

A Tribute to Martha Perske

Washington, DC. April 30, 2001, Robert delivered an address to a combination of national agencies for persons with intellectual disabilities. (The speech, "A Joint Statement to the ARC, AAMR, AAUP: Stop The Execution of Persons With Mental Retardation," is found in the earlier section of IDD articles). After finishing his address and without any warning, Robert quietly and reverently faced Martha and -- without any formal introduction -- recited the following words.

Isn't it strange how Robert the clown,
Walks into buzz saws that oft cut him down.

He pokes in his nose, and sticks out his neck,
With what he has going, you'd think he would wreck.

But no, he stumbles forward and clings to his pace,
And what keeps him going is found in a face.

It's your face, dear Martha, my very best friend,
That gives me the guts to over extend.

It's your lovely face I now must concede,
That makes me so cocky; you are all that I need.

(The audience gave Martha a standing ovation.)