

December 18th, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

We hope this email finds you well during these challenging times. We are writing to request your assistance in developing the **NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOLARS** who are focusing their research on the communication needs of individuals with severe disabilities. In collaboration with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation (ASHFoundation), the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Individuals with Severe Disabilities (NJCS) is establishing **The McLean Yoder Schiefelbusch Fund (MYS Fund)**. Our goal is to endow this ASHFoundation fund so that student scholars who are interested in the communication needs of individuals with severe disabilities can receive scholarship support while they are establishing their research agenda.

As you know, the late James McLean (University of Kansas), David Yoder (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), and the late Richard Schiefelbusch (University of Kansas) are the founders of this area of research investigation. Their early 1970s book on language intervention for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities laid the groundwork for the delivery of communication services and supports for individuals who previously were excluded from such services and supports.

To meet our goal, we need your help! In order to endow this fund through the ASHFoundation, we must raise \$100,000. With the support of Jim, David, and Dick's former students and colleagues, we believe we can achieve this goal. Please consider contributing to the **MYS Fund** at the ASHF Individual Donor Website <https://www.ashfoundation.org/Ways-to-Give/Individual-Donor-Form/>. On the form, enter the amount you wish to contribute under "other" and then enter MYS Fund in the "optional" box.

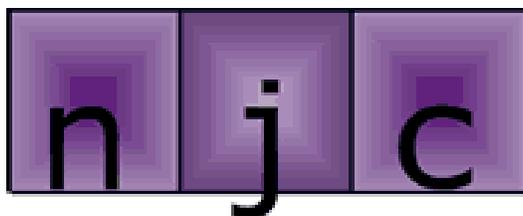
If you already contribute to the ASHFoundation's annual giving appeal, we hope that you will consider the MYS Fund contribution over and above your annual ASHFoundation gift that remains necessary to sustain vital support to existing programs.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions. To learn more about the establishment of this scholarship fund, please go to FAQs attached to this email or the link on the NJCS website (www.asha.org/NJC). We are happy to discuss the MYS Fund with you. You can reach MaryAnn at mromski@aol.com or 404-731-6933. Thank you in advance for helping us reach our goal and continuing this important area of research by building the next generation of scholars. Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season and a good 2021!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MaryAnn Ronski".

MaryAnn Ronski on behalf of the NJCS



FAQs about the MYS Fund

Why is this fund named the MYS Fund?

From the early 1970s, **Drs. James McLean** (University of Kansas, founding chair of the NJC), **David Yoder** (University of North Carolina, former ASHA president and member of the NJC), and **Richard Schiefelbusch** (former ASHA VP for Research and editor of the Language Intervention book series) spearheaded the development of research and practice in the area of severe communication disabilities. Children and adults with severe disabilities are a low-incidence population and were on the edge of speech-language pathology clinical practice at the time. They advocated for the communication needs of these individuals by conducting research about the development of communication. Their first volume, published in 1973, addressed language intervention for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who at that time were not receiving communication services and supports. Their work laid the groundwork for the inclusion of communication services and supports for these individuals. They produced a substantial number of edited volumes that addressed research and practice issues facing the field. These edited volumes provided the foundation for the continued development of the field. Their work influenced clinical practice policy and eventually led to the formation of the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of People with Severe Disabilities. The impact of naming the fund for them honors the work of these three giants in the field and keeps a focus on research about severe communication disabilities through the ASHFoundation.

What is the long term objective for the MYS Fund?

The long-term objective of the MYS Fund is to use the endowment to offer a scholarship as part of the ASHF New Century Scholars Doctoral Scholarships for a doctoral student (regardless of discipline) whose research focus and dissertation preparation is in the area of communication intervention and severe disabilities.

How much money do we need to endow the MYS Fund?

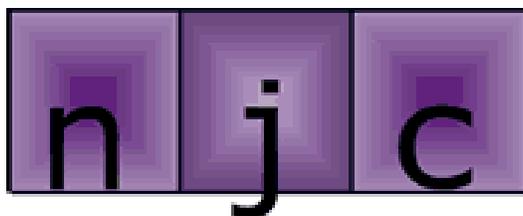
In order to endow a fund through the ASHFoundation, obtaining a \$100,000 minimum amount within a 3-year period is required. For us, this period begins in January 2021 and we must endow the fund by December 2023.

What happens to the funds if we cannot endow the fund within 3 years?

If we do not reach our \$100,000 goal, the monies contributed will go into the New Century Scholars program for distribution as the ASHFoundation sees fit.

Why did you choose to endow a scholarship fund with the ASHFoundation?

We chose to endow the MYS Fund through ASHFoundation because it is a well-established foundation with a focus on the next generation of scholars. It has a well-established review process for awarding doctoral scholarships. It will permit the award to go forward in perpetuity. The ASHFoundation Board of Directors reviewed our proposal and agreed to collaborate with us in establishing the MYS Fund.



What contribution will the NJC make to the MYS Fund?

The NJC members are volunteers but over our 25+ year history, we authored/edited two books that resulted in modest royalties. The NJC will make the initial gift with a \$5000+ gift to this multi-source donation fund. This initial gift comes from the committee's royalties on the two books as well as recent honorariums from the production of an NJC video.

Who can donate to this cause?

We invite all colleagues who believe in the need to support the next generation of scholars studying the communication needs of individuals with severe disabilities to contribute to the MYS Fund. The generous support of many individuals and organizations at any level will allow the fund to grow more quickly toward establishing a permanent endowment. Please note that in 2020 the Cares Act permits a \$300.00 donation to a cause regardless of whether you itemize or not.

What is a Founding Donor?

A Founding Donor is anyone who makes an initial contribution of \$1,000.00 to the fund. Founding Donors will be acknowledged on the NJC Website and in correspondence about the fund (if they desire). We already have pledges from at least five Founding Donors as we begin this process.