

Missouri Council of the Blind

HISTORY

1982 - 2016



By Yvonne Michaud Schnitzler

Foreword

You are about to read the amazing story of the Missouri Council of the Blind from 1982 through 2016 in these pages. Like Missouri, MCB is unique in many ways. One unique thing about Missouri is that we are bordered by more states than any other state in the nation: Illinois, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Iowa, and Nebraska. Many of these states contain similar geographies and economies. It is notable then that the Missouri Council of the Blind is the largest and most economically viable of all the affiliates in the region at the time of this writing. In the years of this chronicle, we have grown significantly in membership. While many other states have shrunk in membership, we have retained approximately 700 members for the past decade or more. MCB achieved financial viability due in large part to its thrift store program about which you will read here, and led the way to the greatest expansion of the American Council of the Blind using the same thrift store business model. Today, MCB has several million dollars in the bank, own our own building, and have no debt. Neighboring states have perhaps tens of thousands of dollars which is commendable but not at the same level of achievement as MCB.

In these pages, you will be introduced to scores of strong builders of affiliates and of the organization as a whole. Because of the work of these individuals, we are comprised today of 23 local affiliates and four special-interest affiliates. The organization and these affiliates are responsible for a variety of programs that help the blind of the state such as Summer Camp, Adaptive Technology and Special Services, just to name the most prominent.

This second volume of the MCB history has been compiled over the past six years by MCB member Yvonne Schnitzler. Her work has been painstaking and thorough for each year comprising the history. Her research has been meticulous and relies on source material all the way. Without her, this history could not have been possible! Yvonne won the Nathaniel Johnson Award for her many contributions to MCB in 2017.

As you read this book, year by year, you are bound to be impressed at the achievements of MCB so far. Think as you read what can be done in the next twenty to thirty years to sustain the organization, allow it to grow and change over time, and continue its work of serving all blind Missourians in coming years.

***Christopher Gray, Executive Director
Missouri Council of the Blind - February 9, 2018***

1982

President Darrell Lauer opened the MFB Convention at the Holiday Inn, Joplin, hosted by the Joplin Service Club. The Ozark Association of the Blind celebrated its 25th anniversary. The Delta Area Blind in Sikeston received its charter.

During the early 80's, the thrift store partnership between the MFB and the Henderson Management Company (HMC) was showing progress. The Kansas City and St. Louis stores were doing well. The St. Louis stores averaged 40 pickup loads of merchandise per day. When asked about the beginning of the partnership between the MFB and the HMC, past President, Shirley Brokaw said that, "In the late 60s and early 70s, the Pony Express Council and the Allied Workers were receiving financial benefits from HMC's Kansas City store". The MFB partnership with the HMC began when the convention assembled in 1971 agreed to sign a contract allowing HMC to operate thrift stores using the MFB name.

To raise awareness for the White Cane, St. Louis Cardinals baseball Broadcaster Jack Buck walked blindfolded, led by United Worker's for the Blind (UWB) member Bill Benson using his cane as a guide. President Lyndon B.

Johnson proclaimed October 15 of each year as “White Cane Safety Day” on October 6, 1964. The Presidential Proclamation emphasized the significance of the use of the white cane as both a tool and as a visible symbol. President Johnson commended blind people for the growing spirit of independence and the increased determination to be self-reliant and dignified. In North America, the introduction of the white cane has been attributed to the Lion’s Clubs International. The first special White Cane Ordinance was passed in December 1930 in Peoria, Illinois.

Roy and Shirley Specht received the MFB’s most prestigious award, the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Forshee graduated from the Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) in 1913. He was a member of the UWB, the first organized group of blind people, formed in 1912. The MFB paid tribute to Forshee by naming its legislative award after him. Forshee worked tirelessly in legislation advocating for a blind pension program. Congressman Tom Curtis received the first Ellis M. Forshee Award in 1958.

Fred and Assunta Lilley received the Nathaniel Johnson Award, previously the Federationist of the Year Award, first presented in 1971 to Majella Rigdon and Eleanor Shain. The

award honors Nathaniel Johnson, a 1959 graduate of MSB, who was a gregarious well-liked individual. Johnson helped organize affiliates and brought many people into the MFB. The MFB received the Meritorious Service Award from Governor Christopher Kit Bond for outstanding contributions to the handicapped.

Missouri State parks became accessible to the visually and physically handicapped in 1982. Paved trails at Elephant Rocks State Park were wheelchair accessible. Brailled signposts along the pathway described the origin of the billion-year-old granite stones that dot the park.

1983

President from 1983-1986, Carl Mack presided over the 1983 convention held at the Ramada Inn, Sikeston. The Southeast Missouri United Blind, Delta Area Blind, and the River City Workers hosted the event. The Ramada Inn room rates were \$26 for single, \$32 for double, \$36 for triple, and \$40 for four.

A charter member of the Tower Club since 1957, Mack was active in the fight for rights for the blind. He served on the American Council of the Blind (ACB) Board for two years.

President Mack's motto was, "There is no project too large to undertake or problem to be solved".

Bill Benson received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and the Nathaniel Johnson Award went to Beverly Haase. Liesa Faye Wasson was Outstanding Young Woman of America for 1983. The program recognized young women who shared time, talents, and unselfish service to enrich the quality of American Life. Sabrina Fowler received the Blind Worker of the Year honor from the Kansas City Association for the Blind for her dedicated work and inspiring attitude.

Bill Benson produced public service announcements sponsored by the MSB Boosters. The Public Relations Committee considered using action photos of blind individuals on the MFB calendar to promote the Council.

The MFB protested the state legislature transferring one million dollars from the Blind Pension Fund to the Medicaid Program. The Equal Access to Voting Rights Act required accessible polling places for Federal elections. The House of Representatives approved a bill prohibiting feigning blindness for benefit or advantage. Feigning blindness was illegal in Missouri until an overhaul of criminal statutes ended the prohibition. Organizations for the blind supported the bill

claiming that people who feigned blindness tended to bring blind people into disrepute.

On its 25th anniversary, the MFB credit union had 252 members and assets of \$216,478.94. Its 82 loans totaled \$97,475.73 with those unpaid amounting to 4.5 percent. St. Charles County Council participated in Expo 83 - Disability Awareness Day. Employers, agency personnel, and handicapped individuals discussed jobs, fundraising, and other disability issues. Members visited Driver Education Programs, educating students on the use of the White Cane and Guide Dogs.

The MSB Boosters Fashion Show made its debut at RITE Hall with RITE members parading daytime and evening apparel. Real Independence Through Employment (RITE), organized in 1955 to supplement the work being done by existing agencies toward solving the major problem of the blind; employment.

Radio Information Service for the Blind and Handicapped (RIS) celebrated its 10th anniversary. Headquartered in the Tom Dooley Center at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, it was founded by Father Boniface Wittenbrink, OMI. The first broadcast was on the sub-carrier

signal of WMRY-FM on March 1, 1973. A special radio called a sideband receiver provided closed-circuit broadcasts of printed material to 2,100 visually impaired and handicapped individuals in the bi-state area. (By 2015, it had 200 volunteers bringing programs to 14,000 residents).

During the July 4 weekend, John Weidlich and Darrell Lauer broadcast the Veiled Prophet Parade through downtown St. Louis over RIS. The Telephone Pioneers made it possible for the duo to describe the floats to blind people, which they could hear over the radio or over headsets. The two worked to make sure that Fair St. Louis was accessible to disabled fairgoers. The first Veiled Prophet Parade, modeled on the New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration, was held in October 1878.

The National Headquarters of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) exhibited the world's first large print computer terminal on January 24, 1983. It gave partially sighted individuals access to computer systems.

1984

RITE hosted the 1984 convention held at the Rodeway Inn, St. Louis. The North County Council of the Blind received

its charter. The toll-free number for the MFB spelled “DIAL MFB” (1-800-342-5632). It stayed the same when the MFB became the MCB.

On October 22, 1984, the convention Assembly voted to change the name Missouri Federation of the Blind to the Missouri Council of the Blind. The Court amended the Charter on June 28, 1985. The name change was made to avoid confusion with organizations of the blind that used the word “Federation” in its name. According to the original Charter, the MFB organized, for benevolent purposes, on October 3, 1956.

Ed and Louise Rieman received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Nathaniel Johnson received the Nathaniel Johnson Award named in his honor.

The MFB was looking to buy a building for use as an office and one to use as a housing complex for the elderly blind. The Council purchased the Giles Street Apartment Building in St. Louis.

The MCB affiliates worked to promote public awareness. The River City Workers joined Anderson-Clark, Wholesale Distributors, Cape Girardeau, in a successful candy sales project. The Pony Express Association tended a booth benefiting the disabled at the “Ability Exposition” in St. Joseph.

The St. Louis County Council participated in a “Disability Awareness Showcase” in St. Charles displaying aids and equipment. The Delta Area Council presented a puppet show featuring the “Do and Don’t” of white canes and guide dogs. The Blind of Central Missouri displayed aids for the blind at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia and sponsored a White Cane Week Poster Contest with over 1,200 students contributing.

1985

The Pony Express Council hosted the newly named MCB 1985 Convention in St. Joseph. President Carl Mack and the Assembly welcomed MCB’s new parliamentarian Virginia Taulbert Berberick.

The Quin Cities Council of the Blind in the Hannibal area dissolved.

Suzanne Turner, Director of Family Services, commended the MCB for its many activities, noting the summer camp and scholarship programs.

Congress passed legislation allowing the Division of Family Services (DFS) to work with the Department of Transportation opening vending facilities at rest areas along the Interstate. The DFS was in the process of becoming more

accessible and setting up offices in remote areas of the State.

The banquet attendees greeted guest speaker Oral Miller with a standing ovation. Glen Carmack received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, signed into law at the end of 1985, increased the participation of disabled voters.

1986

The Blind of Central Missouri in Sedalia hosted an enthusiastic and spirited 1986 convention. The Assembly welcomed three new affiliates, the Bootheel Council of the Blind, the Lake Stockton Area Council of the Blind, and the United Workers for the Blind (UWB). The UWB had withdrawn from the MFB in 1979 because of developments concerning the legislative program.

Caroline Manakea received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Dorothy and Francis Moranville received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

President elect Shirley Brokaw from the Kansas City Area was the second President of the MCB that did not live in the St. Louis area. Victor Johnson (1966-1970) was the first. Brokaw

spoke daily with the St. Louis office.

1987

The Allied Workers for the Blind (AWB) hosted the 1987 convention held at the Ramada Inn Southeast in Kansas City. Shirley Brokaw, President 1986-1990, greeted the St. Louis Council of the Blind who received its charter. The Assembly accepted the Braille Revival League of Missouri (BRL) as a special interest affiliate.

Floyd and Joanna Cargill, members of the ACB of Illinois, organized the Braille Revival League in 1981 as a special interest group of the ACB. MCB member, Alma Murphey led the way in organizing the BRL of Missouri. The groups organized to offset the decline in Braille literacy, which worsened with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a Federal decision that mandated public schools accommodate children with disabilities. The use of tape recorders and computers made Braille obsolete. Cargill was the first President of BRL and the ACB representative to the Braille Authority of North America (BANA).

Carl Mack received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Edward Lanser received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

Blind Pension recipients did not receive a raise. Two point four million dollars was removed from the Blind Pension Fund. MCB members testified before the Appropriations Committee against this practice.

To raise funds, members from Kansas City played a beeper ball game against personalities from Channel 16 in Joplin.

1988

The 30th Annual State Convention held at the Joplin Holiday Inn and hosted by the Joplin Service Club had 210 people in attendance. President Shirley Brokaw welcomed MCB's 19th affiliate, the Library Users of Missouri (LUM), as a special interest affiliate. Their purpose was to promote reading and encourage the use of the Wolfner Library. The ACB past president, Grant Mack was the guest speaker at the convention and banquet.

Members enjoyed listening to Vernon Sigars' entertaining stories and witticisms. Sigars brought a team of oxen named Jop and Lin to the 1988 convention. He said that in the 1930s he drove a covered wagon pulled by a team of oxen from Joplin to Chicago.

Eugene (Deke) Edwards received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Edwards attended the MSB, and later taught math and coached wrestling at the school. He was the first blind wrestler inducted into the Missouri Wrestlers Hall of Fame.

Louise Reiman resigned as *The Missouri Chronicle* editor. Bill Benson was appointed acting editor.

1989

The Bootheel Council hosted the MCB Convention in Sikeston. President Shirley Brokaw welcomed the Southwest Missouri Friendship Council of the Blind as an affiliate of the MCB.

