

The ASL Bowl History

In 2011, Dr. Petra Horn-Marsh, previous KSD Bilingual Specialist and current early childhood and elementary school principal and Kester Horn-Marsh, former secondary Language Arts teacher and current Bilingual Specialist, established an ASL Bowl competition in which Deaf secondary students at KSD have the opportunity to view professional works of ASL from video, create their own works with the help of fluent adult ASL users, then perform their works in a live competition format. Motivated by famous Deaf KSD graduates such as Patrick Graybill and Chuck Baird and by a world-famous Deaf poet, Peter Cook, Petra and Kester felt the need and saw the excitement in students who wanted resurgence in the ASL literature movement. They developed judging rubrics to evaluate three categories of American Sign Language Literature. All three categories (ASL Storytelling, ASL Handshape Stories, and ASL Poetry) have four sub-genres each. The professional videos used were from the Bilingual Multi-Media Room library as well as from professional ASL literature works that the secondary Language Arts teachers typically use to teach English literature using an L1/L2 approach. This competition was held in 2011, 2012, and 2013 at KSD. Each winner received a medal, their pictures were hung on the "ASL Wall of Fame" in the Roberts building, and their names were placed on plaques compiling each year's winners. Petra and Kester were not content in seeing this movement stay only with KSD and created a proposal for the GPSD athletic Directors to review and approve in 2012. With all GPSD schools in favor of the addition of the ASL Bowl to the current GPSD Biathlon, the GPSD Triathlon was born! In 2013 each GPSD schools' winners went on to perform at a higher level at the GPSD Triathlon Tournament.

KSD was very fortunate in 2013 to host the first-ever GPSD Triathlon Tournament. This event was held on November 15-16 and consisted of an Academic Bowl Competition, Oratorical Contest, and ASL Bowl Competition. KSD hosted 8 Great Plains Schools for the Deaf (New Mexico, Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, and Wisconsin) on-site competing in these three events. This tournament is now held on a yearly, rotating basis among the 8 GPSD schools. The GPSD ASL Bowl was also a first-time event in history and was live streamed via the web. A representative from Gallaudet University's Youth Programs and Outreach office attended to see if this event could be expanded into a multi-regional event in the culmination of a national ASL Bowl tournament. Since 2017, Gallaudet has hosted a yearly national competition of ASL Literature via YouTube videos using a similar format started by KSD. During the inaugural GPSD ASL Bowl competition among students, the audience watched Jonathan Kovacs, Jesse Jones III (ASL Films star), and Joann Benfield of Rathskeller, a popular ASL dance troupe and Rosa Lee Timm, a famous Deaf storyteller and ASL Films star perform throughout the competition. Rosa Lee and Jonathan emceed the entire ASL Bowl and also performed at the awards banquet following. Also at the ASL Bowl Event on Saturday November 16th, 2-5pm in the KSD Murphy Auditorium was Deaf DJ, Billy Warnock. Professional and

historic ASL videos were shown between each student performance as well as some popular comic strips by Deaf Cartoonist, Matt Daigle. Tickets were on sale for \$10. This event was sponsored by local and national organizations committed to the improvement of education, communication, and technology of Deaf students (sComm, Sorenson Communications, SKAI, GURC Midwest Region, KAD, and Sign Language Specialists). Three KSD students took first place with their performances of ASL Literature: Jaeden Rolofson, Tres Diaz, and Renate Rose.

In addition, Ben Jarashow, a well-known ASL literature researcher, professor, and performer, came to KSD on October 3rd to present current information on ASL Literature, Audism, and Linguicism. Peter Cook also came to KSD on November 7th to perform, to provide targeted workshops on developing ASL Poetry, and to work with the six KSD GPSD ASL Bowl finalists on their works of ASL literature to prepare for the competition. This was a wonderful opportunity for KSD students, the Deaf and hearing communities, for regional states, and in the future, all states in the U.S. to revel in the beauty of ASL literature. Since 2013, as part of the GPSD Triathlon Tournament, the GPSD ASL Bowl competition has been hosted by MSAD, OSD, MSD, ISD, and WSD. ASD will host this tournament in 2019 followed by KSD once again. MSAD won this tournament in 2013 and 2014, followed by 4 straight wins by KSD. Over this long stretch of time, the ASL Bowl bylaws have improved and the changes have been approved several times.