Celebrating 100 Years: Our History, Our Story, Our Future
ON THE COVER

Have you ever done anything for 100 years? One hundred of anything is a really big deal! From transparencies to PowerPoints, the Great Depression to the Great Society, Head Start to immigration, the World Wide Web to digital justice—the college has played a significant role in the evolution of how our society cares for people.

FEATURED

[7] Leading with vision and purpose
A tribute to our leaders and a look at those who have guided the college thus far.

[8] Alumni shape social work’s future
From the boardroom to the licensing board, CSW alumni are showing up and shaping the future of the social work profession and beyond.

[10] What was it like when you were in college?
Alumni talk about some of the most pressing social issues during their time at the college, as well as fun stuff like the cost of bread and gas.

[16] Stillman Hall: A landmark adorned in history
It’s the hub and home to all things social work at Ohio State. More than 15,450 graduates have launched their careers from its classrooms and hallways.

[24] Palmer brothers fund scholarship to honor father’s belief in college’s mission
Learn about a man who believed in people, reform and second chances, a man who voluntarily placed himself behind prison bars to negotiate for the incarcerated.

[25] “Sew”cial work scholarship supports students stitch by stitch
Ranked as one of the country’s Top 10 quilt shops, the Elys’ business—as well as their philanthropy—is inspired by a passion for the developmentally disabled.

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A Note from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the centennial celebration of social work education at the College of Social Work. This year is an opportunity for us to raise our gaze from our day-to-day routines and accomplishments and reflect upon the bigger thing that we are a part of.

One hundred years ago, our predecessors began formally training social workers at Ohio State. I do not know if they anticipated that what began as the School of Social Administration, and later transitioned to the College of Social Work, would produce 15,500 graduates who each in their own way have changed the world through practice, research and service. However, I am confident they shared our vision that the world is a better place with Buckeye social workers in it.

In this special 100th anniversary issue, I invite you to reflect upon your time here at the college, whenever that might have been. I hope you recognize familiar faces, learn about the accomplishments of your former classmates and enjoy reminiscing about your favorite memories and your fondest experiences.

To all of you who have worked or studied here, I remind you that you are part of a lineage of persons who shared your commitment to knowledge and a just society where all can reach their potential. You might take the time to think about those who came before you, who helped make the difference you make in the world possible and who contributed in many ways to the advancement of social work education and research at Ohio State.

And in that same spirit, you might then reflect upon your own contributions and how you could mentor the next generation of Ohio State social work practitioners and scholars. Because having looked to our past and honored those who came before us, it becomes appropriate to look forward to our next 100 years, to consider what society needs from us now and to establish our place in the continuing lineage of social work at Ohio State.

I am often awed by the accomplishments of our alumni, students, faculty and staff, and it is a great privilege to serve as dean. Among this year’s accomplishments is our further rise in the national rankings. U.S. News & World Report’s current rankings of America’s Best Graduate Schools place the College of Social Work 6th among public universities and 13th overall among the 268 graduate social work programs in the United States.

I am grateful for everyone who has contributed to 100 years of social work at Ohio State. On behalf of all the people who, for a century, have enjoyed better lives because of the work that happens here, thank you.

Best wishes,

Tom Gregoire, MSW, PhD
Dean, The Ohio State University College of Social Work
Charles C. Stillman, a former minister who lectured at Ohio State in the 1920s, became director of the school in 1932.

Should you reach 100 years old, what would you point to as your defining legacy? At Ohio State’s College of Social Work, there has always been a drive—a successful one—to embrace advances and innovation and to define how social work is perceived, taught and implemented. Rooted in that approach is a single altruistic mindset that has continued across 10 decades: “When I wake up today, what will I do to help others?”

The social worker’s commitment to the most vulnerable among us is the college’s promise and prominence. It allows students to face difficult circumstances and put their hearts and souls into helping their clients overcome life’s scars. It translates lessons learned individually into policy on a public scale.

The college’s forebears would be proud of how today’s faculty, students and staff are helping inform and reshape not only the issues affecting communities but the communities themselves.

“One of the things that makes us unique is our core set of values of justice and valuing human beings and relationships,” says Tom Gregoire, dean of the college. “So there’s always been a pragmatic quality to our profession. Our outcome is a more just world, but as the world changes, we also change with it.”

**One course to light the way**

Before social work was a college, a school or a department, it was a series of courses at Ohio State that tried to address the social issues of the day. The first one, “The Physical, Intellectual and Moral Conditions of Social Progress and Social Amelioration; the Unfortunate Classes and Persons in Society,” appeared in 1875, five years after Ohio State, then known as the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, was established. Though the department that conceived the course was abolished a year later, the groundwork was laid.

By 1887, courses and lectures on pauperism, charitable organizations and social reform were offered in the Department of History and Political Science. They were taught under a sociology curriculum, but the social work aspects were unmistakable. By 1919—the same year the college became accredited—the course catalog announced six curricula in “the field of social work.”

Later the department was renamed Economics and Sociology and was placed in the College of Commerce and Journalism. But by 1927, the university created the School of Social Administration, and two years later, Charles C. Stillman, a former minister who lectured at Ohio State in the 1920s, joined the faculty. He became director of the school in 1932 when it separated from the Department of Sociology, and his influence helped the school make its mark nationally.

Students were taught to be leaders and fundraisers of community and charitable organizations, and during Stillman’s time, Ohio State graduates could be found spearheading some of the many Community Chests and Councils of America chapters, the precursor to United Way.

