WEALTH INEQUALITY

SOCIAL WORKERS BATTLE THE DEEPENING CRISIS IN AMERICA
Once again, I am pleased to welcome you to another fall issue of Bridges. The school is vibrant with the infusion of new and returning students eager to learn how to be social workers, and the school is home to faculty and staff members who are just as eager to help them on their educational journeys. Also, I am happy to report that this fall the school had the largest number of applicants for admission in its history. This issue, as you will have noted from its cover, focuses on wealth inequality. Not since the 1920s have so few Americans had so much and have so many been threatened by having so little. According to statistics cited throughout this issue, three decades ago, corporate CEOs made 40 times the salary of the average worker. Today, it’s 331 times. Currently, the top 1 percent of the population holds roughly 36 percent of the country’s wealth, while 35 percent of Black households, 31 percent of Hispanic/Latino households, and 15 percent of White households have zero or negative net wealth. Over the last 30 years, virtually all of the gains made in reducing the economic inequalities in America have been washed away. Following the social science and the 1960s, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (also known as the Kerner Commission after Illinois Governor Otto Kerner Jr., its chair) concluded that America was moving toward two societies, one Black and one White. Today, this still appears to be true, but ours also is an America that is hurriedly moving toward a society of haves and have-nots.

This rising inequality in wealth gives rise to inequalities in health, education, housing, and opportunities for employment. In short, gross wealth inequality, such as we are now experiencing, gives rise to an overall inequality in the quality of life that people experience. As social workers, we must work to level the economic playing field wherever and however we can. This issue of Bridges is intended to heighten the awareness of the seriousness and importance of wealth inequality and to profile some of the initiatives in which our colleagues and fellow alumni are currently engaged to ameliorate it. Among those working on these initiatives are new faculty members who we are welcoming this fall: Associate Professor Mary Ohmer, Assistant Professor Jaime Booth, and Lecturer Tiffany Lumpkin. Ohmer has more than 25 years of experience in community organizing and development and will conduct research and evaluation on a variety of community-based projects and initiatives. Booth’s research focuses on health disparities in minority populations, with a special focus on neighborhood issues. Lumpkin, previously of Small Seeds Development, Inc., is concerned with the prevention and reduction of disparities among at-risk or underserved populations.

All of us here at the school extend our warmest regards to Bert Maguire, who retired this past spring. Maguire is a longtime friend of mine—we were classmates together at the University of Michigan. We will all miss his being a part of the school but wish him the best in retirement. Sadly, this year we lost some of our heroes: Elaine M. Brody, Gerri Kay, Thelma Williams Lovette, George Plutchok, and James V. Cunningham. Jim, of course, was one of the icons of the school. He not only taught social work, he lived it.

This issue also highlights the recent successes of other faculty, students, and alumni for whom social work is also a passion. So I hope you’ll take the opportunity to read about their academic and career milestones.

As always, you are invited to visit the school, and we look forward to seeing you at the school’s and Center on Race and Social Problems speaker series. At this year’s lectures, we will be collecting winter clothing (new hats, gloves, scarves, and socks) to donate to local charities. We also encourage you to visit us online at www.socialwork.pitt.edu.

Larry E. Davis
Dean
Donald M. Henderson Professor

“AS SOCIAL WORKERS, WE MUST WORK TO LEVEL THE ECONOMIC PLAYING FIELD WHEREVER AND HOWEVER WE CAN.”
Angela Campbell, a former foster youth from the Hill District neighborhood of Pittsburgh, completed her MSW degree this summer. During the summer, she worked as an intern in the Independent Living Initiative in the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Campbell’s career goal is to work on transitioning foster care youth toward self-sufficiency. As an advocate for foster youth, she has served as a board member for Systems Improvements Through Youth and a fellow of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, of which she is a 2013 alumnus.

Dezrea D’Alessandro recently traveled with a group to help facilitate an art camp for middle school youth on the Pine Ridge Reservation, an Oglala Lakota reservation in South Dakota. Every day for five days, D’Alessandro’s group served lunch and breakfast, introduced the kids to art materials and processes, read them traditional Lakota stories, and taught them about Lakota culture. The goal of the weeklong program was to collaborate with the Lakota people and, with their values at the forefront, to design a curriculum that can be used with children across the reservation in order to help strengthen the culture of and unify the Lakota nation.

Summer McKnight recently won Outstanding Poster Presentation at the Pitt Department of Psychiatry’s 14th Annual Research Day. The poster was titled “Factor Structure of the Scale of Prodromal Symptoms and Empirical Development of a Brief Version in Youth at High Risk for Schizophrenia.”

