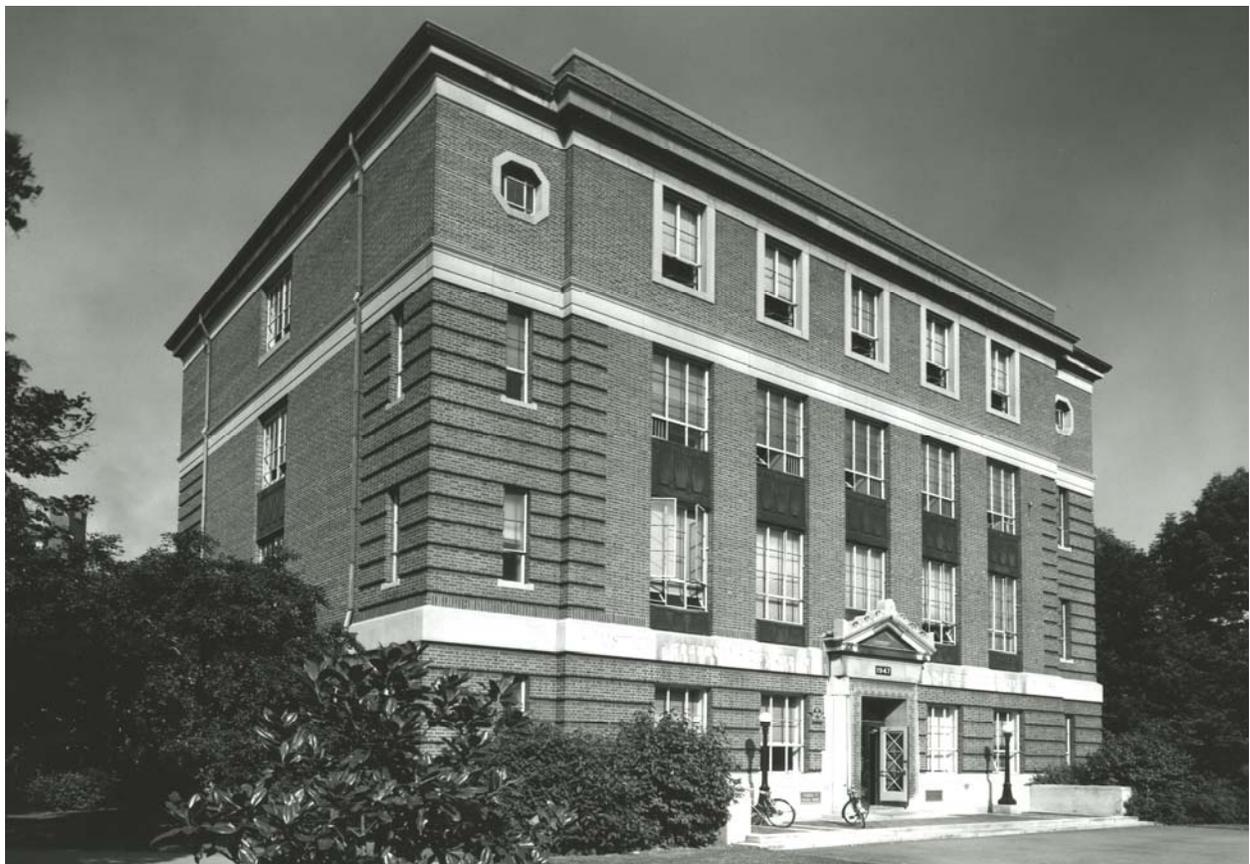


# FACING THE CHALLENGE:

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

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Stillman Hall (date unknown)

## Prologue: What social work really means



This booklet offers a glimpse at the rich history of the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University. Below is a compilation of the reflections of the emeriti professors on the real meaning of social work:

Because you're no good if you can't get the services for your client. (Em. Prof. Walt Pillow)

If you don't like the way the world is run and the way this college is run and the way this agency is run, shut up your damn mouth and go finish your education and come back and you take it over. And I had several students who did that, and they did wonderful things. One of them was a lawyer and he went into the Youth Commission and he changed laws for the state, he was the director of the Ohio Youth Commission, he did it. And he did wonderful things. (Em. Prof. Walt Pillow)

