

## **BRUCE R. BAKER**

### ***Healthcare Hero- Innovation and Research***

Bruce Baker is already a hero to 75,000 persons (and their families, friends, teachers and employers) with severe physical disabilities--individuals with cerebral palsy, head injury, stroke, MS, ALS, Down syndrome, etc. Baker's breakthrough Minspeak system enables persons with unintelligible speech to communicate in a functional and efficient manner. Minspeak, likely the single most widely used visual language (VL) in augmentative communication, has been translated into Spanish, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish, all with Baker's guidance.

Minspeak system operators:

- Now give speeches at major conventions (e.g., 2004 national political convention)
- Can "talk" verbally, and say exactly what they want to say to their brothers, sisters, teachers, employers, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters, without frustrating long delays for both speaker and listener. People who could not previously say "help me get my shirt on" can now tell their healthcare aides "I have to meet my friend at the library at 10 AM."
- Many system operators attend higher education, and are successfully employed, because they are now able to speak in a timely fashion.

Bruce Baker had his first contacts with individuals who could not use speech or hand signs successfully with unfamiliar communication partners in 1980, noticing they were significantly slowed by the number of "hits" required to generate speech via spelling. *His solution:* Baker used his classical linguistic training to create a patented visual language system based upon ancient hieroglyphics. The system enabled hundreds of words and sentences to be encoded with very few keystrokes. Originally designed for adults, speech-language pathologists began to use Minspeak to teach language to children with developmental disabilities. *Baker's system represents a transformative breakthrough that has greatly improved the lives of persons with physical disabilities.*

Baker's innovation spawned the development of six computer devices to take full advantage of the transformative power of the approach, and has application to a host of telecommunication devices.

Baker is widely acknowledged as a brilliant linguist and entrepreneur. He studied Latin and Greek at Wabash College (he's a Distinguished Alumnus); Indiana University; and University of Paris. He earned his Master's degree at Middlebury College. As part of his doctoral work in linguistics, Baker developed the semantic compaction language representation technique upon which Minspeak is based. Baker travels tirelessly to teach the system (US, Canada, across Europe, Australia, South Africa).

Baker is founder and President of the Pittsburgh PA-based Semantic Compaction Systems. An Adjunct Associate Professor, he teaches graduate courses at Pitt's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

A humanitarian, Baker founded and chairs SHOUT, a non-profit Pennsylvania corporation that studies employment issues for people with significant speech and multiple impairments. He has an Adjunct Associate Professor for ten years chaired the Pittsburgh Employment Conference for Augmented Communicators, committing countless personal and staff hours.

Baker's system allows fast access to language and voice for a large number of individuals, and has improved the quality of life for persons with the most severe physical disabilities.

Baker's innovation and stellar reputation shine brightly on Pittsburgh.