Silent World

Deafness would not stop her from living life to its fullest.

In a world full of sound, Bonnie Poitras Tucker has known only silence. But it has not stopped her from leading a remarkable life in what she calls the “hearing world.”

In her memoir, The Feel of Silence, Tucker takes readers to a place where very few venture, a place without ringing telephones, blaring stereos, crying children, or knocks at the door. But it is also a place where confusion inevitably creeps in and ignorance is all too pervasive.

From the very start, Tucker, now a professor at the Arizona State University College of Law, refuses to depend on others for her care. Instead she becomes an expert lip-reader—to the point that those who don’t know she is profoundly deaf remain unaware of her disability. And, as she learns at an early age, when all else fails, she can bluff her way through. It’s an amazing yet imperfect skill, causing the author countless awkward moments, anger, and sadness.

Imagine, for instance, playing kick-the-can as a child, finding a great hiding spot and staying there, not knowing the game is over until your worried mother locates you alone in the dark. “On the way home it was Mother who cried,” she writes. “My heart was broken too, but I refused to show it.”

Tucker chooses to reject sign language and the “Deaf culture,” which she sees as isolated, secluded from the world she wants to experience. While studying at Syracuse University, she visits a school for the deaf in Washington, D.C., and decides such a lifestyle won’t satisfy her. “As difficult as my life was, I’d always been a part of the hearing world where everybody spoke, and where there were no fences, actual or figurative,” she writes. “I felt more alien in this segregated deaf environment than I did among the hearing. I’d gone to seek acceptance in a place that only made me feel more isolated.”

Tucker’s resilient spirit and enduring humor carry her through many of life’s trials. Her dogged individualism and creative solutions to all sorts of seemingly insurmountable obstacles eventually lead her through law school and beyond. She succeeds as a corporate litigator and law professor, as well as an expert in disability law, civil rights, and other legal areas. Tucker also embraces advocacy and becomes friends with others who are deaf, a scenario she’d adamantly avoided most of her life. Finally, too, she admits to having limitations, but unleashes more troubles on herself. “The paradox is that I speak, lip-read, and function so well in the hearing world that the hearing people around me are sometimes incapable of understanding that there are limitations in my reality,” she writes.

Again and again, however, in anecdotes, reflections, and observations, Tucker skilfully illustrates the power of perseverance and the value of believing in one’s self, no matter the challenge. “How glad I was that I’d chosen to live my life in the mainstream of society,” she writes. “There really was, as I’d known, a big world out there. And I was, as I’d planned, taking part in it.”

—JAY COX
Other Alumni Books

The Unseen Power: Public Relations—A History
By Scott M. Cutlip '59
807 pp. Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. $29.95
The Unseen Power presents the first detailed history of public relations from 1900 through the 1960s. Based largely on primary sources, it documents the tremendous role public relations practitioners play in U.S. economic, social, and political affairs—a role that generally goes unseen and unobserved by the average citizen whose life is affected in so many ways by thousands of public relations practitioners. Author Scott M. Cutlip is a longtime leading scholar, historian, and instructor of public relations.

Object-Oriented Networks: Models for Architecture, Operations, and Management
By Subodh Bapat G'84, G'85
784 pp. Prentice Hall. $51
Today's communication networks are the central nervous systems of government and industry—and often just as complex. Advanced networking technology only adds to the complexity even as it delivers greater network speed and versatility. Object-Oriented Networks is the first book to present a modeling methodology equal to the complexity of today's and tomorrow's communications needs.

These Upraised Hands
By William B. Patrick G'74
118 pp. BOA Editions, Ltd. $20
William B. Patrick is a writer whose greatest strength lies in making vocal portraits. Drawn from diaries, letters, memoirs, and personal encounters, his poems and narratives tell intricate, painful, and loving stories that move the reader through dramatic situations as diverse as a boy losing teeth in a hockey game to a father losing a son in an ocean's coral reef.

Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century
By Mary Ann Calo '74, G'81, G'91
253 pp. Temple University Press. $34.95
Tracing Bernard Berenson's writings over half a century, author Mary Ann Calo explores his career as a connoisseur, Renaissance art historian, and champion of Western culture in the context of recent art and theory. Calo also examines Berenson's change from an innovative critic to a reactionary conservative who used his authority to discredit 20th-century art and sustain the idea of culture as a franchise of the elite.

Homes and Libraries of the Presidents
By William G. Crotzworthy '48
557 pp. McDonald C'
Woodward. $19.95
In a dramatic career switch, this former Saturday Night Live censor has compiled a guidebook to almost 100 presidential homes, libraries, and museums that opens a window into the personal lives of some of America's most noted public figures.

Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa
By Louise M. Bourgault 71
320 pp. Indiana University Press. $53
Involved in the growth of media in Africa for the last 20 years, Bourgault offers a new perspective on African media production and management practices in historical context. In so doing, she also deals with the political shifts affecting Africa in the 1990s and offers a revolutionary diagram for more responsive and informative media in the sub-Saharan region.

Gender and Agricultural Development
By Helen Krieger Henderson '58
161 pp. University of Arizona Press. $29.95
Women have long been prime movers in world agriculture, yet their contributions to the planet's food supply are widely ignored. This work argues that those contributions must be recognized as a necessary first step toward improved planning and policies. Representing 20 years of international research, this book provides guidelines for locating information on gender-related agricultural issues and incorporating it into development, planning, research, and training.

Majorski's Ghost
By Bob Cohen G'66, G'57
Marty Fenton is not your typical sleuth. As a graduate student in psychology, he is far more comfortable with the challenge of a crossword puzzle than with violence and danger. But when Fred Majorski disappears during a research interview, the inquisitive Fenton is determined to solve the mystery. Central New York and the Syracuse University campus serve as backdrops for this novel.

Improvising Rivers
By David Jauss 74
85 pp. Cleveland State University Poetry Center. $15
A runner-up in the 1994 CSU Poetry Center national poetry competition, this book was selected for publication from more than 1,000 submissions. In Improvising Rivers, Jauss presents his first collection of poetry. His unobtrusive technical mastery and the almost classical precision of his style make this collection notable.

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Knowledge in a Nutshell
By Charles Reich
248 pp. St. Martin’s Press
$4.95
If you love wild, wacky, absolutely true facts; real-life, bizarre accounts; or history so shocking the schoolbooks leave it out, you’ll have lots of fun with Knowledge in a Nutshell. This work includes information about the U.S. state that no longer exists, President Bill Clinton’s original name, the King of England who couldn’t speak English, and more.

Garden Madness: The Unpruned Truth About a Blooming Passion
By Susan Mullin Watkins
304 pp. Fidlerum Publishing
$15.95
Digging deep into the foundation of America’s most popular pastime, Susan Watkins exposes gardening for what it is: An avowed affliction. As such, the essentials, foibles, and out-and-out craziness inherent in the love of growing things are examined. This work comes complete with facts about the miracle of leaf mold, joys of garden goop, and ways to murder your lawn.

Spell of the Tiger
By Sy Montgomery
200 pp. Houghton Mifflin
$22.95
A tantalizing glimpse of the shifting boundaries between nature and myth, this work focuses on the coastal forests of India and Bangladesh and the people who inhabit them. Spell of the Tiger is a transcendental book filled with beauty and suspense. It explores the human experience of living in a world rich with gods and goddesses, yet always aware of being prey.

The Empowering School
By William L. Fibkins
144 pp. Resource Publications
$16.95
Maintaining that the key to helping at-risk teens is to make the school the center for prevention and character education, Fibkins highlights seven steps that are needed to set up an empowering school. He demonstrates how his principles have been used to create support programs for teen-agers addicted to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, or those affected by eating disorders or family crises.

Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes: Robert F. Kennedy’s War Against Organized Crime
By Ronald Goldfarb
584 pp. Random House
$35
When President John F. Kennedy appointed his young brother as head of the Justice Department, there was widespread criticism—Robert Kennedy had neither courtroom nor trial experience. Author Ronald Goldfarb, a lawyer recruited to work with RFK, recounts Kennedy’s transformation into one of the most aggressive attorney generals, the man who declared war on corruption.