Looking at folks through social work eyes...So I'm convinced that social work itself has a very vital way of looking at other human beings who are in distress and to help them get out of distress and back into health...(Em. Prof. James Pantalos)

All I know is that I'm a social worker and I practice it the best that I can with what I think I know, what I've been trained in accumulating all this crazy information which is called knowledge and sifting it out...(Em. Prof. James Pantalos)

## What Social Work Really Means (2)

I believe you should have strong knowledge and data before you start raising hell. Too much emotion and fire without solid facts and possible solutions are not likely to bring about good ends. The advocacy for social change is a wonderful part of the social work tradition. It works best when we have a factual defined problem and have taken the time to develop some good solutions. (Em. Prof. Bev Toomey)

(Social work is) based on a belief system that values social justice and human life. Social work identifies social problems, both systemic and individual. It attempts to solve them with changes in social policy and practices. It focuses on both changes to the social system and to individuals to increase the well being of the community and the individuals living in it. (Em. Prof. Bev Toomey)

I think social work really is helping people in society, it's helping people deal with problems in living in society (with) all kinds of problems...some of them are economic, some of them are psychological, some of them are interpersonal, but that's what social workers are supposed to be able to do... with a special commitment to the poor. (Em. Prof. Stan Blostein)



1979 Classroom scene (Professor Charles O. Ross)

I think we need to have a global vision. (Em. Prof. Milton Rosner)

The inspiration (in dealing with the vast poverty of Bangladesh) was the philosophy of my own lifestyle. And that is, never give up, never give up on a problem of any kind whether it's in the U.S. or any other part of the world. Again, try to devise a plan. (Em. Prof. Milton Rosner)

### **What Social Work Really Means (3)**

In a word, empathy. We've always had the capacity to identify with oppressed people, people who are in a bad way who are just like us, the only difference is that they have some problems that we don't share, but we can be helpful to them. Empathy, compassion...many words that you can use, but basically it's an identification, and a willingness to reach out and work with that person, be helpful to that person, so they could become self-sufficient (and) self-determining. (Em. Prof. Rocco D'Angelo)

Because (some) might see these people (clients) and view them as they don't have any ambition or energy or skills and they really leave it at that, they don't look beyond. I think we tend to look beyond, we look for the person, the ability, the gifts, the potential...and then try to steer them in a path that has a payoff for them. (Em. Prof. Rocco D'Angelo)

I've often said that social work is always concerned with the leftover and the left-out. I've often thought that social work is concerned with picking up the damage that capitalism does to people. (Em. Prof. John Behling)

What is the quality of that relationship? Am I one-up or one-down on you? Am I ahead of you or behind you? Those are destructive. All of that is destructive, that we should have an egalitarian notion about what we should be there to one another...We may accumulate wealth or fame, academic prominence, or we may end up in prison...but at the end of the day, it's the relationships that we have known. (Em. Prof. John Behling)



Director Charles Stillman at Hall dedication, 1937

## What Social Work Really Means (4)

I used to draw up different models, one of the ones that caught was the Hoover vacuum cleaner model. ‘Beat while you sweep while you clean.’ If the object is a family in poverty and the kids have no shoes...Wrong! You wanna beat while you sweep while you clean. Use the shoes a lot more than just shoes. The ability of man to earn enough to buy some shoes, or how to keep the shoes in good shape, or teach the kid now to take care of his own shoes, or all three. Is there some way that this fact can be used as a fire-work, to go off in different directions, and lots of different things for the kid, for the mom, for the family, for the community? (Em. Prof. Frank Longo)

That’s what social work is all about: enabling and empowering. (Em. Prof. Frank Longo)



Prof. Livingston (date unknown)

(Without social work education) they didn’t have a theory to go along with it. They were just kind of plumbers without theory. (Em. Prof. Sam Dixon)

The most fundamental thing, what one primarily offers is a relationship, a form of social exchange...(to) minimize disaffection and maximum solidarity. (Em. Prof. Nolan Rindfleisch)

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Sources: Oral history interviews and Archival materials.