The guest speaker, Charles Hodge, Second Vice President of the ACB spoke of similarities between the struggles of other minority groups and those experienced by the blind. Hodge stressed, "We cannot be proud of the fact that we are blind, but we should certainly not feel ashamed. We can be proud of achievements we make despite our visual problems."

To alleviate MCB's dependence on thrift store income, MCB looked into the feasibility of setting up a Braille production service to provide for MCB's Braille needs.

John Evans received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Bill Longinotti received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

1990

The Tower Club hosted the 1990 MCB Convention at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in downtown St. Louis. The Bootheel Council of the Blind folded, but later merged with the Ozark Association of the Blind in Ste. Genevieve. The Bootheel Council held its first meeting February 28, 1958 in Cape Girardeau as Boot Heel Association for the Blind. The group enrolled 19 charter members and adopted their Constitution.

The convention guest speaker, David Vogel, Deputy Director of the Bureau for the Blind, talked about the Enterprise Program training individuals to operate vending machine facilities. The Assembly heard from Gary Stangler, Director of Social Services in Missouri and Senate Representative Bill Siedhoff.

Laura and Aubrey Welle received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Liesa Wasson received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. The Master of Ceremonies for the banquet was St. Louis radio personality Richard Onion Horton.

Laura Welle became the first President of the MFB in 1956. She served as Editor of *The Missouri Chronicle*. As Chair of the Education and Welfare Committee, Welle was involved with the Blind Pension. During her leadership, the Legislature stopped taking money out of the Blind Pension Fund to pay the Bureau for the Blind for Medicaid payments and services to the visually impaired. She was a past recipient of the Federationist of the Year Award.

Aubury Welle was the plant superintendent at the Lighthouse for the Blind in St. Louis. He credited Ellis Forshee for his first job in 1934 working at the Lighthouse making \$5.00 a week. After leaving the Lighthouse, he established his own business employing blind people.

Welle designed the voting machine used by the MCB and many organizations of the blind. He also designed a small bingo card easy for blind people to use.

Members worked with State Representative Gayle Chatfield seeking legislation to stop taking money out of the Blind Pension Fund to make Medicaid payments. The MCB invited members of the NFB to join them to present a united front urging passage of legislation to increase the blind pension by \$50.00 per month.

The Missouri Chronicle served 124 Braille readers, 370 large print, and 225 cassette recipients with the latter category the fastest growing.

The first Editor of *The Missouri Chronicle* was Alma Murphey and the first issue, February 1960, had 20 pages. Murphey was Editor of the *Braille Forum*, published by the ACB, from 1969 until 1971. She resigned to become President of the MFB.

President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law July 26, 1990. The ADA provisions required accessibility for the disabled in employment, transportation, and public accommodations.

The Membership voted Fox Springs Lodge as the new summer camp.

The first week of camp was held at Cobblestone Lodge in July 1973. The summer camp program, sponsored by the MCB, was made possible by the thrift store fundraiser and was available to all the blind of Missouri. MCB covers a percentage of the expense for those attending, and for a time, arranged and paid for transportation. The camp program provides a relaxing time for members, nonmembers, and guests to enjoy a vacation and make new friends. Activities are accessible to

the blind such as bocce ball, shuffleboard, washer toss, cards, bingo, and crafts. The talent show is the highlight for many and features MCB vocalists, musicians, and various talents.

The camp moved to Eaglehurst Ranch in 1979 where horseback riding was one of the many activities. In 1986, MCB contracted with Fox Springs and had 100 people attending camp in July and 75 in June. The lodge provided canoes, rafts, and tubes for floating the river.

In 1993, MCB began a relationship with Cobblestone Lodge owners Lee and Nancy Layton. Years later, Lee Layton, Jr. took over the operation of the resort. Campers savored all you can eat home cooked meals three times a day, wiener roasts, barbecues, pool parties and ice cream socials. Cobblestone guests enjoy hiking, swimming, canoeing, tubing, and river rafting as well as bingos, card games, crafts, and white elephant sales. An extended weekend camp for adults began in September 1993.

1991

The Springfield Service Club celebrated its 60th anniversary at the 1991 convention held in Springfield. Edna Freeman, President 1990-1994, greeted the Northeast

Missouri Council of the Blind, Kirksville, and the South Central Missouri Ozark Association of the Blind, West Plains, as each received its charter.

On July 9, 1991, Representative Gail Chatfield, Candy Hawkins, MCB Education and Welfare Chair, Lucille Fierce and five members witnessed Governor John Ashcroft sign House Bill 213. The law stated, "In 1992 money would no longer be taken from the Blind Pension Fund for Medicaid payments. It was a real relief," Fierce said. "We have worked hard for the passage of this Bill, and it represents quite an achievement." However, the victory was short-lived. MCB learned that the Department of Education received \$2,585,424 from the Blind Pension Fund.

Lucille Fierce received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. A long-time member of the UWB, she was dedicated to working with legislation, especially the Blind Pension, and for the employment of people with disabilities. She was involved with the Statewide Independent Living Council, The Assistive Technology Project, and the Board of Paraquad. Fierce did much to promote the ADA, the Braille Revival League, and other disability organizations in the community. Shirley Brokaw received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

The Independence City Council adopted an MCB resolution requiring Braille markings on elevators. Following a Cardinals-Mets game, Busch Stadium was the site of an exhibition beeper ball game. One thousand fans witnessed a blind team play a game using beeping balls, bats, and bases.

History of the MFB Logo by Alma Murphey

The Missouri Chronicle, 1991

June 1966 was the first print edition of *The Missouri Chronicle* that displayed the new logo designed by a sighted member, Henry Heier, a distinguished artist. Henry explained the logo in this way.

“The emblem is circular in shape about the size of a half dollar. The background is black. The letters MFB (at that time we were the Missouri Federation of the Blind) are designed in such a way as to appear slightly raised and centered within the circle. A shaft of white light from above cuts through this sphere of black, shines over and through the MFB letters, and extends to the bottom edge of the circle and beyond in an ever widening beam of white.”

Heier says, “The black circle represents blindness with all its many problems; and the slightly raised effect of the letters

indicate that the MFB opened, arose from, came into being because of these many people with like problems and a common goal. The shaft of light approaches from above the circle of darkness and is, first, a spiritual light. As it travels down through the circle, it becomes the light of knowledge, of wisdom and brotherly love and the light of hope for the future. It figuratively lights a pathway to the MFB and shines upon it as hope for the future.”

1992

The River City Workers hosted the 1992 MCB Convention held at the Holiday Inn in Cape Girardeau. The new affiliate, County Line Council of the Blind, Harrisonville, received its charter. All MCB events and services were accessible to the hearing and visually impaired.

The Council received positive publicity when President Edna Freeman and Second Vice President Ken Emmons were guests on a radio talk show in Cape Girardeau. The two provided information about the Convention, the activities of the MCB and the River City Workers. The *Southeast Missourian* ran a quarter-page article covering the event.

President Edna Freeman introduced Paul Schroeder,

Director of governmental affairs for the ACB. He spoke about the Americans with Disabilities Act and its relation to the blind and visually impaired. Dave Vogel, head of Rehabilitation Services, formerly known as the Bureau for the Blind, gave an address followed by a question and answer period.

Tom Culliton received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. He was President of the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA). He served as principal and superintendent of the MSB, and as an assistant wrestling coach. Eugene Dody received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

The MCB cooperated with Rehabilitation Services hiring recent graduates from training programs.

1993

The Southwest Missouri Friendship Council hosted the 1993 convention held at the Ramada Inn, Joplin. The Assembly accepted Adaptive Technology as a special interest affiliate. Its purpose is to further the education of the legally blind in the field of adaptive technology.

MCB Attorney, David Neuberger, explained the caller ID intervention and Laura Ofteddahl spoke about Descriptive Video Services. Kathryn Extrum described services provided

by the Audio-Reader Network, and Father Boniface Wittenbrink, OMI gave an update on eye research.

Georgetta Patterson received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Don and Beverly Shockley received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

Working with Discovery Days, MCB members provided training to tour guides and suggested ideas for making tourist attractions accessible. St. Louis Science Center and Busch Stadium were the first sites chosen for the project. MCB joined other disability groups sharing problems and working for common goals.

MCB past President, Darrell Lauer presented the MCB Board with a \$48,000 check from Southwestern Bell. The Missouri Chronicle received \$45,000 of the donation to purchase equipment. The Board authorized \$1,500 grants to affiliates and approved an expanded weekend camp in September for adults.

1994

The Pony Express Council and the Library Users hosted the 1994 convention held in St. Joseph. One of the highlights was the banquet. Members dressed in attire reminiscent of the

early days. Kathey Wheeler, chosen Queen for the evening, wore a light blue satin Southern Belle ball gown. Lace adorned the bodice and the gigot sleeves. Kathey wore blue silk slippers and carried a blue silk reticule.

Leroy Saunders, President of the ACB, spoke about concerns for education, healthcare, computer graphics, information super-highway, and reinventing government. The Assembly heard the history of the Buffalo Soldiers from Sergeant Melvin Norwood.

Any legally blind resident of Missouri, age 13 through 17, may apply for Junior Membership in an affiliate or special interest group of the MCB. Junior members may speak at MCB meetings and serve on committees. The Assembly approved that each affiliate, special interest group, junior member, and member-at-large pay ten dollars annual dues plus one dollar per member to be eligible to vote. Members and members-at-Large, 18 years of age and over, have the right to vote, speak at MCB conventions, serve on committees and hold office. MCB limits membership to one affiliate excluding special interest groups.

Father Boniface Wittenbrink, OMI accepted the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Carolyn Anderson received the Nathaniel

Johnson Award. Anderson was active in Affirmative Action, the RSB Mentor training programs, and MCB public forums.

The Assembly approved Board meetings held via conference call but vetoed polling Board members by mail or phone. The group voted to have a full-service banquet at conventions rather than buffet style.

1995

Ken Emmons, President 1994-1998 thanked the St. Charles County Council for hosting the 1995 MCB Convention at the Holiday Inn, St. Peters. Marie Kelley received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Roy and Edna Freeman received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

MCB sold the Giles Apartment building for \$117,000. It needed several major repairs costing \$80,000 to \$100,000. The Board listed the building through a real estate agent for \$130,000 with a base of \$75,000.

MCB legislative concerns included a link to Social Security earnings, access to the information super-highway, the Randolph-Shepard Act, disabled children education, and tactile identification for paper money. MCB collaborated with representatives from RSB and NFB on the mentor program.

The MCB Attorney David Newburger counseled a student attending the University of Missouri, Kansas City, facing discrimination because of her blindness.

The Scholarship Committee awarded nine \$1,500 scholarships limited to full-time students; one in memory of Alma Murphey.

1996

The UWB hosted the MCB's 40th Anniversary Convention held at the Holiday Inn Southwest Viking Convention Center in St. Louis. In 1940, UWB members were present and helped organize the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The goal was to combine organizations of the blind in each state to form a state federation. The UWB members were a dominant force in organizing the MFB.

Hotels chosen to host MCB conventions must comply with the ADA accessibility requirements.

The MCB honored Zada Albee, with the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Jenny Echus with the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Zada was a strong advocate for blind children learning to read and write Braille.

MCB Attorney Newburger sought to resolve issues with

RSB's equal treatment of consumer organizations. In 1996, RSB continued to send clients to residential training centers oriented to the philosophy of the NFB, specifically, the Denver and Iowa Training Centers. Discussions with Sally Howard, RSB Deputy Director, failed to resolve the issue. The Board authorized legal action against RSB to stop negotiations of contracts with the Centers operated by the NFB. The RSB conducted an internal investigation, and the MCB agreed to drop the suit pending the outcome. The NFB sued RSB claiming that its new policies deprived the staff of freedom of speech. The suit sought a preliminary and a permanent injunction. The Judge denied the injunction to stop the new policies while the suit was heard. In 1997, RSB canceled its contract with the Colorado Center resolving most of the MCB's concerns with RSB.

The MCB and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) sponsored a Helen Keller Exhibit in St. Louis commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the AFB.

1997

The River City Workers hosted the MCB Convention in Cape Girardeau. President Ken Emmons welcomed Action

Council of the Blind as a new affiliate and Gateway Council of Citizens with Low Vision as a special interest group. The ACB President Paul Edwards spoke to the assembly. Speaker Sally Howard, RSB Deputy Director, reported an increase in employment of blind persons.

Ida Scotti received the Ellis M. Forshee Award, “In recognition of a lifetime of achievements, services provided to the blind community in the state of Missouri and dedication to improving the lives of all people”. Harvey House received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. President Emmons accepted an award from the Lighthouse for the Blind on behalf of the MCB.

