

Dr. Cheryl Branker:

Audiences nationwide have responded to Henry Holden's program in such a positive way that he was selected as a finalist for the lecturer of the year by the association for the promotion of campus activities. Last year Henry was honored by the New York State Senate and assembly at its legislative disability awareness day. Last October he was recognized for his outstanding accomplishment in the field of Performing Arts, by the United Federation of Teachers. On October 20th of this year Henry had the honor of delivering the keynotes for Mericor Incorporated. Our speaker today, among many other things, is an advocate and pioneer for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all forms of media and entertainment. He is the founder of Performers with Disabilities for the Screen Actors Guild, an award-winning lecturer recognized for his influential and enlightening message. In everything he does he teaches us that people with physical disabilities should not be treated better or worse, simply equal. He said that the media is the most powerful entity on earth. It can make the guilty innocent and the innocent guilty. By deconstructing the images of people with disabilities that the media sees, our speaker Henry Holden hopes to take away a little of that power. So with that in mind, I'd like to introduce to you actor, comedian, athlete, and activist, Mr. Henry Holden.

Henry Holden:

Thank you. I guess the reason I'm here today is because when I was four years old I was fortunate enough to contract Polio. Well you might be thinking, testing; Am I hearing this right? Here's this gentleman who walks on crutches he uses a leg brace, quality of life? Many times there's the assumption that if you have a disability you cannot have quality of life. You're looking at someone who's ridden at the national horse show at Madison Square Garden. Any horseback riders here? English, Western? Western, great. I'm a certified scuba diver. Any scuba divers in the audience? Are you certified? Great, we have a couple of certified scuba divers here. Bowlers, any bowlers in the audience? Okay, I bowled a 196 in a bowling league, did you do higher? Lower? Okay. It's not my average, but I did bowl three 145's and I have a patch to prove it. Also, I learned how to ski in Colorado. I do it two ways. One way I'm sitting on a ski, and I've got two little poles called outriggers that look like crutches here. Another way I do it, I'm standing up, I've got skis on the bottom of my legs, and skis on the bottom of my crutches, like I said called outriggers, and I'm going down that hill skiing. It always works better when I go down this way, I don't know what.

This presentation is divided into three parts. The first part is my favorite subject I talk about which is Moi, which is me. I let you know a bit of my background, where I've come from, what has brought me here. The second part of the presentation is entitled Misconceptions Continue, How Media Represents People with Disabilities. Because by and large the way that you view your fellow man and people with disabilities, unless you know someone with a disability, a family member, a friend, or acquaintance, the only way you would know about a person with a disability is from media. Depending on how the media portrays us, that's how you feel towards us. Now the third part is the part that I enjoy the best, which I'm going into the audience, and we'll have a little dialogue.

Now, when I was growing up children with disabilities were not mainstreamed. Does anyone not know what mainstreaming is? I went to a Special Ed school in the 50's and the 60's called Branchford School. I was bussed to the school. I'm a professional actor, which was mentioned. I've appeared on Hill Street Blues, Knott's Landing, WILU; I've just appeared on Becker. I played a clown on the kids show, Kids Incorporated, and I was on Divorce Court. People say, "You were on Divorce Court? I thought it was real." Let me ask you ladies and gentleman, have you ever seen anybody get divorced in twenty-seven minutes?

Now I guess the love of acting came from the fact that at Branchford School, School for children with disabilities, I was always in plays. Christmas plays, graduation plays, Chanukah plays. So naturally I took this love of acting to my neighborhood high school because after the eighth grade I decided I wanted to go to my neighborhood high school. There were three flights of steps, but I was allowed to leave two minutes earlier when the warning bell buzzed. Everybody in the class wanted to leave two minutes early with me to carry my bags so I al-ways had volunteers.

Now, I was always in senior plays in this high school. One year we were going to do another play, and as I walked in to audition for a part in the play, the director said, "You are the assistant director." I felt bad because I came here to act and he wasn't giving me the opportunity. Not only the opportunity to succeed, but also the opportunity to fail. Many times people with disabilities are not given the opportunities to succeed as well as fail. Everybody in this room knows that we still learn a lot by failure. You can get 99 on a test, but you dwell on that one question you have wrong. You don't say, "Wow 99, I'm pretty smart." I had a degree in political science from CW Post College in Long Island, New York. I thought I was going to be a lawyer, but I played a lawyer on Hill Street Blues, and I played a judge in Jake and the Fat Man. How's that?

The first presentation, the first image that we're going to see is (I had the pleasure of hosting the Americans with Disabilities Act rally in New York City six years ago.) Now anybody, when you think about a rally, do you think about it as an active event or a passive event? Active, okay. Now we're going to see the first image, and ask yourself, "Does this represent a rally of two thousand people?" Two thousand people participated in this rally, marching from 42nd Street and Madison Avenue all the way down to 23rd Street, and this is the slide. Can everybody see this? No, that's what I thought; we have to dim the lights. (Technical difficulties.)

I'm also a professional comedian. When I was first starting in the business I wasn't getting rolls as an actor, so I developed a comedy routine, which I would do impersonations of famous celebrities about how they'd walk on crutches. Everybody loved laughing. Then I'd do a Chinese ping-pong ball, (sound of paddle hitting ball) and I'd do political impressions. Al Gore, Vice President Al Gore, as a matter of fact I think I could do this impression if George W. Bush wins as well. This is my impersonation of Vice President Al Gore: (visual effect) Do we have the lights dimming? Sorry about that. I'd like to go into this. Timing, everybody timing is important, obviously my timing is not so well today.

This is our interpreter right here. Does anybody know sign language? Sign language is very important. Oh, here we go.