## Foundation of the College

As a relatively new profession, social work grew out of the philanthropic movements of the 1800s. Not until the 1920s did social work begin to receive recognition as a profession instead of being considered a group of untrained volunteers. Specialized education, an essential aspect of any profession, developed alongside the social workers' other efforts to establish themselves as an important force in society.

Although Ohio State's College of Social Work (also known as School of Social Administration) did not emerge as a separate entity until 1927, the university did offer classes that became the foundation of the College. Below are listed some classes that were related to social work:

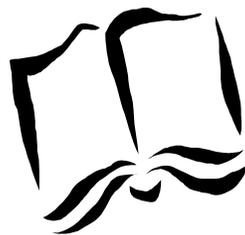
In 1875, courses on the economic aspects of poverty were offered, including on "the Unfortunate Classes and Persons in Society;"

In the 1880s, a political science course focused on "pauperism" and charities;

In 1901, Dr. Hagerty offered a sociology class that appeared similar to a social work class because it required field work at Godman Guild-House (a settlement house) to learn "scientific training along the lines of charity and philanthropic work;" and

In 1910, the university offered a field work course in sociology. Other new courses included "Modern Charity," "Poverty," and "Preventative Philanthropy."

In 1916, the university created two new specialties under the College of Commerce and Journalism. One specialty was "charity organization" with a stress on "relief giving" and casework, while the other was "social service" with an emphasis on settlement work. These specialties reflect the twin roots of social work, Mary Richmond's Charity Organization Society and Jane Addams' settlement houses.



World War I proved to be a turning point in the history of both social work and the College of Social Work. In 1919, the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work was created with Ohio State as one of the 15 charter members. During the 1920s, the courses for the Master of Science in Social Administration included “The Assimilation of the Immigrant” and “Social Case Work.” Although several students took these courses, only one student actually received the Master of Science degree. This student, Prather James Hauser, wrote his thesis on “Treatment of Columbus Daily Newspapers of News Regarding the Negro” in 1923.

### **The First Years: 1927-1930**

Dr. Hagerty became the first Director of the School of Social Administration in 1927, which was under the administration of the Department of Sociology. The School offered two degrees, a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts.

The undergraduate program offered five specialties:

- General Social Work
- Social Case Work
- Group Work
- Community Health Administration
- Rural Social Work

In contrast, the graduate program declared that:

Its object is to prepare men for administrative positions in social work such as the administration of Financial Federations and Community Councils of Cities, and the executive positions of the Red Cross, State Boards of Administrations, Charity Organization Societies, Community Welfare Organizations, Playground Associations, etc. (1927-28 Catalogue)

Besides field work and a thesis, the graduate curriculum also included courses in:

- Modern social welfare movements
- The community
- Social case work
- Methods of social investigation
- Community surveys

## The 1930s

Charles Stillman, the Director for whom the building was named in 1952, first began teaching at Ohio State in 1929. He set up the first curriculum in community organization for health and welfare offered in the U.S., which received sanction from the Community Chests and Councils of America, Inc. In 1932, he became Director of Social Administration and received recognition as a national leader in community health and welfare studies.



School of Social Administration (1930s)

Serving as host at a Commerce party, Stillman noted that a certain business professor who went to church on Sunday “consorted with the truth and then taught advertising at the University on Monday.” Stillman’s lively personality left a deep imprint on the College.

According to his daughters, “the words on Stillman Hall—Justice, Freedom, Democracy, Knowledge, Education, and Happiness—were a result of several family discussions at dinner. Her father felt that these six words expressed what it takes to make a perfect life.”

## The 1930s (Cont)

After ten years of waiting, the School of Social Administration was able to leave the “congested conditions” in the Commerce Building. At the new building’s dedication in 1937, Harry Hopkins was the guest speaker. On the first floor, the District Office of Family Bureau of Columbus and Franklin County served as the training center for advanced students in case work.



Construction of Stillman Hall

Besides the construction of Stillman Hall as a public works project, the Depression affected the School as budget problems caused less hiring and smaller salaries. The School often employed graduate students as teachers as a less expensive alternative than hiring more faculty. Also, Stillman went on leave in 1935 to direct the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (later known as Works Progress Administration).

