



## **DOUGLASS R. ANNAND**

### **ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

#### **“THE WHEELCHAIR TRAVELER”**

In 1952, Doug was a 22 year old Marine fighter pilot training to enter the Korean War. On April 10, during an exercise at the Marine Corps Air Station in El Centro, California, his plane malfunctioned and crashed. He survived, but lived the rest of his life in a wheelchair. After spending nearly a year in the San Diego Naval Hospital, he learned how to live on his own, drive and eventually to fly his own plane.

Even though he made his home in California at that time, he would frequently drive alone across the country to visit his family in Delaware. It was during these “commutes” that he realized how limited the availability of safe, accessible accommodations was.

He began keeping detailed information about every place he stayed. The data he recorded included heights of beds and toilets, widths of doorways, size of maneuverable space, barriers, and any challenges he experienced in using the location.

He began publishing his findings in 1965 and called his small book “The Wheelchair Traveler”. Other handicapped travelers were encouraged to provide specific information to him for publication. The book grew to include all 50 states, information on restaurants, public venues, flying, cruising and a wealth of travel tips to make handicapped travel safe and enjoyable. Because of the specific, sensible and necessary information he provided, Doug became an internationally recognized authority on wheelchair travel. His book was regularly cited in travel guides and travel columns in newspapers and magazines. He received requests and information from people all over the world and loved hearing from other travelers about their experiences. Doug moved to Milford in 1970 and spent many years working with groups such as the National Association of the Physically Handicapped, Granite State Independent Living Foundation, and New Hampshire’s Governor’s Commission on Disabilities. The Governor’s Commission was part of a country wide effort that developed the Americans with Disabilities Act. It was passed into law on July 26, 1990.

The last of edition of “The Wheelchair Traveler” was published in 1990.

Story submitted by Mrs. Douglass “Charlie” Annand