Can everybody see this image now? Okay, now ask yourself, "Does this represent a rally of two thousand people?" Why? Only two people. Because of this image this is how my presentation happened. I look at this image and I figure, my God if this is what the New York Times portrays people with disabilities, then how can I blame them for their negative attitude? So I was upset about this image, so I wrote a letter to the New York Times. They responded, "We tend not to cover such staged events as demonstrations and marches." Well that's a lie, because two months later this image appeared and it says, "On wheel chairs and crutches some disabled protest the telethon." So the New York Times, which is the paper of record, lies. Okay, to continue, "That certainly does not mean that we do not cover the subjects of causes the people are marching for or against. That we did not cover this march does not mean we are ignoring the disabled. We cover extensively the problems of the disabled."

So what does that mean? Anytime there's going to be an article about somebody with a disability, what is it going to be about? About a problem. Now, let's look at the next slide. Here we have an ADA demonstration a year prior and you can see there are placards, marching, shouting; it's a very active event. Next slide please.

Now we're going to focus on a few of these images. Can we zoom in on the top one? Here it says, "Governor Wallace faces a death without regret." Governor Wallace recently passed away. There was an assassination attempt on his life, and he used a wheel chair. Notice I say uses a wheel chair. I don't say wheel chair bound, I don't say confined to a wheel chair. I jokingly say nobody's bound to a wheel chair. Nobody has sex in a wheel chair, unless they're kinky. I would not take exception to this article if it showed Governor Wallace sitting in his wheel chair. This article is about death, and you're seeing an empty wheel chair, so there's an inference of dying with disability. That's why a lot of times people will look at people with disabilities and assume that we're sickly; we're going to die.

Now I bet you four very active sports that I've participated in, in this room full maybe of 70 people maybe 7 people raised their hand. Now, what does that say? Well, that I'm athletically more inclined perhaps. Society thinks that if you have a disability, you're not athletically inclined. Again, I would not take exception to this article if it showed Governor Wallace sitting in this wheel chair. Next slide please.

Here we have this young girl in a wheel chair. Does that wheel chair fit that young girl? Too big, too small? Too big, so that makes her look how? Sickly. Anything else? Maybe evoking pity. This is a law firm saying that if your child has a disability, perhaps we can sue and get you money. So notice how you're being manipulated. Next slide.

Here we have this young girl in a wheel chair. Notice it fits her. She looks happy. We have another young girl with forearm crutches playing with her friend, happy. So it doesn't have to be just one sided. Now, by a show of hands, raise your hands if you've seen in the news-papers the past week images of people with disabilities. I know there are hidden disabilities, but right now I'm talking about visible disabilities. Raise your hand. One person raised their hand. How about in the last six months? Couple of more people. How about in the last year? A few more people. So maybe 25% of the audience raised their hands. Now, the reason I asked this question is, if you're only going to see a few articles in your newspapers, and if they tend to show people with disabilities in a pitiful way, in a sad way, then you're going to assume people with disabilities are like this. Next slide please.

Oh! Barbie has a friend in a wheelchair! Did you know that?! Did you?! That's very positive; at least it gives a choice to a child with a disability. Maybe they can get a doll, just like your giving choices to Asian Americans or African Americans, that they can have a doll that looks like them. So this is positive, plus other children without disabilities may be can get this little doll in the wheel chair. However, I have sad news; this particular Barbie cannot get in the dollhouse. Barbie has a party; she invites all her friends, Ken and everybody else. It's raining, this Barbie has to be outside, and she gets rained on. What are we going to do right? It's a shame. But, at least it's positive. Somebody told me, well if you take her head off, she'll fit in the dollhouse. (Laughter) Next slide please.

Now here we have two disabled vets with the American flag behind them. Is this an active picture or a passive picture? Passive picture, they're just sitting there. Now I'm very patriotic, I'm going to do a little humor here, so get ready. I personally believe people with disabilities, we should be out there, whatever is available in society we should be part of. Matter of fact, I enlisted in the Marines, but I only served one day. I think I took it a little too seriously. This is what happened. The sergeant yelled, "Holden, what's the proper position of attention?" I replied, "Sergeant, the proper position of attention is, head erect, back straight, feet at 45 degree angles, crutches along the seams of my trousers, sir!" (Speaker demonstrated position and salute, with crutch in hand.) (Laughter) I knocked him out. Another reason I'm upset about this particular image is because during the same time I played wheel chair basketball with the North American Wheel Chair Athletic Association. We played the Meadow Lands during half time. I was responsible to get media attention, a local newspaper did come down there, and they did take pictures. However, none of the images appeared in the newspaper. This would have been another way of showing people with disabilities as active members of society. This shows people with disabilities as passive members of society. Next slide please.

Now another way the media portrays people with disabilities is as objects. Where's the head of the person? Where is the person? Now I'm a firm believer in role models. The slides that you're seeing now are from the original one, from six seven years ago with the ADA rally, all the way up to a couple of months ago. I'm constantly updating my presentation. There was an excellent article in my local newspaper about a woman who uses a wheel chair, but I took exception to one sentence in this article I find at the beginning of the eighth paragraph extremely offensive. Mr. Braun states that, "Mary Anne doesn't look right in a wheel chair, not that anyone does." Again, "Mary Anne doesn't look right in a wheel chair, not that anyone does." I send them a two-page letter. They respond with

one sentence, and they write back to me,

"With all respect, I think you're being too sensitive about one sentence in a column that you must agree was compassionate and inspiring." Mary Anne doesn't look right in a wheel chair, that's compassionate? Again, I'm a firm believer in role models. Can you imagine a child with a disability reading this article? What kind of image are they going to have of themselves? Or the parent of the child? Or the regular readership? They think well if you're in a wheel chair something's the matter with you. Before I continue, I have to apologize for what I am about to say. When I saw everybody walking in here today, I started laughing at you. Why? I think people who don't walk and crutches walk funny. What does it matter how you get from point A to point B? Whether you are on crutches, a cane, a Seeing Eye dog, or you wheel in, what does it matter? Now, again to Mary uses a wheel chair, doesn't look good in a wheel chair. Ironically, two months later, in a publication that's geared specifically for people with disability, this image appeared on the front cover. She looks pretty good in a wheel chair.

