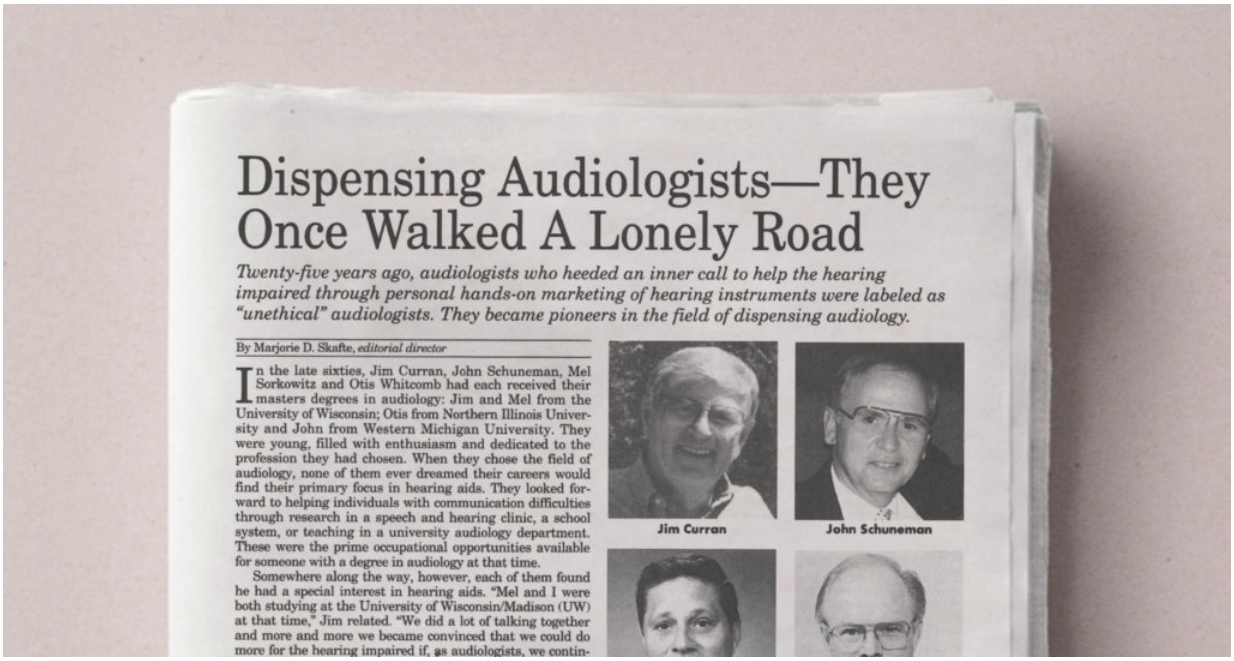
Canadian Audiologist
The Official Publication of the Canadian Academy of Audiology

Dispensing Audiologists—They Once Walked a Lonely Road

Published November 17th, 2021

Marjorie D. Skafte

Oct 10, 1994 | Patient Fittings, People | Reprinted with permission



Dispensing Audiologists—They Once Walked A Lonely Road

Twenty-five years ago, audiologists who heeded an inner call to help the hearing impaired through personal hands-on marketing of hearing instruments were labeled as "unethical" audiologists. They became pioneers in the field of dispensing audiology.

By Marjorie D. Skafte, *editorial director*

In the late sixties, Jim Curran, John Schuneman, Mel Sorkowitz and Otis Whitcomb had each received their masters degrees in audiology: Jim and Mel from the University of Wisconsin; Otis from Northern Illinois University and John from Western Michigan University. They were young, filled with enthusiasm and dedicated to the profession they had chosen. When they chose the field of audiology, none of them ever dreamed their careers would find their primary focus in hearing aids. They looked forward to helping individuals with communication difficulties through research in a speech and hearing clinic, a school system, or teaching in a university audiology department. These were the prime occupational opportunities available for someone with a degree in audiology at that time.

Somewhere along the way, however, each of them found he had a special interest in hearing aids. "Mel and I were both studying at the University of Wisconsin/Madison (UW) at that time," Jim related. "We did a lot of talking together and more and more we became convinced that we could do more for the hearing impaired if, as audiologists, we contin-

Jim Curran

John Schuneman

Click here to read article by Marj Skafte about perspectives of audiologists Jim Curran, John Schuneman, Mel Sorkowitz, and Otis Whitcomb.Download

History and People | October 1994 *Hearing Review* archives

By Marjorie D. Skafte

Article summary: Fifty years ago, audiologists who heeded an inner call to help people with hearing loss through personal hands-on marketing of hearing aids were labeled as "unethical" audiologists. They became pioneers in the field of dispensing audiology. Here are the personal stories of four masters degree audiologists who were among the very first to venture into dispensing hearing aids: Jim Curran, John Schuneman, Mel Sorkowitz, and Otis Whitcomb.

Note: This article was published prior to the establishment of *Hearing Review*'s website. To read and/or access the article, please click on the article on the right or point your browser to this link: https://www.hearingreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Skafte_DispensingAudiologistsLonelyRoad_Oct1994HR.pdf

Citation for this article: Skafte M. Dispensing audiologists–They once walked a lonely

road. *Hearing Review.* 1994[Oct];1(10):22-24.

Reprinted with permission.