The school also benefited from Stillman’s recruitment to lead the Ohio Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935. Using WPA labor and leftover WPA funds from other projects, Stillman got the school a new home in 1937. It was named Stillman Hall in his honor in 1952. His daughters would later say that the motto carved into the building’s facade—“Justice, Freedom, Democracy, Knowledge, Experience, Happiness”—resulted from family dinner discussions about what makes a perfect life.
In 1939, Ohio artist Emerson C. Burkhart (left) completed 10 murals in Stillman Hall as a part of the New Deal’s WPA Federal Arts Project.

A journey to prominence
Emeritus Professor Richard E. Boettcher, who was dean between 1983 and 1993, said having the college at a prominent institution such as Ohio State made a difference. “We had and still have many resources that other social work schools do not possess,” says Boettcher, who was dean of Missouri’s social work college for seven years prior to his arrival at Ohio State. “Our research possibilities locally and nationally were amplified compared with smaller operations that didn’t have funding or talent to do the kind of work high-level research demands.”

Because classrooms and offices were forced to move into other buildings as the college grew, during his term Boettcher asked for and received the green light to enlarge Stillman Hall. A 23,000-square-foot expansion was completed in 2000 to bring social work back under one roof. Enrollment increased 62 percent to more than 700 students in that decade, mostly because of the new part-time MSW Advanced Standing Alternative Program (ASAP) and expansion of the MSW program to Ohio State’s Lima, Mansfield and Newark campuses.

“Certainly, today’s enrollment is considerably greater than what it was in ’93, but our expansion was an important way of demonstrating our viability as a degree program at Ohio State and of showing there was a substantial effective public demand for what we had to offer,” Boettcher says. “This was an important growth step.”

The faculty makeup began shifting under Boettcher, too. More women were hired as male faculty retired, creating a 50-50 split (today it’s 84 percent women faculty), and racial diversity was an important focus as well. “Most of our student population is female, and we needed to have role models for our students,” Boettcher says. “We similarly made a goal of hiring minority faculty and achieved our objective in that regard.”

In other quantitative measures, the present-day college is achieving historical firsts. The most social work students ever—1,475 on the Columbus and regional campuses—enrolled in fall 2018. Research expenditures reached an all-time high in FY18 with an increase in awards to faculty, staff, and students.

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Social Work Milestones

1875 The first social work-focused course—“The Physical, Intellectual and Moral Conditions of Social Progress and Social Amelioration; the Unfortunate Classes and Persons in Society”—is offered by the Department of Political Economy and Civil Policy.

1910 The first field work course in sociology is established for seniors and graduate students.

1918 The first two Bachelor of Science in social service degrees are awarded to Ada May Remington and Helen Mae Risden, part of a two-year track in the College of Commerce and Journalism.

1919 Ohio State becomes a member of the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work, later named the American Association of Schools of Social Work. The college is accredited. Today, the college is recognized as the oldest continuously accredited public social work program in the country.

1927 The School of Social Administration is created and resides within the Department of Sociology. Dr. James E. Hagerty is the first director.

1929 Charles C. Stillman, a visiting lecturer during the 1920s, joins the faculty.

1931 Kenneth W. Miller earns the first Master of Arts in Social Administration.

1934 William J. Blackburn Jr. earns the school’s first PhD in social administration. He later joins the faculty.

1937 The School of Social Administration gets a new building using Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. The building is later named Stillman Hall.

1939 Ohio artist Emerson C. Burkhart completes 10 life-sized murals on the fourth floor of Stillman Hall as part of the WPA Federal Arts Project about the history and development of social work.

1954 The Master of Arts in Social Administration becomes the Master of Arts in Social Work.
1960 The School of Social Administration is renamed the School of Social Work.

1970 One hundred students walk out of class to fight for more of a voice concerning faculty, course structure, field placement and the role of the school in the community as well as the establishment of a Black Studies program. Their requests were granted. Professor Charles Ross supports student efforts to end widespread racist practices on campus.


2000 Stillman Hall’s expansion is completed, adding 23,000 square feet of new classroom and office space. The historic library murals are restored.

2008 The college ranks 19th among public universities and 31st overall among graduate social work programs in the United States, according to U.S. News & World Report’s rankings of America’s Best Graduate Schools.

2009 LiFEsports (Learning in Fitness and Education through Sports) becomes an initiative led by the College of Social Work and Department of Athletics. Originated in the 40-year-old National Youth Sport Program (NYSP), LiFEsports aims to enhance the quality of youth development, sport and recreational programs to increase positive youth outcomes.

2010 The college offers the first nationally available social work courses through iTunes U.

2012 The college distributes iPads to all faculty and staff, becoming the first college at Ohio State to implement the technology into its curriculum.

2012 The college climbs to 15th among public universities and 26th overall among more than 200 graduate social work programs in the United States, according to U.S. News & World Report’s rankings of America’s Best Graduate Schools.

The college started a veterans initiative in 2009, and its enrollment of student veterans and active duty military personnel proportionally continues to be the highest in the university. Its commitment to support veterans is demonstrated through building relationships with partners across campus, in the community and with its veteran students. For instance, the college was among the first on campus to fund and embed a veterans advocate to support its veteran students. In addition to veteran-focused events and a certificate program, the college’s MSW program also offers specialization for working with veterans.

The college also achieved its highest rankings ever—13th overall and 6th among public universities.

But numbers can’t tell the complete story of how the college is making a difference. “What I’m most proud of is that we’ve never been more engaged in our communities with our research and teaching,” Gregoire says.

