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Don Messinger and
 Bernard P. Henri,
 Ph.D. circa 1998

In 1986, Messinger was appointed Board President. Having co-chaired CHSC’s 1988 capital campaign, Messinger credits former Cuyahoga County Commissioner, Seth Taft, for encouraging the board to stretch their fundraising goal. “We knew we could raise \$1 million, but it was Taft who encouraged us to reach for \$1.5 million,” said Messinger.

By the late 1990s, faced with a deteriorating building, CHSC began looking to partner with other institutions, and Messinger once again found himself serving as the board president. In 2003, with the expansion of University Hospital (UH), the idea of building a new facility for CHSC was born.

“We wanted to continue to serve the urban population, so we built on our relationship with Case Western Reserve University,” said Dr. Bernard P. Henri. In 2006, a capital campaign was launched, and by 2008, construction began on CHSC’s new home in University Circle. It turned into a project that would benefit everyone, including Case, UH and University Circle Inc. “The new facility was a capstone project for Don and me,” said Henri. “This new building has given us street cred in the donor and corporate communities.”

After 25 years of service, Henri’s dedication to the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center can be seen in all the

advances the organization has made since his arrival. Having relocated from Maine in 1989 to join CHSC, Henri recalls spending the first six months reading board meeting minutes dating back to the organization’s beginnings, and having to manage difficult financial issues. Thanks to fundraising efforts, he and the staff strengthened existing programs and developed new programs to better serve their clients.

Both Henri and Messinger agree that one of CHSC’s greatest achievements is the success of the Regional Infant Hearing Program. “Having met with four women in Canton, who all had children that were diagnosed with hearing loss well past their infant years, we knew things had to change,” said Henri. Following CHSC’s legislative lobbying efforts, Ohio adopted a program to test newborn infants. Later, when funding from the Department of Health was cut by sixty percent, Messinger says it was “Cleveland in its true blue philanthropic mode” that helped cover forty percent of the funding loss.

Collaboration with other organizations, like the Cleveland Sight Center, has also been important to the success of CHSC. Referring to the Sight Center as CHSC’s “sensory twin,” Henri assures that the partnership will continue as they share clients that are both deaf and blind.

Henri and Messinger have witnessed a lot of change over the years. Through technological advances, remote therapy and speech and hearing screenings conducted with video cameras and computers have saved money and helped cut down on client’s travel time. “It’s also been great seeing smart phones and tablets become a means for signing across the miles,” said Henri.

Together, Messinger and Henri have created a lasting legacy through their work with Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center. And given that, perhaps it’s fitting that Henri’s nickname for past board presidents is The Rushmores. ●●●