



**Remarks by Justin Dart, Jr.,
introducing Lex Frieden, keynote
speaker at a ceremony celebrating
Handicapped Employment Week,
held at the Great Hall of the
Department of Health and Human
Services, October 10, 1986, HHS
Secretary Otis Bowen presiding.**

"It is a privilege for me to be able to participate today in this celebration of the dignity human life and of human productivity. And it is an honor to serve in an

administration led by great contributors to the cause of productive independence like President Ronald Reagan and Secretaries Otis Bowen and William Bennett. The fundamental and only legitimate purpose of human society is to enable each member of that society to fulfill his or her potential to be productive in terms of the physical, psychological and environmental components of quality of life. Although we live in a culture which clearly has the resources to make ancient visions of heaven on earth come true, and although during the last several decades, millions of individuals with disabilities are still excluded from the mainstream of cultural process, and particularly from employment, which is the backbone of that process.

Our speaker today has been a pioneer at the frontiers of productive independence for persons with disabilities. Lex Frieden was one of the first to point out that employment for most severely disabled people cannot be productively addressed as an isolated goal involving only training and placement, but must be pursued as part of a total solution involving acceptance of the principle of equal opportunity, accessible environments, research, prevention, public education, transportation, housing, personal assistance, and a continuum of other appropriate support services.

As a founder of the successful New Options Independent Living Program in Houston, as the director for many years of the Independent Living Research Utilization program at the Texas Institute of Rehabilitation and Research, and as a prolific writer and lecturer, Lex has earned an international reputation as perhaps the world's leading authority on independent living and independence oriented rehabilitation. For the past two years he has served as the executive director of the National Council on the Handicapped, leading that newly independent policy-making agency through its difficult startup period to be one of this government's most respected components.

One of Lex Frieden's most significant contribution to the nation has been the

coordination and editing of the National Council's special report to Congress and the President, recommending basic revisions in federal disability legislation. *Toward Independence* is a courageous call for the implementation of fundamental democratic principles. It completely transcends personalities and politics. It has been endorsed by people with disabilities, their families, their advocates and their service providers. It has been endorsed by Republicans and Democrats, and by citizens in every part of America. It was hailed by President Reagan as a "Testament to Independence." By Senator Lowell Weicker as "one of the best things that has ever been done," and by Congressman Steve Bartlett as "The Declaration of Independence, 1986." The Attorney General of Texas, who is a staunch democrat, mailed a copy to every other attorney general in the nation with his personal endorsement.

It is my privilege to present to you now an Eagle Scout from Alva, Oklahoma, a Texas cattle raiser, a distinguished scholar, one of the ten most outstanding young men in America in 1983, the director of an independent federal agency, a patriot in the tradition of Washington and Jefferson, and one of the most gentle, loving, intelligent and profoundly honest individuals I have ever known. ***He is a great American and he is a great human being: Lex Frieden.***

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