

## **Book Review**

**Title:** *The Disability Rights Movement: From Deinstitutionalization to Self-Determination*

**Author:** Duane F. Stroman

**Publisher:** University Press of America, 2003

**Cost:** Paperback - \$37.00 USD

**Reviewer:** Mike Clear

The book *The Disability Rights Movement: From Deinstitutionalization to Self-Determination* by Duane F. Stroman sets out to describe the history of disability as a minority group model in the United States through the lens of what Stroman describes as “multiple perspectives within sociology.” At the outset he provides a basic framework of some sociological concepts, analysis of medical and social models and traces the changing definitions of disability. Stroman frames his discussion as a journey of change from institutionalization to self-determination.

The primary worth of this book is that it contains a wealth of valuable information, about the history of disability in the United States since the latter part of the nineteenth century, particularly since the 1950s. This history is a strong focus on changing issues of definition, rights, services and advocacy. It is a broad survey of change.

The book identifies the “beginning student” as the audience and it is likely to be a useful text for senior high school and undergraduate students or others such as professionals or interested laity. *The Disability Rights Movement: From Deinstitutionalization to Self-Determination* is not, however, well written and although the use of tables to explicate a range of issues does assist, the format is dense and the writing mostly turgid. Sometimes the structuring of headings and sub-headings is not logical or conducive to an easy and accessible read. The broad survey approach lacks a quality of engagement at the personal and political level. The issues of self-determination and the journey of the disability rights movement is a powerful political history, yet reading Stroman’s work I was not connected with this. The profound injustices and the personal and social struggle for change that underwrite the achievements towards greater self-determination is more or less written out of his account. Notwithstanding these criticisms, the book is a useful resource for students interested in the broad social history of disability in the United States.