The MCB formed a Student Development Committee to research services working for and with blind students. The concern was the lack of training in mobility and Braille skills. The Council looked for ways to alleviate the situation. The RSB Prison Alternative Formatting Program moved forward with the transcribing agenda with a \$5,000 budget. The Board approved reasonable reimbursement for accommodations, meals, and travel expenses for Board representatives.

1998

Edna Freeman, MCB President 1998–2000, thanked the

Southwest Missouri Friendship Council for hosting the 1998 convention held at the Ramada Inn, Joplin.

Senator Harold Caskey and Representative Bill Boucher received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Gene Weathers received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

An amendment to House Bill 1088 provided utility bills for the blind and visually impaired in Braille or large print.

Affiliates received a \$1,500 grant if updated membership lists were in the office by February 1. Each affiliate having members attending the ACB Convention received an additional \$1,000.

The Board approved an annual Outstanding Service Award presented to a sighted person at the MCB Convention.

1999

An appointed committee hosted the 1999 convention held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

The guest speaker, Carl Augusto, Executive Director of the American Foundation for the Blind, cited eight challenges facing the blind community. The number one problem was insufficient collaborative efforts and too much dissension among organizations. Other issues were specialized services,

inadequate funding, high unemployment, underemployment of blind people, and lack of access to information through technology.

Teddi Emmons accepted the Ellis M. Forshee Award presented to her and MCB past President Ken Emmons, who passed away in September 1999. Michael Keller received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Ron Theel, the Division Manager for Schwann's Quality Frozen Food Company, received the Alma Murphey Braille Award for making Schwann catalogs available in Braille.

The Missouri Guide Dog Users (MGDU) incorporated March 15, 1999. The Guide Dog Users became an affiliate of the ACB in 1973. The first guide dog school was the Seeing Eye cofounded in 1929 by Morris Frank in Nashville, Tennessee with financial backing from Dorothy Harrison Eustis. It modeled a European training school where more than 5,000 dogs trained after World War II for veterans blinded by mustard gas.

John Weidlich served as Editor of *The Missouri Chronicle* from March 1999 until September 31, 2006.

The Board approved a change for the MCB logo. Jerry Annunzio proposed a slick white cover with navy blue printing.

The MCB Credit Union changed from State-controlled to Federal-controlled share insurance in 1999. It granted 53 loans during the year.

President Freeman appointed Linda Gerken Chair of the Youth Services Program. It purchased needed items for children and provided them the opportunity to attend camp.

Relations between the MCB and RSB improved. Individuals were able to apply for job training and RSB services in one location with the 101 one-stop shops. MCB encouraged member involvement with the transportation agency. The MCB participated in working with the Mentor Program.

2000

The Queen City Council hosted the MCB Convention in Branson. President Freeman welcomed a new affiliate, InnerVisions, Inc., based in St. Louis. The West Central Workers of the Blind dissolved because of inactivity.

The guest speaker Charles Crawford, Executive Director of ACB, voiced concerns for young people who are blind. He said, "We have produced in our mainstream a generation of blind individuals that have no idea of who they are. These are blind young people who have not been exposed to other blind

people and who think that all the battles have been fought and won. They feel there are no more important issues so feel blind organizations are no longer relevant. We need to bridge this gap by showing newly blinded people the reality of how our organizations can change the future for blind people.” He added, “together we can change things. Alone we are the victims of things.”

Crawford spoke of descriptive video saying, “If we don’t have the civil rights and the access to the information that everybody else has, we cannot possibly contribute in the same ways or understand the issues in the same ways that they do.” Crawford said, “disability groups need to respect each other enough to care about each other and to make choices that will meet each other’s needs.”

The RSB made 278 employment closures last year. Seventy blind Missourians were operating independent businesses through the vending program. The Missouri Assistive Technology Project offered free adaptive equipment providing the blind and disabled a pathway to the Internet. A telephone surcharge funded the program.

Chris Gray, President of the BRL and the ACB official representative to BANA 1989-1999, explained that the Unified

Braille Code is an attempt to combine the various Braille Codes, such as literary Braille and Nemeth Code into one single Braille Code. Gray characterized the proposal as disastrous because of the changes made in the literary Braille Code. He said, “Braille readers need a more unified Braille Code, but not one that totally alters the Codes that are in use today.”

Country music singer, Barbara Fairchild, entertained the Council during the hospitality dinner. The highlight was a duet of her hit song “Teddy Bear” accompanied by MCB’s “teddy bear” Bill Burris.

Diane Golden and staff, Missouri Adaptive Technology Project, received the Ellis M. Forshee Award, “in recognition for their work providing disabled people in Missouri with assistance in learning and acquiring the technology needed to live independently.” John Weidlich received the Nathaniel Johnson Award, “in appreciation for his many years of dedicated service for the Missouri Council of the Blind by enriching the lives of blind persons utilizing radio, newsletters, and personal contact throughout the disability community.” Don and Beverly Shockley received the Alma Murphey Braille Award from the BRL, “in recognition for their countless hours of

providing Braille for individuals and the MCB office”.

On the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by President George Bush, many MCB members participated in the Spirit of ADA Torch Relay. Some carried the torch in the Veiled Prophet Parade through downtown St. Louis. The goal was to inform, educate, and reach out to people with disabilities. The relay challenged Americans to renew the pledge the country made to eliminate all barriers that limit opportunities available to people with disabilities. The flame, lit by President George Bush in Houston, merged with the flame from the Martin Luther King Jr. torch in Atlanta. From there, it started a twenty-four-city trip ending at the United Nations Building in New York City.

On July 27, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to require cable and television to provide verbal descriptions of programs during pauses in dialog. Major markets provided descriptive video in April 2002. The MCB, ACB, and other advocates worked 15 years promoting accessible TV programming.

In 2000, the National Convention Assembly elected MCB member Jerry Annunzio to the ACB Board of Directors. Alma Murphey, one of the founders of the ACB, served as Secretary

and First Vice President in the early 60's. (It was the highest office within ACB held by a woman at that time).

2001

The Springfield Service Club hosted the 2001 convention. It was the Club's 70th anniversary. Chip Hailey, President 2001-2004 greeted guest speaker Terry Pacheco, from the ACB, who updated the Assembly on the FCC's ruling concerning DVS and explained the Rehabilitation Administration decision regarding sheltered workshop noncompetitive placements for rehab purposes.

John Weidlich, Bill Burriss, Marti Watson, Dennis Miller, President Hailey, and Parliamentarian Virginia Berberick revised the MCB Constitution. When presented to the convention Assembly, Bill Benson, the Resolutions Chair, read the document section by section, and John Weidlich, the Bylaws Chair, commented on each section and then the item was open for discussion with debate limited to 20 minutes. Opposing views created controversy with some issues. There were those who wanted to allow sighted members elected to the MCB Board, but it failed. There was a debate on removing the section prohibiting members of MCB from belonging to

NFB. That section remained in the bylaws by a vote of 113 to 44. The Assembly adopted the amended Constitution with cheers and applause. The new document will be called Bylaws.

The MCB held a caucus rather than breakfast at the ACB convention. *The Missouri Chronicle* became available by e-mail.

Jim Thuser received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Leroy Welch received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

The Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) officially chartered on February 27, 1851, celebrated its 150th anniversary. The MSB was the 12th school for the blind in the United States; the first was the Perkins School in Boston founded in the 1820's. MSB started with three students and was the first American school to introduce Braille to its students in 1860.

The MCB did not have a signed contract with HMC. The old contract had expired in January. The HMC requested to exempt two stores in St. Louis that were deeply in debt. There was not a motion or vote, but August 14, 2001, Minutes read that the Board agreed to allow the contract with the exemption of these two stores.

The MCB received a sizable bequest with the donor's

stipulation that the money be used to purchase a building for the MCB. In August 2001, a suitable building was located to use as the MCB headquarters. The site offered bus service and other amenities. The listing price was \$299,000. The Board offered \$260,000 with a deposit of \$1,000. The MCB moved into the building at 5453 Chippewa in South St. Louis on January 31, 2002. On September 27, 2002, at least 60 people from throughout the state attended the open house, dedication, and ribbon-cutting ceremony. Speaking to the gathering, President Hailey remarked, "This is a special occasion in the history of the Council. This is the home of the Missouri Council of the Blind. This is where our heart is. For many years, MCB wanted a facility that we could be proud of, where we could provide services and programs to meet the needs of all our members." Representatives, from KETC Channel 24 and Radio Information Service, interviewed members and guests.

Affiliates and committees use the MCB building for meetings and social activities. It serves as a central location for members to meet for bus transportation to functions.

2002

The Delta Area Blind and the Southeast Missouri United Blind hosted the 2002 MCB Convention in Sikeston. Bob Smith, Board member of the Blinded Veterans Association, honored MCB Veterans. The veterans introduced themselves and spoke with pride about their time of service. Each received a commemorative American eagle from The Spirit of Freedom Collection and a cowboy hat donated by the American Legion. Those veterans honored with a standing ovation were Joe Binder, Ed Bowen, Bill Burris, John Connor, Wayne Dawes, Marshall Eggert, Bill Godwin, Paul Guzman, Harry Hickman, Theodore Jeffers, Richard Kolasch, Larry Parker, Harold Poiry, Marvin Shelton, Ed Sibley and Ronald Zirkle.

Allan Beaty, Board Director of ACB, challenged the Assembly to become involved in their communities, and to be available to advise any group attempting to provide services for the blind. A speaker from RSB explained the Ticket to Work Program, a social security plan designed to provide individuals receiving SSDI or SSI incentive to pursue a job and still maintain benefits. Tory Brus gave a brief history of Alphapointe, the largest employer of people who are blind in Missouri.

The amendments to allow sighted members on the Finance Committee and the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee passed. Members at large may apply for an ACB convention grant if their membership was accepted before February 1.

Dennis Miller received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Marie Thompson the Nathaniel Johnson Award. The Council presented a plaque expressing appreciation to the library staff at Wolfner Library. Father Boniface (Boni) Wittenbrink, received the Agrama Harmony Gold and Light Award presented at the Retinitis Pigmentosa International (RPI) 27th Annual Vision Awards in Los Angeles. The award honored Father's commitment to the spirit of volunteerism and vision in his work for the blind.

Dennis Miller, Chair of the Education and Welfare Committee, met with Secretary of State Matt Blunt to discuss the Help America Vote Act. The Bill provided for an accessible voting machine with speech output and text enlargement capabilities at polling places.

The ACB filed suit against the Secretary of the Treasury and the Treasurer of the United States to require a change in the design of U.S. paper money. The ACB has long advocated

changes in the currency that would allow people who are blind to distinguish between bills by touch.

The MCB donated \$5,000 to the ACB, \$3000 for the general fund, \$1,000 to the student scholarship program and \$1000 for an ACB Lifetime Membership for an MCB member. MCB allotted \$20,000 for grants to those attending the ACB Convention.

2003

The 2003 MCB Convention opened with 300 voices singing a rousing rendition of "Goin' to Kansas City" at the Adam's Mark Hotel. The Allied Workers for the Blind hosted the event assisted by the Progressive Council. The fun began with the Thursday afternoon Board meeting lasting until two o'clock Friday morning.

Talking Book Narrator Jill Fox spoke and read to the Assembly and to the Library Users at their meeting. Many enjoyed the opportunity to visit with her. Ward Bond demonstrated the Talking Signs Technology used in numerous cities. Beth Jordan from the Helen Keller National Center also spoke to the Assembly about the signs of hearing loss and ideas of how to cope.

The MCB created the “Darrell Lauer Outstanding Leadership Award” in memory of Past President Darrell Lauer. The Award will be presented when appropriate to a member manifesting outstanding leadership. Lauer, President of the MFB from 1978 until 1982, was known for his dedication and advocacy for the disabled, poor and elderly. While employed at Southwestern Bell Corporation, he helped create Braille billing, arranged a national training program for certified disability leaders for ADA, and assisted in an initiative project with 20 major corporations creating computer related internships for disabled individuals leading to permanent employment. Lauer served on the Board of Directors of numerous organizations whose missions focused on aging, disability rights, and independent living for the disabled. The recipient of many awards, he was the first person to receive the National ADA Medal. Lauer had a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and a Master’s Degree in Social Work.

At the 2003 National Convention, the ACB honored Ida Scotti with the Distinguished Service Award, “In recognition of her life-long accomplishments onstage and in the community. Her work is a shining example to all.” MCB presented Bill Haygood with the Ellis M. Forshee Award, “For the positive

impact his leadership and organized efforts have had on the social, economic, and educational concerns of persons with disabilities”.

