

# Kolash honored for contributions to deaf community in Virginia

PORTSMOUTH, Va. — Joseph D. Kolash, (Joe), of Springfield Va., son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph N. Kolash, DuBois RD 4, was nominated for 1987 Distinguished Service Award for “unceasing and diligent effort to foster, promote and preserve the general welfare of his fellow citizens in the selfless tradition.” He was honored by the Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD) during it’s convention July 11. At the time of his nomination, he was serving his third two-year term as treasurer; he is now serving his fourth term.

“The Virginia Associatin of the Deaf joins me in proclaiming Joseph D. Kolash as being most worthy to receive the 1987 Distinguished Service Award for his continued activities to promote and protect the interests of deaf Virginians,” said Rachel M. Bavister, president of association.

Kolash’s service to the association has been remarkable. He brought sophistication to the VAD by computerizing the record keeping process — developed a database for membership, maintained accuracy of input, and developed a methodology to easily manage financial accounting auditing and transactions.

During his first term as treasurer, the VAD membership roll increased almost 100 percent due to his ability to track down former members and get them to renew their memberships. This enabled VAD to send two representatives to the 1984 and 1986 National Association of the Deaf conventions instead of one, as in the past. The net worth of the organization has increased four and one-half times since 1981.

Kolash is a strong advocate for equal access by the deaf community. “Deaf people living in apartments or staying in hotels/motels do not always enjoy the same right to survive as do hearing tenants or guests due to the lack of visual smoke/fire alarms,” he said. He brought this lack of safety devices for the deaf to the attention of many public officials, and due to

his persistence his delegate sponsored House Bill 777 during the 1984 Virginia General Assembly. The bill mandates visual smoke/fire alarms in public places.

Kolash is a member of the Northern Virginia Association of the Deaf Chapter of the VAD and is on the board of directors, education committee, and works on the newsletter. Additionally, he served on the Fairfax County Commission for Physically Disabled Persons, and is a layleader at the Assembly of God Church.

Kolash works as a computer programmer analyst for the Department of the Navy. He lives with his wife, Karen, and two children in Springfield, Va.