



Area merchants have helped Miss Reedy prepare for the pageant.

## Glory Takes Backseat As Miss Deaf Virginia Seeks National Title

### She Hopes To Spotlight Deaf Issues

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Miss Deaf Virginia Charity Reedy wants to be heard.

She's not preparing for next month's Miss Deaf America pageant for the roses or the applause. Miss Reedy, who will hold the Virginia title for another year, knows that with the national title she can do more to bring hearing and deaf people closer together.

"The more I can reach, the more we can get some of the things we need and the problems can be less between the hearing and deaf," says Miss Reedy, a graduate of Broadway High School and a senior at Washington's Gallaudet College. "There has been a thick wall."

"I can use my Virginia title to help a little," she says. But with the Miss Deaf America title, she says, she can go to large national companies and get them involved in recognizing problems in the deaf community.

She talks about captioned television, saying she noticed that news reports of this year's protest at Gallaudet College in Washington included printed captions on the screen for the deaf to read. Before and after the reports, she says, the captions disappeared.

"If you can do that (for parts of programs), why can't you do it for the whole show?" she asks. She's been told that the captions also help the illiterate learn to read, Miss Reedy says.

She also would like to see private companies use telecommunication devices to assist the deaf, as state-funded agencies have done. Some 10 percent of the population is deaf, Miss Reedy says, and so the hearing community needs to be educated on how to communicate with the deaf.

Hospitals, especially, she says, should be more aware of how to communicate and where to get interpreters. "It's difficult to



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communicate, and there's a lot of miscommunication," says Miss Reedy, who speaks, but is spoken to with sign language through an interpreter.

The barrier has been especially inconvenient for Miss Reedy while approaching businesses for financial help with her wardrobe and traveling expenses for the week of pageant activities.

She has estimated that she will need about \$5,000, and has spent hours trying to communicate with paper and pencil, explaining her needs to store managers.

The process "takes a lot of time, when I could just go and shop" she says with a slightly frustrated laugh.

But she wasn't laughing before she got her first big donation, an outfit donated by Bell's store. She had already been turned down by some department stores in the area, she says, but after Bell's made the first move, "it's pouring down like rain." But she still doesn't have all she needs for the trip and other public appearances, Miss Reedy says.

The pageant, which is part of the National Association for the Deaf convention in South Carolina, includes sportswear. See DEAF, Page 14