Tackling today’s issues
Faculty and student research is helping the city of Columbus make better policy and budget decisions about its ever-growing immigrant population. The college also is delivering data on the state’s aging population and helping create an age-friendly community. In collaboration with the Colleges of Nursing and Medicine, social work runs an intergenerational daycare center on Columbus’ east side that pairs three-to-five-year-olds and seniors.

“They have a safe place to go during the day, their caregivers can go to work and the older adults get to remain in their homes,” Gregoire says.

Also noteworthy is how infusing technology into teaching and learning has had a tremendous positive effect. Social work gained a reputation as a techno-maverick when it became the first college at Ohio State to use iPads in the classroom and the field in 2012. The college also produced the first three social work courses on iTunes U, and it continues to experiment constantly with mobile tech.

“The biggest tech breakthrough in teaching during my first 10 years here was the move from transparency to PowerPoint. Now all hell has broken loose,” Gregoire says with a laugh. “Information is everywhere, so how do we create a cohort of students who can think critically about sorting through that?”

Technology also made it easier to connect and collaborate, but that’s something the college has been cultivating for years. Leaning on its talented faculty, social work endeavored to develop specializations in fields such as aging, mental health, children and families, alcohol and drug addiction, and new American and immigrant communities—and it made it a point to do so by partnering with other Ohio State colleges.
The college opens the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse and Prevention and Recovery (HECAOD), a collaboration among Ohio State’s College of Social Work, College of Pharmacy, Office of Student Life, Generation Rx Initiative and Collegiate Recovery Community.

The first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is offered on human trafficking, drawing more than 30,000 students from 187 countries.

The Champion Intergenerational Day Care Center opens, where both older adults and young children interact and learn from one another.

The college receives its first $1 million individual donor contribution from Preston V. McMurry (BSSW ’60).

The part-time online MSW Advanced Standing Alternative Program (ASAP) is launched, followed by full-time ASAP during summer 2017.

The college makes its first appearance in the Top 10 among public universities and Top 20 overall, ranking 9th among publics and 17th among more than 220 colleges and universities in the United States, according to U.S. News & World Report’s rankings of America’s Best Graduate Schools.

The college welcomes Age-Friendly Columbus and Franklin County. Age-Friendly is a collaborative approach to helping elders age in place and supporting communities to respond to their changing needs.

The college celebrates another milestone as it climbs to 6th among public universities and 13th overall among 268 graduate social work programs in the United States, according to U.S. News & World Report’s rankings of America’s Best Graduate Schools.
BEING THE CHANGE: ALUMNI SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL WORK

From the boardroom to the licensing board, from city hall to the halls of Congress, Ohio State social workers are making change in big ways. These alumni are expanding the role and reach of social work through policy, advocacy and a firm commitment to social work values in whatever setting they practice. They draw connections between lessons from their time at the College of Social Work, highlights from their careers and the future of the social work profession.

Samira Beckwith
MSW ’77
It’s easy to see that Samira Beckwith does not take things for granted. While she has brought her career many places—from direct hospice care to testifying in front of U.S. Senate committees to her current role as president and CEO of Hope HealthCare—Beckwith still cites the opportunity to serve as her greatest accomplishment.

“This is what hospice work has taught me,” Beckwith says. “Being at the bedside shows you that every moment is special and important. I have had the wonderful opportunity to make a difference for people.”

Beckwith sees beyond collaboration in complex systems like health care, emphasizing a transition to shared awareness of human systems.

“Social work fundamentals should be fundamental for all people.

“We know that when something affects the person, it affects the family. There needs to be synergy and systems working together. Inter-professional collaboration was the beginning, but we need allies in this work.”

Dr. Keith Alford
MSW ’87, PhD ’97
Director of the School of Social Work and interim chief diversity officer for Syracuse University,

Dr. Keith Alford holds an unequivocal vision for the future of social work.

“We must champion the clarion call for diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility,” he says. “Social workers are not just mental health professionals or macro practitioners, they are facilitators of social justice as well. We must continually uplift the dignity and worth of humankind.”

Raising his son made these commitments professional and personal for Alford.

“When my son was born, they gave him 48 hours to live,” he recounts. “I had a choice to either step up to the plate or step up to the plate. Parenting him through the years, I was able to live what I advocated my whole life—to not only work through what might be viewed as hardships, but also promote people’s strengths and applaud their triumphs.”

This strengths-based perspective is central to Alford’s approach to his work.

“We live in a multicultural society, where there is room at the table for everyone,” he adds. “We need to make sure each person has a seat.”

Lori Criss
BSSW ’91, MSW ’92
Relationships have always made the difference for Lori Criss. Coming from a small town to a big university like Ohio State, Criss valued the personal experience and community she found at the College of Social Work. Now as the director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, relationships still guide her work.

“I’m so proud of the opportunity to be a recovery ally, build relationships with people with lived experiences and be there for them in really difficult circumstances,” she says. “I get to be a voice for people who don’t get to be at the table.”

Being that voice is not an easy task, especially when advocating for people experiencing mental illness and addiction.
“There is so much stigma around addiction and mental illness,” Criss says. “And that stigma extends to programs and advocates. It has taken years to find allies who are willing to have conversations that move beyond ‘either-or’ thinking about who is right and who is wrong. We need people to see that kind of thinking is a barrier to progress and that another way is possible.”

**Dr. Denise Goodman**
*PhD ‘93*

Dr. Denise Goodman has built her career around a bold approach to advocating for children. Currently serving as a child welfare consultant and trainer, she has worked with states and jurisdictions to reinvent their policies and practices to promote the best interests of children.

