The School of Social Work was deeply saddened to learn that Dr. Joseph Eaton, one of the early leaders of the School’s Doctoral Program, passed away on October 15 at age 93. Dr. Eaton was a celebrated professor and his incredible dedication to the School and his legacy continues to positively impact the School’s doctoral students. Dr. Eaton was chair of the Doctoral program at the School of Social Work from 1962 until 1966. He was noted throughout the University of Pittsburgh and the nation as a champion of modern research and statistical methods for social science research and the importance of research to the development of social work as a profession. He was also responsible for the creation at Pitt of a research major at the MSW level. Many students used the MSW research major as a stepping stone to doctoral studies, often with advanced standing. Dr. Eaton made his first major contribution to social science research with his seminal study and subsequent publications describing the Hutterites in Canada and the Unites States. He taught internationally and was listed in Who’s Who in the World. He earned his doctorate in sociology at Columbia University under such luminaries as Robert Merton, Paul Lazersfeld and Edmund Brunner. Eaton published widely including since his 90th birthday. His publications are noted in social work, sociology, public health, and public and international affairs.

In January of 2007, a group of doctoral alumni established the Joseph W. and Helen F. Eaton Emerging Scholars Award Fund to honor Dr. Joseph Eaton’s incredible legacy. This special award allows the School of Social Work to recognize an outstanding scholarly work completed by a first or second year doctoral student through a cash award to further their academic and professional development. The first recipient will be awarded this fall.
Students of Joseph W. Eaton, the original architect of the School of Social Work PhD program, presented him with a bound edition of his publications at a reception during the 2007 Society for Social Work and Research Annual Conference in San Francisco, Calif. Dean Larry E. Davis hosted the reception, which was attended by faculty, students, alumni, and some of Eaton’s former students: Michael Austin (PhD ’70), Neil Gilbert (MSW ’65, PhD ’68), Peter Gaupp (PhD ’69), Aytan Stromberg (PhD ’78), Marvin Feit (PhD ’75), and Brian Segal (PhD ’71).