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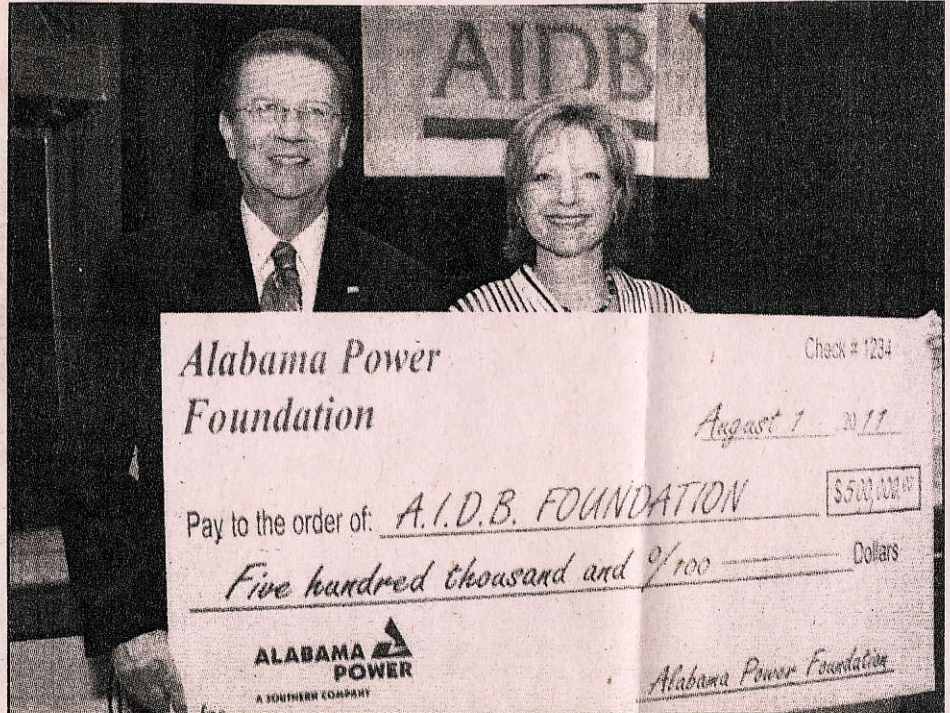
Alabama Power ¹⁷⁴⁷ gives AIDB \$500,000 grant for health center

By AZIZA JACKSON
Home staff writer

TALLADEGA

—
“Dream Weaver” was the theme for the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind convocation Monday, and included an array of special guests and a big announcement.

AIDB President Terry Graham welcomed Julia Segars, vice president of Alabama Power’s eastern division, to the stage where she announced that AIDB will receive a \$500,000



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

Julia Segars, vice president of Alabama Power’s eastern division, presented a \$500,000 grant to AIDB President Terry Graham for a new health center at Alabama School for the Deaf.

grant from Alabama Power for a new health center at Alabama School for the Deaf.

The news was met with applause from a full house

of AIDB students, staff members and special guests in the ASD auditorium.

Among the special guests were Sen. Jerry Fielding, Rep. Steve Hurst

and Greater Talladega Area Chamber of Commerce Director Mack Ferguson.

After a welcome from

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Grant

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Dr. Horace Patterson from the E.H. Gentry Senior Services Center, Lanier Corbitt led the singing of "God Bless the U.S.A."

Newly appointed Talladega Regional Director Patrick Robinson gave a presentation about his childhood stories and journey through life with a hearing impairment.

Robinson also gave the audience a look back into his first day as a student at ASD and told what ASD meant to him.

"Be a can-do, not a can't-do person," an interpreter

said as Robinson signed to the audience.

For the "Dream Weaving by Parents" portion of the convocation, two parents of AIDB students gave their testimonies about their respective experiences.

"It wasn't until we enrolled Malia into ASB (Alabama School for the Blind) that I was able to see the extraordinary world behind the extraordinary name," Karen Thibado said.

Thibado praised ASB Principal Charlotte Lowrey and other staff members

for what they do for blind students, and went through her daughter's experience at ASB, from her first day riding the bus to learning how to type for the first time.

She said that for the staff at ASB it was not a job, but their "calling."

Next, Jimmy Seigo spoke on behalf of his son, Jacob, a Helen Keller School student who is deaf and blind.

"We found AIDB and he started his first year at ASD and he's been at Helen Keller for seven years," Seigo said.

"It's a wonderful place and they have helped bring Jacob up to where he is today."

Seigo told the audience about Jacob's progress, as well as him winning three medals in the Special Olympics before Jacob took the microphone for himself to say hello to the audience.

"He teaches me every day to enjoy life," Seigo said.

"We wouldn't have been able to communicate without the help of you all here."

Sen. Jerry Fielding also addressed the audience

as part of the "Dream Weavers" theme and wishing everyone a good school year.

Graham then took the stage to deliver his "State of the Institute" report through a presentation.

"If your ship is not coming in you may have to swim to it," Graham said.

He told of the many ways the staff at AIDB has chosen to swim for new opportunities for their institution and their students.

He also alluded to upcoming athletic programs and several con-

struction projects currently taking place.

Graham also let the audience know that all of AIDB's regional centers are continuing to service their respective communities with the help of technological advancements, as well as advancements in handicap accessibility.

"As we move into this next year, let's not wait for opportunity but go out and make opportunity for our deaf and blind citizens," Graham said.

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