

CRIPSTORY

The Unheard History of Disability

Hale Zukas

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Hale Zukas was born in 1943 in Los Angeles, California, with cerebral palsy, diagnosed during his childhood. Fortunately, his mother recognized his intelligence and did not institutionalize him, as was common practice for people born with disabilities at that time. He received his basic education in San Luis Obispo, California, and learned to use an electric wheelchair. As he was nonverbal, he used a helmet mounted with a pointer to point to a letter board. He earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of California Berkeley in 1971, which was one of the first universities in the world to admit students with physical disabilities.

In the mid-1960s, Hale joined other students with disabilities to form the Rolling Quads, an organization that advocated for the rights of students with disabilities. In 1972 Zukas and other disabled people founded the first Center for Independent Living in Berkeley. He served as the Center for Independent Living's first coordinator of Community Affairs and held that position until 1982. Zukas did a lot to advocate for the disabled community by asking for the elimination of architectural and transportation barriers, especially on the Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART) in the San Francisco Bay Area. With the Center for Independent Living, he helped lead a movement to install the first curb cuts ever in Berkeley in 1973.



Hale was also part of the protests for the ratification of the 504 Rehabilitation Act and was chosen to lobby in Washington DC to confront the Carter administration about passing it. He co-founded the BART accessibility advisory group in 1975 and is responsible for the BART elevators having a button that can be easily reached by wheelchair users. He worked on the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and served on the board of transit accessibility, which met monthly to discuss ways to make public transportation available to more people.

The disabled community in the United States owes a lot to Hale's mother, who recognized his potential to contribute to his community and helped him become a full, equal, and productive member of his community.

**RIP Hale Zukas
1943-2023**





HALE ZUKAS

DISABLED

PEOPLE

ARE

PEOPLE!!

DIYabled



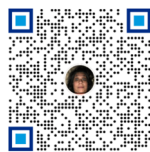
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