DEAN’S UPDATE

Ninety Six Years and Counting

The year 1914 was a long time ago! Ninety six years ago, the Tulane School of Social Work, in collaboration with Kingsley House and faculty from the Tulane Sociology Department, began offering a professional certificate in social work. By 1928, the Tulane School of Social Work held its first official commencement.

December 11, 2009, was a great night to welcome our newest alumni to our ranks. Author, director, satirist, musician, radio host, playwright, multi-media artist, record label owner, and outspoken advocate for the rebuilding of New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina, Harry Shearer provided the commencement address. You may know Harry as the voice of several characters from the Simpsons: most notably Mr. Burns, Smithers, Ned Flanders, Rev. Lovejoy, and Scratchy.

With this in mind, consider that on this night we graduated 71 new MSW’s who join the ranks of the other 5,865 master’s degree alumni for a total alumni population of 5,936. And, in 1961 the Tulane School of Social Work began its doctoral program in social work, making it among the oldest in the United States. Rebecca Kendig and Torin Sanders became the 151st and 152nd persons to join the ranks of our PhD gradu-
This year, we welcomed more than 90 new MSW students (full time, part time and advanced standing) bringing us back to our pre-Katrina levels. As well, at this point in our admissions cycle, we are well on our way to exceeding last year’s number of applications.

On other fronts, a few years ago, we began the conversion of our most used classrooms into technology smart rooms, with built-in LCD projectors, smart podium, electronic screens and internet connectivity. These updates have been very well received by our faculty and students alike and are used on a very regular basis. This year, we’ll be converting a third classroom.

As many of you know, over the last several years, the School has been working very hard to develop its international programs and has had much success in this area. Four and a half years ago, Eileen Ihrig was hired as the first director of international programs and charged with overseeing this area. At that time, while many schools were interested and charged with overseeing this area. At that time, while many schools were interested in developing this area, Tulane was among a very small number of schools who dedicated a full-time position to that mission.

Of course, coming to New Orleans in the summer of 2005 was not the start she was expecting for her first full time domestic job in nearly 12 years. Coming to Tulane was going to provide a bit of stability. August 29, 2005, came eight weeks after she moved into her apartment and she, like the rest of us, evacuated New Orleans. After this rocky beginning, Eileen was able to quickly settle in and begin the important work of developing our international programs.

Eileen left New Orleans at the end of February to take a new position at the Boston College School of Social Work directing their international programs. Join me in wishing her well on her new position in Boston.

In the nearly five years Eileen has been with the School, she has made many contributions. Among some of these are her coordination of the certificate in international programs and the concomitant development of the international field sites. Most recently, our students were in Central America, Asia and three countries in Africa. Our work in Rwanda has developed substantially with her able coordination. With this foundation of the last several years in place, the School is both committed and poised to develop this even further, and I am especially excited to begin a national search for her replacement to move these programs to the next level of excellence.

On other personnel fronts, we congratulate Professor Fred Buttell who was recently promoted to full professor. I’m also very pleased to announce that Charles Figley, the Kurzweg Distinguished Chair in Disaster Mental Health, has secured two major grants this year. One is a $2.1 million dollar grant along with Ky Lu, formerly the director of foreign assistance aid in the United States Agency for International Development and Nancy Mock from the Tulane School of Public Health. This grant will enable the establishment of programs to address the need for leadership in the disaster field. A second grant, the Soldier Medic Mettle Study, is funded by the department of defense and will examine soldier medics on active duty in Iraq and Afghanistan to better understand aspects of resilience in the face of traumatic experiences. This grant will take Professor Figley to Germany for extensive interviewing of soldier medics on leave from the front lines.

It is always a real pleasure to see so many of you at the School’s homecoming events. Last October we were especially glad to welcome two of our colleagues from Sapir College in Israel, Drs. Itzhak Lander and Roi Tal, for the purpose of providing several lectures and presentations in the area of forgiveness interventions. Drs. Lander and Tal provided a three-hour workshop on this as part of our homecoming activities. Special thanks go to our alumna, Holly Pavy, and the Holley Pavy and John Deblois Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana which provided the financial support to enable bringing them to Tulane. Holly’s generous support will continue this year and will enable us to bring a nationally recognized expert to campus for lectures and presentations. Stay tuned for the details.

In the meantime, Homecoming 2010 is scheduled for October 9, 2010. As always, it is a very real pleasure to see our alumni there and throughout the year, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Although our alumni are no longer roaming our halls in search of knowledge, our students are just as hungry as those more experienced hands who are reading this. Here are just a few projects going on in the community, in the classroom and in our faculty’s research arenas at the School.

