

DISABLED CHOOSE FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT AS PERSON OF THE CENTURY

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WASHINGTON, DC - December 27, 1999 – The National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.) announced today the selection of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as its Person of the Century.

In TIME Magazine's celebrated Person of the Century selection, Roosevelt finished second only to Einstein among all men and women - disabled and non-disabled.

Alan Reich, President of N.O.D., stated that FDR is the only world leader in history to overcome a major disability and reach the pinnacle of global power. "Those of us in the disability community, 54 million in the United States and half a billion people around the world - have long understood FDR's unique triumph," said Reich. "And now at the dawn of the new millennium, FDR has finally been recognized for his achievements as President, accepted by all as an outstanding world leader."

Although he could not stand or walk unassisted, President Franklin D. Roosevelt led Americans through its gravest crises of the century - the Great Depression and victory in World War II. Paralyzed from the waist down by polio in 1921 at the age of 39, FDR used a wheelchair every day during his twelve years in the White House. He became, through sheer determination and courage one of the country's most effective and beloved leaders - an inspiration to all people, with and without disabilities.

N.O.D.'s mission, fulfilling FDR's legacy, is to expand the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life - employment, education, voting, religious worship, in social, recreation and community activities.

Reich continued, "President Roosevelt's victory in overcoming his disability while managing national and international crises sets an inspiring example not only for the disabled community, but the non-disabled community as well."

The disability community, led by N.O.D., is currently raising funds to construct and place a statue of President Roosevelt in his wheelchair at the FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C. In addition, N.O.D.'s World Committee on Disability, in cooperation with the Franklin and Eleanor

Roosevelt Institute and the United Nations has established the \$50,000 FDR International Disability Award to honor and encourage nations to work toward full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in their society. The award is presented annually at the U.N. to a nation that has made noteworthy progress on behalf of the half billion persons with disabilities, the majority of whom live below the poverty line in developing countries.

The National Organization on Disability promotes the full and equal participation of America's 54 million men, women and children with disabilities in all aspects of life. N.O.D. was founded in 1982 at the conclusion of the United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons. N.O.D. is the only national disability network organization concerned with all disabilities, all age groups and all disability issues. N.O.D. is funded entirely by private donations and accepts no government funding. For more information about N.O.D and its programs, visit www.nod.org.