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WASLI 2011—2015: Meet your new WASLI Board Debra Russell, WASLI President

Hello! The WASLI 2011 conference in South Africa was a fantastic opportunity for some 160 interpreters from 49 countries to come together and enjoy learning from each other. The time together was a busy one and we are grateful to each and every one of you that contributed to the conference. For some of you, your gift was recognising that while you could not attend WASLI, you could offer a financial donation to help someone else attend. Your generosity to the sponsorship programme meant that many interpreters from developing countries were able to come to WASLI and they will take so much learning back to their home communities. Our days at the conference were filled with such spirit and energy – this is what happens when interpreters come together around the world! Please visit our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) site to learn more.

During the conference, your new WASLI Board was elected. Let me introduce them to you:

José Luis Brieva (Colombia), Vice President. As an interpreter with 17 years of experience, José Luis also works with the Deafblind community as an interpreter and guide. He is one of the founding members of the National Association of Sign Language Interpreters in Colombia (ANISCOL). José Luis is eager to work to help develop interpreting as a profession that demonstrates high quality and respects Deaf communities throughout the world.

Susan Emerson (Australia), Treasurer. Susan has practiced as a sign language interpreter for over 20 years, and is currently working on a Masters of Translating and Interpreting. Susan has worked as an interpreter training advisor in several countries. She is also the President of ASLIA Victoria and the coordinator of ASLIA's Creating Opportunities Fund, which enables interpreters from developing countries to access training events in the Australasia/Oceania region.



Debra Russell
New WASLI President



José Luis Brieva



Susan Emerson



Awoii Patrick Michael



Samuel Begumisa



Nigel Howard



José Ednilson
Gomes De Souza
Júnior



Sheena Walters

Awoii Patrick Michael (Uganda), Secretary. Patrick is a sign language interpreter with over 10 years of experience. He works with several non-governmental organizations in Uganda, and brings a rich background of communication and accounting experience to our board.

Samuel Begumisa (Uganda), Africa regional representative. Samuel has Deaf parents and has worked as an interpreter for the past 18 years. He is also a sign language interpreter trainer and has worked as an educator of deaf children for the past 8 years. He continues to teach Deaf children, and was selected as the Africa rep at a meeting of the representatives of the 17 African countries attending WASLI in 2011.

Nigel Howard (Canada), North America regional representative. He has been an interpreter instructor at Douglas College for over 17 years, and an ASL linguistics instructor at University of Victoria for the past 3 years. Nigel is a professional Deaf Interpreter, workshop presenter and trainer with over 15 years of experience through North America and Europe. He is honoured and keen to represent North America for the next four years.

José Ednilson Gomes De Souza Júnior (Brazil) Latino America regional representative. José is currently studying towards a Masters degree in Linguistics at the University of Brasilia. He also teaches on the Interpreter Bachelor of Arts programme at Federal University of Santa Catarina (regional UFGD). José is also the Vice President of the Brazilian Federation of Sign Language Interpreters - FEBRAPILS and APILDF (regional association).

Sheena Walters (Australia), Australasia/Oceania regional representative. Sheena is a sign language interpreter with many years of experience, including international work in Kosovo. She currently works as a manager with the New South Wales Deaf Society. Her parents are Deaf and she brings the CODA sensitivity to the work in her diverse region.



Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel,
WASLI 2011 venue,
Durban, South Africa



Fantastic view from the hotel



Delegates at WASLI 2011



WASLI's new Secretary in action



Stuart Anderson

Stuart Anderson (a proud Scotsman living in London), Europe regional representative. He is a qualified teacher, assessor, and internal verifier at his own business. He is a Deaf interpreter and is currently studying towards his Translation degree; this is due to be completed in 2011. He is delighted to be on the WASLI board and is looking forward to working with European interpreters and colleagues on the board from the rest of the world.



Igor Bondarenko

Igor Bondarenko (Ukraine), Transcaucasia & Central Asia regional representative. Igor comes to us from Kiev where he works daily as an interpreter on the televised national news. He was previously a staff interpreter with the national Deaf association and has recently organised a conference of interpreters in his region. He speaks Russian and Ukrainian and will be a great bridge in helping WASLI to grow in this region.



Emiko Ichikawa

Emiko Ichikawa (Japan), Asia regional representative. Emiko continues to serve in this role, having been with WASLI since our founding in South Africa in 2005. She has been an interpreter for many years, active in bridging interpreters and the Deaf organisations in Japan. She is a tireless advocate for WASLI in her region, and the donations from her region have always contributed to WASLI's bottom line.