New Orleans residents were keenly aware of the Feb. 6 mayoral race, but the TSSW SGA did its part to draw awareness to the Orleans Parish Juvenile Judge Race.

A public forum involving all three candidates -- Richard Exnicios, Tracey Flemings-Davillier and Marie Williams -- drew more than 50 New Orleanians. Each candidate was given a chance to tell voters about their platforms as well as answer questions from TSSW students.

TSSW and Save the Children, an international organization that helps children in need, held a special public report on the “Journey of Hope” curriculum that have been under way in many New Orleans schools since Hurricane Katrina.

The Dec. 8 discussion was held at TSSW and drew more than 50 people, many of whom were involved with the curriculum’s creation. The “Journey of Hope” program marked the first time Save the Children responded to a disaster on U.S. soil. The curriculum, which were administered with the help of more than a dozen School of Social Work interns, were used at more than 26 K-12 schools in New Orleans. After Hurricane Katrina, Save the Children created a psychosocial unit to address the mental health needs of its youngest victims. The result was a series of strength-based curriculum written to build resilience in children and youth.

A group of nine Norwegian chaplains visited TSSW in October to learn best practices in trauma, resilience and self-care during a week-long study tour featuring a tailor-made curriculum created by the Institute for Psychosocial Health.

All nine chaplains (eight men and one woman) are part of the Church of Norway, a Lutheran Church, and counsel workers in the North Sea’s offshore industry. Each chaplain works with about seven North Sea platforms along with their on-shore duties.

The trip served a three-fold purpose -- refreshing what they already knew; forming a new perspective about resilience and self-care; and learning more about themselves.

“We talked about what was going on inside ourselves,” Chaplain Tormod Woxen said.

“We talked about compassion and compassion fatigue and how to increase our own resilience.”

Thanks to the dissertation work of recent TSSW alumnus Rev. Torin Sanders, premarital counseling will be the topic of an April 10 continuing education offering.

Sanders (PhD ’09) and TSSW Associate Professor Lynn Pearlmutter (PhD ’90) will co-present a special six-hour program entitled “Premarital Counseling: Building a Lasting Bond Before The Wedding Day.”

Sanders found in his study that social workers were interested and eager, but they were not always knowledgeable about premarital counseling.

“We are going to give our participants a taste of the many different models of premarital counseling,” said Pearlmutter, a licensed marriage and family therapist and LCSW whose practice and research is on couple’s therapy. “We’ll sample from the best of them, and I guess, we see this as a good-sized appetizer.”

According to Torin’s dissertation, there is very little premarital counseling occurring in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans areas, which were sampled in his study. Most premarital therapy is performed by ministers.

The event will be tailored to social workers, family and marriage therapists and licensed professional counselors, as well as ministers. Sanders said participants will learn the latest and best techniques and rationales for premarital counseling, as well as what is required to offer a quality program of premarital counseling.

“Premarital counseling is a proven way to give couples the skills they need to avoid some of the pitfalls that those who do not receive counseling fall prey to,” Sanders said.

“I found that many more couples would be interested in receiving counseling if it was available to more people. I believe that this should not be the duty of just the clergy, because in many ways social workers are better prepared to perform this service because of their previous training. And I can say that because I am a clergy member.”

Sanders, a native of New York City, graduated from public high school at the age of 16. He received his bachelor’s degree from Howard University, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude and was admitted to Phi Beta Kappa. He earned both his master’s degree and PhD in social work from Tulane University. He is a licensed clinical social worker, an ordained minister, an experienced family therapist and a qualified mediator. He has served as Pastor of the Sixth Baptist Church for more than 12 years. His research interests include premarital counseling, marital satisfaction and African-American families.

The event will be held Saturday, April 10 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at the School of Social Work with an hour lunch and two, 15-minute breaks. It will offer six hours of continuing education credit. The registration fee is $90.

For more information or to register, visit the Tulane School of Social Work Web site at tulane.edu/socialwork/.
TSSW Alumna Joins Centenarian Club

When TSSW alumna Jane Pharr Gage turned 100 in mid-December, the new centenarian’s fondest memories were of her early days in social work.

When Jane graduated in 1932, she had one fellow grad – that’s right, just one.

“We started out in 1931 with 30 students, but that was the beginning of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program and all but two went back to their jobs,” she said.

Jane and her classmate Anna earned their degrees in large part because of Charity Hospital. They both wanted to carve out careers in medical social work, and both were already interns at Charity.

“We got credit and money, which was very important. In those days, we made the handsome sum of $25 a month, and that was a lot of money,” Jane said.

