) Oral History Collection never waned and she volunteered to revitalize the project. She and Baum collaborated with the Bancroft Library to procure sponsorship. Their persistence paid off with a three-year grant (1996-1999) from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), a division of the U.S. Department of Education. True to the mantra of the

²⁹ O’Hara & Landes, interview, 55.

³⁰ O’Hara & Landes, interview, 94.

disability rights movement: *Nothing about us without us*,³¹ O’Hara intentionally hired disabled interviewers whose lived experiences and training were relevant. She advised the project as a historical consultant and helped strategically select interviewees. Together, O’Hara and Baum co-facilitated over 100 interviews, producing the first segment of the DRILM collection: “Builders and sustainers of the Independent Living Movement in Berkeley.”³² A total of five volumes were published and archived on the Berkeley Library’s digital collection of personal papers and research artifacts. O’Hara’s role in chronicling disability history and promoting independent living was captured through her own oral history. The DRILM series expanded to collect historical disability resources across the nation following an additional grant from NIDRR (2000-2003). This second segment complemented its predecessor and became the complete Disability Rights and Independent Living Oral Histories collection. As a student, coordinator, and director, Susan O’Hara’s greatest role at UC Berkeley may be that of a historian highlighting the resilience in the disability community.

This [oral history] collection is going to enable historians and scholars to document the shift from a time when people with disabilities were seen as objects of charity needing medical supervision to people who were taking control of decisions affecting their own lives.³³

- Susan O’Hara

In Memoriam: Susan O’Hara’s Legacy

Susan O’Hara passed away at 80 years old in her Berkeley home and left an unforgettable legacy of compassion and justice. Colleagues remembered her as someone with “a wonderful sense of humor, a gift for friendship, quiet yet strong leadership skills, and a keen historical

³¹ “Nothing about us without us” is a phrase adopted by the Disability Rights Movement. Disability activist James Charlton traced its origins to South African advocates in the 1980s and Eastern European labor organizers even further back.

³² “Builders and sustainers of the Independent Living Movement in Berkeley: oral history transcripts,” Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2000, <https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/54319?ln=en>

³³ O’Hara & Landes, interview.

sensibility.”³⁴ She was a mentor that empowered DSP students to become ardent self advocates.

Alumna and Assistant Professor Megan Conway of the University of Hawaii, Manoa, recalls:

“Somehow an advisory group turned into an advocacy group under Susan’s tutelage. She didn’t just nod her head and say, ‘Are you being served?’ She told us her stories. She encouraged us to address things that we saw as wrong. And we thrived under her example.”³⁵

O’Hara was often recruited as an independent living consultant in higher education and even embarked on a speaking tour in Japan (through Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, and Osaka), as a result of her collaboration with Professor Takahiro Sadato, a visiting scholar from the University of Osaka.³⁶ She was an expert on programs to support and retain severely disabled students in higher education. Outside of her career, O’Hara loved opera, poetry, Scrabble, and sharing meals with many friends. She traveled to Europe seven times and published articles on accessibility in those experiences through news outlets such as the *Montreal Gazette*, *Boston Globe*, and *Los Angeles Times*. From her days as a student to her work as an advocate, O’Hara enabled self-determination for generations of students and forged a counternarrative of disabled people in private and civic life.



Former student Megan Conway stands next to Susan O’ Hara at the DSP Graduation in 1992. Credit: Megan A. Conway.

³⁴ Ann Lage, “In Memory of Susan O’Hara,” Berkeley Library Update, University of California Berkeley, July 31, 2018. <https://update.lib.berkeley.edu/tag/susan-ohara/>.

³⁵ Megan A. Conway, “Will the Next Generation Please Step Forward? A Legacy for the Next Generation of Troublemakers,” *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, vol. 1, issue 1, 2014.

³⁶ Dr. Sadato invited O’Hara to speak at an international conference at Waseda University in Tokyo. They spent several hours every week for a semester discussing DSP, independent living at Cal, and other organizations in Berkeley.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Co-Chairs of the 150W History Project, Dr. Sheila M. Humphreys (Emerita Director of Diversity for the EECS Department) and Professor Catherine Gallagher (Emerita Eggers Professor of English Literature), for their support and enthusiasm for my research on women in the disability rights movement. I am grateful that this essay will be archived through the 150W History Project in the California Digital Library.

