



SPRING 2005

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#1 Team**

Connections

35th Anniversary Year Edition

What better way to celebrate a significant milestone than by looking back and reflecting. Dean Colby invited four faculty members who participated in the events of the decades to reflect on "the times" throughout the 35 year history of the Graduate School of Social Work. Their memories are woven throughout this issue.

As Editor and Director of Alumni and Career Services, it was my privilege to reestablish contact with our alumni from the Pioneer Graduating Class of 1970. Efforts began to locate the members of the school's first graduating class when the idea of *A Salute to Pioneers* was born. It culminated with a faculty-alumni brunch celebrating the 35th anniversary of the first graduating class of the GSSW on May 14th. Several Houston Pioneers also attended the UH President's Commencement Reception held at Wortham House during the Commencement Week celebration.

Reentering the lives of our pioneers provided the following updates: Ann Chastang, of Temple, Texas attended the event and stated, "I could not imagine a more fulfilling line of work than social work. Every day I go home knowing I've made a difference!" Ann has worked in geriatrics, medical social work, home health, substance abuse and is currently working as a hospice social worker.

Miriam Edelman, Grace "Pete" Stuart and Vesta Eidman of Houston were all in attendance and are actively involved in private practices. Angie Grindon served as the pioneer link for the event and works close to home as a staff member for the University of Houston!

Ticia Hanisch of Corpus Christi recalled fond memories of both entering graduate school and getting married in 1968.

Jim Hodge of Houston joined in the celebration along with his wife and current business

partner. Neither Stella Edmondson of Houston, nor Goldie Rappaport Wetcher of Naples, Florida were able to attend due to travels in Europe. Linda Joyce Braunig of Charlotte, North Carolina was unable to attend but reports that she remains in contact with her former classmates.

Gloria Marek of Lower Gwynedd, Pennsylvania passed away in February of this year, as have classmates Paul Ulrich and Mary Fowler in years past.

Each Pioneer received a gift, awarded by Dr. Gerson David, Professor Emeritus and Founding Faculty member of the GSSW. Mary Marks Guillory, Director of Development, is to be recognized for the success of the *Salute to Pioneers* along with Dean Colby and the GSSW faculty. May 14th was truly a memorable day for all associated with the GSSW.



Pioneer Class of 1970 and Current GSSW Faculty

A MESSAGE FROM DEAN COLBY

GSSW Dean's Advisory Council

Carole Ashendorf
Baylor Geriatric Medicine Associates
GSSW Alumna '95

Angela Blanchard
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

Ruth Brodsky
Community Volunteer

Sylvia Brooks
Houston Area Urban League

Cam Canion
Community Volunteer

Leonel Castillo
Office of the Mayor

Felix Fraga
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

Nancy Frees Fountain
Frees Foundation

Brenda Gallagher
The Frank and Brenda Gallagher
Family Foundation

Barbara Henley
UH-GSSW

Marjorie Jenkins
GSSW Alumna '76

Cecile Keeper
GSSW Alumna '78

Ronald Lewis
Baker Botts L.L.P.

Barbara Mackey
GSSW Alumna '92

Linda May
Simmons Foundation

Rafael Medrano
GSSW Alumnus '80

Robert L. Navarro
Retired
GSSW Alumnus '76

Wayne Norden
Junior Achievement of
Southeast Texas

Cindy Reibenstein
Reibenstein & Associates
GSSW Alumna '88

Lawrence Root, MD

Monsignor Frank Rossi
Diocese of Galveston-Houston

Victor Samuels
Victory Packaging

Donald Sheppard
Houston Endowment, Inc.

Hinda Simon
Private Practitioner
GSSW Alumna '91

Ed Smith
Foley's

Jerri Workman
Heights Education Project
GSSW Alumna '89

Since Linda Joyce Brauning, the first individual who received the MSW degree from the University of Houston in 1970, there have been 2,999 graduates. In May 2005 – the GSSW's 35th anniversary, Angela Panzica became the GSSW's 3,000th graduate!

And what an incredible 35 years it has been. As seen through the eyes of GSSW faculty in this special issue of *Connections*, the GSSW has experienced the highs and lows faced by all organizations. Birthed in the ferment of the 1960s, the school's mission of promoting justice and equality was framed by the belief that anything was possible. As one of only four graduate programs in Texas, the GSSW quickly emerged in the early 1970s as a significant partner with groups and organizations in the Gulf Coast region. The GSSW's resiliency and strength were evident when faced with significant financial challenges that threatened the school's viability in the 1980s. The 1990s witnessed new educational and community programs, all of which continued to build on the school's original mission of promoting and advocating for social justice. In the beginning of the new millennium, three themes emerged: increased access to the GSSW through significant student scholarship initiatives; new faculty who broadened the GSSW's intellectual and practice capacities; and the continued refinement and promotion of peace and justice issues with the significant contributions of Jody Williams, the 1997 Nobel Peace Laureate, as a faculty member.