Selman Hoti

Selman Hoti (Kosovo), Balkans regional representative. Selman has been with WASLI since 2007 when the Balkans region was formed. Like Samuel, Sheena, and Susan, his mother and father are Deaf. Selman works with the national Deaf association, and has overseen the training opportunities provided to interpreters in his region. As an interpreter and trainer, he continues to work towards improving the situation for Deaf people in his region.

Some other aspects of the 2011 conference:

Over the past 18 months, there has been a Task Group focused on producing guidelines for countries about

educating interpreters. That paper is now completed and will soon be available on our website. I encourage each of you interested in international development to review the philosophical statement and principles that have shaped the document, and to find ways to share it with others.

Zane Hema and Liz Scott Gibson were conferred with Lifetime Membership, which was so well deserved given their tremendous work with WASLI since its inception. Liz Scott Gibson was also recognised by WFD for her outstanding service – congratulations, Liz!

Our opening ceremony showcased a 46 person Zulu Dance Troupe, followed by Markku Jokinen, World Federation of the Deaf President, who opened our conference. Bruno Druchen, President of Deaf South Africa, and chair of the WFD Congress, also brought greetings, prior to Colin Allen (now the current president of the WFD) delivering an inspirational keynote address on the theme of unity among interpreters and Deaf people, nationally and internationally.

Our welcoming reception was held by the pool of the Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel, overlooking the Indian Ocean, where we again enjoyed the dance troupe, had the chance to meet new friends and reconnect with old friends underneath the stars.

Dr. Risa Shaw and Dr. Steven Collins, both of Gallaudet University, coordinated the selection of papers and posters, and while neither was able to be with us, we so appreciated the variety of presenters and the range of topics showcasing research and practice. Brendan Costello (Spain) and Mary Thumann (USA) will



be editing the conference proceedings over the next few months so watch for the opportunity to purchase your copy. For many delegates, this was the first time they had access to this level of information about our work. The two days of presentations were interspersed with country reports from our delegates. Learning about events in Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Panama, Chile, Ukraine, Costa Rica, Cambodia, Japan, Sweden, Mexico, to name but a few, was so enlightening. We have much in common, and there is so much work to be done to bring equity to services for Deaf people globally. We will never forget our delegate from Zambia speaking about coming to WASLI as a series of "firsts" - first time on an airplane, first time to see the ocean, first time to a conference, first time to have access to training, and first time to see the face of WASLI changing lives. Country reports will be available to download from the WASLI website soon.

English and International Sign were the official languages of the conference, and Dr. Christopher Stone from the UK pulled together an amazingly talented group of IS interpreters. The interpreters all volunteered their services, and offered access for Deaf participants, as well as hearing participants who may not have been familiar with English.

WASLI also enjoyed some wonderful media coverage, including photos, Facebook updates, Tweets, and videos. Our thanks to Nicole Montagna (NY) and



The former WASLI Board's 2011 meeting (prior to the WASLI conference). Front: Zane Hema, Deb Russell, Liz Scott Gibson. Back: Marco Nardi, George Major, Juan Druetta. On skype: José Luis Brieva!

Patrick Galasso (VT) and their team for making sure that the sights and sounds of the conference were shared globally.

WASLI was invited for the first time to bring greetings to the WFD General Assembly. I was thrilled to be able to do that, and our entire Board looks forward to working with the WFD Board on shared projects over the next four years. One of the major projects will focus on interpreting access during natural disasters. When I was in Australia attending the ASLIA conference in August 2011 I was able to meet with Colin Allen to begin our discussions.

The photos from our closing Gala Dinner show the spirit of friendships born from our various "heart languages" and shared profession, regardless of our linguistic and geographic differences. Many delegates dressed in their national costumes, which created a colourful background upon which to take photos, exchange parting messages and celebrate the experience of interpreters coming together from around the world to share their knowledge, passion, and commitment to developing interpreting throughout the world.

The new Board is now focused on transition issues, and moving toward creating the next strategic plan for WASLI. We are such a young organisation and there is much to be done. I hope you will find ways to contribute to WASLI's growth, and support activities in your region. Take out an individual membership, participate in raising sponsorship dollars for other countries, pay the membership of an interpreter in a developing country, and learn about the committees that await your talents! Please feel free to be in touch with any of us serving on the Board – you can find contact information at www.wasli.org. And finally, begin saving now – our next conference in 2015 will be held in Istanbul, Turkey!