Letha Dangerfield received the Nathaniel Johnson Award, “In appreciation for many years of dedicated service”. Active since the 1940’s, Letha was a member of the Joplin Service Club, the Sendee Club, and on the Board of the Joplin Association for the Blind. She was supportive to those in need offering assistance and encouragement.

Letha was a ham radio operator and knew Morse code. She received many awards, including the Certificate of Merit Award given for her years of service to the National Traffic System. She appreciated poetry and published a book of poems.

Nate Brown, a blind professional musician, entertained with his saxophone, voice, and taped accompaniment for the hospitality evening.

Adaptive Technology approved 19 grants, and the Health Benefits program filled 29 requests. The Scholarship Committee awarded 14 scholarships. Special Services accepted 24 applications. In its eleventh year, 193 people attended summer camp at Cobblestone Lodge. Wolfner

Library claimed the first magazine available in the new “Web-Braille” program.

The Progressive Council was responsible for the installation of the first audible traffic signal in Missouri located at the intersection of Ash and Highway 24, in Kansas City. St. Louis’ first audible traffic signal was at South Kirkwood Road and Woodbine Avenues. MCB invested 60 percent of its assets in the stock market and 40 percent fixed income. The account was up 12 percent. The Assembly voted to acquire more than one bid for determining convention sites.

2004

The Agape Council and Tower Club hosted the 2004 Convention at the Millennium Hotel in downtown St. Louis. The Northeast Council of the Blind affiliate folded because they did not have enough members.

The guest speaker, Madelyn Buzzard, a talking book narrator for 21 years, has recorded 850 books. She said one of her biggest challenges was pronouncing the names of drugs in a medical book. A monitor follows along to stop her when she makes a mistake. Later, a proofreader listens to the recording for errors or noises.

Wolfner Library added a professionally designed recording studio, where volunteers record books about Missouri. In 2004, there were 9,741 adults, and 533 young readers registered with the library. There were 900 subscribers to *The Missouri Chronicle* with most people using the large print format, followed by tape, Braille, and e-mail.

Two amendments adopted stated that proposed amendments and resolutions be sent by the office, to affiliate presidents, members at large, and to any members who request them in their preferred format. Although not part of the amendment, the proposed amendments will be included in all editions of *The Missouri Chronicle*.

Beverly Armstrong received the Ellis M. Forshee Award, "In appreciation of her outstanding leadership advocating legislative change for the Blind of Missouri". Maryan Harrison received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Maryan was a charter member of RITE and the ACB. She was a guide dog user for over 50 years. Roy and Edna Freeman accepted the Darrell Lauer Outstanding Leadership Award.

Cingular Wireless introduced a new cellular application "Talks" available on the Nokia 6620. It is the first cell phone in the U.S. that responds to spoken commands with voice

recognition technology. The software was created in partnership with ScanSoft Inc.

The UWB sold its apartment building at 2628 Hope in Maplewood. The UWB purchased the eight-unit apartment building in 1974. It was the UWB headquarters and served as a meeting place for the Board. The building had no connection with the MCB apartments on Giles.

At a news conference, prior to the October 2004 convention Board meeting, MCB announced that it had filed a lawsuit along with four Missourians, against the State of Missouri. The suit asked the state to account for its use of Blind Pension Fund money and to pay the money owed people who are blind. Thomas E. Kennedy Law Firm filed the suit along with attorneys from the St. Louis University Law Clinic. The litigation involved the Department of Social Services (DSS), Family Support Division (FSD). The suit claimed the Department has taken money from the state Blind Pension Fund for more than a decade, for purposes other than those permitted by state law. The State disagreed with the claims. State officials negotiated with advocates for the blind to try to resolve the dispute.

The Blind Pension Fund is financed entirely by state

funds. It was in 1921 that the statute was passed to implement the fund established in the Missouri Constitution of 1875, which called for a tax levy of up to three cents per \$100 of state property tax to be collected to serve the blind. The tax pays for increases in the monthly pension checks. Under state law, when the taxes paid into the fund increase from one year to the next, officials must increase the monthly pension checks by at least 75 percent of that growth, the suit says.

The MCB Board set up a Committee to work with the attorneys and authorized the Committee to make emergency decisions.

2005

The Progressive Council hosted the 2005 convention at the Clarion Sports Complex in Kansas City. The MCB provided signers for the hearing impaired. The Action Council of the Blind dissolved for lack of members.

Kathey Wheeler, President 2004-2007, introduced guest speaker Mitch Pomerantz, ACB second vice-president. He updated the Council on legislation and activities of the ACB. Susan Alt from Social Security explained the changes in Medicare and Medicaid. Dr. Steven Silverstein spoke of new

techniques in treatments of eye diseases.

The Assembly approved the following amendments. To qualify as a candidate for elected office, an individual must be a member of MCB for two years and have attended one convention. The MCB funds shall be deposited in a bank or banks decided upon by the President and the Treasurer, with approval of the Board. They shall designate the purpose of each account. The Treasurer and all persons handling money shall be bonded.

Fred Gissoni received the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Fred provides information on the APH Website's "Fred Head", a source of tips and techniques for and by blind individuals. Phyllis Lovett received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

James Hollins received approval from the Board to initiate a plan to entice young people age 18 to 32 to membership in the MCB. He teamed with Youth Services Chair Linda Gerken to establish the First Timers program, which paid the young person's way to convention. The youth enjoyed a hospitality night with lots of food and games. The Group sponsored a sock hop and filled five trash bags full of socks to donate to the MSB. The following year, the youth collected sweat suits for the school.

2006

The MCB celebrated its 50th Annual Convention at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. The Blind of Central Missouri planned a variety of activities. The special interest affiliate, Randolph-Sheppard Vendors, dissolved due to lack of interest.

ACB member Brian Charlson was the guest speaker. Ray Komman spoke about the 13 Guide Dog Schools in the U.S. He recommended Users investigate before making a decision because while there are many similarities, there are some definite differences in philosophy. Nolan Crabb, the producer of technology tutorials, introduced Bookport, an innovative device used for listening to digitally recorded books. Dr. Richard Smith, Director Wolfner Library, said the estimated cost to change from cassette to digital was \$150 million nationally. Audiocassette production ended in 2011.

At the 2006 ACB National Convention held in Jacksonville, Florida, the Assembly adopted an amendment stating, "Neither currently affiliated organizations nor those seeking affiliation with this organization shall exclude members based solely on their membership in another consumer organization of the blind". To comply with the ACB Constitution and remain an

affiliate in good standing, the MCB needed to remove the section in its bylaws that prohibited its members from belonging to the NFB. It was in 1971 that the MFB Constitution was amended prohibiting its members' concurrent membership in the MFB and the NFB. (Forty-two years later, at the 2013 MCB Convention, the Council finally received the necessary votes to allow MCB members to belong to the NFB).

Representative Rachel Storch received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Celita White was the recipient of the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Chip Hailey received the Darrell Lauer Outstanding Leadership Award.

President Wheeler appointed Patricia Schonlau to Chair the 401 Task Force Committee. In 1999, the Missouri Legislature created, in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), a task force to study and improve educational and vocational achievements of blind and visually impaired students.

Wolfner Library celebrated the 75th Anniversary of its partnership with the National Library Service (NLS) established in 1931. The NLS distributed books to blind and handicapped people and included phonograph recordings (talking books) in 1934 and cassette books in 1971. It took four years to phase

out cassette books and players for the digitally recorded books on computer flash cards at a cost of about \$150 million nationally.

Wolfner Library was serving 10,556 individuals and 1,627 institutions statewide: the youngest age 1 and the oldest 106. It served three patrons for over 50 years. Wolfner's collection comprised 47,707 cassette books, 16,471 Braille books, 536 descriptive videos, and 1,502 large print books totaling 66,296 titles. When the Saint Louis Public Library formed a special department for service to the blind, its collection had 360 Braille volumes with a circulation under 100.

In Legislative action, the House appropriated \$140,000 for two new Blind Skills Specialists. The Blind and visually impaired welcomed the opportunity to vote independently using the accessible voting machines.

MCB investments ending September 2006 were \$5,506,322.76. The Budget and Finance Committee's proposed budget for the fiscal year 2007 projected total income at \$652,999.08 and total expenses of \$513,287.00.

2007

The Joplin Service Club hosted the 2007 MCB Convention

at the Holiday Inn, Joplin. President Kathey Wheeler resigned in April 2007 for health reasons. First Vice President Phyllis Lovett assumed the President's duties. The convention Assembly elected Phyllis Lovett as President 2007-2008. Guest speaker, Brenda Dillon, ACB Second Vice President, versed the assembly on programs and legislative action of the ACB.

An amendment to the membership section changed the word "meetings" to read "conventions". This change allowed members to speak from the floor at conventions. Visiting members would no longer be able to speak at Board meetings without advanced permission from the President. That member could only speak if a Board member requested permission and the Board approve. A vote to remove the section from the MCB Bylaws prohibiting MCB members from membership from the NFB failed.

The St. Louis University Law Clinic and Thomas E. Kennedy Law Firm shared the Ellis M. Forshee Award. Both were instrumental in the MCB Blind Pension Fund lawsuit. Ted Jeffers received the Nathaniel Johnson Award and Kathey Wheeler received the Darrell Lauer Outstanding Leadership Award. For this year only, each recipient received a sterling

silver lapel pin the size of a quarter with a brushed silver background instead of a plaque.

Executive Director and Chair of the Blind Pension Committee, Beverly Armstrong, and members Linda Gerken, and Nancy Lynn testified before Judge Patricia Joyce on behalf of the MCB. In her declaration, Armstrong stated that, “Rehab Services started taking money out of the Blind Pension Fund in the mid 1990’s. Rehab Services received 80 percent of funding from Federal money and 20 percent from the State. The concern was the 20 percent the State had been taking out of the Blind Pension Fund.”

Armstrong said that, “The State offered MCB a \$1.7 million settlement before the start of the trial. We said no. MCB witness, Mike Alderson, an expert on economics and pensions, reported that ‘By his calculation there was about \$24 million dollars there.’” Armstrong said, “She authorized Attorney Deborah Greider to request \$7 million dollars divided among the blind pension recipients receiving the pension for the last three years.” Armstrong stated, “We will settle for less but certainly not \$1.7 million. It would be more like \$5 million.”

On October 24, 2007, Judge Patricia Joyce’s decision on the Blind Pension lawsuit ruled in favor of the Department of

Social Services on all counts. After a discussion with the attorneys on the advisability of appealing the Judge's decision, the Board voted to move forward with an appeal.

In legislation action, MCB lobbied for the Textbook Revision Act, which would allow blind students to receive textbooks on time and in an accessible format. MCB requested extra appropriations for a Blindness Skills Specialist. The Senate enacted legislation for comprehensive vision exams for children entering kindergarten and first grade.

Bill Benson, Editor of *The Missouri Chronicle*, took a leave of absence for health reasons. The Board approved Janelle Edwards as the Assistant Editor. The MCB banned playing bingo games or games of chance on MCB property to comply with Missouri Law. The MCB spent \$7,300 to aid members and other legally blind of Missouri who incurred added expense because of two ice storms. The MCB changed its list serve from the ACB to Look Media, a server in Kansas City. MCB was part-sponsor for the 2007 Children's Vision Summit and participated in the Power Up Conference.

The Missouri Council of the Blind suffered through a period of dissension; the membership divided on numerous issues. A Board meeting held December 1, 2007, to clarify

rumors and bring harmony to the Council, ended in a bickering session with arguments and accusations.

An unfortunate incident deepened the chasm. Rather than allowing the MCB Board to decide what action would be taken, a few took it upon themselves to notify the Attorney General's office without Board approval. This resulted in turmoil and resentment within the membership and led to the scrutiny of the MCB by the Missouri State Attorney General's Office.

2008

The St. Charles County Council of the Blind hosted the MCB convention in St. Peters. The Assembly recognized Beau Barnhart, Look Media, for providing audio and video Internet streaming of the convention.

According to MCB Treasurer, Danny Wheeler, "MCB's investment accounts lost about nine percent of their value during the fiscal year ending August 31, 2008. Then the banking crisis hit. Based on the broad-based Standard and Poor 500 index, stocks lost an additional 26 percent. MCB's investment portfolio is still substantial since a portion is in fixed income investments rather than stocks. "However", Wheeler warned, "with no income, MCB's value is not growing, and

MCB will have to draw on the savings for operating expenses”. The MCB gave the Guide Dog Users special interest affiliate the designated \$126,000.00 donation from the Alice Gahn Trust Fund.