Abby Middleton helped the palliative care nurse at the Community LIFE-Tarentum agency to design and implement an aromatherapy program as an alternative behavioral intervention for older adults with dementia. Beyond the MSW program, she helped to write a grant proposal to expand a chronic disease self-management program provided by the agency where she worked.

Stacey Chiwewulu Udumukwu was an intern at Northside Common Ministries (NCM), where she designed and led a seven-week healthy eating workshop for children between the ages of 7 and 12, during the 2013-14 academic year. This workshop gave kids in the community a chance to learn not only about healthy eating but also about different regions of the world and food from those regions. This workshop has now been picked up by the current intern at NCM and will be a regular workshop that NCM will provide for the North Side community.

Udumukwu also participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program and Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program, served as an application counselor for the Affordable Care Act, and received Mental Health First Aid certification.

The keynote address was given by Angela Mahone, a partner at Reed Smith LLC. Mahone serves as a member of the School of Social Work Board of Visitors.
Program Highlights

BASW Program

The 2014-15 academic year is upon us, bringing with it another great group of Bachelor of Arts in Social Work candidates. Students join the program, an upper-division major, during their junior year and immerse themselves in social work’s knowledge, values, and skills. It is exciting to congratulate recent BASW graduates, support the professional development of seniors as they enter their field placements, and welcome another strong group of students to the program.

This summer, the BASW program provided an exciting new summer research opportunity in which students could engage in scholarly work with faculty members. Through this program—generously supported by the Office of the Provost—students gained experience and knowledge about the design and execution of research projects, including aspects such as funding, writing, presenting, and publishing. Three BASW students were selected to work alongside research-engaged faculty members and were supported with a $1,000 fellowship. They were Sandhya Subramanian, who worked with Catherine Greene, associate dean for research; Shanelle Thompson, who worked with Helen Cahalane, principal investigator, Child Welfare Education and Research Programs; and clinical associate professor; and Michele Williams, who worked with Helen Petracchi, associate professor. More information about undergraduate research opportunities is available at socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/undergraduate-research.

To learn more about the BASW program, please visit socialwork.pitt.edu/academics/bachelor-arts-social-work-basw.

Annual Board of Visitors Meeting

The Board of Visitors meeting and dinner were held on May 8 and 9, 2014. Attendees are pictured at right.

Attending the Board of Visitors dinner on May 9 were (left to right): James McDonald, James Browne, Alan Morreger, Joy Starzl, Dean Larry E. Davis, Dana Cameron Williams, Basil Cox, Pitt Vice Provost Alberta Silaghi, and Eric Springer.

Attending the Board of Visitors meeting on May 9 were (left to right): James Browne, Erin Loring, Alan Morreger, Basil Cox, Marc Cherni, Eric Springer, Esther Blash, Thomas VanKirk (chair), James McDonald, Joy Starzl, and Dean Larry E. Davis.

Bert Maguire Retires After Nearly Four Decades

After receiving his PhD in social work and psychology from the University of Michigan, Lambert “Bert” Maguire had several very exciting offers for his first job—one of which was from the University of Pittsburgh.

“I did my research about Pittsburgh and discovered that it was a great place to raise my two daughters. I also liked the idea of an up-and-coming urban university that was moving up in all respects,” says Maguire. “And I have never regretted the fact that I chose to come to Pitt. I could not have had a better experience personally or professionally.”

After nearly 40 years on the faculty of Pitt’s School of Social Work, Maguire is retiring. In addition to serving as a faculty member, Maguire once chaired the direct practice program. In his role as associate dean for academic affairs (2006-13), he helped to lead the school in a time of great growth and recognition. He also taught, advised, did field liaison visits with MSW students, and served on numerous dissertation committees.

When asked what he will miss the most, Maguire is at a loss. “I have so many things I will miss that it is very hard to say. I loved teaching and working with students. I also enjoyed research and writing. Frankly, I have loved this job and pretty much everything about it. The regular contact with students as well as my many dear friends among the faculty and staff. My best friends all worked with me at the school.”

Those feelings are certainly shared by his colleagues. “Bert is one of the kindest people I know. He was always available to students and faculty members in need and had encouraging words for everyone. In fact, I used to say to him, ‘I can’t trust your opinion about anyone because you like everyone,’” says longtime friend and Director of Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Hide nori Yamatani. “I already miss both Bert and Gary Koese [who retired last year] very much, because over the years, we shared over 2,000 lunch hours—blessed with a most informative and enjoyable time.”