At this point I'd like to talk about sexuality and the disabled. I think if I wouldn't talk about this, broach the subject, I'd be doing a disservice. By and large, people with disabilities are viewed as sexless individuals. True story, I was married and divorced because I wanted to be like everybody else. I remember before getting married, I overheard my wife's mother talking to her saying, "What are you going to do in bed with Henry?" I mean, that hurt. To be judged sexless? Because you have a disability? So now I joke and say, "Before I get married again, I'm taking the mother out first." Next slide please.

Here we have Olympic hero brings hope to disabled athletes. You look at that and say that's fine. But again, if you're only going to see a couple of articles during the year it's better to see this image. Next slide. Where it says, "Wheel chair athlete inspires disabled kids." Again, role models. Here we're seeing children with disabilities are seeing someone that they can relate to. This is Randy Snow, he plays wheel chair basketball also he's a champion tennis player. By the way, if you use a wheel chair you're allowed two bounces. So those that are not very good at tennis get a wheel chair. Next slide please.

Here we have in the op-ed page of my newspaper, "Handicapped kids are people too." Handicapped kids are people too. I thought they were. Right? Now if this newspaper has to say that handicapped kids are people too, then there's an inference that they're not. Now when I look at this statement as a person with a disability, I am offended. Why am I of-fended? All right, let's substitute some other words so you'll understand. Suppose it said, "Black kids are people too. Hispanic kids are people too. Jewish kids are people too. Irish, Italian kids are people too." Would you be outraged if you were a part of that group? Yes or No? Yes! "Handicapped kids are people too." This is a racist statement. Now, if the news-paper really believed children with disabilities are people too, then if they're a local newspaper, daily, then every day let's see images of children with disabilities participating in society. Whether at school, at the playground, playing with their friends, whatever society has to have. Now, later on we're going to see images that depict this. Next slide please.

Here we have President Clinton shaking hands with a woman in a wheel chair. You know what this article is about? Healthcare. Why is it when you're seeing a politician with some-one with a disability it's about healthcare? Healthcare is one aspect of my life. As you can see I do a lot of athletic activities. Why can't you see a politician shaking hands with some-body with a disability as a teacher, professor, homemaker, being at the mall, whatever is out there? You'll see these political advertisements now: they talk about different subjects. When they talk about Social Security, you will have an image of someone with a disability. Next slide please.

Another way that media portrays people with disabilities, either they make us pitiful sorrowful individuals or people, or they make us into a superman. Now again, I would not take exception to this article if there were twenty or thirty articles during the year. But again, if you're only going to see one, two, or three articles and they're going to talk about, for example, a blind sailor's vision. He's going to go across the Atlantic. Well then people with disabilities, they're saying, "Why is it every time the newspaper does a story about somebody with a disability they're doing this unbelievable

feet?" They're doing undue pressure. Not to say there's anything wrong with this, but again, we're only seeing a few images. When I asked the question, in the last week, last month, last six months, last year, how many times you've seen images of people with disabilities, more than half the audience did not raise their hands. Next slide.

Here we have a wheel chair warrior; he's going to go across the United States. I think he's cheating because he's using an electric wheel chair. Next slide. Now, President Clinton be-came disabled, by the way, 60% of the population will at some time or another acquire a disability, 60%, whether it's temporary or permanent. There are fifty-four million people in this country with some sort of disability. President Clinton, the president of the United States be-came disabled. Was he still the president of the United States? Yes! But why is it that people assume that if you become disabled you can't work anymore? 70% of people who are disabled are unemployed. Since the ADA has been passed ten years ago unemployment has risen. Why? There might be a couple of reasons for that, but I firmly believe until the American public starts seeing, viewing people with disabilities in the media; by the way, ac-cording to the School of Communication out of the University of Pennsylvania, they say that television on an average of six and a half hours a day, yet the American public is viewing people with disabilities less than 1.5% of the time. Again, it does impact, it does impact. There was a show, *Life Goes On* I'm sure a lot of people have seen, where it shows a child with Downs Syndrome. Very very positive. Very very positive for children with Downs Syndrome and their family members. People need to see role models for their self esteem. For years people thought a child with Downs Syndrome can't be educated, can't go to high school or college, that's been proven wrong. Next slide please.

This is here because disability is an equal employment opportunity, we take everybody. Superman. Next slide. Stephen Hawking. Raise your hand if you do not know who Stephen Hawking is. We have a lot of people raising their hands. Stephen Hawking is probably the smartest person in the world. What he's given to society cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Creator of the black hole theory. He's a professor at Oxford in England. He needs to communicate through a voice board. Smartest person in the world. He's helped society. Yet, I was speaking at the University of Wisconsin in Madison years ago in 1994 or 95 and the woman who was in charge of disability services, who uses a wheel chair, a professor comes up to her. Not only is he a professor, he has a doctorate in his field. What does he tell this woman? He says, "People like you should not be in college." People like you should not be in college. Obviously this gentleman, put that loosely, has a very low opinion of people with disabilities. Has he seen people with disabilities in the media? Has he seen active members of people with disabilities in society? Obviously not. This is an ignorant person. There are a lot of ignorant people out there in the world. That's why the media, and I'm glad to see we have the school paper here, very important issue the newspaper, and hopefully this writer is sensitized to the issues here, and in future publications, articles, you will see people with disabilities. They're part of the college community. Next slide.

This is something recent where this is at the conference in Minnesota, and people with disabilities are saying, "Disabled and proud." When I was introduced I said I'm here today be-cause I was fortunate to have contracted Polio as a youngster. Having a disability has not been a negative to me. It's a positive. Everything about everybody in this room is a positive. There is nothing negative about you. The same thing with disability. Disability is an aspect of my life. It has made me better, the person who I am. Now naturally people with disabilities can take advantage and we'll talk about that later. Disabled and proud. Next slide please.