The GSSW faculty hosted the school's "Pioneer Class of 1970" with a brunch preceding this year's graduation ceremony. This small group of 26 individuals risked a great deal by enrolling in a non-accredited social work program. Had the school not been accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, their diplomas would not have been worth anything other than the paper on which they were printed. But they did risk and put aside their personal desires for the greater good. They understood that someone had to take the first steps to establish a graduate social work program in Houston.

In retrospect, the actions of the individuals who became the Class of 1970 reflect the core principle of justice – putting aside one's self interest in favor of the greater good. Their actions affirmed the GSSW's fundamental principle of social justice. Over the years, countless numbers of faculty, staff, students, alumni and GSSW friends have reaffirmed this principle and translated it into social action that has resulted in positive change efforts.

As we reflect on our past, we continue to embrace a central belief from the school's formative years – anything is possible.



Dean
Ira C. Colby



Angela Panzica
GSSW's 3000th Graduate



(L-R) Pioneers Angie Grindon, Vesta
Eidman, Miriam Edelman, Dr. Gerson
David, Ann Chastang, Grace Stuart, and
Jim Hodge

THE 1960s-1970s

It's 1968. The Vietnam War is still raging. Social injustice is manifest in the homeland. The activities and supporters of women's and civil rights movements have failed to achieve through established and political channels, the fundamental liberties and racial equality promised in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. People are becoming angry and often their rage boils into rebellion. The social and political conflict that gripped the nation is evident on campuses across the nation.

During this period of political ferment, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) was holding its 1968 Annual Program Meeting in San Francisco. At this conference I was approached by Dr. Daniel O'Keefe, the founding dean of the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work, who was recruiting faculty for the school that was set to open in September, 1968.

In the mid-1960s, social work leaders in Houston and throughout Texas had asked the University of Houston to consider the establishment of a school of social work to educate students for the social work profession with emphasis on the graduate professional characteristics of the M.S.W. degree. The Community Leadership Group (CLG) in Houston, headed by Monsignor John J. Roach and William P. Hobby, Jr., finally succeeded in realizing the long sought after goal. University of Houston President Philip Hoffman, after careful investigation, determined that actual statutory authorization was not necessary, and on his recommendation, the Board of Regents in 1966 decided to establish the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston under its institutional role and scope. In 1967, the State Legislature authorized its establishment with an appropriation of \$100,000 to employ a Dean for planning and faculty recruitment.

Dean O'Keefe was searching for a competent doctoral level faculty to provide leadership and implementation of the research component of the M.S.W. curriculum at the new school. He said that he had discussed my dossier with Dr. William E. Gordon, his Research Curriculum Area Consultant, and was ready to recommend me to President Hoffman for the offer of a faculty position at the rank of Full Professor. Dr. O'Keefe was eager to have me join him on July 1, 1968. The rest of the five original faculty joined us in August, 1968.

1970s

In June 1970, the Commission on Accreditation voted unanimously to grant accredited status to the Graduate School of Social Work. The mandatory review of newly accredited schools which takes place three years after the initial accreditation was postponed to June, 1974. The postponement was granted by CSWE due to the untimely demise of Dean Daniel O'Keefe in October, 1971 resulting in interim arrangements for the administration of the school with an Acting Dean.

The death of Dean O'Keefe was followed by the death of two original faculty members by the end of 1972. The emotional trauma caused by these events, no doubt, deflected and slowed the efforts of the Dean and the faculty to revise curriculum and respond to the Accreditation Commission's 1970 site visit observations. Dean Gary Lloyd, successor to the first Dean, and the faculty developed a new curriculum design that was a more responsive, open curriculum within the context of the 1970 and 1974 revised statement of objectives.

The faculty perceived the curriculum as constantly evolving. Challenges presented in the field and class curricular areas pertaining to the education of social work practitioners: in ethnic or minority communities; and in administration and planning, strengthened the resolve of the faculty to engage in a flexible approach to curriculum building.

In Spring, 1977, Dean Gary Lloyd appointed an Accreditation Committee which was charged with the responsibility of monitoring a self-study process which extended over a period of two and one-half years. This exercise provided the faculty with an extensive and intensive opportunity to examine the validity of the educational goals of the school, and to appraise the adequacy and effectiveness of methods used in pursuing the educational goals and for evaluating the working of the program.

Dean Gary Lloyd resigned and left the school in January, 1977. The self-study process continued during the transition with Dr. Florence Clemenger as Acting Dean and Chair of the Accreditation Committee. The search for a Dean combined with consultation provided to Chancellor Barry Munitz by Dr. George Magner, then Professor of Social Work at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, further highlighted the evaluation of resources and needs of the GSSW. The subsequent appointment of Dr. George Magner as UH Provost facilitated the participation of Central Administration of the University in the self-study process and the securing of a firm commitment for the much needed additional resources for the GSSW.

Despite a number of changes in faculty composition and changes in the school's administration, work connected with the preparation of the self-study report enabled the faculty to become a more cohesive group in dealing responsibly with issues of social justice, equality and compassion within the environmental and political context of the 1970s.