In 1932, the School was separated from the Department of Sociology. Both the M.A. in Social Administration and the doctoral programs started in the early 1930s. The first PhD in Social Administration was awarded in 1934. As enrollment grew during this decade, there were 30 graduate degrees and 60 undergraduate degrees awarded a year by 1939.

New specialties emerged in the 1930s:

Community organization;

Social Case Work;

Group work and recreation; and

Administration and health-related courses.

## The 1940s

Before the U.S. entered World War II, the Depression still affected the School as the salaries remained low. Parents found it harder to send their children to college, so enrollment also went down. World War II obviously affected the enrollment rate when both men and women entered the armed forces. During the war, there were fewer classes taught. Faculty would teach classes related to the war, assist in teaching in other departments that were poorly staffed, and even join the armed forces or government service.

According to the 1944 Bulletin of the School of Social Administration, “The peace-time need for workers in these fields was great, in time of war it is far greater.” World War II created new needs for social work professionals as the males could become morale officers, women could work in auxiliary organizations, and relief agencies such as the Red Cross needed rehabilitation workers in the hospital. Training in statistics was critical as students learned the use of punch cards and statistical schedules.

The bulletin also noted that the war had affected the public’s attitude toward ex-convicts, who proved to be excellent soldiers and “are rendering good service in the armed forces and in war industries.” In this context, social workers needed the “right kind of personality” and “an interest in people for their own sake and a faith that human beings have within themselves the power to change.”



Hallway in Stillman Hall (date unknown)

## The 1940s (Cont)

On the OSU campus during the war, the armed services occupied the dormitories so students had to find their own off-campus lodging at \$12-16 a week. Male students had to take six hours of Military Science.

During the 1940s, undergraduates could specialize in public assistance, penology and corrections, group work and recreation, and social investigations and social statistics. On the graduate level, students could focus on social casework, group work and recreation, community organization, penology and corrections, and social research. The School stressed community organizations because “A charitable concern for others has been advocated as a principle of ethical behavior by religious leaders for centuries.”



Stillman Library (date unknown)

## The 1950s

OSU created new curriculum requirements for the University, including 15 credits each in Natural Science, Social Science, and Humanities. Freshmen and sophomores were required to take these prerequisites. In 1954, the M.A. in Social Administration became a Master's in Social Work. The School separated the undergraduate from the graduate courses. As the Council of Social Work Education developed from two different organizations in 1952, OSU was one of the leading schools in this momentous step toward professionalizing the education of social workers.

## The 1950s (Cont)

During this decade, community organization became the most important focus of the School. As Emeritus Professor Pantalos stated, “In fact, OSU was the college in the nation that if you wanted a very capable person to work at the community chest...you came to Ohio State. If you wanted to hire someone to work at the community chest, you went to Ohio State. A very powerful reputation.” (Community chests were the precursors of United Way.) Two other fields that made the School famous were corrections and rehabilitation for the handicapped.



Community chest organization class, 1958

## The 1960s

As society lurched into this decade famous for its turbulence, the School also experienced many changes. There was an “expanding enrollment, expanding field instruction, and bringing people in who had PhD’s” (Emeritus Professor Rindfleisch). In 1960, the name changed to the School of Social Work and the bachelor’s degree was renamed from B.S. in Social Administration to B.S. in Social Welfare. The 1964 Master’s program consisted of Social Welfare Policy and Services, Human Behavior and Social Environment, and Social Work Practice with emphases on case work, group work, and community work.