All right, now this is to give you a little bit of history. Years ago you never saw commercials with people with disabilities. I did a letter writing campaign in 1979. By the way, in a Business Week article they said that the disabled population had the buying power of over seven hundred billion dollars. That's billion with a B. In a recent article in a magazine geared for people with disabilities their figure was up to a trillion dollars. In 1979 McDonald's replied to me about using people with disabilities, that they'd be taking unfair advantage. Well, they've changed their tune. For those who've seen the recent McDonald's commercial, where this one child is reading a book and when she finishes the book the mother takes her to McDonald's to celebrate, and we find out she's reading the

Happy Meal in Braille. Very positive, also showing children with disabilities are part of the American scene. Next slide please.

However, United Airlines in 1979 said, "We have only twenty seven seconds to deliver a message that is vital to our marketing success. Given that time frame, use of handicapped people would almost inevitably represent an intrusion that could not be explained." How would you like to be called an intrusion that could not be explained? Now, what are we talking, when society gives you lemons what do you do? What do you do? Make lemonade! Myself, I make it very sweet. At this time I was working with a comedy writer from Saturday Night Live, and this is what we did with the intrusion that could not be explained. (Sound effects - do do do do...) More terrifying than Jaws 3D, (sound effects - do do do...) more horrible than Friday the 13th part 14! Paramount Pictures presents, "The Intrusion That Could Not Be Explained", starring Henry Holden as, The Intrusion. People wait for an air-line commercial, what happens next is sheer terror. (Hysterical voice) Honey look at this, there's a guy on crutches in the airline commercial. Oh my God! What's he doing there? Means if you fly with the friendly skies people, that you'll catch Polio! Oh honey, please quick shut the TV off I can't take it. The Intrusion That Could Not Be Explained, coming soon. (Laughter and applause) Let's continue.

Now we're going to the most positive images. Here we have images of people with disabilities, yet the article has nothing to say about disability. This is not about human interest anymore. Here we have this gentleman with forearm crutches and he says, "The emergency agency quickly assembles team to handle storms aftermath." This is his position. He's got forearm crutches like mine, not as nice as mine. Mine come in all colors, I don't look at these as crutches, to me accessorize, right ladies? Accessorize. Here we have this young boy on forearm crutches at the Liberty Science Center. Now I didn't pick pictures, I depicted individuals with forearm crutches because I use them; it just happens that these images appeared in the newspaper. Now remember the little blurb that said handicapped kids are people too, remember that? Well here! This shows that children with disabilities are people too. Here we have this young woman in a wheel chair with a child on her lap, she's at a town hall meeting Very positive, showing that people with disabilities are sexual, do have families. This picture is here, when you speak to someone who uses a wheel chair, eye contact. Next slide please.

Now this is advertisement. This is relatively new, maybe in the last ten years where advertisers, and like I'd mentioned they recognize that we're a buying power, and they're using people with disabilities in their advertisements. By the way, what does advertisement sell? Any-body? Image, what else? I know I'm not going to get this. It begins with S and ends in X. Sex! Sex, that's what advertisement sells. I mean look at the WXFL. Have you seen those commercials? I don't see anything about football, but you have scantily clad ladies. Advertisement sells sex. So at least I'd rather the American public were confused. Because you'll see that child with an oversized wheel chair and you'll feel pity for them, and then all of a sudden you'll see this picture of a woman in a chair in a more positive light. So I'd rather the American public were confused then they just view people with disabilities in one stereotypical way. Next slide please.

Who's that young lady? Anybody? Miss America, Heather Whitestone, former Miss America Heather Whitestone. Many times I ask that same question, who is that? and they say that's Miss Deaf America. I say, "No. There's no asterisk next to her name, like they did with Roger Maris when he hit 61 home runs. Heather Whitestone, who's deaf, Miss America. You know who that gentleman is with her, next to her? Don't say her father. That's me! Me, without the beard. Notice the pink crutches, accessorize right? Here we have Heather Whitestone, Miss America, deaf. Next slide.

Someone who's deaf is neat. People with disabilities we have choices in life. We can strive to become Miss America? Or, I'm going to let you in on a little secret. People with disabilities, we will manipulate you. We will manipulate you. You feel sorry for us, you feel pity, we will manipulate you. We will tie you around our little fingers. I'm going to share an experience with you. During high school one of events that we participated in was a road rally, and I was driving. By the way, I have a car that's equipped with hand controls. I'll show you a little bit about that later on. So I'm

driving, I have a navigator and my navigator gets me lost. I'm a competitive person, brought up in Newark New Jersey. I'm a city kid, so I start to speed up. Now I go down this hill a little too fast and pow! I hit a car, and I leave the scene of the accident, which you're not supposed to do. My number 17 is on the inside of my car. Everybody in this road rally has a number. They're not going to know who did it? Right? So, I said I've had it with this rally. I'm going to the yearbook signing at the gym. I go there. A couple of minutes later an officer comes over to me and says, "Did you hit anybody, did you hit a car?" I said, "No. I don't think there's anything, there's nothing on my vehicle." He says, "Well this guy is very, very upset. I want you to follow me." Now this is how I move on crutches. (Demonstrates) I want to catch a bus... "Hey wait, wait, wait. So I move relatively well. But this is how I walked over to the guy's car I hit. (Demonstrates again.) He said, "Get out of here." What was he saying? He said you're disabled, you are not held ac-countable. Was it saying that? Anybody else, would he say get out of here? He said to me, "Get out of here." So people with disabilities, we will manipulate you if you allow us to. Let's continue.

Oh! I had the pleasure of being in Europe and I had the chance of visiting my relatives, the McHolden's in Scotland. They're very fierce clan. Can we say that? (Laughter) Very fierce. I was lucky to get out of there alive. All right let's continue.

Now we have also beauty pageants. People with disabilities they have beauty pageants as well. Now I get so much into mainstream, my feeling is that if that's the way you want to go, try to get into a mainstream situation as much as possible. When I was studying, I studied at the Lee Strasburg Institute in New York. I studied with Gordon Hunt, who is the father of Helen Hunt in Las Angeles. I do not study where there are just people with disabilities. That's not how I relate to myself. I'm an individual who happens to have a disability. Next slide.