By Gerson David, Ph.D.

THE 1980s

The decade of the 80s was characterized by both stability and change in the GSSW. For the most part, the early 80s were grim years. Amidst the conservatism of the Regan era and corresponding cut backs in social services, dwindling Title XX dollars eliminated over \$100,000 in student stipends and the college lost seventeen full-time and ten part-time faculty. Angry students made a futile attempt to institute a class action suit against the university. The alumni organization lost energy and the school's status within the university was dimmed. The dismantling of our continuing education program was another casualty of vanishing funds.

A bright spot in these initial years of turmoil was the dedication of the new Social Work Building on Sunday, March 23, 1980. Despite the overall gloomy context, the school saw numerous innovations under the leadership of Dean Jennings and Associate Dean Alex Zaphiris. Among these was the experimental "Pan American Program," coordinated by Assistant Dean Fernando Galan, which brought our first year M.S.W. courses to students at Pan American University in Edinburg, Texas. Eventually, nine students completed the program before budget constraints caused the program to be suspended indefinitely.

Another curricular innovation initiated at this time was a health care specialization for students in both the Social Treatment and the newly revised Community Practice tracks, with forty students participating in this new specialization. Renewed interest in a doctoral program at the GSSW led to the development of Ph.D. program proposals that received substantial community support. Sadly, the rapid drop in oil prices in 1985 led to a severe loss of state revenue and the State Coordinating Board "froze" consideration of all new programs. A disappointed faculty was forced to put the Ph.D. proposal aside. Despite the era's problems, momentum and a degree of stability was achieved during these years. But yet another shift came when Dean Jennings announced his resignation in order to return to teaching.

In 1985, Dr. Karen S. Haynes became the fourth Dean of the GSSW and the only female academic dean in the history of the University of Houston. Under her leadership, the GSSW was reaccredited for the maximum length of time. Moving forward with her goal-oriented agenda, Dean Haynes initiated numerous community projects and May 1986 saw the advent of the first social work Futures Conference, a joint venture between the GSSW and the Houston Unit of the NASW. Four other efforts helped the GSSW to successfully reconnect with the community: the revival of the continuing education program; the reestablishment of a viable Alumni Association with the first alumni newsletter, *Connections*; the Helen B. Kapiloff Health Care Lecture and the Women's Issues Symposium. Under the leadership of Associate Dean Karen Holmes, the symposium was funded by a generous donation from an alumna.

During 1987-88, two entirely new positions were created within the school. The Director of Student Services, under the leadership of Sandra Galvan Posada, centralized academic advising, and the Director of the Office of Community Projects (OCP), led by Marcia Sanderson, expanded community outreach. During this period, Virginia Cooke Robbins was recruited back to the GSSW as the Director of the Field Practicum office.

Faculty became more visible in state, national, and international arenas and their efforts, combined with the newly created OCP, brought more than \$400,000 into the GSSW through large research and training grants. Through university support, the GSSW substantially expanded its Computer Learning Center and Dr. Paul Raffoul became its Director.



Original Architectural Design for the Graduate Social Work Building in 1980

Continuing with efforts initiated in 1989, the GSSW faculty, together with many community practitioners, threw themselves into a full examination of the M.S.W. curriculum. After much deliberation and struggle, they emerged with university approval for a substantially revised curriculum. The new program required a minimum of 63 credit hours, including an expanded foundation with a choice of five fields of practice concentrations in the second year. Major change was again in the air.

By Susan Robbins, Ph.D.

THE 1990s

While serving as a member of the faculty at the University of Denver, prior to joining the GSSW, I learned of the GSSW's Associate Dean, Dr. Alexander Zaphiris, who worked in Denver before my time. I joined the GSSW faculty as an Associate Professor in 1991, which was the same year that Dr. Zaphiris retired from the GSSW. During this time, Dr. Karen Haynes served as the Dean of the GSSW and was later appointed as President of the UH-Victoria campus in 1995. For the duration of her tenure as Dean, from 1985 to 1995, the GSSW developed an innovative MSW curriculum. Upon implementation in 1992, this curriculum, which is still utilized today, includes a specialized program with five concentrations: Children and Families, Gerontology, Health Care, Mental Health, and Political Social Work. In 1996, while celebrating its 30th anniversary year, the GSSW also celebrated its tenth year of hosting the Futures Conference. After Dean Haynes' departure to UH-Victoria, Dr. Karen Holmes was appointed as the Interim Dean until 1999, when Dr. Ira Colby joined the GSSW as our new Dean.

In fall 1992, the GSSW opened a new page in its book of academic achievement with the establishment of its Ph.D. Program. A senior faculty member recalled that it took 17 years of dedication to finally obtain this approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. I was appointed as the first Director of the Doctoral Program. In the following year, we admitted a cohort of 15 doctoral students, including Judy Baer who became our first doctoral graduate in 1996. Judy is now a tenured faculty member at Rutgers University in New Jersey. After the completion of my three-year term as Doctoral Program Director, Dr. Howard Karger was appointed as Director in 1995. By fall 1998, seven doctoral students graduated, many of whom are now professors within major universities.

