



Moments of Truth: Robert R. Davila, the Story of a Deaf Leader

Harry G. Lang, Oscar P. Cohen, Joseph E. Fischgrund

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Withstanding childhood poverty in a migrant farming family and an illness in 1943 at age 11 that left him profoundly deaf, Robert R. Davila persevered to become one of the first deaf persons in history to earn a doctorate. He did so at a time when interpreting in higher education had not yet become a professional support service. Davila worked unfailingly to achieve positions of stature as vice president of Gallaudet University, the president of three major deaf education organizations, and the seeming culmination of his career as the highest appointed deaf official ever in the U.S. government at the Department of Education. Yet, after this government service, he returned to his field to achieve another series of firsts. He served as Headmaster of the New York School for the Deaf at White Plains for three years, and as the first deaf chief executive officer of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology for seven years. Then, in 2006, Bob Davila was invited to assume the presidency of Gallaudet University in a time of crisis.

Moments of Truth summarizes a series of defining experiences that enabled Davila to rise to the pinnacle of his profession as an educator. This book is not merely a roadmap on how he achieved such honors it is an inspiring tale of self-discovery and resilience appealing to all who face overwhelming odds, especially deaf children who are sure to be encouraged by his pioneering legacy.

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