Here we have an advertisement. Remember I said advertisement is the most positive thing out there right? I did say that? We have advertisements, the milk ad, and another ad for clothing. However the American public will never see these images. Never see these images. This is Zoë Koplowitz by the way in the milk ad, always finishes last in the New York City marathon, whether at twenty-eight hours or thirty-two hours. Where will you see these images? You will not see these in Vanity Fair, or Parade, or Seventeen, or The Ladies Home Journal. You'll see them in the following magazines, which are strictly for people with disabilities. For example, Mainstream; "Who's that clown? Henry Holden just clowning around." That's me with makeup. So it's in Mainstream, Enable, Ability, New Mobility, Sports and Spokes Week, these are the publications that you will see people with disabilities in a positive light. Next slide please.

Now these are activities available for people with disabilities. You name the activity and it's out there for people with disabilities. Many times by and large, people with disabilities do not know what's available for them. Their parents might not know. Here we have from golf to football, flying, bowling, billiards, basketball, amputee sports, multi sports, quad sports, skiing, you name the event and it's out there. People with disabilities can become active members of society. If you enjoy doing sports then you do it. Somebody recently became disabled in the recent People magazine. He enjoyed to ski. That was the best thing he loved to do. Well, his occupational therapist mentioned about the ski program, which I participated in, in Winter Park Colorado, and he still can do these things. Your life is not over if you be-come disabled. However, people do think their life is over. I received a letter from a non-traditional student, meaning an older student at Indiana University, a couple of years ago to the effect that she was very inspired, she loved my presentation and the way I held myself. She said I used to be like that too; I'd like to have that back. She used to be like that? And she'd like to have it back? What did this woman do? She gave away her power. She gave away her power. Probably when she was growing up she viewed disability in a negative light, a can't do situation. A lot of people do that, give away their power. They don't see people with disabilities functioning in a positive active way.

In the next slide we'll show images of people with disabilities participate in the activities from road racing to mountain climbing to softball, that's the mono-ski, to parachuting, to wheel chair basketball, tennis, whatever that contraption is. Let's continue.

Wheaties! Wheaties is the breakfast of champions, right? Yes? Breakfast of champions! We have this child with Downs Syndrome. She's a champion! Can you imagine what this does, how she feel about herself, not only about her, but other children who have Downs Syndrome, or her friends? Wheaties, breakfast of champions. That's why media is so important. So important, to everybody, and especially to people who media forgets about. When it comes to disability, by and large the media forgets about us. Next slide.

Now this is here, I had the pleasure of speaking at Edinborough University in Pennsylvania. In their application for admissions do include people with disabilities. They chose to show someone with an orthopedic disability who uses a wheel chair. Now I haven't looked at your application for North Carolina State University, but I would strongly suggest that if there are images of students, that you also include students with disabilities. Just like if you're African American and you're looking at these images and you don't see anybody of African American, or Asian, or if there are no women, well what does that say? If their not going to show you as part of the college environment, then they're excluding you. Next slide.

This was taken, just a random picture at Mississippi State University. This is part of the scene. This is part of it, and that's why I would like to see in your newspapers images of people with disabilities as part of the college scene. Next slide.

Now, this is in reference to the Academy Awards around forty years ago, where all the actors who were nominated for Academy Awards had some sort of disability. From Ralph Feans in the English Patient, to Woody Harellson playing Harry Flint in The People Verses Harry Flint, to Jeffrey Rush in Shine, to Billy Bob Thornton. This particular writer chose to describe these actors as "Damaged men and the women who love them." I have a disability, I am not damaged goods! People with disabilities are not damaged goods. It's a condition, it's part of our life, we are not damaged. Now, if this is what the media is portraying towards disability, then how can I blame you for your negative attitudes? Damaged men and the women who love them? How would you like to be called damaged? Would you like that? No. Next slide.

Here we have the FDR Monument. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the 32nd president of the United States. Raise your hand if you do not know that Franklin Delano Roosevelt had a disability. Raise your hand if you do not know. Okay we have a few hands up here. Franklin Roosevelt contracted Polio when he was thirty-nine years old. According to this statue, does it show him with a disability? No. There are only two pictures that exist depicting FDR in a wheel chair. FDR could never walk around, he used a wheel chair. Now FDR was a politician. He knew he'd never get elected if they showed him with a disability. Why? Because disability is viewed in a very negative light, and you're not going to vote for some-one. For example, I just want to read some terminologies that recent colleges have told me when I said the term disabled or handicapped, what's the first word that popped into their minds and they said pain, and trapped, lonely, undeveloped, sad, not able, sick, disappointment, disadvantaged, non functional, not whole, and feeble. Are you going to vote for some-body like that? No way. No way. Now, because of this particular statue there was an outcry from the disabled community. Because of that outcry there's going to be another statue depicting FDR with a disability. Now. Like I had mentioned, I was in Europe this past year in March and I found that in England at Hyde Park they also have a statue of FDR, interesting enough FDR is from Hyde Park New York. I stopped on the way to the train station to see how the English depict FDR. Can we see that slide? Can we get a little closer? Do we see a disability? What do we see? A little cane? He'd be on his ass! On his ass. Can you say that in North Carolina? Let's continue.

This is here to show that people with disabilities, the manufacturers from GM to Chrysler to Ford, will give people with disabilities as much as a thousand dollars to equip their vehicle. I need hand controls to drive my car. As a matter of fact, when I travel around the country all the car rentals do have hand controls on vehicles. My hand controls cost five hundred and sixty dollars, when I bought them three or four years ago I was reimbursed. To be perfectly honest, to equip this vehicle with a ramp would be maybe ten thousand dollars. At least it's something that's out there and that the

manufacturers are acknowledging people with disabilities. Now for the last slide and then I come into the audience and we can raise the lights. Let's see the next slide.