The mother of three ended up working at Charity in the social services department until she married a doctor and focused on raising their children.

But before Jane became a full-time mom, she used her motherly instincts to help those in need. Straight out of graduate school, she worked for the WPA in Plaquemines Parish in Pilottown. She arrived at work at 8 a.m. after stepping out her Uptown home and making several bus and streetcar changes along with a ferry ride.

“There were a great many trappers in that area. Pilottown was their stopping point where they rolled up their skins and cured them,” Jane said. “That was our place to interview them. Business was poor, and many of them were in need. We went down the Mississippi in an outboard motor boat, and stayed two nights in Pilottown.”

So the young social worker learned the language — asking “Do you trap yourselves or does the company trap you” — meaning “do you own your traps or does the company provide the traps?”

Jane helped more than just trappers. Another case involved a child who injured her leg on a rusty nail. The child’s family was not able to provide the proper treatment so in stepped Jane. One day, Jane took the young girl to her home and fed her breakfast after a doctor’s appointment, only to see the girl’s amazement at the sight of a magazine.

“I gave her several magazines to take back with her, and she kept them under her mattress. She had her brothers and sisters run errands for her for a look at the magazines,” Jane said.

Jane went so far as to organize her church to provide clothes for the children, who had been kicked out of school for their lack of cover.

“I guess I was young and seeing stars that things would happen, but I understand that later, they got put out of school again,” Jane said.

Perhaps the most telling story of Jane’s social work ideals came on Bourbon Street with a syphilis patient. At the time, she was in charge of making sure patients received their shots, and this individual had not.

“I called up to him and he said – ’I’m in bed. You come up here,’” Jane said. “Well today, I wouldn’t have thought of doing it much less wandering on Bourbon Street; but I went upstairs. It makes me cringe now to think that I walked up those steps on Bourbon Street to see a strange man in bed. I didn’t think anything of it then.”

The man received his treatment.

Jane became a social worker on the suggestion of a professor. Then a junior at Newcomb College, her English professor gave her this advice — “English teachers, they’re a dime a dozen. You don’t want to do that. You’re reasonably intelligent and you’ve got a pretty good personality so I think you might do well in social work. I think that is one of the coming fields.”

Like all social workers, Jane found a way to make it work. She had an uncle who sent her $50 a month — $25 went to tuition while she had $25 to live on. During her second year, her job at Charity paid $25 a month and provided lunch.

The rest is history, and one that Jane wouldn’t have any other way.

“It was well worth it. I really think that you have to like people. People shouldn’t get a social work degree because they think that it is a way to make money unless they really like people. You have to be able to understand people and be able to listen patiently to their problems. It is often very boring, but it is part of it. Some people are just not cut out to do that. I don’t think that social work is for everyone.”

Calling for a Cause

Nine TSSW students held an Internet-based phonebank on Nov. 2, 2009, to alert Maine voters about a same-sex marriage vote the following day. The students reached more than 1,000 potential voters during three hours of calling using MassEquality’s Callfire system. Pictured from left are Piper Iles, Mary Palmer and Mary Ham in the TSSW computer lab.
Alumni Spotlight

Alumnus Launches a Legacy of Leadership as NASW-LA President

“I absolutely love the idea of having a professional group that advocates for the social worker. My Dad, in his early years, was very instrumental in getting unions formed in the South for employees of big corporations. I would hear his stories of advocating for the employees and how change was happening at work sites. I was inspired by his passionate tenacity to help others help themselves. I sought out NASW in my early years and had been on the Board for over 12 years before contemplating the position as President.” – Darryl Bruno

As a teenager in the early 80’s, actively involved as a youth leader in a local church, Darryl Bruno (MSW ‘87) recognized that he possessed a special gift for emphatically listening to the issues and concerns of other people. He decided to pursue an education in a career “that I could get paid for what came naturally.”

Greatly influenced by Dr. Bob Hildebrandt, who earned his doctorate in social work from TSSW, Bruno enrolled in the Tulane School of Social Work and graduated in 1987. His career spans the micro, mezzo and macro levels of social work practice from the non-profit social work arena to National Association of Social Workers-Louisiana Chapter President.

During his Presidency from 2007-2009 Bruno explains, “I tried to bridge differences between special interest groups and join together those who felt isolated and alone. I tried to address the continued devastation felt from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the economic recession on social workers.” He was instrumental in introducing the FISH Philosophy used by various Fortune 500 companies and school districts throughout the United States. Darryl interjects, “I would use humor to lead and try to get everyone on the same page to work for the collective good…”

When asked about his specialty as a social work practitioner, Bruno reflects, “As a poster child for ADHD, it was very difficult to nail down a specific age group or clinical issue within I wanted to specialize. As soon as I would have a case load of specifics, I found myself searching for other areas of interest. Numerous mentors and champions of the mental health/addiction fields exposed me to various clinical theories and treatment practices that have shaped the clinician I am today.”