“A lot of jurisdictions wanted really strict rules for foster families,” Goodman says. “But group care is not a place for kids to be raised. Families come in all shapes, sizes, and we had to evolve those systems to make a difference for children.”

With over 40 years of experience in the child welfare system, Goodman is not afraid to do what needs to be done for kids in need. “I ask for forgiveness, not permission,” she says. “There are often solutions, but no one has ever tried them. If it is in the best interest of a child, I’m going to take that chance. If people recognize that it is the right thing to do, you just have to do it.”

**Amy Rohling McGee**
*BSSW ‘92, MSW ‘94*

When Amy Rohling McGee brings the latest evidence on effective health policy to a legislator’s attention, she does it through a social work lens. “It’s so easy to dismiss people with different perspectives,” says Rohling McGee, president of the Health Policy Institute of Ohio. “I’m always thinking about where they are coming from. How can I establish rapport and meet them where they’re at to move to another place or position?”

Rohling McGee also sees connecting social workers to avenues for advocacy as a key piece of creating sustainable policy change. “Advocacy is the antidote to burnout,” she says. “When people experience barriers that are rooted in flawed policy, hopelessness can lead to despair. It’s important that we demystify the policymaking process so people can articulate what they’re experiencing.”

Crediting instructors during her time at the College of Social Work for planting the seed for policy work, Rohling McGee is doing what she loves. “If this position would have existed when I was in school, it would have been my dream job,” she adds.

**Danielle Smith**
*BSSW ’08, MSW/MPA ’10*

As the executive director of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Ohio Chapter, Danielle Smith sees self-reflection as a critical piece of social work education and practice. “I had so many moments at the College of Social Work when in small, kind ways, people let me mess up, be a student and were invested in my learning,” she says.

During her tenure at NASW Ohio, Smith helped close a loophole in social work title protection and succeeded in banning the harmful practice of conversion therapy in cities across Ohio. Yet, she places her advocacy within the context of social and political histories. “When we decided how to respond to the growing Movement for Black Lives, we realized that our role was to improve social work. As social workers, we have power and authority that can harm people if we are not reflecting on our practice.”

That reflection has led NASW Ohio to step further into its role as a social work advocate. “We stand firm in our grounding in social justice and anti-oppression work,” Smith adds. “We’re not shying away from taking action that requires us to be uncomfortable at times.”

**Elon Simms**
*BSSW ’09, MSW ’10*

Elon Simms sees social work practice reaching far beyond its traditional venues and roles. “I see nowhere that we can’t go,” he says. And Simms has taken social work to many places.

After graduating from the College of Social Work, Simms eventually took the role of director of field education at the college, where he pushed innovative field placements to get social work students into new settings and positions. Currently serving as the director of community affairs for Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, Simms is proud to take social work into environments where he can apply his skills. “I often hear, ‘I didn’t know social workers did this,’” Simms says. “We need to be seen in roles that some may not typically associate with our profession. Social workers should be leading nonprofits, for-profit institutions, working in philanthropy, speaking up and advocating for the perspective we can bring to many settings.”

The value that the college placed on relationships is something Simms still carries with him. “I’m blessed to have degrees from such a great institution,” he says. “We are preparing for the next 100 years with the foundation we have set today.”

Learn about other Social Work Buckeyes at [go.osu.edu/alumni-spotlight](go.osu.edu/alumni-spotlight)
OUR ALUMNI THROUGH THE DECADES

We pay tribute to those brave and committed students who started paving the social work path in 1919, as well as those who have followed them in the many decades since.

Their dedication and hard work will never be forgotten.

College of Social Work alumna
Marlene Owens Rankin (BSSW ‘61) was The Ohio State University’s first African American Homecoming Queen, pictured here shaking hands with Ohio State President Novice Fawcett. She is the daughter of Jesse Owens, the first American in Olympic track and field history to win four gold medals in a single Olympic event at the 1936 games in Berlin.
1950s

James N. Miller
MSW ‘55

Position: Retired after 60 years of social work practice (child welfare, family, administration, consulting)

Location: Indianapolis, IN

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $0.29
Loaf of bread: $0.18
Tuition: About $700 to $900 for a year of three quarters, which included room and board. An additional $75/quarter for out-of-state students.

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: Civil rights, Korean War, McCarthyism, threat of nuclear annihilation.

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? Social workers are now more often regarded as professionals than “welfare workers.” Private practice was rare. Few states had licensing laws. NASW came into being. The main practice question was “Are you providing the best the profession has to offer?” Now it’s all about results. The responsibility for outcomes has shifted from the client to the provider. Results have to be measurable. Sadly, there has been some loss of attention to significant but unquantifiable factors such as inner peace, goodwill and feeling that one’s life has meaning and purpose.

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Graduation in the ‘Shoe and the wisdom of speaker C.F. Kettering, who said he believes above the door of every library should be carved the inscription: Beware! Much Misinformation Inside.

1960s

Marlene Owens Rankin
BSSW ’61

Position: Managing Director, Jesse Owens Foundation

Location: Chicago, IL

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $0.45
Loaf of bread: $0.45
Tuition: Can’t remember—parents paid. Guessing $300/quarter.

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: It was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Kennedy also introduced the Peace Corps.

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? During the ’60s, social work took a comprehensive look at the issues impacting the lives of those in need. It was a generalist approach to service. My interest was in individuals and issues impacting their day-to-day functioning, which is why I pursued a graduate degree in psychiatric social work. It seems that the practice has come full circle in that we are again looking at issues from a comprehensive perspective, hence, the generalists or researchers.