Since the Board approved all affiliates have representation on the Board, the three Director positions were redundant. The amendment to eliminate the bylaw failed.

The MCB honored Attorney Carson Elliff from Springfield with the Ellis M. Forshee Award in recognition of his volunteer hours working with the thrift stores. Eldon Cox, Convention Chair for four years, received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Linda Gerken and James Hollins accepted the Darrell Lauer Outstanding Leadership Award for their work with Youth Services. Yvonne Schnitzler received the James H. Veale Humanitarian Award from the Ziegler Foundation.

Dr. Richard Smith, Director, Wolfner Library demonstrated the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) system at the MCB convention. BARD is a free library service of recorded and Braille books and magazines for those who have visual or physical disabilities. The NLS in cooperation with a network of regional and sub regional libraries provide the service.

The Kids Club, led by Youth Services Chair Linda Gerken,

provides games and entertainment for the younger children while their parents attend convention sessions.

Presidential candidates Denny Huff and Gregg Hollins received an equal number of votes on two trips to the ballot boxes. Denny Huff won the election by three votes.

In September 2008, the Attorney General requested copies of MCB's audits, articles of incorporation, bylaws, amendments, and all policies relating to the financial and internal governance of the organization. These legal difficulties made it necessary to hire a legal advisor. The Board approved Attorney Deborah Greider as MCB's General Counsel to represent the MCB in complying with the Attorney General's mandates. It damaged the Council financially as the MCB's only source of income at that time was from donations. The Council was using its savings to pay bills and fund programs. (The Attorney General closed the file releasing MCB from scrutiny in July 2009).

In legislation, ACB and affiliates worked on the accessible and usable phone and television services for people with disabilities.

The MCB offered additional scholarships to honor Lucille Fierce and Alma Murphey. The MCB joined the Coalition of

Organizations Accessible Technology (COAT). Adaptive Technology grants totaled \$55,877.00.

Many MCB members stopped by the U. S. Treasury and the auto industry booths at the ACB Convention in Louisville. The representatives answered questions and sought ideas and suggestions from attendees on how to identify money, and on how to protect the blind from the danger presented by silent cars.

2009

The Allied Workers and the Progressive Council welcomed the MCB membership and guests to the 53rd Annual Convention at the Hilton Garden Inn, Independence.

President Denny Huff introduced guest speakers Marty Exline, Missouri Assistant Technology Director, Ardis Bazyn, ACB Membership Chair and Mark Laird, RSB. The motivational speaker, Phil Ledgerwood, spoke at the banquet.

The amendment to allow MCB members to become members of NFB failed. The Assembly approved MCB membership dues of \$10.00.

Representative Jeff Grisamore received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Linda Hailey the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

President Denny Huff initiated the Member of the Month Program to recognize MCB members that do not receive much recognition working in the background assisting the blind and visually impaired, or have made a difference in their community.

The ACB worked with the Disability Rights Office at the FCC to formulate a report that detailed complaints by the disability community. The report gave the blind community data to utilize when working with Congress and industry on issues about telecommunications.

Even though the Budget and Finance Committee cut expenses, the MCB still operated in a deficit. The Board reduced the grants to affiliates, and special interest groups from \$1,000 to \$500 and assistance to attend the ACB convention decreased from \$45,000 to \$20,000. In October, the Board hired Jennifer Parker as Executive Director and Lowell Newsome as Field Marketing Representative. The MGDU staffed a booth at the Pet Expo in St. Charles where nearly ten thousand people participated. MCB sponsored a Braille essay contest. The winner received a Perkins commemorative Louis Braille Brailier.

The Board hired Kathleen Lee to assist in the development of a Strategic Plan. The Plan incorporated many of MCB's visions and aspirations and provided a guide that offered flexibility for the Council to adapt to future challenges and opportunities.

After the Circuit Court of Cole County determined the class had established the elements of accounting, Judge Patricia Joyce appointed Special Master Dr. James LePage, PhD., CPA. Dr. LePage determined the data available, the elements of damages, and judgment concerning the Blind Pension Fund.

Several MCB members joined the ACB convention tour of the Disney Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida. Disney sought input from the blind on the Disney-patented technology, which delivered an audio description of the visual images of inside attractions for guest who are blind or have low vision. The group found the technology favorable and provided constructive feedback.

With the loss of financial support from the thrift stores, the Council faced serious funding issues. The MCB requested HMC to pay the \$295,763.64 it owed to the Council. The HMC acknowledged an amount due MCB of \$142,000. In June

2009, instead of pursuing litigation, the MCB agreed to a settlement with the HMC for \$96,000.00 for arrearages with payments made over a four-year period. Although the MCB did not receive the compensation it was seeking, the HMC released the MCB from the clause in the contract that restricted the Council from opening a thrift store or contracting with a third party management company. Free from that stipulation, the MCB explored the feasibility of starting its own business.

President Huff appointed a Thrift Store Committee with Michael Keller as Chair along with Bill Johnson and Shirlene Pickle. With the advice of an attorney, the Committee investigated the pros and cons of MCB taking on a thrift store project by researching the potential return, and associated risks. Legal counsel recommended that a separate charitable corporation operate the thrift store, not MCB.

In October 2009, the Board voted to incorporate the separate charitable corporation, Encore Thrift Store. With the help of a professional advisor, the Thrift Store Committee developed and formulated a business plan. It approved the Encore Bylaws and on November 19, 2009, Encore Thrift Stores was incorporated as a not for profit corporation in the

State of Missouri.

In January 2010, the Board approved that “MCB donate \$425,000 to establish a thrift store for fundraising purposes, \$287,000 paid now, and the balance donated in September 2010.” The Board voted that “MCB authorize, permit, license, and allow Encore Thrift Store, Inc., to use the name Missouri Council of the Blind in the operation of Encore’s thrift store or stores.” In March 2010, the Encore Board drafted and adopted corporate policies for the IRS and enlisted a CPA to file for 501(C) (3) status.

However, at a Board meeting in April 2010, Attorney Deborah Greider, and CPA, James Sanders voiced concerns with the Board’s decision to continue with the Encore Thrift Store Corporation’s involvement with MCB. After much deliberation, the Board voted to rescind previous Board decisions and end the Encore Thrift Store initiative. The Encore Thrift Store Board returned the balance of funds donated by the MCB.

2010

The Blind of Central Missouri did a superb job hosting the MCB’s 54th Convention at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson

City. The jammed-packed event provided an array of guest speakers, fun activities, and entertainment. The Capital City Council of the Blind received its Charter. The Social Outreach Council of the Blind (SOC) sought membership as a special interest affiliate in the MCB but withdrew its application when the Assembly voted for an age limit of 18 to correspond with the MCB Bylaws. SOC's Bylaws stated an age limit of 21 because of the social nature of the group.

The Assembly heard from the ACB President, Mitch Pomerantz, who spoke on legislative action and the latest activities of the ACB. He moderated a breakout session on Advocacy for the Blind. Mark Laird, RSB, and Deputy Director of RSB, Michael St. Julien, talked about Rehab Services. Ray Campbell, Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind, spoke on the Monthly Monetary Support Program (MMS). He was the guest speaker at the Adaptive Technology special interest group session. Marti Exline gave an update on legislative issues.

The BRL sponsored a Braille reading competition offering a cash prize and initiated an Annual Luncheon to honor Alma Murphey.

The Assembly disqualified eight controversial amendments and one resolution because most were signed

and submitted via e-mail. The MCB Bylaws states amendments and resolutions must be in print and Braille.

Marty Exline received the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Charles Johnson received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

During his second term, President Huff promised to spend more time promoting MCB and working with blind and disability related organizations. He initiated the MCB Connect, Phone Cast, and free educational programs to allow members to stay involved and up to date on the latest news concerning the MCB.

In February 2010, President Huff addressed the ACB Executive Board to explain why MCB has not complied with the ACB Constitution on allowing its members to belong to the National Federation of the Blind. President Huff told the Board that a proposed amendment to remove the section in the MCB bylaws that did not comply with the ACB bylaw had been voted on and defeated many times. Numerous MCB members continued to harbor hard feelings stemming from controversies at the time of the split from NFB. The ACB Board did not penalize the MCB at this time. (It did penalize the MCB ten percent, two and one-half votes in 2012).

Different reasons contributed to the split from the NFB. At

the 1961 NFB Convention held at the Muehlback Hotel in Kansas City, those who could no longer agree with the philosophy of the NFB walked out of the convention and crossed the street to the Aladdin Hotel. They could no longer accept “. . . an undemocratic process by which a small group could keep control forever by eliminating anyone at any time for the least dissent or criticism”. Eighty-three persons representing 21 states and the District of Columbia attended the meetings where the American Council of the Blind, structured to democratic principles was born. There were 59 charter members recorded. (Information and quotes taken from People of Vision, A History of the American Council of the Blind, by James J. and Marjorie L. Megivern).

In 2010, a report developed by Special Master Dr. James LePage was approved and adopted by the Circuit Court as part of its Finding of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Judgment against the State of Missouri. It was determined that there was underpayment to the class of eligible blind persons from 1992 through 2009. It was determined that the State owed the class approximately \$19 million plus prejudgment of approximately 11 million. The Court adopted Dr. LePage’s report and findings as the Court’s judgment against the State of Missouri. The

Attorney General asked the Court to reconsider and reverse its decision regarding the statute of limitations and other issues. The Court declined to do so. The Defendants filed an appeal.

At the beginning of the Blind Pension litigation, recipients were not receiving the money due them each year because the money was miscalculated. Now the State must follow the statutory procedure for determining the Blind Pension payments. The pensions increase as long as the property taxes increase. If the property taxes decrease, the pension may decrease or remain the same. The fight continues over the damages blind recipients should receive for those years of miscalculations.

After discussions with Executive Director Jennifer Parker and President Huff, Field Marketing Representative Lowell Newsom followed up on suggestions regarding an entrepreneurial grant from the Scandalaris Center at Washington University. One plan was a white cane sales/distribution and repair business. Newsom met with the agent from China responsible for contacting two manufacturers of canes on behalf of the MCB. The two discussed further possibilities when the representative from China visited family in St. Louis.

The St. Louis Council produced 6,000 flyers, which displayed a message for drivers to pause for blind pedestrians using a white cane or guide dog. The Board said yes to a new logo. Executive Director, Jennifer Parker resigned in November. The MCB offered several informational and educational programs for members at the MCB office conference room.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. The legislation required modern communication technologies to be accessible to individuals with vision or hearing loss.

2011

The MCB Board coordinated the activities of the 2011 convention at the Holiday Inn, Joplin. President Denny Huff welcomed the Route 66 Council of the Blind, from Lebanon. The Lake Stockton Council celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The keynote speaker, Chris Gray, immediate past president of the ACB, spoke on legislation. Mark Laird, Deputy Director for RSB, asked the Assembly for feedback on what RSB services members valued the most, the barriers assessing those services, and what direction members would

like RSB to take.

Stephanie Brady received the Nathaniel Johnson Award.

MCB members spoke with Legislators in Washington, D.C. promoting access to information on prescription drug labels, Medicare coverage for low vision devices, and an amendment of the Internal Revenue Code to allow charitable donations of qualified vehicles. On the State level, MCB members discussed Parental Rights Legislation, a bill that modifies provisions relating to termination of parental rights for parents with disabilities, Property Assessment Limit for the Elderly and Disabled, and Professional Therapy Dogs. The bill adds professional therapy dog to the definition of “Service dog” relating to crimes against these animals or crimes of impersonating a disabled individual.

On January 4, 2011, President Obama signed The Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act. The law required an alert sound on electric or hybrid vehicles as a safety measure for the blind and other pedestrians. Governor Jeremiah (Jay) Nixon proclaimed October 14 Guide Dog Day in Missouri.

The FCC established the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program. The plan provided valuable information that the FCC used for the development and implementation of

an efficient deaf-blind equipment distribution program.

To encourage membership in the organization, MCB members will receive full benefits of MCB programs while non-members receive one-half of the benefits. James Hollins was approved Editor of *The Missouri Chronicle*. The Board terminated the position of Director of Development, formerly titled, Field Marketing Director.

On May 21, an F5 tornado devastated Joplin. MCB members lost homes or suffered severe damage. The Board approved \$25,000 to the relief effort with the stipulation that the money be used to help MCB members and legally blind in the area. The Independent Living Center in Joplin handled the distribution of funds.

The MCB hosted the first Midwest Leadership Conference. Fifty representatives from seven states attended the event held in St. Louis. Guest speakers were Dan and Brenda Dillon, Dr. Ron Milliman and Chris Gray.

