



ISAAC Remembers Dr. Bruce R. Baker

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Toronto, Canada – May 7th, 2020: The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) joins the rest of the AAC world in mourning the loss of Dr. Bruce R. Baker, who passed away today, May 7th, 2020.

“Over the years, Bruce became much more than a business partner,” says Dave Hershberger, CEO of PRC-Saltillito. “He became a mentor to many, a teacher to others, and an inspiration to us all. Bruce has touched so many of us in the AAC community and will be greatly missed.” Dr. Baker had deep connections to the PRC family, as evidenced by [this tribute](#) and the many comments posted today on the PRC and Saltillito brand social media pages.

In the words of Erna Alant, former ISAAC President, “Bruce Baker is an icon in the field of AAC. The Minspeak[®] system he developed was ground-breaking in supporting communication for people who have significant difficulties in speaking. He will be sorely missed.”

Dr. Baker was a brilliant linguist and entrepreneur, as the inventor of Minspeak[®] (Minimum Effort Speech), a voice output language system used in speech-generating devices. He founded Semantic Compaction Systems in Pittsburgh to share this innovation. Minspeak[®] is now in use by countless individuals world-wide. The system has been translated into French, German, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Norwegian, Japanese, and Mandarin. He lectured around the globe, and his work has been recognized by awards from many organizations including the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC), United Cerebral Palsy in Washington DC, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), and the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA). He was the recipient of the ISAAC Distinguished Service Award in 1998, and a participant in ISAAC’s biennial Research Symposia. He was a strong supporter of ISAAC’s LEAD initiative, as far back as ISAAC Conference 2006 in Dusseldorf, Germany.

SHOUT, a non-profit Pennsylvania corporation that studied employment issues for people with disabilities, was founded by Dr. Baker. For many years SHOUT hosted the Pittsburgh Employment Conference for Augmented Communicators.

Past President of USSAAC, Sarah Blackstone, calls Dr. Baker “a giant in the field of AAC. Unique, smart, committed to making a difference ... a visionary. Bruce Baker changed the lives of many. Together, let us celebrate his life.”

Gail Van Tatenhove writes, “As a linguist and innovator, Bruce's development of Minspeak® changed the field of AAC. As a gifted teacher, he generously taught us from his wealth of knowledge and insight. Together, we honour him by continuing to innovate, teach, and change the world.

Former ISAAC Council Chair, Janice Murray, recalls that “as a relatively novice speech language therapist/pathologist, I had the privilege of attending a day-long workshop presented by Bruce in Edinburgh (Scotland) in the late 1980s. He spoke eloquently and academically about the theory behind “minimum effort speech.” In fact, he was effervescent! I was a convert to the Minspeak® principles and its usefulness to people who might benefit from it. He was a true inspiration in terms of encouraging us all to think outside of the box. Bruce, you will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.”

On behalf of the ISAAC Executive Board past and present, Council, and staff, we express our sincere condolences to Dr. Bruce Baker’s family, friends, and colleagues.

ISAAC is an international membership organization with head offices in Toronto. ISAAC’s goal is to create worldwide awareness about how AAC can help individuals without speech. ISAAC accomplishes this by sharing information and promoting innovative approaches to research, technology and literacy through AAC. Activities include hosting the ISAAC biennial conference, sponsoring projects, and offering awards and scholarships.

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