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Becoming the first African American Homecoming Queen. It was a scary but fun time. It brought people together in a way that was unimaginable in those years. There was a great deal of pride in the win for minority students and a sharing of that pride with the general student population. As I said, it was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement and a raising of awareness of racial biases.

1970s

Kathy Schroeder
BSSW ’76

Position: Retired; worked as prevention education coordinator in Putnam County and the mental health field; currently works part-time for Putnam County WRAPAROUND Program

Location: Ottawa, OH

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $0.59
Loaf of bread: $0.25
Tuition: $250/quarter

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: Drugs, LSD, hippies, Vietnam War, oil embargo, Watergate

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? There are so many more job options for social workers to choose from than when I graduated. Even in my career, I went from the field of mental health to working in a school setting. The field has also extended to outreach in other countries, which is a great opportunity for students and a chance for the social work field to have a part in changing the world we live in.

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Meeting the love of my life, my husband, Terry; meeting the best friend ever, Cindy; having the chance to graduate just a few seats down from Archie Griffin!
1990s

Bob Ahern
MSW ’92, PhD ’00

Position: College of Social Work Senior Lecturer; Juvenile and Probate Court of Union County Clinical Director

Location: Marysville, OH

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $1.36
Loaf of bread: $0.95
Tuition: Unsure

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: Feminism, global poverty, racism

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? Social work has both continuity and changes. We’re still deeply committed to working with disempowered populations. Mental health in social work has morphed into less psychodynamic models and into models of psychotherapy that are more empirically based. We also drink from the wells of post-modernism. When I was an MSW student, a wonderful professor, Dr. Dixon, was neo-Freudian in his view of counseling. That has changed in our “vocatio” and in our college. Yahoo!

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Not the football team! My favorite memory is Dr. Jim Lantz’ individual therapy class when he referenced Heidegger, Frankl, Blake and the Beatles in one lecture.

1980s

Pat Lyons
MSW ’88

Position: Owner, Lyons Counseling & Consultation Services

Location: Columbus, OH

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $0.86
Loaf of bread: $0.61
Tuition: $1,500 give or take

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: The implications of race and racism in the systemic treatment of individuals who were addicted to crack cocaine.

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? The African American family was underrepresented in treatment services and overrepresented in corrections. The crack cocaine epidemic was met with systemic practices of criminalizing addiction and characterizing African American babies as “crack” babies. Today, we properly address opioid addiction as an epidemic, thereby changing the trajectory of treatment and funding to combat the addiction without criminalizing the individual. Social workers are training professionals to care for the delicate balance of needs for babies born addicted while supporting pregnant and parenting women with addictions. Social work continues to address its own biases in advocacy, rights, access, equity and privilege.

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Walking across campus eight months pregnant with Dr. Charles Ross giving me that look of admiration and asking, “Are you sure you’re gonna make it?”

“Dr. Jim Lantz’ individual therapy class when he referenced Heidegger, Frankl, Blake and the Beatles in one lecture.”

Dr. Bob Ahern on his favorite Buckeye memory
2000s

Sean Williams
MSW ’08

Position: Research Associate, National Center for Veterans Studies; Owner, Summit Behavioral Counseling

Location: Indianapolis, IN

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $2.38
Loaf of bread: $0.97
Tuition: $10,410/year

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: No idea—I was busy having fun!

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? The stigma associated with mental health has changed. People are more apt to seek help and talk about depression. I also enjoy seeing the mainstream adoption of concepts like mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy.

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Meeting my future wife on February 13 at the Ohio Union.

2010s

Rakiya Harris
BSSW ’15, MSW ’16

Position: 2-1-1 Team Lead at HandsOn Central Ohio

Location: Columbus, OH

Costs while attending college:
Gallon of gas: $2.70
Loaf of bread: $2.69 for Sunbeam
Tuition: $20,000/year for the MSW program

Prevalent social issues during your time at the college: The Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement. I remember hearing the horrific stories about the tragic deaths of Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown and Sandra Bland, which had a huge effect on me. I will never forget hearing Trayvon’s mother speak on campus about the loss of her son and her community work with the BLM Movement.

How has the role of social work changed since your time at the college? People in our community are becoming more aware of political and controversial issues, including voting, violence, health insurance, Social Security, the economy, the environment and the LGBTQ+ community.

What is your favorite Buckeye memory? Buck-i-Frenzy—a fun campus event held during Welcome Week, filled with free food, music, services, fashions and technology!
Thank you! Gracias! Merci! Domo arigato! How many ways can we say thank you? We can’t count them all, nor can we count the hundreds of remarkable in- and out-of-state agencies that have hosted our field students during the college’s 100 years of existence!

Note: We’ve made a list and checked it twice, but apologize if we’ve overlooked any agencies that have contributed to our 100 years of success!
Then and Now

A century of change at Ohio State’s landmark building

Thousands of College of Social Work alumni have passed through Stillman Hall. There, they have learned to give voice to the most vulnerable among us, individuals who might not otherwise be heard. Social work practitioners, says Dean Tom Gregoire, are the “conscience of a just society.”

Students’ focus has changed with the times: Courses of the late 1800s touched on “unfortunate classes and persons in society,” while those of the 1930s covered the beginnings of community child care and the leadership of charitable organizations. In the ’50s, students may have taken “The Veteran and His Family,” and today’s coursework delves into the dynamics of human trafficking and the unique challenges of refugees.