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your support.

Debra Russell, WASLI President

Having fun at WASLI 2011!





Barry-Alan Davey at WASLI 2011



A Newbie at WASLI

Barry-Alan Davey, UK

Hello everyone, I'm a sign language interpreter from England. I work with Deafblind people as an interpreter and I also train other interpreters, both Deaf and hearing, on how to communicate and interpret for Deafblind people who have a restricted fields of vision or use tactile sign language.

My road to WASLI

I wasn't sure I would make it to the WASLI conference in Durban, South Africa but I knew that there was information I wanted to share with the global interpreting community. I submitted a proposal for a poster presentation entitled "Tactile BSL, where is it?" – a presentation on the lack of training in England for interpreters to learn the skills necessary to communicate and interpret for Deaf tactile sign language users. After a long wait I finally heard that my presentation had been accepted. It took me about 5 seconds to consider it and by the end of the week I had booked my flights, accommodation and my place at the conference. I then spent the next 6 months working my hands and fingers to the bone to pay for it.

The Journey

The journey was two long flights from London. I wasn't expecting my WASLI experience to start until I arrived in Durban but actually it started when I changed flights at Dubai. While waiting to board my flight I spotted two people signing; they were interpreters from Malaysia and Thailand. As we waited to board our plane we spoke about interpreting in our countries and what we expected from the conference. We were then joined by another interpreter from Singapore. Although I had attended international conferences before and have done some international signing before, this was a great way to warm up my brain for the coming week. As the plane was about to board a group of Deaf people from South Korea came down to the departure lounge. We all got talking and they said that they were on their way to the WFD Youth Section.

I introduced myself as "Barry" and explained that my name sign in BSL is "BAD", signed with a closed fist but with the little finger sticking up (I think this is the same in Auslan). My new friends all start laughing and giggling, when I asked why they were laughing they told me that in Korean Sign Language my name sign meant "girl". I wasn't expecting to do any actual interpreting on this expedition but I assisted the South Korean group to fill in their passport form, as it was in English, and I interpreted for them through passport control and customs.

The conference

When I arrived at the conference the first thing on the programme was the General Meeting. Although I was new to WASLI, it was still interesting to see how the organisation has been run over the last 6 years and who would be leading it for the next 4 years. During this meeting we were given the opportunity to break away into our regions: Europe, Asia, Australasia, African countries etc... This was interesting because we got to see what WASLI means to us on a local level and we also got to meet our "global neighbours".

A Newbie at WASLI, cont.

The conference was opened with a display from an African Dance troop that was fantastic to watch, it gave you a real feel for our host country. The keynote speaker was Colin Allen and his talk was on "Think Globally, Act Locally". It was a profound insight into how we as a global community can learn from each other and act at local levels to benefit our local communities.

In the evening there was cocktail party arranged, this was a great opportunity to meet peers from all over the world on a social level with nice food and plenty of drinks. The interpreters I had already met from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and many different places in Europe were able to introduce me to people whom in turn introduced me to more people.

The presentations during the following two days were a diverse mix with content that will stay in my mind and benefit my interpreting and the way I work for years to come. There are two prominent presentations that have stuck in my mind: "Working together to support the Solomon Islands: An emerging Deaf and interpreting community" and "IS Interpreter in Asia and Pacific region". Both these presentations, along with the rest of them, gave me an insight into something I never knew was out there and had never considered.

This whole conference was one of the most beneficial experiences of my life. While there I learnt so much and met some wonderful people, people who I will be friends with and remember for many years to come. To anyone considering going to a WASLI conference I have one thing to say: just go for it!



The next WASLI conference will be in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2015!



**Report on the XVI Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf
Kellye Bensley, New Zealand
(Christchurch Deaf community member, Deaf Aotearoa Executive Board member)**

I was very fortunate to receive funding from the [Deaf Development Fund](#) so that I could attend the WFD Congress in Durban, South Africa, 18-24 July 2011.

There was a pleasant surprise of having four interpreters on my plane from Sydney to Johannesburg and then from Johannesburg to Durban – Angela Murray, Micky Vale, Rachel McKee (New Zealand) and Della Goswell (Australia) who were all attending the WASLI conference. This made the flight all the more enjoyable, but maybe not for the flight attendants who didn't like our signing blocking their way. Oops!