In 2011, the Western Appeals Court in Kansas City ruled in favor of MCB on four of the five points appealed by the state. The Court ruled against the statute of limitations. Instead of going back to 1992 for back pay, the Court ruled that the statute of limitations allow five years from the filing of the lawsuit.

On August 22, 2011, the Board allocated \$75,000 and authorized the Thrift Store Committee to take the necessary legal action to close the Kansas City and Springfield thrift store and open MCB's own thrift store. The Board approved William Hawkins as Thrift Store Chair and Michael Keller, Eldon Cox, and Jerry Annunzio as committee members. The Board voted to cancel the contract with HMC immediately and take appropriate legal action on their assets. On September 29, 2011, MCB's contract with the HMC ended. After weeks of failed negotiations with HMC to purchase the Kearney Street building, the Council moved to a new location. (The HMC continued to run the Kearney Street thrift store under the signage of the "New Image Thrift Store" between December 2011 and September 6, 2013).

The New Image Thrift Store, the first under the direct management of the MCB, opened its doors on December 8, 2011 in a 17,000 square foot old movie theater, located at 2713 North Kansas Expressway, Springfield, Missouri. The proceeds from the store will help fund the MCB's support programs for the blind. In 2010, the Council spent \$256,000 on various forms of financial assistance including the youth camp, scholarships, technology equipment, emergency assistance,

and other services to assist the visually impaired of the State.

Chris Gray, President of the ACB from 2001-2007, accepted the offer for the position of Executive Director of the MCB. Gray said, "MCB is one of the truly great affiliates of the ACB as well as an exemplary member of the organized blind movement of America. The MCB can be proud of its history, for its standing today in the community, and the many successes achieved for blind residents of Missouri." Gray, from San Francisco, California, attended Washington State University majoring in political science and received a master's degree in public administration at the University of Washington. Mr. Gray played a role in compiling the history of the ACB "People of Vision" by James J. and Marjorie L. Megivern published in 2003. Chris Gray started his job as the MCB Executive Director mid-January 2012.

2012

The Blind of Central Missouri hosted the 56th Annual Convention at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. President Denny Huff welcomed two new affiliates, the Act Now! Council of the Blind in Kansas City and the Tiger Council in Columbia. The Progressive Council of the Blind dissolved.

The UWB, one of the oldest blind consumer organizations, celebrated its 100th Anniversary in May.

Dan and Brenda Dillon, members of the Tennessee Council of the ACB, addressed the Assembly. Dr. Richard Smith, Director, Wolfner Library reported that 72 percent of patrons have no Internet access. RSB Deputy Director Michael St. Julien said that more consumers became employed this year than last year. Senator Jim Lembke and Charlie Brennan, talk show hosts at KMOX radio, spoke at the banquet. Communication's Director for the Governor Sam Murphey and his mother Ann Murphey warmed the audience with stories about their mother and grandmother charter member of the MFB Alma Murphey.

The Braille Revival League of Missouri changed its name to the Missouri Braille Revival League (BRL). The BRL adopted new bylaws. The first MCB convention auction grossed over \$4,000.00.

Senators Jim Lemke and Jason Crowell were co-recipients of the Ellis M. Forshee Award for working to restore Medicaid for blind pension recipients. Charlie Brennan, KMOX radio, received the MCB Media Award presented for the first time. Brennan invited Legislators and MCB members as

special guests on his talk show to publicize the position MCB defended when the General Assembly tried to take away medical coverage for blind pension recipients. William and Tracey Hawkins received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Chip Hailey received the Darrell M. Lauer Award for leadership promoting MCB's mission of meeting the needs of people who are blind. The MCB presented Governor Jay Nixon with a special appreciation award.

Walmart announced a pilot program, working with En-Vision America, to make available talking prescription containers for blind customers.

The MCB submitted an amendment to the ACB Constitution and Bylaws committee in 2012 to strike that part of ACB's Constitution that places the Missouri Council of the Blind out of compliance with the ACB Constitution. The amendment, voted on at the National Convention, failed. The MCB argument in rescinding that section stated, "MCB does not believe the National affiliate has the authority to dictate to a State affiliate as to whom they can or cannot have as members."

On November 3, 2012 the State and Plaintiff submitted figures to Judge Patricia Joyce for what the Class should

receive for damages. The State calculated about \$75,000 owed, and MCB's estimate was \$19 million. The MCB maintained that the monthly amount owed must be based on the amount of money the blind should have received had the pension not been miscalculated from 1994 onward. The State argued that a five year statute of limitations should apply and that damages should be determined going back to 2001 five years before the filing of the suit. At the end of November, the Court of Appeals agreed with MCB's assertions regarding how damages should be calculated. It was a huge victory for MCB.

On February 29, 2012, news media covered MCB's grand opening celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the New Image Thrift Store located on North Kansas Expressway in Springfield. Several members and dignitaries attended the event.

In February, the Missouri House of Representatives budget proposal removed \$28 million dollars from the Medicaid program for the blind and transferred the money to higher education. It caused a political upheaval. MCB members joined rallies and lobbied legislators. Since the 1960's, the \$28 million program has covered about 2,858 blind Missouri residents whose individual annual income of more than \$9,495 would

otherwise be too high for them to qualify for Medicaid. Chris Gray, the Executive Director of the MCB, said, “reducing the coverage would push some people into nursing homes and increase visits to hospital emergency rooms. Their income puts them just above the Medicaid threshold.”

Governor Jay Nixon met with 100 blind Missourians as well as leaders from the MCB and the NFB. He spoke strongly to restore Medicaid cuts for needy blind residents. Governor Nixon stressed, “These cuts, though made to support higher education, were not requested by higher education”. He emphasized, “No Missouri citizen should have to make the kinds of choices that blind people would be forced to make if these medical cuts are enacted. For decades, Missouri has provided this efficient and compassionate program that offers essential health care services for blind Missourians with very limited financial means,” Nixon said. “I urge the General Assembly to send me a budget that maintains full funding for this vital lifeline”.

Executive Director Chris Gray, and President Denny Huff, expertly represented the MCB on the Charlie Brennan talk show on KMOX radio in St. Louis. Each voiced concerns about the elimination of medical coverage and its effects on the

recipients of the blind pension.

A specified \$10,000 donation paid for a radio ad aired in Kansas City and Jefferson City bringing attention to the attempt by Missouri lawmakers to stop the Medicaid benefits. (Efforts were rewarded when lawmakers restored the Medicaid cuts).

Members of the MCB and NFB requested Senators support for instruction of Braille for blind students. Despite the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) stating that Braille will be the primary reading media for blind students, there are still many blind students not receiving Braille instructions.

St. Charles County Council held its first White Cane Awareness Day with a walk, music, and guide dog demonstrations. The Springfield Service Club along with seven affiliates celebrated its 20th annual White Cane Walk with city and state officials taking part. The St. Louis Firing Squad hosted its first National Beeper Ball Regional Tournament in St. Louis. The Board retained Nichols, Stopp, and VanHoy LLC and suspended the services of James Sanders, CPA, and Rickhoff and Associates. The Labor Day sale at the New Image Thrift Store was the highest one-day sales event with

522 customers. The Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library started loaning Braille games.

The MCB Website attracted 34,590 visitors in 2012. This includes special interest list servers for ATI with 114 subscribers, the Chat list with 79 subscribers, Guide Dog Users with 42 subscribers, and Missouri-I with 229 subscribers.

2013

The Tower Club and RITE hosted the 57th annual convention at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel in St. Louis. Two hundred-two registered members and 17 guests attended the 2013 fun-filled event.

Patricia Schonlau, President 2012–2014, introduced the guest speaker, Michael Hingson. He talked about his book *Thunderdog* and the events of his escape from the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 when he and his guide dog walked down 78 flights of stairs.

The Assembly approved the amendment stating that the President appoints the Education and Welfare Committee Chair rather than the committee. The amendment that special interest affiliates have representation on the Board failed.

After 42 years, the Assembly finally voted to remove the

section in the Bylaws stating, “MCB prohibits its members from belonging to the National Federation of the Blind.” Removing that section brought MCB into compliance with the ACB Constitution. The amendment failed numerous times in the past. The MCB used electronic voting machines at convention for the first time.

Harold Poiry received the Nathaniel Johnson Award and Brenda Gardner received the Darrell M. Lauer Award. Kim Charlson was elected the 11th president and the first woman President of the ACB at the ACB National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

The thrift store at 1445 Kearney Street, Springfield, owned by the HMC closed on September 6, 2013. The MCB was awarded a \$950,000 settlement against the Henderson Management Company.

Jeff La Montia, who is legally blind, was appointed General Manager of the New Image Thrift Store. The store employs disabled salaried workers and volunteers. La Montia said that, “Community outreach is a major focus of the thrift store developing and expanding a mentoring program enabling the thrift store to give back to the community. The project provides useful tools to those unable to join the workforce,

teaching responsibility, communication, team building, and efficient work skills. The mentoring program has been critical in the success of the thrift store and the participants”.

MCB gained 98 new members with 648 affiliate members and 109 members-at-large. MCB had 186 individuals attend Cobblestone camp. Youth services helped 35 children sending five to camp. The convention auction raised \$3,875.

The MCB fought an uphill battle to expand Medicaid to 138 percent of the poverty level. The increase would have allowed Missouri to take full advantage of the enhanced Federal funding available pursuant to the Affordable Care Act. An estimated 260,000 to 300,000 Missourians would have gained access to health coverage. The Medicaid expansion bill (HB 700), was passed by the House of Representatives, and called for massive cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. MCB took immediate action and fought to protect Medicare and Medicaid. Executive Director Chris Gray and Past President Denny Huff provided testimony to the Missouri House Interim Committee on Medicaid Transformation. The testimony stressed that Medicaid expansion should have no effect on the blind community. If adopted, it would exempt the aged, blind, and disabled from managed care. The bill did not pass.

The Medicare program was authorized in part because the 1950 Census found that only one in eight seniors had health insurance. The insurance companies denied health coverage to seniors because they considered seniors too high a risk. The Medicare program provided a necessary health safety net for seniors, children, the poor, and individuals with disabilities. The budget drafted would have changed Medicare from a program that provided guaranteed health care coverage to seniors, to a voucher program. A voucher program would force each senior to purchase private health insurance or a form of traditional Medicare with much higher out-of-pocket costs. The Federal Government paid over 65 percent of Medicaid through matching funds for Missouri.

Other bills passed protected small businesses that stimulate jobs for the blind. The Ticket to Work Health Assurance Program allowed disabled Missourians to work without losing Medicaid or MO HealthNet coverage.

The MCB set up an online computer system that tracked Missouri legislation and governmental affairs. The office installed a telephone system, which included the New Image Thrift Store in Springfield. The MCB invested in Foundation Search America for fundraising. It had the largest database of

foundations and tools to organize grant writing and fundraising.

The Board approved HR Solutions, offered by Paychex Company. HR Solutions handled MCB's payroll system including the thrift store and helped with human resource matters, employee training, and keeping MCB in compliance with state employee laws. The chair of the thrift store said the store has up to three human resource matters per week. It is the Board's decision on how to handle a Human Resource matter concerning the New Image Thrift Store.

The Agape Council held its third Annual Black History Program. The Delta Area held a weeklong fundraising event at the county fair promoting its affiliate and MCB. MGDU published a brochure and planned for its first Guide Dog Conference. The Low Vision Committee provided information on resources for the blind and visually impaired. The Allied Workers adopted five students with visual challenges from a Missouri State School for the Multiple-Handicapped. Several affiliates provided food, gifts, and clothing to needy families for Christmas.

2014

The Springfield Service Club and Route 66 Council hosted

the 2014 MCB Convention convened at the Doubletree Hotel in Springfield. The guest speaker Kim Charlson, president of the ACB, spoke about “Making a Place for All: Having Pride in what we do.” Jennifer Tidwell explained Missouri HealthNet.

An amendment changed the Education and Welfare Committee name to Education and Advocacy Committee.

The MCB recognized Leroy Welch with the Ellis M. Forshee Award “for outstanding service to the Blind community of Missouri and the Missouri Council of the Blind”. Virgil McCoy received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. The ACB honored Chris Gray, Executive Director of the MCB and Past President of the ACB with the James R. Olsen Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Gray said, “Advancing the rights, opportunities, and overall status of the blind is a particular passion of mine and something for which I strive each day.” The ACB presented a Public Relations Award to the MCB for its achievements working with Missouri Legislators.