Here, take a walk through Stillman Hall and the history of social work studies at Ohio State, which offered its first social work class in 1875.

Reprinted with permission from Ohio State Alumni magazine

WATCH THE VIDEO

go.osu.edu/StillmanHall

THEN: Students could be found studying in the college’s fourth-floor library.
NOW: Students today have many more opportunities to study and explore technology with the creation of the Digital Union, housed on the first floor of Stillman Hall (far right).
THEN: Students leave class in 1976 with books in hand. NOW: Today, students walking to and from Stillman Hall are just as likely to be carrying iPads. The College of Social Work was the first college at Ohio State to implement the technology into its curriculum.

Some things never change. Both THEN and NOW, students in the College of Social Work receive high-quality instruction from passionate, expert faculty. The college recently climbed to 6th among public universities and 13th overall among 268 graduate social work programs in the United States, according to U.S. News & World Report’s rankings of America’s Best Graduate Schools.
The 100-year history of the College of Social Work is also a story of the day-to-day commitments from the college’s faculty and staff. Looking back at hundreds of student field placements each year, thousands of hours of teaching and mountains of data, these faculty and staff reflect on accomplishments and the future of social work education.

**FACULTY AND STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

**Dr. Joe Guada**

Professor Joe Guada had a successful career as a mental health clinician before changing his path and joining the college faculty in 2007.

“This is the best job I’ve ever had,” Guada says.

Currently working on community-based research in collaboration with the College of Veterinary Medicine, Guada appreciates the college’s openness to innovative, inter-professional research. He cites these partnerships across disciplines and with diverse community partners as an important emerging trend for the future of social work education.

“Also having faculty and staff that reflect changing demographics, and doing so in an intentional and transparent way, is important for the future of our profession,” he adds.

Along with the opportunities for creativity in his research, Guada appreciates the chance to work one-on-one and learn from his students.

“I learn so much from my students and their interests,” he says. “They inform my own teaching and research. I don’t think they believe me when I tell them that, but it’s true.”

**Dr. Sharvari Karandikar**

Professor Sharvari Karandikar situates her work in a broad context. Karandikar, who taught in India before joining the faculty in 2009, draws links between her international research with sex workers in India and social work practice in central Ohio.

“We need to see the importance of the global and local at the same time,” she says. “There are gaps in critical services happening outside the college, and we must be able to respond.”

Her international perspective has also helped shift conversations within the college itself.

“Since my time here, we have become more open to talking about issues of diversity and more willing to speak up,” Karandikar says. “This is a place where you can be who you are.”

Seeing online learning and international field placements as important trends for the future, Karandikar feels confident in the direction in which the college is heading. “I am certain that I’m in the right profession. But it’s more than professional for me. The people here are like my family.”
Roz Meisel

Guiding students along the path to a social work degree is always rewarding, but not always easy. In nearly 30 years of service at the College of Social Work in advising, field education and as a community lecturer, Roz Meisel (MSW ’72), now retired, cites her work with students as one of the greatest accomplishments of her career.

“Helping students problem-solve difficult experiences was so rewarding.” Meisel says. “I once had a student come into my office and tell me, ‘I’m not going back to that field placement and you can’t make me.’ Well, we talked it through, and by the end of the year, he had a job offer at that same agency!”

One of the unique aspects of working at the college was developing an appreciation of all different facets of social work practice. Over her time at the college, Meisel worked with more than 1,800 students as a field liaison and hundreds more in the classroom.

“I sometimes think of myself as people’s social work grandmother. I see former students doing great things in the community. It’s a really good feeling,” she says.

Katie Justice

After first performing data entry for the Field Education Office in 2003, Katie Justice, LISW-S (MSW ’09), now serves as the director of Career Services and Alumni Relations. Embodying a social work approach to her role, Justice has embraced the college’s commitment to educating the whole student.

“Being a social worker, I wanted to do something grassroots,” she says. “I heard students talking about the challenges of building a professional wardrobe when starting their careers, so I organized the CSW Career Closet.”

By collecting donations of gently used professional clothes, Justice helps remove financial barriers some students face when trying to make a positive impression early in their careers. To date, over 100 students have taken advantage of the Career Closet.

Justice has also pioneered unique opportunities for College of Social Work students. She created a career development course to prepare students for entering the professional world and orchestrated the college’s D.C. Fly-in trip.

Always aware of the importance of relationships, Justice points to the supportive culture in the college. “I’ve had such great mentors in my time here,” she adds.

Dr. Bev Toomey

Professor Emeritus Dr. Bev Toomey (MSW ’74, PhD ’77) carries the rich history of the College of Social Work in her work and memory. Originally employed by the College of Administrative Sciences before social work gained independent college status, Toomey witnessed how the unique perspectives of social work set it apart from other disciplines.

“Discussions of poverty were first being taught in economics,” she says. “I was taken by the thought that social work should fix the system.” After completing her PhD at Ohio State, Toomey became one of the first women on the faculty at the College of Social Work to hold a doctorate.

“We always need to be looking at equity and fairness,” Toomey says. “We still need more work on helping people of different ethnicities, religions and backgrounds. Social work has always stood for that, and we can always do a better job working with all different kinds of people.”