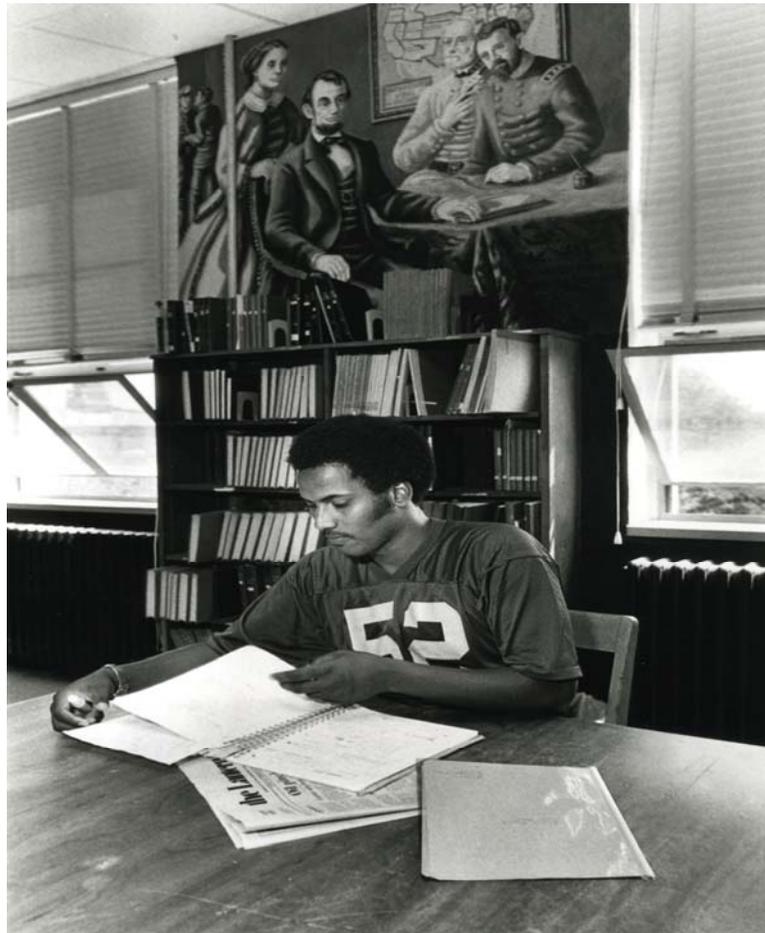
The “New Careers” program assisted 60 students who were not qualified to go to college to receive free academic services. Most of these students were older African Americans who wanted to work on “some of the problems of the ghetto.” During their second year, they interned in social welfare agencies or prisons. According to Dr. Rindfleisch, this training of “indigenous subprofessionals” was successful in providing social work education in a broader context.

Emeriti professors agree that in the 60s, “there was a broader activism, a period of social ferment, a lot of changes going on” (Emeritus Professor Blostein). Students became involved in civil rights through working with the South Side Settlement House as the administration worked on recruiting more African American students.

Some faculty became involved in the anti-war movement, especially Emeritus Professor John Behling. The FBI kept a file on him for eight years, carefully recording when he donated baked goods to a bake sale, went on a hunger fast for peace, and showed a movie about the French student protests at Stillman Hall. Besides the anti-war movement, the movements that occurred in the 60s included civil rights, women’s rights, and free speech. “The 60s represented a period that was the most exciting, that...I matured in a way that has pleased me.” (Emeritus Professor Behling)



## The 1970s



Student studying in library (date unknown)

This decade began in a period of turbulence as the student protests raged all across the country. At OSU, a flyer from this period read, “No more My Lai!!” The students protested the University’s role in the Vietnam War and the low enrollment rate of African Americans and low-income whites. Stillman Hall, which is close to the Oval, was in close proximity to the center of protests on campus. “That was when things exploded. The National Guard troops were there. Now that was exciting, don’t get me wrong, as I look back from the comfort of my living room. Wow, what a time to have lived and been involved. I still get tears in my eyes from emotion, but also from having been gassed with tear gas bombs on the Oval.” (Em. Prof. Frank Longo)

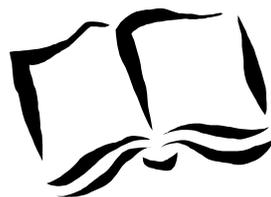
## **The 1970s (Cont)**

According to the Alumni magazine's detailed chronology of the spring of 1970, 100 social work students "walked out of classes to protest what they termed a denial of rights to participate in decision-making concerning faculty, course structure, field placement and the role of the School in the community." While the war protests occurred in the Ohio Union that week, the social work students "demanded 50 percent representation and 50 percent voting rights on all School decision-making bodies." Besides advocating for student rights, these students also demanded a Black Studies program which was soon created. Student involvement in the College decision making structure also increased as a result..