APPENDIX

Document A

Life Chronology of Susan O'Hara by the author from *Susan O'Hara's Oral History, The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.*

<https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt8x0nb362&query=&brand=oac4>

Year	Milestones
1938	Susan O'Hara was born and raised in the Chicago suburb of La Grange Park, IL.
1955	At age 17, O'Hara contracted polio and developed permanent paraplegia.
1956	Through months of physical therapy, O'Hara earned her high school diploma.
	She enrolled in the nearby Rosary College (Dominican University) in River Forest, IL.
1962	O'Hara graduated with a B.A. in History and started a decade-long career at Nazareth Academy as a high school teacher, during which she earned an M.Ed in Counseling.
1967	O'Hara took her first of many trips to Europe, inspired and accompanied by younger sister. She learned how travel in a push wheelchair was possible with proper planning.
1971	Enticed by her younger sister, O'Hara enrolled in classes at UC Berkeley to experience independent living through the Cowell Residence Program and join PDSP at Cal.
1972	After a revolutionary experience, O'Hara decided to move to CA. She taught at Holy Names High School in Oakland for three years.
1975	Due to PDSP Director John Hessler's recommendation, O'Hara was hired as the inaugural Disabled Students' Residence Program (DSRP) coordinator.
1982	O'Hara contacted Willa Baum to create oral histories of leaders in the disability rights movement; the project would not take off until a decade later.
	To celebrate the 20th anniversary of DSRP, O'Hara hosted a reunion with about 300 attendees, including former staff, former students and their families, and the media.
1983	As the Chair, O'Hara organized the national conference of the Association on Handicapped Students Service Programs in Post-Secondary Education (AHSSPPE, later renamed AHEAD: the Association of Higher Education and the Disabled).
1988	O'Hara became director of the Disabled Students' Program (DSP) and invited Stephen Hawking to a community barbeque on Channing Way.
1989	O'Hara co-chaired the annual California Association of Post-Secondary Educators of the Disabled (CAPED) at the Oakland Hilton with Carol Dalessio of Laney College.
1992	30 years after Ed Roberts moved into Cowell Hospital, DSP serves 800 students.
	O'Hara retired as director of DSP and resumed work on the Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement (DRILM) Oral History Project.
1993	O'Hara embarked on a speaking tour about independent living in Japan.
	With the remodeling and decorating assistance of her brother Ed and his wife Judy, O'Hara moved into her own home in Berkeley with fully accessible furnishings.
2000	O'Hara wrapped up the DRILM Oral History Project.

2009	O'Hara published "Fertile Ground: the Berkeley Campus and Disability Affairs" in the Spring 2009 edition of <i>Chronicle of the University of California</i> .
2018	O'Hara passed away on July 1st at the age of 80 in her Berkeley home.

Document B

Chronology of the Disabled Students' Program (edited for brevity) by the Disabled Students' Program Records (CU-479), The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

<https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4g5005m2/admin/>

Year	Event
1956	The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Student Health Services Program is set up for the physically disabled at the University of California, Berkeley.
1962	Edward V. Roberts, the first student with a severe mobility impairment to live on campus moves into Cowell Memorial Hospital and begins his studies.
1963	Following Roberts's successful first year, the University admits John Hessler, the second student with a severe mobility impairment to live at Cowell Hospital.
1967	Seven severely physically disabled students are living in Cowell Hospital as of Oct. Carl J. Ross, Cowell Hospital administrator, proposes a program to serve ten to twelve disabled students.
1968	The Cowell Residence Program is funded by the CA Dept. of Rehabilitation (DR). Roberts becomes a part-time assistant on disability to the Dean of Students.
1969	Conflicts with the DR staff become the impetus for the organization of a student self-advocacy group for those living in Cowell Hospital, named the Rolling Quads. The Rolling Quads write a proposal for a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) for the fiscal year 1970-1971, to fund a physically disabled Students' program. Students who lived at Cowell begin to move into their own apartments off campus. The Rolling Quads propose a community halfway house residence program for students attending UC Berkeley. [The "halfway house" was never established.]
1970	The Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) vote to supplement HEW funding through a 25 cent increase in registration fees. HEW grants \$81,000 to start the Physically Disabled Students' Program (PDSP) in July. Hessler, Michael Fuss, Chuck Grimes, and Zona Roberts (Ed Roberts' mother) set up the first office in an apartment at 2532 Durant Avenue in Berkeley. John Hessler is the first director. Initially, PDSP served 17 clients.
1972	The Center for Independent Living (CIL) is incorporated off campus. CIL is a Berkeley community service agency for persons with disabilities, modeled on PDSP.
1973	The Disabled Students' Union was formed.