Another distinct memory of the GSSW in the 1990s was the expansion of the Office of Community Projects (OCP). Upon my first visit to the University of Houston in 1991, Marcia Sanderson, who was Director of OCP, greeted me at Hobby Airport when most faculty members were attending the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in New Orleans. She showed me around Houston and impressed me with many of the GSSW's accomplishments. During the summer of 1991, the OCP was operating with a minimal amount of support. Before officially joining the faculty, I worked with Marcia to submit two federal proposals. We enjoyed our collaborations through what seemed like endless facsimiles and Bitnet communications. By the end of this decade, the work of OCP evolved into three primary areas: Continuing Education providing a series of workshops and a certificate program in Human Services and Gerontology; Special Projects including the BRIDGE/EL PUENTE, Center for Youth Service Professionals, Child Welfare Education Project (CWEP), Protective Services Training Institute, and The Funding Source; and program evaluations and needs assessments including special studies to assess the needs, efficiency and effectiveness of many social service programs. Over the course of this decade, the OCP's budget reached \$1.75 million with a staff of 22. Due to the increasing scope of work within OCP, Marcia appointed Ann McFarland as the Director of OCP in 1999 while she worked as the Director of the CWEP program.

Another cherished reminiscence of the 1990s involved two important staff persons for the GSSW. The first memorable person, Beth Shipp, was responsible for students' registration until her retirement in 1997. Her image was often portrayed as a strict individual who was knowledgeable about all rules and procedures to the extent that even faculty members consulted with her prior to sending students to any UH office. With her serious commitment and attention to detail, Beth maintained an exceptional recordkeeping system for the GSSW and could identify necessary information for faculty and staff effectively. Although she appeared serious on the surface, she actually had a kind, soft, and good-hearted side.



Charlotte Campbell

Another significant GSSW staff member was Charlotte Campbell, who worked in the Admissions Office for 24 years until her retirement in 1996. She maintained GSSW admission records and assisted faculty members with reviewing applications. In honor of her extensive contributions, the GSSW established the Charlotte Campbell Scholarship Fund in 1997.

My memories of the GSSW during the 1990s reflect a period of growth and innovation. It has been a joy to be a part of the school largely because of the dedication and commitment of faculty, staff and students.

By Patrick Leung, Ph.D.

THE 2000s

As we approached the year 2000, it was clear that our profession would be faced with tremendous social, political, technological, economic and demographic shifts – shifts that are still occurring at unprecedented rates. All realms of social work including education, policy, administration, and practice have become increasingly vulnerable to changes produced by globalization, devolution, privatization and the transition from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. And, along with all social work organizations, the success of social work education now depends heavily on our ability to predict, interpret and influence the constant change.

During the past five years, the GSSW administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni have worked to define and distinguish the school as an institution that embraces the opportunities created by the forces of change. Under the leadership of Dean Ira Colby, the school has set new standards for social work education. We have seven new faculty members who each bring expertise and resources around many of the most critical issues faced by our communities; we have responded to the unexpected budget shortages with unprecedented fiscal responsiveness and we've increased the efficiency and effectiveness of our work by implementing cutting-edge technology at the school. We have truly become a "school for the future."

In addition to the contributions of our faculty, the GSSW has successfully brought PeaceJam to Houston. In 1996, The PeaceJam Foundation was founded in Denver, Colorado. PeaceJam is built around Nobel Peace Laureates who work personally with youth to pass on the spirit, skills and wisdom that they embody. The goal of PeaceJam is to inspire a new generation of peacemakers who will transform themselves, their communities and the world. PeaceJam is a yearlong, on-going educational program for youth. The participating Nobel Peace Laureates are directly involved in developing the curriculum and the program itself. PeaceJam is the only organization in the world that has twelve Nobel Peace Laureates working together long-term for a common cause -our children. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel will be our featured Nobel Laureate for Houston's first PeaceJam event scheduled for this November.

One of our most daunting challenges over the past five years has been the significant loss of education funding at the federal and state levels. Dean Colby, The Dean's Advisory Council and Mary Marks Guillory, the GSSW's Director of Development, took the lead in developing innovative and highly successful strategies for addressing these issues. Since 2000, the school's endowment has more than doubled, funding from major national foundations has increased dramatically and the GSSW has greatly benefited from an increase in major gifts from school alumni and their families. Additionally, in 2004, the GSSW created its first endowed professorship and initiated funding for a second endowed professorship.

The national and state budget changes had a major impact on students as well as institutions. The federal funds for student financial aid have significantly decreased while the cost of education has increased. For the first time in the GSSW's history, we now have a full scholarship program to help students with the cost of their education. The scholarship program has been very successful and we continue to see growth in both our endowed and operating scholarship funds.