While at Pitt, Maguire served on many School of Social Work and University committees, including the 2001 search committee for the new dean of the school, which led him back to an old friend.

“My family may not know this, but I have known Bert for almost 40 years,” says Larry E. Davis, dean of the school and Donald M. Henderson professor. “We were in the PhD program at the University of Michigan together. In fact, his name was the first listed in the acknowledgments section of my dissertation.”

Maguire’s primary research interests were in direct practice and the use of social support systems and networks in treatment, prevention, and rehabilitation. He has been the principal investigator on National Institute of Mental Health grants for both research and training and also has received funding from Pitt’s University Center for International Studies and the Pittsburgh Foundation, among others. He has authored or coauthored books on social networks, social support systems in practice, and clinical practice, including Theories for Direct Social Work Practice; Clinical Social Work: Beyond Generalist Practice with Individuals, Groups, and Families; Social Support Systems in Practice: A Generalist Approach (which also was published in Japanese); and Understanding Social Networks (which also was published in Italian).

Maguire presented papers at more than 30 national conferences and authored dozens of articles and book chapters. He also was very involved in the Society for Social Work and Research, serving as its vice president from 2008 to 2010 and as a member of its Committee on Publications, Minority Research Task Force, and Annual Program Committee (which he chaired for the 2010 program). Maguire will be missed. “I am certain that the school will miss Bert’s presence and the vast array of contributions he made over the past 30-plus years,” says Yamatani.

“Bert has been an outstanding and invaluable member of the faculty here for almost 40 years, and I can’t thank him enough for what he has done for the school. I’m not just losing a friend but a valuable partner,” says Davis. Maguire and his wife, Barbara, plan on traveling extensively but mostly visiting their daughters in Dallas, Texas, and Seattle, Wash. They’re planning a bike trip in September to Washington, D.C., and Maguire says, “If I live through that, we’ll do more biking all over the world.”

I HAVE NEVER REGRETTED THE FACT THAT I CHOSE TO COME TO PITT. I COULD NOT HAVE HAD A BETTER EXPERIENCE PERSONALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY.”  •  BERT MAGUIRE
WEALTH INEQUALITY

SOCIAL WORKERS BATTLE THE DEEPENING CRISIS IN AMERICA

By Nikis Kapsambelis

Whatever happened to the middle class?

In other words, when did the poor get so very poor and the rich so extraordinarily elite that the two sides have essentially lost sight of each other with the naked eye?

Those are the questions that economists, politicians, statisticians, and—perhaps most poignantly—social workers are asking themselves as the continental divide between haves and have-nots continues its steady slide.

From protests by fast-food workers seeking a bump in the minimum wage to pointed remarks by President Barack Obama, the issue of income disparity has worked its steady slide.

Today, he teaches the same class, Economics and Social Work. “It’s always been at the core of social work,” he says. “There’s a perspective from social work that we always look to economic justice and fairness and how that carries out in our economic policies and social welfare policies.”

When comparing the United States to other developed countries along major indicators of social well-being, “not only are we off the charts, but sometimes we’re off the page entirely,” Soska says. One percent of the U.S. population holds 35.6 percent of the country’s wealth while 80 percent of the population has only 7 percent of the wealth, he says, citing alarming statistics (see page 5 for sources).

“How do social workers help create a safety net [for] people who fall through the cracks?” he asks. “These are the things our students will be addressing when they go out into the community. And there are no easy answers for them.”

A Dose of Reality

Tracy Soska, who chairs the school’s Community Organization and Social Action concentration, starts by assigning his students the task of constructing a home budget for a family of four living at the national poverty level or earning minimum wage.

“The students get a sense of what some of the realities are for everybody,” says Soska, who also serves as director of continuing education. “Those kinds of things are very sobering.”

As a student at Pitt in the 1990s, Soska took a course called Economics and Social Work. Today, he teaches the same class, and a major focus is on income inequality.

“It’s always been at the core of social work,” he says. “There’s a perspective from social work that we always look to economic justice and fairness and how that carries out in our economic policies and social welfare policies.”

And worse health outcomes than countries in which the distribution of income is narrower, such as Scandinavian nations.

“The discussion becomes: How does a society address those types of inequalities?” he says. “That’s a challenge that the School of Social Work has taken on and in which we are succeeding.”

Rosen is part of a group piloting an interdisciplinary fellowship in geriatric health. Other initiatives specifically target the intersection of social work and health care, such as a newly approved health care certificate program and the joint Master of Public Health/Master of Social Work program, which is conducted in conjunction with the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health.