An Appointment with Somerset Maugham and Other Literary Encounters
By Richard Costa
227 pp. Texas A&M University Press
$35
In this assortment of memoirs and critical essays, Richard Costa traces the strange turns in literary fortune of writers like H. G. Wells, Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Lowry, Conrad Aiken, James Joyce, Edith Wharton, and Somerset Maugham.

Implementing Diversity
By Marilyn Loden
192 pp. IRWIN Professional Publishing
$20
In this era of ever-expanding world markets and opportunities, Marilyn Loden has produced a guide for making the American workplace exciting, fulfilling, and productive for workers. Implementing Diversity outlines specific strategies for encouraging commitment and excellence from the whole human family, with all of its many differences in ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.

Unsung Heroes: Federal Executants Making a Difference
By Norma M. Riccucci
251 pp. Georgetown University Press
$17.95
Riccucci describes both the complexity and intensity of high-ranking public service jobs and the remarkable commitment of the people who hold them. She provides useful portraits of public leadership, which will contribute to a better understanding of public management, leadership in public organizations, and the role of executives in public policy processes and decisions.

The Internet Business Kit
By Jill H. Ellsworth
and Matthew V. Ellsworth
John Wiley & Sons
$69.95
The Internet has become an important...
place to do business, but getting up and running can seem a bit daunting. The Internet Business Kit is designed to help you get on-line as quickly and painlessly as possible. Included in the kit is an introductory guide; a copy of The Internet Business Book; a CD with software, templates, and other necessary Internet tools; and a copy of Marketing on the Internet: Multimedia Strategies for the World Wide Web.

Children's Books

Mind-Boggling Astronomy
By Steve Wilco '71
160 pp. Cobblestone Publishing, Inc. $19.95
For children ages 8 to 14, this book shows that a sense of humor can make science fun. Each chapter is filled with hands-on activities, discussion questions, and puzzling mind boggles sure to challenge any young mind.

The Little Shoe Book
By Benette Tiffault '80
22 pp. Random House. $5.95
Shaped like a shoe and written for toddlers, The Little Shoe Book is about a child who needs a new pair of shoes. The child goes on an adventure, looking in a pet shop, music store, and ice-cream parlor to find just the right shoes.

Easy Origami
By Gay Merrill Gross '74 and Tina Weilztraub '74
72 pp. Scholastic Professional Books. $10.95
This unique book for teachers offers cross-curricular teaching activities (Grades 2 to 6), in addition to directions for making easy and fascinating origami models. Teachers ordering this book will receive a free class supply of origami paper.

The Night I Followed the Dog
By Nina Loden '83
Have you ever wondered where dogs go at night, and what they do? In this engaging book, a young boy follows his dog through a surprising series of night-time adventures.

Private I. Guana
By Nina Loden '83
Leon the chameleon is missing! But ace detective Private I. Guana is on the case. He searches high and low until he unexpectedly stumbles across the solution to the mystery. This exciting story is sophisticated enough for older readers and silly enough for younger listeners.

Outlaws
By Tim Green '86, G'94
384 pp. Turner Publishing, Inc. $22.95
Dakota Grey, starting fullback with the Texas Outlaws, becomes the prime suspect in a high-profile murder case when his wife's illicit entanglements with a rogue CIA agent plunge him into a bewildering maze of greed, passion, international intrigue, and sudden, shocking violence.

To benefit SU, Turner Publishing will donate $2 to the Orangemen for each book sold. Purchasers of Outlaws will also receive a free copy of Green's bestseller, Ruffians.

New and Notable Product Design II
By Robert Blaich '52, G'90
Internationally recognized for his outstanding contributions to the industrial design profession, Blaich has applied his expertise in selecting and presenting more than 300 products that reflect excellence in design effectiveness and creativity. The book features important new technologies and styles, as well as current developments in materials, fabrication, and methodology.