In 1976, the School became designated as a College within the University structure. This enhanced the professional status of social work education and made OSU one of the national leaders in this field.

Other highlights of the 1970s was Project 100, a recruitment effort to try to "correct a racial imbalance" in the College. International social work became a higher priority as the College helped the Egyptian government develop a social work system. This included a needs assessment with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

In 1973, the Alumni Society administered a survey of alumni to investigate what social work students should learn to become effective in their field. One alumnus wrote, "Understanding one's own values and helping others clarify theirs is vital in this age of moral indifference." Another wrote that "Motivating others on behalf of your client or to affect change in the community is important in advocacy." Even as the turbulence of the 1960s died down, the commitment to social change did not diminish within the alumni of the College of Social Work.





Dean Washington with international students (date unknown)

## The 1980s

The decade of Ronald Reagan's conservative values meant funding cuts and public disillusionment with social programs. Social work jobs were scarcer, which meant a lower enrollment rate in the College in the early 80s. Social problems such as homelessness and joblessness, however, worsened during the recession.

After hearing Charlie's story of the circumstances surrounding his homelessness, I said to myself, this is not fair; he was a victim of circumstance, he just had a few bad breaks. This could happen to anyone; he shouldn't be forced to endure this hardship and live this lifestyle. Then again, who should have to endure this kind of lifestyle? (Quote from student Joe Evinsky's journal at his experience at Friends of the Homeless Shelter as cited in 1986 Intervention article)

As the decade progressed, though, the social work profession began to reassert itself. Social work schools experienced a higher rate of enrollment as the licensing of social workers gave them professional credibility and as the number of jobs increased.

## **The 1980s (Cont)**

The College made two significant changes in this decade by developing a part-time Master's program and creating a five-year "advanced standing" program that combined a baccalaureate and Master's in Social Work. Both changes reduced the barriers for students who wanted to become social work professionals but could not afford the time or money for a full-time, two-year program.



(Date unknown)

## **The 1990s and beyond**

By 1990, the field of social work had started the shift from social agencies to private practice. The College countered this trend by stressing international issues, such as providing study opportunities in Poland and India. Innovative teaching techniques included Dr. Keith Kilty bringing a mock Klansman to a Minority Perspectives classroom for an "interview" and Dr. William Eldridge staging a mock funeral to discuss death.

In 1993, OSU proposed a merger of the College of Social Work with the College of Education. The social work faculty successfully opposed this change, since they believed that keeping the College as a separate entity retained the unique identity of social work.

## Epilogue: Facing the challenges

As social work education begins a new millennium, the OSU College of Social Work must overcome challenges both old and new. Poverty has existed for centuries, but the economic problems caused by outsourcing and other effects of globalism will create a new dimension to poverty issues. Terrorism has brought international tensions into the homeland once thought safe. In this tense climate, our clients may face bigotry, fear, and even hostility—and we must advocate for them.

Fortunately, we have a legacy of courage from the professors, staff, administrators, and students who have walked through the doors of Stillman Hall. Graduates of the social work program can build on this legacy as they face the new challenges ahead. This booklet is only a brief glimpse at the wonderful accomplishments of social work educators and their students.



I think that where I am planted I am ready to grow.

(student quote, 1975 letter to Director Medhurst)

Within me, there has been an unrelenting compulsion to help people experiencing pain in the most dire of circumstances. I simply had to find a way to do that job better....

We must translate what we know into action....

(Alumnus quote from H. Stanley Eichenauer, MSW, 1970, Mental Health Administrator)(cite: Alumni magazine)

Any eagle that wants to fly and be a social work eagle, you can....

When you talk about eagles flying, I'd just see people burst into this glory and you see them take off into the sky. And I guess that was my reward.

I can share that, I have that happiness with them,

I've got a lot of eagles flying in this world.

I think they're good people and they've done good, done good.

(Em. Prof. Walt Pillow)





Burkhart painting Library Mural, Stillman Hall

*SOCIAL WORK IS A DYNAMIC  
PROCESS—  
IT MUST MOVE*

(CHARLES STILLMAN, 1940)