Rosen believes that social workers can play a key role in lobbying policymakers to expand the health care safety net. “What the top end, Professor John Wallace Jr., is pursuing the second year of a National Institutes of Health grant studying the risk factors associated with higher asthma rates in poor children: living conditions infested with vermin and mold, old housing stock, air pollution, and prone diets exacerbated by a lack of available fresh food.

Wallace points out that the purpose of the research is that there are no easy answers when seeking solutions for those problems.

“This stuff is hard; that’s the bottom line,” he says. “The work is very hard, and there is no simple solution. There is no silver bullet.”

Wallace is studying asthma rates as a microcosm for the larger problem of health care disparities. He believes that identifying problems in one neighborhood will allow him to examine them on a macro level in the larger issue region and the country.

 Học Side Effects

Associate Professor Daniel Rosen notes that the United States has one of the lowest life expectancies in the developed world.

“Societies that have big wealth inequalities hinder social mobility,” says Dean Larry Davis. “It’s hard to move from one income level to the next. It violates our notion of fairness.”

Despite the accomplishments of the school and the reputation it enjoys, particularly as a touchstone the playing field for all kids,” Cahalane says.

Rosen, who specializes in issues related to health care access, looks broadly at barriers to care for older adults with physical, mental, and substance abuse problems.

“We can really have an impact on the region because of the relationship and the trust and the connection that exist between the University, between the hospitals, between the [UPMC] health plan, and between the community,” he says. “Social work is well situated in all of those.”

A Notion of Fairness

In the self-proclaimed land of opportunity, the notion that people can no longer better their circumstances by virtue of their hard work should be fundamentally offensive.

“Societies that have big wealth inequalities hinder social mobility,” says Dean Larry Davis. “It’s hard to move from one income level to the next. It violates our notion of fairness.”

Despite the accomplishments of the school and the reputation it enjoys, particularly as a touchstone

Continued on page 10
WEALTH INEQUALITY BY THE NUMBERS

Half of Americans are now considered poor or low income.

On average, White families have six times the wealth of Black and Hispanic families. So for every $6 a White family has in wealth, Black and Hispanic families have only about $1.

By one measure, U.S. income inequality is the highest it has been since 1928.

Forty-three percent of Americans raised at the bottom of the income ladder remain stuck there as adults, and 70 percent never make it to the middle.

IN PITTSBURGH’S HILL DISTRICT, CARL REDWOOD WALKS THE WALK

By Niki Kapsambels

When Carl Redwood teaches classes in community organizing at the School of Social Work, he draws on the examples he lives out every day, particularly in Pittsburgh’s Hill District neighborhood.

And the first thing he wants students to know is that if they want to create social change, they have to walk the walk.

“I always tell students, ‘You can develop theories as well, but you have to have some experiences to draw on [and] seriously think about it and put it in a framework to explain it to somebody else.’ ”

A Pittsburgh native with deep roots in the Hill, Redwood views the city’s landscape as emblematic of lost opportunities for Black people.

“There are a lot of inequities in society and things that need to be made right. A lot of that can be corrected by organizing movement,” says Redwood, who is the codirector of the Hill District Conservation Group and has served as assistant director of the Hill House Association. He knows firsthand what he speaks: Redwood has been instrumental in organizing the neighborhood to negotiate with the Pittsburgh Penguins for a voice in the development of the lower Hill property adjacent to the CONSOL Energy Center.

Never far from his mind is the memory of how the Penguins’ former home, the Civic Arena, isolated the Hill from the rest of Pittsburgh and displaced thousands of people and hundreds of businesses thanks to the city’s use of eminent domain policies in the 1990s. More recently, he says that a lack of available low-income housing has pushed Black people into Pittsburgh’s immediate suburbs—evidence of a growing gap in wealth that has eroded upward mobility among minorities.

“They’re trying to build a new Pittsburgh by getting rid of Black and poor people and bringing in more people of wealth and higher income,” says Redwood. “I mean, it’s the Achilles’ heel of the political economy that we live in.”

“There are a lot of inequities in society and things that need to be made right. A lot of that can be corrected by organizing movement.”

In particular, Redwood points to the lack of housing as indicative of the wealth gap, because home ownership is a key indicator of wealth generation. Under his leadership, members of the Hill community—notably the 400 people who form the consensus group that he coleads—have formed a set of formal demands that they want the Penguins to meet before moving forward with any development around the new arena. Among those is that 30 percent of the planned 1,200 new housing units be set aside for low-income residents.