Despite the fact that my bags went missing somewhere along the way (they arrived two days later), I had a great time meeting new people, and learning new things to bring back to New Zealand in terms of advocating further for the Deaf community.

The opening ceremony was fantastic – on every chair there was a drum and there was a performance by some African musicians who told us when to bang on the drums. The whole place was vibrating! There were a lot of speeches and a performance by the Deaf schools from the area – they were performing about the history of South Africa in dance and they all did an amazing job. The 18th of July 2011 not only celebrated the opening of the 16th WFD Congress but it also celebrates Nelson Mandela Day so that made this day even more special.

The congress was split into two

streams per day, and each day had a different focus. We had choices of which stream to go to and I attended workshops on bilingual development. One that interested me the most was a presentation about SLED (Sign Language Education and Development) which used Deaf artists to illustrate books for children and the books were accompanied by DVDs so that the story was signed. It was amazing to see the children on the video with such great signing skills. This presentation led me to 'Hi Hopes', another organisation that focuses on early intervention that is all inclusive – sign language, amplification (cochlear implants and hearing aids) and uses Deaf and parent mentors as well as professionals so that the Deaf child has the opportunity to learn everything and there is no bias. It struck me that this is something that we need here in New Zealand.

Other presentations I attended were on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This topic has fired me up, so I went up to ask questions. I understand that New Zealand has not signed the Optional Protocol so obviously I needed to find out how I can get involved in the push for this to be signed. There were quite a few presentations on the UNCRPD being that it was signed after the last congress held in Spain. All of those presentations were right up my alley because it meant that I could learn a lot more and to try and use what I have learned in New Zealand.

Socially, I had a great time and

met so many nice people, especially those from the developing countries in Africa. I was particularly interested in Uganda as they have a Deaf MP and I was surprised to find that they are quite onto it when it comes to disabled people! I could write a whole book on the people I met in Durban as they were all fantastic and I enjoyed their company every bit. The closing ceremony was more low profile than the opening one but there was another amazing performance in dance by the eight Deaf schools in the Durban area. I should also mention that I was fortunate enough to win an iPad2 from a raffle drawn by H3.tv so that was an exciting moment!

I need to thank the Deaf Development Fund again for their support. I would never have experienced this if it was not for them.



Images from WFD

“Think globally Act locally”

WASLI Photo Contest



WASLI wants your three best photos that show the theme "think globally, act locally".



Photos selected from each region.

3 photos per entry.

Submit by 31-12- 2011.

Send photos to: waslimedia@gmail.com

The Grand Prize winner receives a year membership to WASLI.



Call for committee members

A new WASLI committee is now forming that will focus on Deafblind interpreting issues. We're looking for members who are interested in partnering with the Deafblind community with the goal of collaborating on various tasks. Committee work may include developing and sharing best practices for Deafblind interpreting, further defining the roles of intervener and support service provider, and examining approaches to infusing Deafblind issues in interpreter education.

Please email secretary@wasli.org to express your interest.

AILSU, The Interpreters Association of Uruguay, invite sign language interpreters and all those interested to visit their new meeting space at the blog:

<http://ailsumontevideoy.blogspot.com>.

For more information and summaries of some of the papers presented at the WFD Congress and the WASLI conference, check out this blog:

www.efsli.blogspot.com

Thank you to Maya de Wit for the hours you spent blogging this!

Have you joined WASLI on Facebook?

Our new page can be found [here](#), or by searching for 'WASLI'. Like our page to receive up to date information about the WASLI Board's work programme as well as interpreting events around the world. You can also use this page to connect with other interpreters, post photos and videos of interpreting events, and to let us know what is happening in your part of the interpreting world.



www.wasli.org

IMPORTANT

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Regional Representatives: Emiko Ichikawa (Asia); Sheena Walters (Australasia & Oceania); Samuel Begumisa (Africa); Selman Hoti (Balkans); Stuart Anderson (Europe); José Ednilson Jnr (Latino America); Nigel Howard (North America); Igor Bondarenko (Transcaucasia & Central Asia)

WASLI VOLUNTEERS

WASLI Webmaster: David Wolfenden

WASLI Membership: Robin Demko

WASLI Translations Coordinator: Rafael Treviño (plus volunteers)

Newsletter Editors: George Major and Angela Murray

Newsletter proofreaders: Patrick Galasso and Alan Wendt