From reaccreditation to community organizing and fund-raising, one of the tools making our growth possible is technology. Under the direction of Dr. Paul Raffoul, Associate Dean for Administration and Information Technology, the GSSW has transitioned to a state-of-the-art educational facility. Our classrooms are now wired for Internet connection. Each classroom has built-in projectors and Internet access. The GSSW is also equipped with an internal video system that allows the administration to broadcast important school news and reminders on televisions located throughout the building.

In 2003, the GSSW was fully engaged in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reaffirmation process. The GSSW was the first school in the nation to submit materials electronically and to undergo the process with the new CSWE guidelines. In 2004, we were notified that our reaffirmation was successful and the school was recognized for its innovative use of technology.

Over the past five years, we have also seen a significant increase in the number of faculty using some component of e-learning in their classrooms – especially WebCT. Its biggest advantage is that it allows students access to information at any time of the night or day. During the summer of 2003, the GSSW offered its first fully on-line course utilizing WebCT technology.

The GSSW has adopted Mahatma Gandhi's powerful quote, "We must become the change we want to see." In that spirit, we are always working to understand and embrace our constantly changing environment so that we can fulfill our mission of advancing social, economic and political justice and advancing knowledge for competent, ethical practice and leadership with diverse populations.

By Brené Brown, Ph.D.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Andrew Achenbaum, Professor of History and Social Work, received the *Geneva Mathieson Prize* for outstanding contributions to the field of aging from the National Council on Aging in March. On January 16th, Dr. Achenbaum was quoted in the *New York Times* "Week in Review" by Robin Toner regarding social security.

Monit Cheung, Professor, received a 2005 Asian Pacific American *Unsung Hero Award* and was featured in a public service announcement aired on WB39 in honor of the accomplishment. Dr. Cheung made the following professional presentations in Hong Kong: "Counseling Skills" and "Handling Child Sexual Abuse Cases," *End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation*, (December 2004). "Child Sexual Abuse Truth/False Assessment: Practicing Interviewing and Treatment Techniques," Chinese University of Hong Kong, (June 2004). She

has several new journal publications: Cheung, M. and Driver, D.D. "Self-plagiarism as a Social Work Concern," *Hong Kong Journal of Social Work* (2004). Kendall, W.D.B., and Cheung, M. "Sexually Violent Predators and Civil Commitment Laws," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 13(2) (2004). Beveridge, K. and Cheung, M. "A Spiritual Framework in Incest Survivor Treatment," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 13(2) (2004).

Kelli Connell-Carrick, Assistant Professor, has a new book, Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, *Understanding Child Maltreatment: An Ecological and Developmental Perspective*, Oxford University Press (2005). She has a journal article, Connell-Carrick, K. and Scannapieco, M. "Using a Social Constructionist Theoretical Model in Child Welfare," *Constructivism in the*

Human Sciences (9)1 (2004), and presented: "Keeping Preschoolers Safe at Home: An Eco-Developmental Model of Maltreatment," *15th Annual Family Preservation Conference*, San Antonio (September 2004).

Jean Latting, Professor, was honored with an Endowed Faculty position awarded in her name at the GSSW.

Needha Boutté-Queen, Assistant Professor, gave the following presentations: Erich, S. and Boutté-Queen, N.M. "Social Workers Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding the Transgender Community," *22nd Annual Conference of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors*, Detroit (November 2004). Boutté-Queen, N.M. and Erich, S. "Identifying Barriers to Obtaining Social Work Licensure," *28th Annual Conference of NASW Texas*, Austin (October 2004). Erich, S. and Boutté-Queen, N.M. "Children and Racial Identity Formation," *Casa*

de Esperanza, Houston (September 2004).

Susan Robbins, Associate Professor, was a guest on the television show "Drugs, Crime and Politics" that aired on Time Warner Cable's Houston Media Source Channel November 3rd. Dr. Robbins was elected to the Board of Directors of The National Center for Reason and Justice, and as the Vice President of the Drug Policy Forum of Texas. She has been appointed as an advisory consultant for a documentary on medical marijuana produced by Jed Riffe Films titled "Waiting to Inhale" that was screened at the Ann Arbor Film Festival this Spring.

Sandra López, Clinical Assistant Professor, has been promoted to Clinical Associate Professor.

Virginia Robbins, Clinical Associate Professor and Director for the Office of Field Education, has been promoted to Clinical Full Professor.

In Memory of GSSW Alumni:

Mary Ann Board, Class of 1975, passed away on April 10, 2005

Gloria Marek, Class of 1970, passed away on February 15, 2005

Howard Rabinowitz, Class of 1973, passed away on October 29, 2004

Dean Ira C. Colby
and
the faculty of the
University of Houston
Graduate School of Social Work
proudly welcome

Reverend William Lawson

to the
University of Houston GSSW
as a
Distinguished Community Scholar
in Residence

BILINGUAL SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

On the evening of February 17, the beautiful residence of Chancellor and Mrs. Jay Gogue on South Boulevard was a hubbub of light, cheer, and excited guests. The Chancellor sponsored "our" reception for local Hispanic business leaders to introduce the GSSW's new campaign for scholarships for Spanish-fluent social work students.

