

## UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

### Successful People with Disabilities: Brief Summary

#### Actors/Actresses

Harry Anderson  
Actor, magician, comedian, has dyslexia

Billy Barty  
Actor, Little-person

Chris Burke  
Actor, first person with Down syndrome to star in a weekly television series

Tom Cruise  
Actor, has dyslexia

Kirk Douglas  
Actor, stroke which caused speech difficulties

Patty Duke  
Actress, won three Emmy and an Academy Award, diagnosed as having a manic-depressive disorder

W.C. Fields  
Actor, juggler, vaudeville performer, billiards performer, newspaper cartoonist, Broadway star, major film star, author, and an alcoholic

Michael J. Fox  
Actor, has Parkinson's disease

Annette Funicello  
Actress, has multiple sclerosis

Danny Glover  
Actor, has dyslexia

Tracey Gold  
Actress, has dyslexia

Whoopie Goldberg  
Comedian, actress, had great difficulty learning to read in school because she had dyslexia

Henry Holden  
Actor, athlete, stand-up comic, and activist, contracted polio in 1952, he wears leg braces and uses crutches

James Earl Jones  
Actor, stuttered

Marlee Matlin  
Stand-up comedian, actress, author, became deaf in infancy

Marilyn Monroe  
Actress, model, stuttered

Christopher Reeves  
Actor, played Superman, broke his neck falling off the horse which left the actor paralyzed

Henry Winkler  
Actor, director, humanitarian, has dyslexia

#### Artists

Chuck Close  
Artist, severe learning disability, paralysis

Leonardo Da Vinci  
Renaissance artist, sculptor, painter, had dyslexia

Dwight Mackintosh  
Artist, had a cognitive disability

Robert Rauschenberg  
Artist, has dyslexia

#### Athletes

Jim Abbott  
Threw a no-hitter, won Olympic gold in 1988, only player in major league baseball who was born with one hand

Jim Eisenreich  
Professional athlete, has Tourette Syndrome

Ron Harper  
Professional basketball player, has a mild stutter

Ellie Hawkins  
Record-breaking rock climber, has dyslexia

Magic Johnson  
Basketball for NBA, HIV, established the Magic Johnson Foundation to raise money to fund HIV and AIDS organizations

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf  
Professional athlete, has Tourette Syndrome

## UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

### Successful People with Disabilities:

#### Brief Summary

#### Continued

#### Athletes

- Greg Louganis  
U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist and professional swimmer, has dyslexia
- Bob Love  
Professional basketball player, motivational speaker, stuttered
- Gheorghe Muresan  
Actor, former professional basketball player, a pituitary disorder
- Terence Parkin  
Swimmer in 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, born deaf
- Curtis Pride  
Baseball player, deaf
- Nolan Ryan  
Professional athlete, has dyslexia
- Marla Runyan  
Marla represented the United States in the 1500 meter track event at the 2000 Olympics. She began losing her vision at age 9 and is now legally blind.
- Jackie Stewart  
Race car driver, has dyslexia
- Mike Utley  
A football player for the Rams, fractured his 6th and 7th cervical vertebrae and became paralyzed, founded the Mike Utley Foundation which does research to find a cure for paralysis
- Eric Wynalda  
Professional soccer player, has dyslexia

#### Author/Illustrators

- Dale S. Brown  
Author, disability advocate, has dyslexia
- John Callahan  
Cartoonist, wheel chair user
- Lewis Carroll  
Author, hearing loss, stuttered
- Agatha Christie  
English mystery writer, had dyslexia

- Edward Hallowell, MD  
Author, psychiatrist, ADD specialist, has dyslexia
- Joseph Heller  
Author, Guillain-Barre Syndrome
- Helen Keller  
Author, blind, deaf
- Gretchen Josephson  
Poet, has a cognitive disability
- Sylvia Law  
Professor of law and medicine, author, has dyslexia
- Paul Longmore  
Was a historian, author, disability activist, had paralysis from polio
- Nancy Mairs  
Author, disability activist, has multiple sclerosis
- Ved Mehta  
Author, blind
- Patricia Polacco  
Writer and illustrator of children's books, diagnosed as having dyslexia, did not learn to read well until after she was 14 years old
- John Updike  
Author, stutters
- Victor Villaseñor  
Award-winning author, has dyslexia

#### Entertainment Industry and Musicians

- Ludwig von Beethoven  
German composer, deaf
- Harry Belafonte  
Singer, actor, entertainer, has dyslexia
- Andrea Bocelli  
Opera singer, blind
- George Burns  
Actor, comedian, had dyslexia
- Stephen J. Cannell  
Screenwriter, producer, director, has dyslexia
- Walt Disney  
Cartoonist, visionary founder of Disneyland/Disney world, had dyslexia

## UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

### Successful People with Disabilities: Brief Summary Continued

#### Entertainment Industry and Musicians

Fannie Flagg  
Actress, screenwriter has dyslexia

Chris Fonseca  
Comedian, has Cerebral Palsy

David Jones  
Stuntman, pioneer in helicopter aerial photography, has dyslexia

Itzhak Perlman  
Violinist, contracted polio at age four causing paralysis of his legs

Tom Smothers  
Comedian, has dyslexia

Lindsay Wagner  
Actress, author, "The Bionic Woman" has dyslexia

Mike Wallace  
Journalist, mood disorder, depression

Stevie Wonder  
Singer, blind

#### Presidents/Politicians

James Brady  
Former presidential press secretary, brain trauma, movement difference

Gaston Caperton  
Former governor of West Virginia, has dyslexia

Winston Churchill  
Former Prime Minister of Britain, had dyslexia, stuttered

Robert Dole  
Former U.S. Senator, partial paralysis

Judith Heumann  
Assistant Secretary of Education, wheelchair user

Daniel Inouye  
Veteran, U.S. Senator, amputee

Thomas H. Kean  
President of Drew University, former governor of New Jersey, has dyslexia

George Patton  
Military General, had dyslexia

Janet Reno  
U.S. Attorney General, movement differences, Parkinson's disease

Nelson Rockefeller  
Former governor of New York, former vice president of the United States, had dyslexia

Franklin Roosevelt  
32nd president of the United States, contracted polio in 1921 that left him with limited use of his legs, wheel chair user

Woodrow Wilson  
Former President of the U.S. had dyslexia

Frank Wolf  
U.S. Congressman, stuttered

#### Scientists

Alexander Graham Bell  
Inventor of the telegraph and telephone, had dyslexia.

Dr. Red Duke  
Physician, television commentator, has dyslexia

Thomas Edison  
Inventor, scientist, had dyslexia

Albert Einstein  
Scientist, philosopher, had dyslexia

Stephen Hawking  
A scientist and physics, author of *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Hole*, he has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

John Horner  
Curator of paleontology, technical advisor to Steven Spielberg for Jurassic Park and the Lost World, has dyslexia

William James  
Psychologist, philosopher, has dyslexia

William Simmons, MD  
Professor of anesthesiology, has dyslexia

Nancy Sonnabend  
Researcher, inventor, author, has dyslexia

## UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

### Successful People with Disabilities: Brief Summary Continued

#### Other Celebrities

Stephen Bacque

Entrepreneur of the Year, 1998, has dyslexia

Ann Bancroft

Explorer, lecturer, educator, first woman to travel across the ice to the North and South Poles, has dyslexia

Terry Bowersock

Entrepreneur, motivational speaker, has dyslexia

Neil Bush

Son of Barbara and former President Bush, has dyslexia

John Corcoran

Real estate millionaire, has dyslexia

Fred Curry

Navy pilot, CEO of Greyhound, has dyslexia

John Hockenberry

Journalist, TV commentator, has paralysis, wheelchair user

Bom Jimenez

TV anchorman, has dyslexia

Ron Kovic

Vietnam veteran, disability advocate, paralyzed, wheelchair user

Paul J. Orfalea

Entrepreneur, founder of Kink, has dyslexia

Charles Schwab

Founder of investment brokerage, has dyslexia

Richard Strauss

Real estate developer, banker, has dyslexia

Mary Verdi-Fletcher

Professional Dancer, has spina bifida, wheelchair user

Heather Whitestone

Heather was Miss America for 1995, became deaf at the age of 18 months

Roger W. Wilkins

Head of the Pulitzer Prize Board, has dyslexia

King George VI of England

King of England, health problems as a child, stuttered

## REFERENCES:

If you are interested in information about other people with disabilities, check out the resource listed below:

[http://www.patriciapolacco.com/books/rrob/rrob\\_index.html](http://www.patriciapolacco.com/books/rrob/rrob_index.html)

[http://www.history-of-rock.com/ray\\_charles.htm](http://www.history-of-rock.com/ray_charles.htm)

<http://www.steviewonder.net/>

[http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article\\_0060.shtml](http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_0060.shtml) <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/kidsweb/fpwdinfo.html>

<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/~rowley/sb-kids/famous.html>

<http://www.stutteringhelp.org/Default.aspx?tabid=128>

<http://www.deafnix.com/DeafCommunity/fame.html>

16 Extraordinary Americans with Disabilities - by Nancy Lobb, Walsh Publishing, Jan. 1, 2008

Extraordinary People With Disabilities by Deborah Kent and Kathryn A. Quinlan, Apr 1997