It’s easy to see that Ohio State has a special place in Toomey’s heart. “I’ve had a wonderful life at Ohio State,” she says. “When I go to a football game and sing the Alma Mater, I cry every time.”
“I SEE A REVIVAL OF EFFORT IN THE COLLEGE TO ACCEPT DIVERSE CULTURAL INTERESTS, TRYING TO BE PROACTIVE RATHER THAN REACTIVE. YOU CAN FEEL THE ENERGY.”
When Dr. Carla Curtis came to Stillman Hall as a teenager to visit her mother, Professor Caroletta Curtis, she observed change occurring within the university. “This was a period of visibly active protest,” Carla says. “There was active student involvement pushing the university to embrace diversity, increase the presence of African American students and live up to its land grant mission.”

As Carla went on to earn her MSW at the University of Michigan and PhD from Howard University, her mother was a champion for inclusion on campus. Caroletta was instrumental in working with the Office of Minority Affairs (now the Office of Diversity and Inclusion) to create the first structured recruitment program for students of color at the College of Social Work.

Carla broadened her understanding of social work education as she traveled to meet her mom at Council of Social Work Education meetings around the country. “Mom and I would just hang out, but I learned a lot interacting with her and her colleagues,” she says.

One of the conferences led to a conversation with Dr. Richard E. Boettcher, former dean of the college, who encouraged her to bring her experiences in public policy research and advocacy to Stillman Hall. “Next thing I knew, I was doing my colloquium presentation to interview for a faculty position,” Carla adds.

When Carla joined the College of Social Work faculty in 1992, she could tell that the political moment had shifted. “During this time, you could sense that the movement to advance diverse bodies and interests had stagnated,” she explains.

But that didn’t stop Caroletta or Carla from pursuing this work. In 1995, Caroletta was awarded the William H. Watson Jr. Memorial Award for promoting equal educational opportunity. Mother and daughter had the opportunity to work as colleagues for five years. And in 2016, as the college sought to promote inclusivity and enhance diversity with more structure, Carla became its first chief diversity officer.

When asked how she’s changed, Carla reflects, “I’m a little more direct now. I’m more comfortable in the classroom. When students are having conversations on difficult or uncomfortable topics, I am able to direct or redirect as needed.

“I see a revival of effort in the college to accept diverse cultural interests, trying to be proactive rather than reactive. You can feel the energy.”

Through her early career working as a child welfare advocate on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and her 26 years as faculty in the college, Carla has developed an unfiltered and pragmatic approach to policy change. “The politics of decision making are very elitist and influenced significantly by political leverage,” she says. “We need to acknowledge and respect difference in our students and among social workers, and be okay pointing out inconsistencies in policy and practice.”

Through their teaching and advocacy, mother and daughter have placed an indelible mark on the College of Social Work. Whatever the next 100 years brings, the college is positioned to embrace difference and promote justice because of the foundation they have laid.
Still Going Strong

The college continues to positively impact Ohio, the nation and the world.
The Sanctity of Service

Scholarship honors Joseph Palmer’s faith in God, humanity and Ohio State

The prisoners in the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus had a specific request after a 1968 riot in which buildings were destroyed and five convicts died. They wanted Joseph Palmer to be one of the mediators. Over the next two days, Palmer stayed in the prison and helped negotiate a peaceful settlement.

Palmer (BSSW ’57, PhD ’70) had overseen many of the men’s hearings during a four-year stint on the Ohio Parole Board. Though the final rulings had gone against them, they remembered that he had treated them fairly.

It’s a small snapshot of Palmer’s life, but it tells his story in a way only certain moments can—a story of a man who believed in people, reform and second chances and whose faith quietly guided him down every path.

Palmer, a Navy and Air Force Reserves veteran, died in 2017 at age 86, and merely talking about his dad had Matt Palmer welling up in a recent interview. Matt and his twin brother, Mark, opened an investment firm in 1999, honoring their father by naming it The Joseph Group.

They also funded the Joseph Palmer Scholarship at the College of Social Work in 2013, not because they wanted to cement their father’s legacy, but because their father believed so strongly in the college’s mission.

“He also knew what it was like to be a student with no money,” says Mark, recalling how Joe, who grew up during the Great Depression, sold one of the family’s two cars to help pay for his PhD.

The need-based scholarship is for master’s or PhD students who have an interest in faith-based social work, reflecting Joe’s lifelong membership in Bexley United Methodist Church and also how the Christianity he knew taught him devotion to and respect for others.

“He was an amazing guy,” says Matt, one of four siblings—including Andy and Mary Beth—who gave Joe and his wife, Patricia, 11 grandkids. “He left a huge legacy of a 60-year marriage to our mom. She had Alzheimer’s, and during the final couple of years when she wasn’t able to speak or remember him, we watched our dad spend hours with her each day and give her a loving presence.”

While at Ohio State, Joe pursued social work through a law enforcement lens. He started as a parole officer in Kalamazoo, Michigan, before becoming a case analyst for the Ohio Pardon and Parole Commission from 1961 to 1962. In that role, he saw many of his parole recommendations go unheeded because of tough-on-crime politics.

“Dad wrote a resignation letter to Governor Jim Rhodes and explained why,” Mark says.

Impressed with Joe’s candor, Rhodes offered him a position on the parole board two years later. He served as chairman from 1966 to 1968.

“Dad got into social work to help one life at a time, but he was always looking to solve the broader issues, too,” Mark says.

Joe did that during a long administrative career, including his most significant move as president of the federal National Academy of Corrections in Colorado from 1984 to 1987. Palmer stewarded the training and innovative ideas that influenced the entire penal industry. Eventually, he came back to his roots when he opened Mediation Services of Ohio in 1992 and worked until he was 80.

The college named Palmer to its Hall of Fame in 2012, and Matt and Mark said the scholarship recipients are doing their dad’s name justice.