This TSSW alum was born and raised in the Lakeview area of New Orleans — just blocks away from the 17th Street Canal breach. Propelled by Columbine, 9/11, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and inspired by other social work pioneers, Bruno has launched a successful social work career in the field of Crisis Mental Health. Darryl has been in his current position as the Crisis/Mental Health Coordinator with the St. Tammany Parish School Board since January 1999.

“Dealing with a district population of over 35,000 students and 5,000 employees has been incredibly eventful. Supervising over 87 contracted mental health professionals with a total budget of over $1.86 million and being in charge of every schoolwide crisis has enabled me to become proficient in trauma, crisis, threat assessments, and clinical issues that deal specifically with children and adolescents.”

One of Bruno’s proudest moments was being nominated by his peers from NASW to sit on the Governor’s Louisiana Juvenile Justice Commission Advisory Board from 2001 - 2003. The final outcome was the completion of ACT 1225 Juvenile Justice Reform.

During his presidency, Bruno spearheaded a National Day of Service (Saturday, March 7, 2009) in which all Louisiana NASW Board Members, NASW members and LaCHIP outreach staff in the nine regions throughout the state provided an opportunity to assist the community at 51 enrollment sites (including festivals, recreational tournaments, groceries, pharmacies and other businesses) to distribute applications, process enrollments, and answer questions about public health coverage.

During his tenure as NASW-LA President, Bruno’s macro level interventions as an activist and pioneer of efforts to advocate for Louisiana Legislation for the funding in the budget to include the $5,000 School Social Work Salary Supplement for National Certified School Social Workers were successful. Bruno reflects, “In fact, Louisiana was the only state in the United States that utilized the NASW National Certification and received state funding!”

Bruno’s untiring quest to make a difference continues. His future goals include pursuing doctoral studies. “I absolutely love learning and crave it every day. It is amazing… I still feel there is so much I still don’t know!”

Darryl is the proud husband of Blake Bruno and loving father of three wonderful children, Brendon, Brianna and Sophia and currently resides in St. Tammany Parish.
Alumni offer meaningful investments in TSSW

By Lou Franchina, Development

Since my last column, School of Social Work faculty and staff — including Dean Ron Marks and myself — have visited with alumni from San Francisco to New York and many cities in between. We do this in order to share news about the school’s current activities and future plans, but more importantly to learn about our alumni’s experiences at Tulane and beyond.

Please let us know about your accomplishments so we may celebrate your successes with you. And please be sure to update your contact information (especially e-mail addresses) so we may tell you of the remarkable work and dedication of our students and faculty.

Obviously, they aren’t the only ones who are dedicated.

I promised to keep you posted on our progress toward our Tulane School of Social Work Annual Fund goals, and I am proud to report that as of press time, we have raised $26,349 from 183 individuals. This represents 35 percent of our respective $75,000 and 525-donor goals.

While we clearly still have our work cut out for us, I am confident that we will achieve our goals, and my optimism is bolstered by the fact that we have 18 percent more donors compared to this time last year. Please give what you can, and please do not discount the impact that your gift — regardless of its size — can have.

Over the last year, the collective generosity of our alumni and friends has helped us to continue our classroom technology upgrades and also has enhanced the Dean’s Incentive Fund to support faculty research and scholarship in order to develop and advance projects with the expectation of securing external funding.

In this way, you are investing in your alma mater, and while some of the benefits may in fact be financial, they are also so much more meaningful.

And so much more appreciated. Thank you.

Lou Franchina is the school’s development officer. He may be reached directly at (504) 314-7308 or lfranch1@tulane.edu.
Jeanette Andonian (PhD ’01) is living in Portland, Maine, and is an Associate Professor at the University of Southern Maine. She is also the coordinator for the MSW program at the University of Southern Maine.

Larry Coffey (MSW ’74) is living in Stockton, N.J., and is now retired after working for 30 years for the State of New Jersey as a casework supervisor. In 2008, after serving for 25 years on the Township Planning Board, Environmental and Open Space Committees, he received the Volunteer of the Year Award. Larry’s daughter, K.C. Coffey, is in her second year of medical school at Tulane. Larry is also an avid Harley Motorcycle rider.