1974	A job development specialist position is proposed for disabled students and alumni.
	The Coordinating Committee for the Removal of Architectural Barriers (CCRAB) is established to resolve access problems on the UC Berkeley campus.
	A dormitory residence pilot program is set up for students with disabilities. Initially it has 5 rooms in Putnam Hall in the Unit One of the student dormitory complex.
1975	Susan O'Hara begins as head of the PDSP Residence Program (serves until 1988). The residence pilot program is successful. The permanent PDSP Residence Program consists of 16 rooms in the Unit Two dorm complex staffed 24 hours a day by paid attendants. The Cowell Hospital Residence Program is closed.
	California Governor Jerry Brown appoints Ed Roberts Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation. John Hessler leaves the directorship of PDSP to become Deputy Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation. Don Lorence assumes the directorship of PDSP.
1978	PDSP establishes Deaf Services.
	After a program audit of DSP led by UC Berkeley professor William K. (Sandy) Muir, the University establishes the Chancellor's Physically Disabled Students' Program Advisory Board.
1979	Don Lorence leaves the directorship of PDSP. Sharon Bonney is the new director.
	PDSP moves to 2515 Channing Way. It now serves 254 students.
1982	PDSP changes its name to the Disabled Students' Program (DSP) to include students with learning disabilities.
1987	Sharon Bonney leaves the directorship of DSP.
1988	Susan O'Hara, the Residence Program director, becomes director of DSP. Bill Blanchard takes over as Residence Program director.
1990	DSP moves from Channing Way to the Cesar Chavez Student Center on campus.
1992	Thirty years after Ed Roberts moved into Cowell Memorial Hospital, DSP serves 800 disabled students at UC Berkeley.
	Susan O'Hara retires as director. Lynn Bailiff becomes the director.
1997	Lynn Bailiff retires. Ed Rodgers is hired as the new director.

Document C

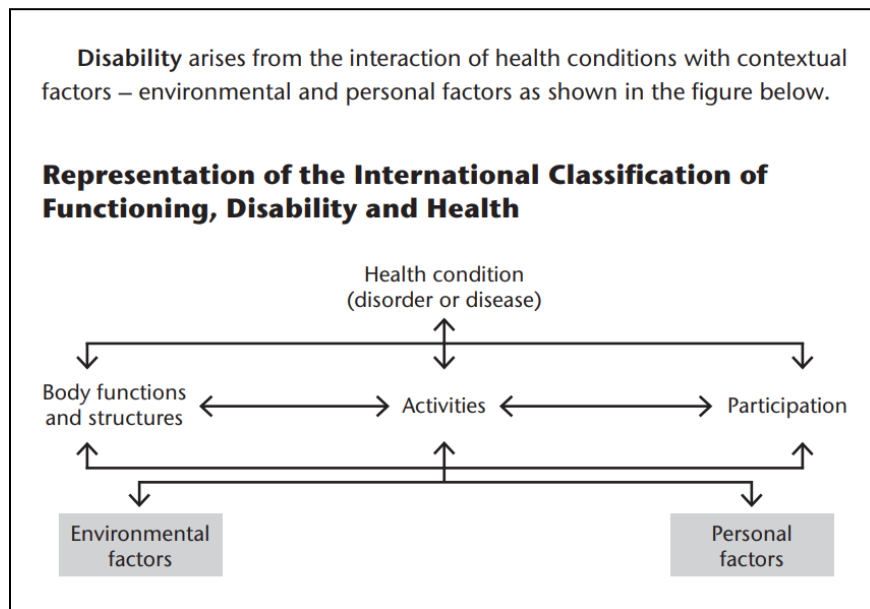
Comparison of Rehabilitation and Independent Living Paradigms by Gerben DeJong from the article “Independent Living: From Social Movement to Analytic Paradigm” (1979).

Table 1: Comparison of Rehabilitation and Independent Living Paradigms

Item	Rehabilitation paradigm	Independent living paradigm
Definition of problem	Physical impairment/ lack of vocational skill	Dependence on professionals, relatives, etc
Locus of problem	In individual	In environment; in the rehab process
Solution to problem	Professional intervention by physician, physical therapist, occupational therapist, voc rehab counselor, etc	Peer counseling advocacy self-help consumer control removal of barriers
Social role	Patient/client	Consumer
Who controls	Professional	Consumer
Desired outcomes	Maximum ADL Gainful employment	Independent living

Document D

Representation of Disability by the World Health Organization (2011:5), reproduced with permission in Dan Goodley’s Dis/ability Studies: Theorising disablism and ableism. P.15.



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