“Every year we do the scholarship, we come away more committed to the mission of social work and excited about the future,” says Matt. “If we have this many students with this training and these hearts, there’s a lot of hope.”

To donate to the Joseph Palmer Scholarship in the College of Social Work (Fund #483195) please visit www.giveto.osu.edu or call Ohio State’s Office of Gift Processing at 614/292-2141.
The Miracle of Sarah

And the scholarship that pays tribute to her inspirational life

Every day that Joyce Hillick Ely (MSW '83) steps through the doors of her and daughter Sarah’s quilt shop in Akron, she knows she’s witnessing a miracle. There were so many days during so many years when doctors were concerned that Sarah, who was born with Down syndrome and had serious health issues following open heart surgery as an infant, was living on borrowed time.

Sarah was more often than not in hospital beds rather than her own, so the fact that her remarkable journey continues is cause for celebration. Now 29, Sarah is the “sew”cial director of the Liberty Green Quilt Shop, opened on her 21st birthday.

Joyce put aside a long career with nonprofit organizations so she could spend more time with her daughter—and now business partner—while doing something she learned to love as a teen. Quilting was a skill Joyce honed and taught to residents in a battered women’s shelter while earning her master’s degree at Ohio State.

The shop, named a Top 10 Quilt Shop by Better Homes and Gardens’ Quilt Sampler, has been donating pillowcases to sick children since day one. This past November, Sarah delivered the shop’s 10,000th pillowcase to the Ronald McDonald House in Akron.

“With each pillowcase donated, Sarah includes a card about the very first case she stitched for her friend Kristen Kirton, who also had Down syndrome and unfortunately passed away from leukemia,” Joyce says.

Sarah has always been an inspiration to others, especially her parents. That’s why when she turned 18 in 2007—a year when her survival was a major concern—Joyce and John Ely (BA ’83) began thinking about honoring her. Both had recently reconnected with the College of Social Work when then-dean Bill Meezan visited and convinced Joyce to bring her fundraising prowess to the newly formed Dean’s Development Circle. She had multiple roles with the United Way of Cleveland, was development director for the Cleveland Institute of Music and was executive director of the American Heart Association’s Cleveland Chapter.

“It was important for me to know a little bit of Sarah would be walking the campus that her father and I walked as students many years before,” Joyce says. They began funding the Sarah Ellen Ely Endowment Fund to support students pursuing a master’s degree in social work with a concentration on developmental disabilities or pediatric medical social work.

The first scholarship was awarded in 2017 to Olivia Pfister, who did her field placement in the Nationwide Children’s Hospital emergency room. Sarah was so excited to meet her. Afterwards she insisted on going to Ohio Stadium to take a picture with the signed Board of Trustees document that made the scholarship official.

“I recognized this scholarship was as important to Sarah as a diploma is to others,” Joyce says. “Having Sarah with me to publicly congratulate Olivia brought tears of joy beyond description.”

The 2018 recipient was first-year grad student Megan Vance, whose brother has Down syndrome.

“Never in our preliminary discussions about Sarah’s scholarship did we think there would be someone so closely aligned,” Joyce says. “Megan came to the quilt shop while on break this past December to meet Sarah. We never allowed ourselves to see the part of the dream where Sarah would be interacting with the students. We are so grateful.”

To donate to the Sarah Ellen Ely Endowment Fund (Fund #641813) please visit www.giveto.osu.edu or call Ohio State’s Office of Gift Processing at 614/292-2141.
“The college has not only fueled my passion for treating trauma in children and adolescents, it has cultivated my skills as a change agent determined to make a positive micro and macro impact on today’s youth. I started as a dual master’s student in social work and public health. With support and guidance from the college, I am actively constructing the path to making my dream a reality through opportunities like internships, research projects and social networking.”

Meyerlyn Sanchez
MSW Student
Hometown: Chula Vista, CA

“Thanks to the college, I’ve made so many connections, and I’m grateful because helping our community is a team effort. These connections have given me a great amount of hope, tremendous growth and a new perspective on how to help heal our communities.”

Samantha Schoepner
MSW Student
Hometown: Alliance, OH

“I came all the way from Shanghai to Columbus because I care about the life and death of the LGBTQ+ population. Traveling 7,790 miles isn’t a short distance, but the College of Social Work continually proves that my determination is worthwhile. It offers me both academic and social resources to change the world.”

Peter Lu
MSW Student
Hometown: Shanghai, China

“I’ve learned what it means to be a true revolutionist. America has taught us to laugh now and cry later, but a leader in hope and change would cry now and laugh later. As Frederick Douglass once said, ‘Without struggle, there is no progress.’ To struggle for change for the betterment of the people is to cry now, but the success from that change will allow us to laugh and smile later.”

Antwan Woods
BSSW student
Hometown: Mansfield, OH

“Throughout my education, the college has supported both my personal and professional development by helping me grow as a clinician, educator and researcher. It has inspired my commitment to bridging the gap between research and practice. My goal is to bring evidence-based therapy into community settings for individuals with bipolar disorder to enhance their quality and length of life.”

Bridget Bailey
PhD Student (MSW ’10)
Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

“Thanks to the college, I’ve made so many connections, and I’m grateful because helping our community is a team effort. These connections have given me a great amount of hope, tremendous growth and a new perspective on how to help heal our communities.”

Meyerlyn Sanchez
MSW Student
Hometown: Chula Vista, CA
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Director of Development  
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Happy 100th Birthday to the College of Social Work!