Can everybody see this? Okay, I'm going to come down. I'm going to jump down. Can I do it? Can we have a drum roll? (Drum rolls sound effects) Okay! Let's talk about this image. Anybody? What do we see in this image? Anybody. What kind of feeling? What is it saying? I just recently put this into my presentation. I just want to know. Yes, young lady. Okay.

Female: The word cure makes you think they're talking about a disease. Anybody else? When you look at this image. Male: Someone is being freed; they're being let go. Henry: Let me come around. This is the part that my physical therapist loves, because I am getting exercise. Female: They're selling sex again as your advertisements say. But then you know she's sexy. Henry: Which picture is she sexy? Female: She's the same woman, she's all sexy. Henry: Okay but does one thing lean more to the, can you see any difference in the first sexual, Female: I think in all of them she's thrusting her chest out. Henry: Okay, so we're talking sexy, okay that's good. This is a way of starting off the discussion. Anybody else? Yes. Let me come around this way. Nobody can hide from me.

Female: I think it's hopeful. It kind of evokes a feeling of its positive and optimistic or some-thing to look forward to. Henry: Okay. Anybody else? Any comments or questions? Next female: I agree with the whole thing about being free. It makes her look very attractive. Just the fact that they're advertising it. You'd think that if someone wanted the cure that they'd be going out and log for it themselves. It's like the way lawyers advertise you can sue. Here they're advertising, here's your cure, come and get it. Henry: Right. Okay, very good observation. Yes, I'm going to come to this lady. You were in class I remember that shirt.

Female: It makes it look like she can just snap out of it, like with the cure all of a sudden she just steps out of the wheel chair. Henry: Okay, you have a second comment? Female: I have a question. Henry: We're allowed to have questions. Go ahead. Female: I want to know how well a wheel chair functions on the beach. Does it work well at the beach? Henry: No. In fact a wheel chair cannot be driven on the beach. As a matter of fact, in order for a wheel chair to be on the beach the wheels have to be very thick, so how did that wheel chair get on the beach? Okay we have to go to the other side of the room. You couldn't all sit a little closer could you? You had to go all around the room. Here we come. Here we go. Let me just move over here.

Male: In relating to what you spoke about, it looks like it's more negative on top when she's in the wheel chair, and she feels liberated when she's out of the wheel chair. So it's kind of depicted as negative at the beginning I think. Henry: Okay, anybody else?

Female: I was just going to say that in that last frame she looks triumphant, in the first frame she's defeated and has a horrible existence. Henry: Very good observation. Where was that hand? Ah! Okay I am coming over.

Female: I think this would be great disrespect for anybody who knows anything about spinal chord injury, because it's not just the fact of getting us out of the wheel chair. I think that if I had a spinal chord injury and saw that advertisement, I would be outraged by the way their advertising it. Henry: Okay, anybody else in this isle want to talk to me?

Female: I want to say the first thing it gives me the appearance that someone in a wheel chair can't swim. It looks like she's walking towards the ocean towards the later part. I believe that they can learn how to swim. You said you scuba dive so it seems like she's willing to have more activities at the bottom. Henry: Okay, great comment. I think we'll go down to the front and then we'll have a last question, and then we'll start our panel. I'm out of time right? All right, out of time. Can you see this young lady here? Stand up; you ought to see her now.

Female: At the bottom as opposed to the top, it looks like she's able to enjoy the beach more, when

she's able to stand up rather than when she's sitting down in the wheel chair.

Henry: I appreciate those comments. You can shut the slide projector off. As a person with a disability, just to let you know how I feel, to me it's an outrage because they're saying that you're less than if you're in a chair. I am going to be honest with everybody in here. Until I was maybe eleven or twelve when it was my birthday, you blow out the candles and before you blow out the candles you made a wish right? What did I wish for? I wished I did not have a disability. But after a while you realize this is the situation and you're going to make the best out of it. So that image is saying you are less than a person you know. Free at last, free at last, you know. Ironically, do you know where that image appeared? That image appeared in one of those publications geared specifically for people with disabilities. Just one final note, we're in the age of disability with Christopher Reeve, and a lot of people in the disabled community really do not appreciate his focus on walking again. The people in the disability community, what do we focus on? We focus on job opportunities, quality of life, raising families. That is our focus. I want to thank you very much, and now the panel discussion will begin. Thank you.

Female: I also work in the area of body image in media.

My name is Henry Holden and everybody knows who I am. I am a professional actor, comedian, and activist for people with disabilities in the media. Maybe we'll start on the left if you want to open up.

Male speaker: This is kind of interesting to me because I work with individuals who have various kinds of communication problems and many times those problems, those challenges that individuals have are not evident when you see the person. Many times you notice that there's something different about the individual when they begin talking. One of the types of communication problems that has been treated in a very interesting way by the media, is the area of stuttering. I think most of you have seen an individual who is considered to be a stutterer. There are of course some images that we have from the media of people who stutter. I think there's some cartoon characters, maybe some individuals from film or TV who stutter. I think the comment that I wanted to make about this was really related to what Henry was talking about with respect to the focus of a disability when you have a character in the media. Many times a character who stutters is brought into a particular situation for some type of comic relief. There will be a fairly serious tone or a serious topic, but then to bring in some type of actor who will bring in somebody who has a little bit of a h-h- hesitation in their s-s-s-s- speech like that, and often that kind of breaks the moment and that character is used for that purpose. The other point is that at times an individual has a problem like stuttering, will be portrayed as an individual who has some type of a quirky personality or sometimes even somewhat of an extreme personality with an emotional problem. For somebody who works with people who have communication difficulties and particularly stuttering this is particularly troubling. I've worked with people who stutter for twenty-five years, and I never meet most of the people who are portrayed. These are individuals who are not particularly quirky; they're not used for comic relief. These are individuals who have challenges each day in communication. I went onto the web and found a couple of interesting descriptions of individuals who stutter. Somebody has a site where they are asking people to write in movies or TV shows they've seen with individuals who stutter and kind of give a description of this. I thought two of them were quite interesting. They listed about thirty-one and I went through them and of those thirty-one, twelve were portrayed in negative ways, eleven were portrayed actually in positive ways, and eight, as I read the description, were somewhat neutral. There were two of them that caught my attention, that I thought were kind of interesting.