The Assembly elected Denny Huff president as President Schonlau did not seek reelection. President Huff plans to establish a better rapport among blind related organizations, develop programs to attract younger members into the Council, and develop a long-range plan of MCB’s vision for the future.

Members demonstrated adaptive technology at the Capitol. It provided legislators with a better understanding of the cost for blind individuals to be independent.

The State budget restored funding for Missouri Medicaid coverage dropped during the 2005 legislative session. The funding covers physical, occupational, and speech therapy plus limited dental benefits for adults.

MCB representatives talked with Legislators in Washington encouraging Medicare coverage of any device with a lens. Medicare had stopped its coverage of lenses in 2008. In addition, they asked for equal access to study materials for people with visual disabilities.

Governor Nixon signed legislation exempting those recipients who have no chance of vision improvement from the five-year eye examination.

In February, the Henderson Management Company filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy with the intent, not to pay the \$950,000.00 owed to MCB. The Judge found the bankruptcy plea to be fraudulent and did not accept it. At a hearing held on June 23, the trustee started dispersing the HMC's assets.

At the request of Executive Director Chris Gray, the MCB accepted membership in the Alliance for Braille Literacy

movement, working to assure literacy for tactile readers through standardization of Braille, and/or tactile graphics. In November 2012, the United States members of BANA voted to adopt Unified English Braille (UEB) to replace English Braille American Edition in the U.S. The planning involved more than 30 organizations as well as individual consumers, teachers, and transcribers. Gray attended open Forums and participated in round-table discussions with the BANA Board. BANA worked on production of Braille training materials in UEB, and training educators to teach the Code. Devices and software will incorporate UEB. “January 4, 2016, is the chosen date the United States will implement UEB,” Gray said. “On this date, UEB, Nemeth, Music, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will be the official Code for use in the United States.”

This is the first major change to the Braille Code since the 1930s. The new Code uses the same six-dot cell pattern but uses different spacing rules, drops some contractions, and allows for translating a wider array of symbols made with modern technology in mind.

Executive Director Chris Gray assisted Missouri recipients of the Blind Pension and Supplemental Aid to the Blind removed wrongfully from the Blind Pension. They were

experiencing many problems. After consulting with the President and the Education and Advocacy Chair, Gray wrote a letter to Valerie Howard, Deputy Director, Family Support Division (FSD), Division of Social Services (DSS) calling attention to the unreasonable actions and demands made to blind pension recipients undergoing their annual review. The department's response did not meet the MCB's expectations. A follow-up letter by Gray explained in detail why the changes were necessary. He asked that reasonable requests be made to recipients during the annual evaluation, relaxation of the time requirement, and modifying the need for the five-year eye examination for those diagnosed as totally blind. The trio continued to meet with the FSD slowly making progress.

The FSD implemented major changes. Blind Pension and Supplemental Aid to the Blind Program Services consolidated into a single office in Warrenton, Missouri handling aid applications and re-evaluations. Color and design changes to mailings made for easier recognition by recipients. One-on-one contact was re-established. There was one phone number and the individual's call transferred to a specialist in the area of concern. Notices were issued 60 days prior to the due date for information the recipient must submit to FSD.

The MCB labored to place Blind Pension/SSDI recipients into Medicare Part D, which would safeguard the ability of Missouri HealthNet to continue paying benefits for blind Missouri HealthNet recipients. By June 2015, over half of the blind people affected had made the transition.

The DSS planned to reduce blind pension benefits by \$33.00. Under Governor Nixon's direction, that did not happen.

The MGDU held an America's Guide Dog Conference in St. Louis. Governor Nixon proclaimed March 23-30, 2014, Guide Dog Week in Missouri. The MCB hosted the Midwest Leadership Conference, which brought together several states for leadership training.

In December 2014, the President appointed Michael Keller Chair of the Thrift Store Committee replacing William Hawkins.

President Huff recorded a 30-second public service announcement about the MCB to distribute to radio stations across the state. The MCB was working on a five-minute promotional video to use for fundraisers and to encourage membership. The Treasury Department, Bureau of Engraving and Printing distributed free talking money identifiers.

2015

The Holiday Inn Country Club Plaza in Kansas City was the site of the MCB's 59th Annual Convention. The Allied Workers hosted the event with contributions from the Act Now! Council. President Huff welcomed a new affiliate the St. Louis Northern Lights Council of the Blind.

Paul Mathews received the Nathaniel Johnson Award. Mr. Mathews was a charter member of the LUM and a reader advisor for the blind at Wolfner Library. MCB received the Prestigious State Independent Living Award for their advocacy work presented by the Independent Living Center (ILC) in Joplin. President Denny Huff accepted the Shine the Light Award presented during the ILC awards ceremony. The attendees viewed the MCB promotional video to be given to prospective members and donors. It was designed to use at Power Up, Legislative Days, rallies, and other activities.

Zyshaun Cross Williams won \$500 in the BRL sponsored Alma Murphey essay contest.

Governor Jay Nixon signed the Missouri "Achieving a Better Life Experience" accounts (ABLE). The program allows a person with disabilities, or their family, to open a tax-exempt savings account for paying expenses related to the disability.

The fund will not count against Medicaid eligibility and other services.

Executive Director Chris Gray spoke at the Disability Rights Education Day in Jefferson City. Over 500 disabled Missourians gathered to hear from leaders in the disabled movement and representatives from Missouri's House and Senate. Gray and President Denny Huff represent the MCB on the Missouri Health Partnership Committee. The organizations network to learn about and help each other.

The Board moved MCB accounts from Wells Fargo to Raymond James so that MCB Broker, Jim Pohlman, would have more flexibility and control in making decisions. The Board moved the MCB checking account from US Bank to BMO Harris because of fees and services.

The MCB hosted a Low Vision Technology Day at the office. In November, the Board hired Natalie Higgins as MCB's General Counsel.

On November 1, the Missouri Council of the Blind New Image Thrift Store obtained 501(c) (3) status officially becoming MCB Thrift Stores, Inc. The store is completely independent of the MCB. The new bylaws protect MCB from lawsuits against the thrift store and against the thrift store

dropping MCB to support someone else.

In November 2015, the State's calculation of benefits for nearly 3,000 people was too low, and the State needed to come up with an additional 19 million. In December 2015, the Court of Appeals Western District refused the appeal by the State of Missouri. The Court of Appeals will not refer any part of the decision for consideration by the State Supreme Court in the recalculations of damages to blind pension recipients. That refusal placed the burden of appealing to the State Supreme Court back in the hands of the State.

Youth Services hosted the first Teen Time banquet held at the MCB convention. The youth learned about safety from a self-defense instructor. The event was a success. Plans are to hold a youth convention in 2016.

As a fundraiser, there were 1,000 legal postage stamps inscribed with the MCB logo put into circulation.

There were many events held across the State to increase awareness of the White Cane. The Delta Area Blind joined SEMO and several leaders from the community for White Cane Safety Day. Local TV stations covered the Joplin Service Club Safety Day event. The St. Charles Council took part in a Pioneer Harvest on the Riverfront in St. Charles. They helped

prepare a meal cooked over a wood fire and churned butter as the pioneers did in the 1700's.

The Agape Council held a chili supper and karaoke to fund a scholarship. The affiliate acquired donations and sponsorships for EPWORTH, an organization that helps runaway youth. Agape Council and the St. Louis Firing Squad beep baseball team sponsored the first Missouri Camp Abilities, a one-week sports camp for blind and visually impaired children. The group held a Gospel fest, and led a statewide White Cane Walk at Union Station in St. Louis.

2016

The Tower Club of the Blind and the UWB hosted the MCB 60th Anniversary Convention with special activities at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel in St. Louis. In greeting the Assembly, President Denny Huff said, "It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of the sixtieth anniversary of the Missouri Council of the Blind. This organization has meant so much too many people over the years. . . I have had the privilege of seeing how our committees interact with the legally blind of Missouri. I am proud of MCB and what we stand for." Executive Director Chris Gray recognized and credited the membership.

“It is because of all of you that MCB will continue soaring to new heights for decades to come!”

For the first time, the MCB sought sponsorship for the convention. The theme was birds of Missouri with the Eastern Bluebird the most expensive sponsorship followed by the Horned Owl, Snow Goose, and Wood Duck.

Stephanie Brady of the Joplin Independent Living Center presented training sessions on the financial, governing, and fundraising responsibilities of the Board. Janet Matthews from TrailNet spoke on pedestrian safety. Other speakers included Brenda Whitlock, Missouri Assistive Technology, Deana Tucker Dothage from MoRides, and Community Leaders Assisting the Insured of Missouri (CLAIM).

Hospitality guests sang and danced at the jam session led by Northern Lights Council founder Steve Schnelle.

The banquet gala featured a strolling violinist. Charlie Brennen, Host of KMOX Radio, and Provocateur on KETC’s Donnybrook was the Master of Ceremonies. Mr. Brennen spoke of his 28 years in St. Louis.

The Honorable Judge Richard B. Teitelman, Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court was the Keynote Speaker. Diagnosed as legally blind at age 13, Judge Teitelman obtained a law

degree from Washington University in St. Louis. He worked two years as a solo practitioner before joining Legal Services of Eastern Missouri in 1975. For 23 years, Judge Teitelman assisted citizens having trouble with hiring lawyers for civil matters. He received The Missouri Bar “President’s Award” and the American Bar Association’s “Make a Difference Award.” Governor Mel Carnahan appointed Judge Teitelman to the Missouri Court of Appeals, and Governor Bob Holden appointed him to the Supreme Court of Missouri. He was the first legally blind Judge to serve on the court.

Mary Hale won the Ellis M. Forshee Award and Carl Franklin the Nathaniel Johnson Award. President Huff presented Mind’s Eye Radio with An Excellence in Media Award and Call-A-Ride with the Community Service Award.

The Assembly elected Denny Huff president.

In April 2016, MCB was victorious in its litigation against the Department of Social Services. The Missouri Supreme Court declined to hear the request by the Office of the Attorney General contesting the Missouri Court of Appeals ruling for MCB. The Circuit Court will determine the calculation and reimbursement of blind pension amounts owed recipients of the blind pension from 2001-2006. It will be 2017 before the

money for the payments can be appropriated in the state budget.

The Board agreed to the Budget and Finance Committee proposals that the ACB grant will remain at 20,000 but individuals will be limited to receiving \$500 each, an increase in the rate attendees pay for summer camp, and doing away with the in-person Board meetings in April. It approved affiliates pay expenses for an invited staff member, committee chair, or Board member with the exception of the President. The Council eliminated donations except for Power-Up, Mind's Eye Radio, and Kansas Audio Reading Service with a line item budget of \$2,000 each.

The MCB discontinued the caucus held at the ACB convention and invited candidates running for office to a caucus conference call prior to convention.

The Resource and Development Committee discussed several fundraising ideas and events including a giving circle campaign, a ball drop, a Riviera cruise, and sponsorship for the 2016 MCB convention.

The MCB donated \$1,000 to sponsor team members, The Missouri Mules, for the ACB Brenda Dillon Walk-A-Thon at the National convention. MCB paid expenses for three members to

attend a weeklong educational fundraising seminar. MCB joined other affiliates of the ACB in a fundraiser billed as the World's Largest Pizza Party. The office of the Secretary of State created a fully accessible web page for the blind and visually impaired. Members demonstrated adaptive technology at the Missouri State Capitol.

When St. Charles and St. Louis Counties decided not to allow the use of accessible machines in early voting, The MCB and the Law Clinic of St. Louis University entered a motion in Federal court to create a restraining order against the action. It was a victory for the MCB as the Election Board released a resolution affirming that they would allow use of the talking voting machines in early voting locations and at all polling places for municipal and Federal elections.

MCB and concerned participants called upon the U. S. Congress to enact the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act. The act insures that students with sensory disabilities are identified, evaluated, and that their specialized needs are met. April 14th is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher.

Governor Jeremiah (Jay) Nixon signed the SSP Bill on June 14. The law provides training and compensation for

support service providers (SSPs) for individuals who are DeafBlind; the term used to identify a person who has a combination of hearing and vision loss.

Discredited for several years by ratings of the Better Business Bureau, MCB finally made the list of non-profits for the federal campaign.

The Board added standard procedure for an appeal process for those denied services to one of MCB's programs. The health benefits guidelines will only pay benefits to those employed and have lost finances due to an illness or injury. The MCB updated the employee handbook to comply with changes in the law. New affiliates will continue to receive a \$500 grant for three years. The Tiger Council attended the Columbia Earth Day Festival in Columbia. Members spoke to visitors about the works and programs of the MCB and Tiger Council and collected donations to send children to Camp Ability.