The guests included alumni Theresa Ramirez, Rafael Medrano, Robert Navarro, among others, plus four GSSW students: Rebecca Gonzales, Pamela Ostaszewski, Jack Griffin-Garcia, and Lucrezia Montez. They presented the Gogues with a candy-filled piñata as a token of thanks. Among the guests were lawyers and business leaders, all strongly devoted to local Hispanic causes.

Dr. Gogue believes in smaller groups with the opportunity to really communicate eyeball-to-eyeball. He also likes brief programs; his welcome and our Dean's presentation were eloquent but only minutes in length. Richard Farias, the founding principal of the inner city school, Tejano Community Center, addressed Houston's urgent need for social workers who can provide services in competent Spanish. Rebecca Gonzales, President of the GSSW Hispanic Student Association, described the hardships of obtaining a professional degree and entering a career with heavy student loan obligations, or trying to earn money while going to school. Three additional students were asked to give their views about scholarships and they rose to the occasion with poise. The highpoint of the evening was the announcement by Felix Fraga that NCI was donating \$5000 to the scholarship campaign. Felix, a former city councilman, is the current Vice-President for External Affairs for Neighborhood Centers. Both Felix and NCI President Angela Blanchard are on the GSSW Dean's Advisory Council.

The Committee on Scholarships for Spanish-Speaking Social Work Students has successfully raised the initial \$100,000 to meet its fundraising goal to cover full scholarships for the first cohort of five students entering the August 2005 class. The committee will now move on to raise funds for the second and third groups of students entering in 2006 and 2007. To receive a scholarship, a student must satisfy these criteria: *be admitted to the UH MSW Program; be entering the first year of the MSW program; be fluent in Spanish and English; be a full-time student at the GSSW; commit to work in Harris County for two years after graduation.*

By Barbara Henley

DOCTORAL SYMPOSIUM

The First Doctoral Social Work Student Research Symposium, *Today's Research-Tomorrow's Practice*, was held on March 31st at the UH Athletics/Alumni Center. The program included research-based presentations by several of our current doctoral students. Attended by GSSW alumni, faculty and a number of community practitioners, symposium presenters included: Moises Prospero, *Sexual Violence Among Mexican-American Gang Affiliated Females*; Lucinda Nevarez, *The Effect of School Status on the Health Behaviors of Young Fathers*; Nicole Willis, *A Content Analysis of Inmates' Last Words in the Texas Death Chamber, 1982-2004: Implications for Theory, Practice and Research*; Lisiane Church, *The Effect of Family Psychoeducational Therapy and Social Skills Training*; Elsie Lo, *Stress Management of Hispanic Working Mothers: Single System Approach*; and Brian Trachte, *PeaceJam: A Model of Peace Education*.



Moises Prospero



Lucinda Nevarez



(L-R) Nicole Willis, Brian Trachte and Amy Russell



Dana Smith



Dr. Maxine Weinman Epstein
Ph.D. Program Director

AGIFT AWARDED NASW OUTSTANDING TEAM

AGIFT (Agencies for Gerontology Intercultural Field Training) at the UH GSSW is one of six Geriatric Social Work Practicum Partnership Programs, a national initiative funded by the John A. Hartford Foundation. The purpose of the initiative is to increase the number of gerontology social workers in response to increased need reflected in changing demographics. A secondary purpose is to strengthen the interaction between the practice community and the academy in order to improve the integration between class and field for social work students.

The UH AGIFT Consortium, a true collaboration of faculty and field instructors, was the glue that held the entire program together. The benefits of this university community partnership are incalculable. The nucleus of the AGIFT Consortium is comprised of committed, creative field instructors who had front line responsibility for the performance of students. From the beginning it was clear that in partnership with the gerontology faculty this group would design and run the program. All major decisions were made by the Consortium members. Task groups were formed. Program ownership evolved as problems were jointly solved. Faculty learned of daily practice realities and used that information in their teaching. Field instructors began to understand the realities of curriculum development and became resources for the creative blending of practice with the academic. Research collaborations evolved. Agency service collaborations evolved. Joint educational opportunities for students were developed. Everyone was a teacher; and everyone was a learner.

At the conclusion of funding for the UH GSSW project, 49 students had participated in the AGIFT program, exceeding the goal of 31 by 18 students. Thirty-three AGIFT Fellows had graduated. Eighty-three percent were employed in the field of gerontology social work. The percentage of MSW graduates with the gerontology concentration had risen from 4.6% in 1998 to 21.2% in 2003. The Gerontology Concentration had risen in student number from the smallest concentration to the second largest of the five concentrations offered by the GSSW.