“Unless we set aside housing for low-income folks, the effect will be to exclude Black people from participating,” says Redwood, adding that the public is paying half a billion dollars in debt service on the new arena. That fact, combined with the political equity he is building, adds weight to the community’s demands.

“We are the people,” he says. “They’re just walking away with tax money and not really giving anything back. So [without meeting public demands], their plan will not be approved.”

Redwood’s efforts have begun to bear fruit in the Hill District in other ways. In October 2013, SHOP’s SAVE opened a new store on Centre Avenue, the first supermarket that the neighborhood has seen in decades. He also has helped to win funding for several social service programs in the community.

“It’s an important aspect of our struggle,” he says, “to make sure that things that people need are provided.”
Help Us to Continue Securing Jobs for our Social Work Graduates

Each year, our school graduates more than 300 students across three degree programs: BASW, MSW, and PhD. As the director of career services and alumni affairs, I am passionate about doing everything possible to assist our graduates in locating and securing social work jobs. There are more than 200 schools of social work throughout the United States, and each year, thousands of new social workers enter the workforce. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2012, there were 607,300 social workers in the United States. Social work as a profession is projected to grow by 19 percent through the year 2022. This is faster than the average for all occupations, which are projected to grow by 11 percent. These numbers are certainly good for our profession. But, needless to say, there is competition. Our goal is simple: to help our students to secure social work jobs.

We do this by offering a variety of career development workshops, including résumé writing, effective interviewing, salary negotiation, and licensure preparation. We also record mock interviews for students and alumni who have concerns about their interviewing skills, and we conduct individual career consultations as requested. We are doing our best to help our students hear these two words: “You’re hired.” We are asking you, our alumni, to e-mail us any social work job opportunities so that we can post them on our current job opportunities Web site and tweet them out to our Twitter followers. We are 10,000 alumni strong throughout the United States and the world. Our students receive a first-rate social work education, but it falls on all of us to help them move forward so that they can do the good work that only social workers can do. Please e-mail job descriptions, names of agencies, and any job-related information. My e-mail address is bobby@pitt.edu and my phone number is 412-624-6534. I thank you in advance for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Hail to Pitt!

Bobby Simmons
Director of Career Services and Alumni Affairs

Pitt Career Network
Register to serve as a mentor to a current student or to network with fellow alumni.

The Pitt Career Network is an online mentoring service for Pitt alumni and students that provides the opportunity to discuss careers and job prospects, learn about your field in new places, have a positive impact on someone’s future, and make valuable connections with other alumni.

For more information and to sign up, visit www.alumni.pitt.edu/networking.

We Are Looking for You!

The School of Social Work is seeking alumni who might be interested in becoming field instructors for our students.

BASW and MSW interns provide more than 300,000 hours of service to agencies and organizations like yours every year. Being a mentor is a very rewarding experience and gives you a hand in educating and preparing the next generation of social workers for service.

If you are interested in becoming a field instructor, please visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu/academic-programs/field-education for more information.

Keep Us Updated!

Have you become a member of the Pitt Alumni Association’s online community?

This online service exists to help alumni connect with each other and with the University. Here you can locate and reach out to other Pitt alumni. If you have been out of touch with your alma mater, you also can update your contact information to begin receiving Pitt news and other materials.

Check out the Pitt Alumni Association online community at www.alumni.pitt.edu/online.

STAY CONNECTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK!

Did You Know?

The Office of Career Services is open to alumni as well as students from the School of Social Work. Our specialization in social work careers will provide you with the information and connections necessary to empower people, lead organizations, and grow communities. The Office of Career Services hosts student and alumni networking events and career development workshops throughout the year. Our free job posting service provides employers with a direct connection to the region’s top talent.

Visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu/student-resources/career-services.php for full details on upcoming events or to schedule an appointment.
Associate Professor Fengyan Tang has coauthored work showing that caring for an aging parent has substantial financial costs for the women who do so.

Tang supervised this work, which was conducted by her then doctoral student, Yeonjung Lee (PhD ‘12). Lee is now an assistant professor of social work at the University of Calgary.

STUDYING THE REAL COST OF CARING FOR AN AGING RELATIVE

To conduct this work, Lee analyzed three waves of data from the Health and Retirement Study, a long-term longitudinal study of the finances, health, and well-being of Americans over the age of 50. Lee’s study focused on the 2,093 women who had a living parent or parent-in-law in 2006, 2008, and 2010. Two hundred fifty-four of these women provided care for a parent.

