



TERENCE J. MOAKLEY

Terry Moakley was a key player in the movement to make transportation accessible to people with disabilities. Any time someone boards an accessible bus in New York City or elsewhere, they have him to thank.

After graduating from St. John's University at the height of the Vietnam War, Terry enlisted in the Marine Corps. While serving stateside, he broke his neck and was left with quadriplegia. He spent two years recuperating at a Bronx VA hospital, where his fellow patients included Jim Peters, founder of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA); Bobbie Muller, Nobel Peace Prize

winner and Vietnam Veterans of America founder; and Ron Kovic, author of "Born on the Fourth of July."

Terry became a member of EPVA (later renamed the United Spinal Association) and later joined its staff, eventually becoming its president.

Terry realized that his status as a veteran with a disability would not improve his chances of getting up an unramped curb, boarding an inaccessible bus or entering an inaccessible building. He brought together a coalition of New York City disability advocates and fellow Vietnam-era veterans with disabilities to fight for accessible transportation.

Terry was a co-plaintiff in EPVA's landmark litigation that resulted in bus and key subway station accessibility and the creation of the Access-a-Ride program. Because of the efforts of Terry and his colleagues, New York became the first major city in the US to have a 100 percent accessible bus service and the first old rail city to agree to retrofit key stations to make them accessible.

Terry also co-founded the Taxis for All Campaign, which gained access to 50 percent of the city's green and yellow cabs. He also founded the Association for Transportation Instruction to facilitate ridership and educate transportation providers, and Mobility Through Access, a coalition of individuals and organizations seeking access to mass transit.

After the Americans With Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, Terry traveled all over the state, then, with Paralyzed Veterans of America, all over the country to explain the ADA. He also worked closely with the New York City Department of Education's Office of Travel Training, which began as a provider instruction to students with cognitive disabilities and expanded to those with physical disabilities after the passage of the ADA. Terry's support and assistance were instrumental in this expansion.

Over his long career, Terry was the inspiration and provided the factual and philosophical underpinning for countless people with disabilities and their advocates to involve themselves in disability issues. Dozens of EPVA and United Spinal employees have gone on to lead nonprofits and hold important government positions, and all of them preach the gospel according to Terry Moakley.

Terry, who died in 2014 at age 69, is a legend in the New York City disability community. He was one of the first to build a bridge between advocates representing various members of the community. He was the commonalities and helped his colleagues recognize them and work together.