Aging content was presented to 220 students in foundation year courses. The gerontology course elective, "Community Empowerment with Elders of Color", was offered for three consecutive summers and was unanimously approved by faculty for inclusion in the permanent course inventory. Three gerontology faculty members completed the summer faculty traineeship and incorporated their new practice based learning into their teaching. The Gerontology Employment Clearinghouse continues and now includes a gerontology social work alumni database, a resource center for geriatric agency information, career service workshops and website linkages.

Although funding has expired, the AGIFT Consortium continues under the leadership of Ellen Seaton of Harris County Social Services. The Consortium continues to manage the rotation model of field placement developed to expose students to the continuum of care in aging. It continues to administer and teach the foundation year Field Seminar Series and the monthly concentration year Integrative Seminar. In August, 2004, it sponsored the first annual gerontology social work dinner for all incoming students to learn about practice opportunities with aging at the start of their graduate study.

As a result of the success of Consortium efforts, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation awarded the UH-GSSW a \$500,000 endowment scholarship in gerontology. This endowment will guarantee supportive funding for all future AGIFT Fellows. At the conclusion of funding for the AGIFT program in 2003, the Hartford Foundation evaluation team awarded the AGIFT program its highest rating, a score of #1, Truly Outstanding.

In recognition of this exemplary accomplishment, the AGIFT Consortium was awarded the 2005 NASW/Texas Houston Branch Outstanding Team Award. The award was announced at the Social Work Awards Breakfast held in March.



**Outstanding Social Work Team
AGIFT Consortium**

In the Spotlight

ALUMNI NOTES

Ellen Seaton ('90) received the *Heart of Social Work Award* as National Field Instructor of the Year. The award was given to her at the Annual Program Meeting of CSWE in New York in February. This national award recognizes not only her unique talent for social work education, but also her passion and dedication to the profession itself.

For the past eleven years, Ellen has worked for Harris County Social Services. She currently serves as the Manager of Special Assistance Services where she heads six programs that offer aid to seniors.

Ellen strongly believes in maintaining a relationship between practice and academia, and thus has continued a deep-seated involvement with the GSSW. In addition to field instruction, she has also served as an adjunct faculty member and a continuing education instructor for the Human Services and Gerontology Certificate Program. She has been an active member of both the Field Practicum Advisory Committee and the Gerontology Concentration committee. Furthermore, Ellen has greatly contributed to the success of the nationally recognized AGIFT (Agencies for Gerontology Intercultural Field Training) Consortium where she is currently serving as its chair.

Ellen is the immediate past Chair of the NASW Houston Branch and is the current NASW Texas State Chapter Board Secretary. She continues to inspire both current and future social workers through her commitment to practice, teaching, and community service.

Cele Keeper ('78) on January 15th, along with other Texas writers, read from a new book, *The Noble Generation Volume II*, in which she has a chapter. This project, a joint effort of Barnes and Noble and the Texas Department of Aging and Disabilities, brings to life personal experiences from the 20th century.

Sondra Kaplan ('79) is enjoying her 15th year in private practice. She and **Judith Miller ('81)** deliver many talks through their innovative Healthy Divorce Co-Parenting Program for divorced and blended families. She is active as a member of the Alliance for Collaborative Divorce Professionals and has recently been elected Chairperson of the Houston Reconstructionist Havurah.

Bertha Fountain ('82) reports that from 2001 to 2003 she is proud to have been a part of the Mental Health community's response to helping people heal from the World Trade Center tragedy. She was allowed to be creative and used Social Work and Yoga to help people who had been traumatized. The Lifetime Channel is currently featuring her work as part of their Real Women Real Stories series. She relaxed in Brazil afterwards. Bertha is now Senior Director of Street Work, a program of Safe Horizons in New York.

Janie LaQue ('89, '02) retired from Harris County with 26 years of service in the field of Adult and Juvenile Probation. She is currently working as a social worker with Houston Hospice providing grief and bereavement counseling.

Tracy Wink Reeves ('91) has recently accepted a position with Baylor and is in charge of providing clinical social work services to the patients of the Maxine Mesinger Multiple Sclerosis Clinic.

Rosalia Vasquez ('92) is the Family Services Coordinator at the Center of Hearing and Speech where she is developing a play therapy model for children with hearing impairments. She is interested in networking with other social workers in the area of deaf services.

Darlene Hurt Henson ('95) is currently involved in fundraising and international adoptions with International Family Services.

Phyllis Moreau Baker ('98) is Director of Social Services and Case Management at Memorial Hermann Behavioral Health Center in Beaumont, TX.

Elizabeth Kent ('01) is working for the Maurice Barnett Geriatric Wellness Center of Collin County in Plano, Texas. She is also the Volunteer Coordinator for the Friendly Visitor Program that matches volunteers with home-bound and isolated seniors. Elizabeth is interested in networking with alumni in the area.

Wendy McWilliams ('02) has been working at MD Anderson Cancer Center since graduation in 2002.

She is the New Membership Chair for the GSSW Alumni Board and is expecting her first child in July!