One of them in this description, this is from a show Brooklyn South. I have to admit I went through a lot of these and I've never seen any of these shows. This is from Brooklyn South, and this was the way this was portrayed. There was an officer who, and in quotes it has, "has a stammer" which is another term for stutter, and it says, "One police officer said to the other, the poor guy, he's got a stammer. I make stupid faces to make him relax." Now later in the show, the officer who has a stuttering problem has to testify, and stammers when he's questioned about specifics. So in the show, what they have the other one doing is sitting in the courtroom making stupid faces so that this person

can try to relax and speak. This is not a particularly recommended therapy technique, nor is it something that portrays the individual who stutters in a very positive way. But then on the other hand, we have one; this was in *Touched by an Angel*. I have seen that show.

In this one, here's the comment made by the individual who reviewed this who stutters. "I like the way it was done, mainly because the stuttering was shown as just a part of who this guy was. Like Henry was saying, there's not a super-smart, not a dumb or slow, not a criminal, just a regular guy that happened to stutter. I think that this is an important comment here about this, and I think something that you were emphasizing, that in the media so many times with disability it's the focus and the person either has to be a super-star, used for comic relief, or somebody who has a real questionable personality. Most of the time that is not the case whatsoever, but it is important in creating images that we have individuals with communication challenges and other types of problems.

Female speaker: First I want to thank Henry for really encouraging us to take seriously that images matter. That they not only affect how we see ourselves, but how others see us, and how we think about others, and that they are really important. My work is on new media technology, thinking about computer technology and Internet. I want to briefly talk a little bit about how some of this is playing out in some of the newer media. We don't have many representations of the disabled in computer technology. If you think of multi-player games, computer games, the Internet in general. We have lots of bad images of gender and race that I think should be for us a red flag to be cautious about how these images are going to get played out when it comes to the disabled.

When it comes to gender, we tend to see women portrayed along pretty stereotypic lines. Its model bodies and Laura Croft is probably the most well known example of this. We see a pretty narrow assortment of bodies in these new technologies. Racial representations tend to also fall into stereotype. Fu man Chu characters are really present. Some really offensive genre's get set up, some really offensive portrayals of bodies. I think what this should indicate to us is that we should be thinking really critically about advocating these new computer mediated spaces. What kinds of bodies are going to be in those spaces? Who's going to populate them? What are those people going to look like? How would we really want to crew-ate diverse and open and interesting kinds of roles? I think so far we haven't seen very many progressive, interesting, or diverse roles thus far.

The other thing I want to mention is that part of creating systems that are going to allow for more diversity, is having a real explicit conscious critique of what systems are about. How do we create open flexible systems so that people can see representations of themselves in the way they want inserted? In a slightly different way, one of the areas where questions around disability have gotten raised is how systems are constructed. Most recently, the National Federation for the Blind filed a lawsuit against AOL in the hopes that it would force AOL (America On Line) to think about how their service was accessible to those who had different kinds of sight requirements, and sight disabilities. There's a big pressure right now I think on web-technologies, web-developers to really think about how the structure of the software its' self, the structure of the site, is possibly keeping people from being able to accesses the site, keeping people from being able to accesses these new technologies. I think there are some interesting policy questions that need to be raised about that. What things are we going to explicitly do as a society to have a wide range of people allowed into these new technologies and involved in them? There's a recent rehabilitation act of 1998 in an attempt to make federal agencies, when they're thinking about buying technology, when they're thinking about new resources of technology, being aware and thoughtful about the different kinds of people, the different kinds of needs that are going to approach that. I think the images we saw today come from traditional media, newspapers, magazines, and television. How these same things are getting played out in new media is a really important thing for us to consider.

New Female speaker: To follow on everything that's been talked about, I want to speak a moment about the media as a socializing force. I think it's a mistake always to think of media images, representations, broadcasts, and programs etcetera as separate from our lives. Many of the things that we think we know about reality, about ourselves and everybody else, very often have a mediated

component to them, partly because a lot of our experience is a mediated experience. To take that into a specific, if you think about what we call the production tropes, which is a way of saying that there are certain conventional values that are in all of the kind of broadcast or even theatrical films that we see. For instance, what will be very familiar to you is that a low camera angle up at a figure, where the figure very large on the screen and very dominating, tends to be a figure of power. The camera angle, which shoots down at a figure very often, is a submissive kind of portrayal of a figure. Equally, the notion of a very long stride from a very forceful male is going to equate with power. An equally long forceful stride on the part of a female would equate with far less positive kinds of conventional ideas very often that women might be seen as less than feminine, perhaps abrasive, etcetera. The gender dimensions are representations that we always bring to things.

Along with that we also live in a mediated culture that is very advertising driven, and the nature, the base of advertising is to both promote and exploit insecurities. Many of us, if not everybody walks around with a kind of self-consciousness and anxiety about our body images, how our bodies are, what they are to be. Again, this has had a gender dimension in the sense that the female body has been sexualized, objectified, and portrayed. It's happening now that the masculine body is starting to be subject to the same kind of treatment, where we see instead of cheesecake, we see beefcake. I was looking at something the other day, men's health under eighteen, which talks about steroids and building up pectoral muscles etcetera. If we then take that into the world of the disabled, the notion that a body that doesn't fit these perfect parameters which very few of us fit and in fact in the age of digital manipulation no-body is going to fit. I mean, you know, when you can take the head of a model, put it on a different body torso, and put that female body torso on top of a fourteen year old male set of legs which is what they're doing, there's no human being that actually looks like that. If you think then in terms of disability say on the physical level the notion that that physical body could be seen as a powerful body, or a forceful body, or an environment a body in which you would want to dwell is really pushing the kinds of culturated limits that we all exist in. I would say that those are, much as we would like to think they aren't, are very much incorporated into our own thinking. When you see broadcast television for instance or programs like that, you'll see a certain kind of stereotypical thumb prints that are very fast to recognize and that's the easy way that writers use and directors use and it's very difficult to break, and I think that's something that you want to start thinking about a great deal.

