

Celebrating Dr. Richard Ager: A Salute to a Remarkable Journey

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Dr. Richard "Rick" Ager, an eminent stalwart in the world of Social Work and Psychology, has recently heralded his impending retirement from the Tulane School of Social Work after 30 years. His multifaceted career, laced with clinical social work, family counseling, substance use treatment, and research, has left an enduring imprint on the institution, the cohort of students who had the privilege of learning from him, and the expansive field of social work.

Dr. Ager's expertise spans several areas, but he is best known for his contributions to substance abuse treatment, family practice, and the training of counselors and

students in evidence-based practices. His pioneering research in family and couples therapy, especially concerning alcohol and drug misuse, has marked a distinctive trail in the landscape of social work research.

His scholarly contributions are impressively vast, backed by a broad spectrum of published works. The eclectic nature of his studies — addressing mental disorders in marriages grappling with a problem-drinking spouse, to unilateral spouse therapy, emotionally focused couples therapy, and intimate partner violence — all bear testimony to Dr. Ager's profound comprehension and flexible approach towards multifaceted societal challenges.

Dr. Richard Ager's career stands as a testament to his undying commitment to the growth and success of his students. This devotion finds expression in his own words: "My success stories are really student success stories."

The essence of Dr. Ager's legacy lies not in personal triumphs, but in the sea of students he has ably guided and inspired. Even amid doubts about the extent of his influence, there's little uncertainty that his mentorship has imparted a significant impact on numerous lives. Through each student's journey and success, we catch a glimpse of Dr. Ager's relentless dedication to education and the enrichment of individual potential.

Reflecting on his career, Dr. Ager expressed his deep sense of fulfillment and satisfaction derived from his role as an educator. "Well, I'm very, very proud, probably most proud of my teaching," he shared, highlighting his profound passion for his work. As he embarks on his retirement, Dr. Ager confessed the aspects he would miss the most: "I'll deeply miss my students as well as my colleagues. Both have been so important to me." This sentiment underlines his strong connections with the university community, reinforcing how his role as a mentor and peer has shaped his career, enriched his experience, and influenced countless lives at Tulane and beyond.

Dr. Ager's commitment to the Tulane School of Social Work, and his contributions to the wider landscape of social work research and practice, set a gold standard for dedication, commitment, and scholarly rigor. As he steps back from his professional engagements, the ripples of his work will continue to shape and influence the field for the foreseeable future.

For those fortunate to have studied under him or worked beside him, Dr. Ager's retirement indeed symbolizes the end of an era. Yet, his influence on social work education and practice is far from over. He will continue to be remembered as a pillar in the field — a legacy that will undoubtedly spark the imaginations of generations to come.