Sue Kulbeth ('03) is living in Georgetown, Texas where she works part-time for the Burnet Counseling Center providing therapy for victims of sexual abuse and their families. She also works part-time at Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center. Sue feels that she has a real opportunity to make a difference in the community.

Kelley Kyle ('03) is living in Boulder, Colorado where she is working with college students as a Contract Therapist with Colorado University. She also works through the local area Battered Women and Rape Crisis Center. She volunteers weekly at the Humane Society and is trying to find a way to integrate pets into therapy sessions with children.

Margaret Mount ('04) is living in Spokane, Washington and has recently accepted a position as Education Director for Planned Parenthood of the Inland Northwest.

Betty Rich ('04) is living in Denver, Colorado and is working for HCR Manor Care as the Alzheimer's Unit Director. She is thrilled that it only takes 10 minutes to get to work! Betty is particularly happy to be in Denver to be involved with wedding planning for her recently engaged daughter.

LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Ten GSSW students participated in the Legislative Internship Program in Austin during the 79th legislative session this spring. Student interns had a unique opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the political process and to learn the role social workers have in it. Internship opportunities were offered by Representative Rafael Achia (Dallas), Representative Lon Burnam (Fort Worth), Representative Garnet Coleman (Houston), Representative Jessica Farrar (Houston), Senator Mario Gallegos (Houston), and Representative Melissa Noriega (Houston). Student interns included Jackie Duron, Kelly Foster, Jamie Frank, Reesa Joyce, Demetri Lopez, Kathryn McCarter, Jennifer Miller, Mickey Montemayor, Rebecca Rosalez, and Brigitte Zabak.

The UH Graduate School of Social Work is one of only a few social work programs in the country offering legislative internships. More than 30 students participated in policy-making internships in Houston and Austin this past semester. Students were required to apply for the competitive legislative internships and commit to remain in Austin for the duration of the 79th Legislative Session. While interning in Austin, the students participated in graduate classes online and communicated with their professors through webcasts and online discussions. In previous years, GSSW students have interned in Washington, D.C. congressional offices, NASW national offices, Houston City Hall and various Harris County Commissioners' Offices.

Students also had the opportunity to participate in the Legislative Study Group with the Progressive Caucus in the Texas House of Representatives focusing on policy analysis. Interns were responsible for tracking all bills dealing with health, human services, consumer protection, education and the environment. They worked extensively to create and summarize bills while crafting policy statements for their respective assigned legislators.

"Following their political internships the vast majority of GSSW students are hired into significant legislative positions," says Dean Ira Colby. "Alumni of the GSSW Legislative Internship Program have served as chiefs of staff for state committees, as legislative directors in representatives' offices, and as governmental relations staff for a number of interest groups and organizations as well as organizers for neighborhood based groups and non-profit organizations."



Legislative Interns at Work in Austin

ALUMNI UPDATE FORM: Bring us up-to-date!

Name _____ Year Graduated _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- I would like to receive email updates and announcements from the GSSW. Please add my email address to the Alumni Distribution List.
- I would like to join the GSSW Alumni Association. Please send me information on how to join.
- I prefer to receive the *Connections* newsletter
- Via email
- In print

Please clip and send information to University of Houston, GSSW, 237 Social Work Building, Houston, TX 77204-4013 or email to gsswalum@sw.uh.edu

**University of Houston
Graduate School
of Social Work**

237 Social Work Building
Houston, TX 77204-4013

Ira C. Colby
Dean

Mary Marks Guillory
Director of Development

Ann Liberman
Editor
Director of Alumni
& Career Services

PHONE:
713-743-8071

FAX:
713-743-8149

EMAIL:
aliberman@uh.edu
or gsswalum@sw.uh.edu

Connections is a semi-annual publication of the GSSW Office of Alumni and Career Services. Its purpose is to link the GSSW with alumni and the social work community.

GSSW CONTACTS

Telephone Numbers

Dean's Office	(713)743-8085
MSW Admissions	(713)743-8130
Ph.D. Admissions	(713)743-8080
Development	(713)743-3599
Alumni Relations	(713)743-8071

Email Addresses

Dean's Office	deans@sw.uh.edu
MSW Admissions	mswinfo@sw.uh.edu
Ph.D. Admissions	phdinfo@sw.uh.edu
Alumni Relations	gsswalum@sw.uh.edu
Career Services	mswjobs@sw.uh.edu
Continuing Ed	gsswce@sw.uh.edu
Field Office	mswfield@sw.uh.edu
Funding Fax	gsswffax@sw.uh.edu

Connections can be accessed online at
www.sw.uh.edu/alumni/newsletter.htm

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

"Military Experience A Social
Work Perspective"
July 16
UH Alumni Center

GSSW Alumni Association
Annual Meeting
August 24
The Hampton

Richard J. DeBottis Lecture
Dr. Dianne Garner
"Women & Aging:
Filling the Knowledge Gaps"
November 2
The Terrace
at West University

PeaceJam
Adolfo Pérez Esquivel
Nobel Laureate
November 12-13
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