MCB Presidents

Missouri Federation of the Blind

- 1956 – Laura Welle
- 1957 – Alma Murphey
- 1962 – Arthur Stewart
- 1966 – Victor Johnson
- 1970 – Alma Murphey
- 1974 – Fred Lilley
- 1978 – Darrell Laurer
- 1982 – Carl Mack

Missouri Council of the Blind

- 1984 – Carl Mack
- 1986 – Shirley Brokaw
- 1990 – Edna Freeman
- 1994 – Ken Emmons
- 1998 – Edna Freeman
- 2000 – Chip Hailey
- 2004 – Kathey Wheeler
- 2006 – Phyllis Lovett
- 2008 – Denny Huff
- 2012 – Patti Schonlau
- 2014 – Denny Huff

History Timeline

- 1851** Missouri School for the Blind (MSB), organized by Eli William Whelan, opened in 1851 as “The Missouri Institution for the Education of the Blind. By legislative decree, the name changed in 1897 to the Missouri School for the Blind.
- 1860** MSB was the first school officially to use Braille in the United States.
- 1907** Electa Matilda Ziegler supported Walter G. Holmes in creating the Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind.
- 1908** The National Society for Prevention of Blindness resulted from studies conducted by Dr. F. Park Lewis.
- 1912** United Workers for the Blind (UWB) formally organized and received its charter in 1914.
- 1920** Dr. William A. Hadley started the Hadley School for the Blind offering correspondence courses for the blind.
- 1921** Blind Pension program was established.
American Foundation for the Blind formed.
- 1924** St. Louis Public Library started a department for service to the blind. It had 360 Braille Volumes with less than 100 subscribers.

- 1927** First guide dog school in the U.S., Seeing Eye Association, Nashville, Tennessee, organized by Morris Franks with help from Dorothy Harrison Eustises. Francis B. Ierardi, President of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, produces the first Braille weekly magazine.
- 1930** First White Cane Ordinance sponsored by the Peoria, Illinois Lions Club.
- 1931** Program created that became the National Library Service for the Blind and Handicapped (NLS).
- 1935** President Franklin Roosevelt signed executive order to transfer \$211,500 to the Library of Congress for construction of Talking Book machines. The original Social Security Act was signed into law on August 14.
- 1939** Allied Workers for the Blind of Kansas City organized.
- 1940** National Federation of the Blind founded at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The UWB in St. Louis was one of the seven organizations involved in its organization.
- 1945** Missouri Bureau for the Blind created.
- 1946** NFB Convention held in St. Louis for the first time.

- 1955** Real Independence Through Employment (RITE) incorporated.
- 1956** The Missouri Federation of the Blind (MFB) organized at a spring convention in Joplin and chartered October 3. Prior to that time, there was a group of clubs known as The Missouri Council of the Blind. Those groups were Allied Workers for the Blind, Kansas City; the Joplin Service Club, Joplin; The Springfield Service Club, Springfield; and the UWB, St. Louis. Those clubs, along with two newly organized groups, the Pony Express Association, St. Joseph; and Real Independence Through Employment (RITE), St. Louis made up the MFB. The MFB became the Missouri Council of the Blind in 1984 to avoid confusion with organizations using the word "Federation".
- 1957** One million dollars transferred from the Blind Pension Fund to the Public School Fund. The move was permitted by Article 38, Section 3 of the Missouri Constitution.
- Ozark Association of the Blind organized November 1957, chartered October, 1958.
- 1958** MFB accepted as affiliates: Ozark Association of the

Blind, Ste. Genevieve; Hannibal Association of the Blind, Hannibal; The Bootheel Association of the Blind, Cape Girardeau; and the Tower Club, St. Louis.

First Ellis M. Forshee Award (the most prestigious award of the MCB) presented to Congressman Tom Curtis for working for the cause of the Missouri Aid to the Blind program. The award named for Ellis M. Forshee, a member of UWB active in legislation.

First Protestant Church Service held at convention.

MFB Credit Union organized encouraged by Durward K. McDaniel.

- 1959** The Randolph County Association of the Blind, Higbee and the Guild of Fulton received charters. A few years later, the Guild of Fulton became the Mid-Missouri Association of the Blind, headquartered in Jefferson City.
- 1960** *The Missouri Chronicle* first published in February. Alma Murphey was the Editor. The first edition was 20 Braille pages.
- 1961** The MFB overwhelmingly rejected the conditions for reinstatement in the NFB, and thereby, refused to expel Alma Murphey and David Krause.

- 1962** Legislation passed to preserve Missouri two-part Aid to the Blind program without losing Federal matching funds.
ACB convention held in St. Louis
- 1963** First MFB affiliate President's Luncheon held at convention.
MFB adopted first foster child through the Foster Parents' Plan.
- 1970** MFB greeting card mailing discontinued.
- 1971** MFB signed first thrift store contract with Henderson Management Company allowing HMC to use MFB's name.
MFB Constitution amended stated that persons could not belong to the Missouri Federation and the National Federation simultaneously.
First Federationist of the Year Award changed to Nathaniel Johnson Award in 1984.
First Catholic Mass held at a convention site.
- 1973** Radio Information Service for the Blind and Handicapped (RIS) was founded by Rev. Boniface Wittenbrink OMI on the grounds of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Ill. The first broadcast was March 1.

MFB applied for affiliation with the American Council of the Blind.

MFB first Summer Camp in July.

Rehabilitation Act mandated public schools accommodate children with disabilities causing a decline in Braille Literacy.

1974 MFB became an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind August 3 at the 13th Annual Convention in Chicago, Illinois.

The UWB purchased an apartment building. The building sold in 2004.

Federal Supplemental Security Income program, (SSI) began January 1.

Bertie Lee became *The Chronicle* editor.

1975 The Blind of Central Missouri, previously the Mid-Missouri Association of the Blind, and the St. Charles County Federation of the Blind, Inc., each received their charter at the convention in St. Joseph.

1976 Capital Area Association of the Blind, Jefferson City, became a charter member.

The "Vote Getter" voting boxes, invented by Aubrey

Welle, first used during the convention. Last used at the 2013 convention.

Distinguished Service Award created.

1977 Southeast Missouri United Blind Club became an MFB affiliate.

1978 West Central Workers of the Blind chartered.

1979 River City Association of the Blind and West Central Missouri Association of the Blind received charters at the MFB convention in Hannibal.

The UWB withdrew from the Federation in early 1979 because of developments surrounding the legislative program. UWB rejoined in 1986.

Grants became available to attend ACB conventions.

Health Benefits Program started.

1980 MFB office set up in December at 2683 Big Bend Blvd., St. Louis. Since 1962, headquarters was at the home of the Murphey family.

1981 The River City Workers of the Blind organized.

National Braille Revival League founded as special interest group of ACB.

St. Louis site of ACB convention

Automated Teller Machines (ATM's) approved for Texas banks. Braille instructions were added in 1983.

1982 Missouri State Parks made accessible for the handicapped.

Delta Area Blind, Inc. chartered.

MFB received Meritorious Service Award for outstanding contributions to the handicapped from Governor Christopher Bond.

Each MFB affiliate gained representation on the Board.

International Braille Conference

1983 Legislators voted to remove one million dollars from the Blind Pension Fund into the Medicaid Program.

Equal Access to Voting Rights Act required accessible polling places for Federal elections.

The world's first large print computer terminal exhibited January 24, 1983 at the National Headquarters of the American Foundation for the Blind. Its starting price was \$3,000-\$4,000.

1984 MFB changed name to the Missouri Council of the Blind to avoid confusion with organizations using the word "Federation".

The St. Charles Federation of the Blind, Inc. changed its name to St. Charles Council of the Blind.

MCB toll-free telephone number “dial MFB” 1-800-342-5632.

North County Council of the Blind received its charter.

1985 Quin City Council of the Blind Hannibal dissolved.

The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act.

1986 Joplin Service Club of the Blind incorporated.

UWB rejoined the Missouri Council of the Blind at convention. It had withdrawn in 1979.

1987 St. Louis Council of the Blind chartered.

The Braille Revival League of Missouri became a Special Interest Group of MCB.

Kansas City Association for the Blind (organized April 16, 1916) became Alphapointe Association for the Blind April 16.

1988 Library Users of Missouri incorporated December 5.

1989 Southwest Missouri Friendship Council of the Blind chartered.

1990 Lake Stockton Area Council of the Blind Inc., Humansville

chartered.

Giles Avenue Apartments passed inspection.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) signed by President George Bush.

Bootheel Council of the Blind folded. Later, it merged with Ozark Association.

1991 Northeast Missouri Council of the Blind, Kirksville; South Central Missouri Ozark Association of the Blind, West Plains; and County Line Council of the Blind, Harrisonville received their charters.

MCB presented the first Louis Braille Award.

1992 MCB events and services made accessible to the hearing and visually impaired.

1993 Adaptive Technology became a special interest affiliate. Missouri Bureau for the Blind name changed to Rehabilitation Services for the Blind.

First year at Cobblestone Lodge. Adult camp extended weekend in September.

1996 Agape Council of the Blind applied for incorporation May 31, 1996 which was received November 16, 1998.

1997 Action Council of the Blind accepted as an affiliate.

Gateway Council of Citizens with Low Vision received as special interest group.

1998 Delta Area Blind, Inc. incorporated February 27, 1998.
Utility bills made available in Braille and large print.
Outstanding Service Award established for a sighted individual.

MCB fiscal year begins October 1.

1999 The Missouri Guide Dogs Users Incorporated.
Department Of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) created. HB 8401

2000 InnerVisions, Inc. accepted as an affiliate.

West Central Workers of the Blind is dissolved.

2001 MCB purchased an office building at 5453 Chippewa, St. Louis and moved in on January 31, 2002.

MCB exempted Henderson Management Company from its committed payments to MCB from two St. Louis thrift stores. There was no motion or vote taken by the Board.
August 14, 2001 Board Minutes read that the Board agreed to allow the contract exemption of the two stores.

2003 First audible traffic signal in Missouri at Kansas City.

Darrell Lauer Outstanding Leadership Award created.

MCB set up a listserv.

2004 MCB filed a lawsuit against the State of Missouri. The lawsuit asked the State to account for its use of the Blind Pension Fund money and requested payment of the money owed the blind under the law.

2005 MCB fiscal year changed to September 1 – August 31.
401 Task Force Committee established.

2006 ACB Convention assembly adopted an amendment prohibiting its affiliates from barring NFB members from membership in ACB affiliates.

Blind Pension lawsuit filed in Cole County, Missouri on February 16, 2006.

MCB 50th Annual Convention held in Jefferson City, MO.
75th Anniversary of Wolfner Library partnership with the National Library Service.

2007 MCB was offered a 1.7 million dollar settlement before the start of the Blind Pension Fund lawsuit trial. MCB Blind Pension Committee instructed Attorney Deborah Greider to ask for seven million dollars to be divided among the blind pension recipients receiving the blind pension for the past three years.

MCB lobbied for the Textbook Revision Act. It would provide for blind students to receive textbooks on time and in an accessible format.

2008 Member of the Month and Member of the Year Awards established.

Strategic Planning Committee proposal accepted.

2010 Capitol City Council of the Blind chartered.

MCB Connect and Phone Cast established.

The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act signed into law.

2011 Route 66 Council of the Blind, Lebanon chartered.

First Midwest Leadership Conference held in St. Louis.

FCC established the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program.

The Pedestrians Safety Enhancement Act signed. It required alert sound on quite cars.

Audiocassette production ended.

2012 Act Now Council of the Blind, Kansas City and Tiger Council, Columbia chartered.

UWB celebrated its 100th Anniversary in May.

MCB penalized two and one-half votes for non-

compliance with the ACB Constitution.

The Missouri Chronicle changed from cassette to digital format.

First MCB convention auction grossed over \$4,000.00.

General Assembly tried to take away medical coverage for blind pension recipients.

First MCB Media Award presented to Charles Brennan KMOX radio talk show host.

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) adopted the Unified English Braille Code.

Major League Baseball program gave visually impaired fans enhanced access to Major League Baseball Web site.

2013 MCB adopted an amendment allowing MCB members to belong to the NFB.

Electronic voting machines used at the MCB convention for the first time.

Kim Charlson elected first woman President of the American Council of the Blind at its National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

2015 On November 1, the Missouri Council of the Blind New Image Thrift Store officially became MCB Thrift Stores, Inc.

One-thousand United States postage stamps inscribed with the MCB logo put into circulation.

2016 First time, the MCB sought sponsorship for the State convention using birds of Missouri as its theme.