Louis DeMoll Jr. (MSW ’49) is living in Austin, Texas, and has been retired since 1987. Following his retirement, the University of Texas established the Louis DeMoll Endowed Scholarship in his honor.

Joe Fogle (MSW ’70) is living in Dallas, Texas, and is a psychologist with a full-time private practice working with individuals and couples with anxiety, depression, anger and substance abuse issues. He also conducts critical incident stress debriefings for groups or organizations experiencing crises. He is a member of the National Center for Crisis Management and is a new board member of Association for Independent Living in Dallas. Personally, the 71-year-old recently started taking water color lessons as well as a Spanish refresher class. Joe’s adopted son from Russia is now 16 years old.

Carmen Krystyniak Kottha (MSW ’05) is living in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and is currently working part time at a residential mental health facility for children. She provides group, individual and family therapy for children residing at the facility and families in the community. She also works part time at Cleveland Heights School District implementing prevention programming and interventions for students who are being expelled. In her personal life, she married Arun Kottha on October 10, 2009, and moved from Michigan to Ohio.

James R. Marion (MSW ’78) is living in Toledo, Ohio, and is the manager of social work services at the Toledo Hospital. He is also a certified trainer for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. James has been honored as a member of the Distinguished Fellows Society at Toledo’s Children’s Hospital, and he wrote an article about Munchausen-by-Proxy Syndrome printed in the Sept. 2006 issue of Pediatric Emergency Care. James is also still playing country music.

Gail Pesses (MSW ’82) is living in Metairie and is in private practice with two psychologists. She performs custody evaluations for the domestic courts in the Greater New Orleans area and has been recognized by the courts as an expert in custody evaluations and child custody. Her other specialty is treating Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. After being certified by the Obsessive Compulsive Foundation after completing their intensive training, she also treats individuals and families in transition. Her son, who was born three weeks after she graduated with her MSW, is now 26 and works and lives in Los Angeles. Her daughter, age 20, is now a junior at LSU where she is studying pre-veterinary medicine.

Vickie Ryan (MSW ’04) is living in Washington, D.C., and is the Special Programs Coordinator for HUD’s District of Columbia’s Housing Authority’s Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP). She also serves as the Disaster Housing Assistance Coordinator for the District of Columbia (DHAP) where she oversees housing and social issues for Hurricanes Rita and Katrina survivors residing in Washington, D.C. Vickie plans to pursue her PhD at Howard University’s School of Social Work beginning this summer. She also released “Hot”, a new dance record on an independent record label, “I Neva” in October 2009. It is the first release on the three-record deal.

Speights passing celebrated with jazz funeral

On February 22, 2008, Marti Royals Speights died of cancer at the age of 64.

After earning an English degree from Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss., Marti earned her MSW from TSSW in 1971. Her 35-year social work career included designing and implementing programs for the Mississippi State Government, and in Washington, D.C., for the National Institute of Mental Health, the U.S. Army and the Department of Justice.

After retirement, Marti became a vacious and popular supporter of New Orleans, active in many French Quarter preservation groups. She served on the board of the French Quarter Citizens, the Advisory Board of the Pirate’s Alley Faulkner Society and reigned over the Society’s Carnival Krewe of Libris as Queen Thalia 1. She also joined two book clubs.

Her death was celebrated in a traditional jazz funeral that carried her fifteen blocks in a black-and-gold-trimmed carriage, through streets she loved: Rampart to Burgundy; St. Philip to Royal.

Her funeral procession ended at the historic Congo Square, but not before it paused in front of her French Quarter home. There, with the Tremé Brass Band urging him on, her husband, David, danced mightily, like someone with nothing else to lose, just the way Marti would have liked him to.

Her contributions to social work and New Orleans will never be forgotten.
WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Please share your thoughts, ideas, and information to be used in Postscripts. You may also visit our web site at http://tulane.edu/socialwork and click on the alumni tab to complete this form or for additional alumni updates.

Name: __________________________________________________________ Year of graduation: ____________________

Address: _______________________________________________________ City: ___________ State: ______ Zip code: ______

E-mail address: ____________________________________________________ Phone number: _________________________

Degrees/certificates earned: _________________________________________

1) What are you currently doing professionally?

2) Have you received any special awards or honors, or have you been published? Please specify.

3) Have you been involved with Tulane School of Social Work since graduation? If not, what events or special services would draw you to become involved?

4) Do you have special news that you would like to share with other alumni (marriage, children, relocation, hobbies, new projects)?

5) Is there anything you would like to start seeing in Postscripts? Is there anything you think should be omitted from the newsletter?

Please complete and return to:
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