New female speaker: I'd like to pick up a little bit where Sarah left off on this notion of media effects and some of these are the things that Mr. Holden was eluding to also. We know that media is a socializing force and so when we think about these images, whether it's of disabled or other ethnic images, and it's really interesting how these patterns are so similar, whether we're talking about gender, or Latinos, or disabled, how the patterns of absence from media, ridicule in media, passiveness in media, go across all of these areas. When we think about effects of media we can think about effects on others and then effects on oneself. Some of the studies, for instance, on effects on others have shown for instance that when children are exposed to Sesame Street characters who are in wheel chairs later on they're more apt to sit closer to another child in a wheel chair. When people are exposed to films or television media or other media where there are images of disabled they then are more likely to perceive patterns of discrimination, whether that's access to a sports event or job access, and have less negative emotional reaction. In terms of effect on oneself, if I'm Latino and I see images of me in media that gives me empowerment, the kind of empowerment that Sarah was talking about. We've seen similar studies in terms of disabled that if they're seeing images, at least in the ads we're seeing a few, there are more positive effects on self esteem. These are more of the quantitative studies, surveys, experiments, in depth interviews, and so on where we're seeing these results.

I'd like to touch on a couple other things; one of them is the effect on public policy. It's great for us all to talk here today, but what you're doing out there is affecting public policy. We know when we see the work of Latino groups, African American groups, the Arab Anti-discrimination League, and so on, that when they are constantly, constantly vigilant and constantly outspoken changes do occur. It's interesting, I'm looking at a hundred years of news coverage of Mexico now and it's interesting that when people get comfortable and say okay now things are looking positive, then that absence

from media, that passive portrayal again reoccurs, so we have to stay constantly vigilant. I hope there are many more with the energy that Mr. Holden has out there. I think I'll stop there, thank you so much, and now I guess we'll open it up for questions.

New Female speaker: I want to make one last comment to about one of the things I was talking about. I was talking with Henry at lunch. The other kinds of oppressive categories always extend into every area so the issue of representation of people with disabilities itself is not a monolithic situation. For instance, males have been portrayed in wheel chairs with a great deal of power. I don't know if any of you remember Raymond Burr as Ironside, a detective series. Right now there's a new series on Warner Brothers, Dark Angel, where there's a man in a wheel chair who's sort of guiding or actually directing the young woman who's the warrior woman. So we'll also see other kinds of relationships are going to exist in terms of disabilities as well. Males and females for instance, or the different races are not going to be equally treated either within representations of disability, so it's not separate from the rest of our society and that has to be remembered as well.

Henry: Before we go into the next part, I just want to give you little bit of history of some of the roles that I've played because you had mentioned that other times they use disability as a comic relief and the last TV show I did, Becker, that's what I was brought in for was comic relief. The show dealt with Ted Dansen who plays Becker. He has to take an anger management class and he comes into the diner where a lot of the show is filmed and he says, "It's working. As a matter of fact to show that it's working, how I'm nice to people, a van is going to be ticketed because the meter's running out." Then I respond. Also, before I continue, they closed the set so nobody would know that I have a disability until we shot the scene. So, Becker says that, you know this person's going to get ticketed and then I'm sitting at a booth and I take out a quarter and I say, "Would you mind putting a quarter in the meter?" Then Ted Dansen says, "Well what else do you want me to do? Do you want me to shine your car? I mean what is this? People take advantage; you try to do something nice." Well at that time I pick up my crutches, I don't say anything, and as I walk out of the diner I stop in front of him and I just nonchalantly say, "I'm sorry to have bothered you." Then I walk out and he's got this egg all over his face, and it got a very big laugh. I knew what it was. In the last role I played had much more substance. It as a show called WILU where I played agent of Dick Van Patten who plays a weatherman and he's going blind. I was in four scenes that were very dynamic.

The way this business goes three weeks prior to getting this major role where I was a guest star and I appeared four times during the show, I was on a show called Dear John with Judd Hirsch. Judd Hirsch comes into the dentist's office, and he comes in I play one of the patients and another gentleman plays a patient, we're looking at a newspaper, and he comes in and he says, "I'm here to get my gums scraped." And me and this other gentleman look up and we say, "Ooh." That's all we say. Now I use crutches, so naturally I had the crutches next to me. The director took the crutches away. He did not want the crutches in the shot. He said we don't want to confuse the audience. Now I'm an activist, but when you're on the set you know that's not where I do my activist stuff. On the set as an actor I have to be as professional as possible and do my job. I go to the dentist; people with disabilities do go to the dentist.

I just wanted to share those few little stories with you and to me the better episode to compare to the episode where I was the agent was not as strong but the media has so much power. You're on television, who wouldn't want to be on television in any role? When I look at it, it was really comic relief and I'd rather have different types of roles but again as an actor it enhances your status if you do anything.

Female speaker: One of the things that has helped Latinos in media and African Americans and so on is having people from that group working in media. Maybe there needs to be that kind of sensitivity among the directors and so on in those kinds of experiences to move you in that direction.

Henry: Okay, so what's the next part?

Female speaker: The next part is me thanking everybody for being here, especially those of you in

the audience, and these people who have thought seriously about this area of disability and the fact that they were willing to spend their time to discuss it with you is important to me. I hope that each of you can take away something that you didn't know, have improved an attitude, because remember, attitude is not a real disability. What's going to happen next is in the multi-purpose room we have a reception, free food! We'd like for each and every one of you to come, and it's being sponsored by the Dean at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in which the department of communication is. So, for about the next hour we can get to know Henry a little bit better and all the panelists and enjoy each other and have food. Thank you.