

# MY DISABILITY...

## An Incredible Journey

I live with a disability and it is called cerebral palsy. In fact, I would contend that we all do! It is my privilege to share and dialogue with you and your community concerning the important areas of:

### DISCRIMINATION:

I was in a large city on business. That night I was to stay at a motel, so I dropped my bags off there in the forenoon. At 7:00 p.m. I returned to the motel. They were busy, so I waited in line. When my turn came, the clerk asked me for my ID and I gave her what I had. She then proceeded to say that I could not stay there and asked me to leave. The question is: was it because she didn't like my ID or was it that she did not want to deal with me due to my disability?

### GETTING AN EDUCATION:

Because of my disability, our school district thought I should be in "special education". When I graduated from high school I wanted to go on to college. Due to my enrollment in "special education", the diploma I received was not recognized by the State. I had to fight for my right to get into college. Today I hold a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Rehabilitation from the University of Wisconsin-Stout with a 3.79 grade average.

### MISDIAGNOSIS:

I was misdiagnosed to have an IQ in the 60's at a young age. As I got older I discovered that a mistake had been made. My dreams and hopes were to be "normal" like my friends and that someday I will be. Today is the day I choose to be "normal". I was misdiagnosed, but life goes on!

### ENDORSEMENTS:

"Sessions with Ben are always interactive, and he expects participation and engagement from the group as a whole. Ben creates a comfortable atmosphere where dialogue is supported. Always informative and thorough, the staff feels their time is well spent. Able to customize his presentations for content and time, Ben always works with us to ensure that he covers topics that we feel are most pertinent. We have continually found Ben very easy to work with and flexible. Personable, and willing to speak from his own experience, our staff appreciates Ben's depth of knowledge."-Matt Rusch-Director, Outlaw Ranch matt@losd.org

*"Ben has been speaking to the UW-Stout Inclusion Students With Exceptional Educational Needs" classes every semester for the past eight years; he uses humor, personal experience and a vast store of knowledge on inclusion to help future educators gain a personal understanding of the importance of inclusion in the lives of those with disabilities." Lyn La Venture, University of Wisconsin-Stout- retired-School of Education*



**BEN & DEE ANDERSON**

[www.bendanderson.com](http://www.bendanderson.com)

715-554-1179

"As an Instructor teaching students to work in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation, I feel that Ben Anderson's book "IQ of 63" – So What" is a must read for not only for students but for all professionals working with persons with disabilities. Ben takes a very thoughtful and insightful look at his life and what it means to be "labeled" as a person with a disability in our educational system. He shows what can be accomplished when one casts aside the labels placed on them by society and seeks to accomplish their own personal goals, dreams and desires. Ben very simply and eloquently tells a story of growing up with a developmental disability in the 50's, how he was shaped by the experiences in his life and what it means to not give up in the face of adversity. This book is so helpful in understanding what it's like to grow up with a disability from a personal perspective, that I use it as a required textbook at UW-Stout in the Psycho Social Aspects of Disability course. Many of my students have commented how much they enjoyed reading the book and the insights they have gained from it."

**Kyle A. Kleist**—Instructor, **UW-Stout**

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"Ben's life has been a real inspiration. His book "IQ of 63..." is being used as a textbook in my undergraduate pre-service teaching class for Special Educators. It has been a pleasure to expose my student's future Special Educators to Ben's story."

**Jennifer Hefter**- PhD.  
retired -Minot State University

**Ben D. Anderson** [www.bendanderson.com](http://www.bendanderson.com).

**Born: June 16, 1953 in Kenmare, North Dakota. with cerebral palsy (spastic quadriplegia).**

**Parents: Russell and Marlys Anderson.**

**Sister: Terri (2 years older).**

**First word: "Moo".**

**1957** Grandpa promises a John Deere tractor if Ben will walk.

**1957-65** Ben lived at the Crippled Children's School ( now the Anne Carlsen School) in Jamestown, ND.

**1965** 12 year old Ben moved home and enrolled in Kenmare special education that fall.

**1968** Went to live with a family in Minot and enrolled in Jr. High there.

**1969-72** Ben was living back in Kenmare and took the bus to Minot to school every day (7am to 5pm daily M-F)

**1972** Graduated from Minot Sr. High

**1975** After a year working on the west coast Ben spent a busy year back in North Dakota with a job as outreach worker for the mental health center in Grand Forks followed by summer work at Red Willow Bible Camp and enrollment at Lake Region College in Devils Lake, ND that fall. During that time Ben started his speaking presentations about persons with disabilities.

**1976** Ben trained in with Lutheran Youth Encounter in St. Paul, MN and spent the summer working for a Christian urban outreach through Augustana Lutheran Church of Minneapolis with Dr. William Berg. That fall it was back to school- transferring to Golden Valley Lutheran College, Golden Valley, Minnesota.

**1978** The spring saw the beginning of Ben's own company-Break Through, Inc. The advocacy for persons with disability work became his focus.

**1981** Ben and Dick Beckmen cooperated to author a book entitled "*Breaking Through*"

**1988** Back to school at UW-Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin-graduated in August of 1992 with a bachelor of science in vocational rehabilitation (emphasis in community based rehabilitation).

**1992** Lake Wapogasset named Anderson Hall in part to honor Ben and his work.

**2006 -2012** Ben appointed by Wisconsin Governor to State Rehabilitation Council

March 26, 2006 Ben marries Dee at Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp.

**2007** Ben writes his second book entitled "IQ of 63, So What!" *Going Beyond Everybody Else's Expectations*. It is textbook at UW-Stout, WI and Minot State University, ND

**2010** Ben was an honoree at "Morgan's Wonderland" "Walk of Fame" at the "Free To Soar" Inaugural Gala in San Antonio, TX

**2012** Ben's booklet- "Last One Picked, So What!" *We can turn it around*. ("bullying"& disabilities)

South Dakota Tours in April & October 2012 sponsored by Developmental Disability Council of SD-spoke to over 6000 people for schools, educators and parents.

**2014** "If I Can Do It, So Can You" *Going to College*. Booklet by Ben D. Anderson

**2014-15** speaks at Wyoming/South Dakota K-12

**2015** In-Service training-Oglala Lakota College, Kyle, SD-Voc. Rehab-Sinte Gleska Univ., Mission, SD

**Visit Ben's "Presentation Calendar" page online at [www.bendanderson.com/locations.htm](http://www.bendanderson.com/locations.htm) to see places he has spoken over the past years including some upcoming events.**

**In the past 10 years-**

He has spoken in Washington State, Washington DC, New Jersey, Florida, Tennessee, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Indiana, Utah, Texas, Missouri, Michigan, Kansas, Idaho and Wyoming. These range from keynote presentations, workshops and consultations.

Ben speaks and travels extensively around the United States with his wife Dee.

**WE ARE OPEN TO BE INVITED TO SPEAK FOR YOUR EVENT.**

call us at 715-554-1179 or visit us on the web.