The women who cared for a parent started out with substantially lower incomes and experienced further drops in income in each of the successive waves of the analysis. In 2006, the median household income for women who were caring for a parent was $46,400 compared to $52,500 for the women who were not. In 2008, this difference increased. The median income of caregiving households dropped to $45,607, while in non caregiving households, median income increased to $52,509. In the final observation in 2010, which occurred after the financial downturn, median income decreased for both groups, and the caregiving group continued to have substantially less income than the noncaregiving group. In 2010, the median income for noncaregivers dropped to $49,404, while the median income for caregivers was $40,900.

This work garnered substantial attention and was summarized by Fox News, Slate magazine, and The New York Times. This finding has important implications for family policy. Providing care for an aging relative affects women’s ability to participate in the workforce, which has substantial implications for the well-being of the women who provide care as well as for their family’s financial status. Family leave policies that allow workers to care for their families is critical.

News coverage of Lee’s study included the following:


Slate, “Women Are More Likely to Care for Aging Parents—and Drop Out of the Workforce to Do It,” http://slate.me/1pTV3ls

ARTICLES COVERING THIS AND RELATED TOPICS


Megan Fabbri

Megan Fabbri, MSW student, was honored for her work to increase resident engagement in Oakland Planning and Development Corporation efforts.

Miranda Miller

Miranda Miller, MSW student, was honored for her work with the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in developing a young advocacy program at GLSEN and for launching courses to prepare youth to advocate for issues of concern to the LGBT community, especially youth concerns.

Samantha Wechsler

Samantha Wechsler (BASW ’14) was honored for her work with the Thomas Merton Center in building stronger communications, organization, database, and recruitment capabilities that help the center’s overall efforts in addressing core issues of peace and social and environmental justice. Also recognized was Wechsler’s work in developing the center’s Young Adult Social Justice Committee.

In addition to their award certificates, the honorees each received a Student Resource Fund award as part of their recognition. Additional information can be found on the school’s Web site.

School to Bestow Community Practice Award in Honor of James V. Cunningham

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Beginning in 2015, the Community Practice Award will be given in honor of the late Professor Emeritus James V. Cunningham. It was through a gift from Cunningham—who left a legacy of his own outstanding community practice—that this award was initiated. The school is hoping to build the endowment of this fund in order to continue to provide ongoing student award support.

COMMUNITY PRACTICE AWARD

In 2006, the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work established the Community Practice Award Fund, and it conducts the annual Community Practice Award program through the school’s Community Organization and Social Action (COSA) concentration. Starting in 2015, this award will carry the James V. Cunningham name to honor the late professor who so generously supported this fund. Contributions can be made to University of Pittsburgh Social Work Endowment for COSA Students. For more information, please contact Tony Gacek, director of constituent relations, at 412-624-8604 or gtony@pitt.edu.

2014 COMMUNITY PRACTICE AWARD RECIPIENTS: MEGAN FABBRI, MIRANDA MILLER, AND SAMANTHA WECHSLER

This year, the School of Social Work was pleased to name three Community Practice Award recipients in recognition of their outstanding community work.

Megan Fabbri

Megan Fabbri, MSW student, was honored for her work to increase resident engagement in Oakland Planning and Development Corporation efforts.

Miranda Miller

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In addition to their award certificates, the honorees each received a Student Resource Fund award as part of their recognition. Additional information can be found on the school’s Web site.

The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, in press.


RESEARCH UPDATE


BOOK CHAPTERS


BOOKS


OP-ED


INTERVIEW

Lovie Jackson Foster was interviewed and quoted in an article on interpersonal trauma in Social Work Today. The article can be viewed online at www.socialworktoday.com/archive/0314gfp.shtml.

AWARDS/HONORS

Shawn M. Eack received the 2014 Deborah K. Pedgirt Early Career Achievement Award from the Society for Social Work Research.

Hidenori Yamatani received the 2014 Community Builders’ Award from the Community Empowerment Association along with Carolyn Anderson, senior program officer at the Heinz Endowments; Four Star, senior vice president at Highmark Health; John Lovelace, president of UPMC; and others. The award was presented at the association’s 20th anniversary celebration.

GRANTS

Gerald Cochran received a grant from the Staunton Foundation for a study to adapt the screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment model to the pharmacists setting for the nonmedical use of prescription opioids.

Shawn M. Eack received funding from the Autism Research Institute for Durability of Neuroplasticity Changes from Cognitive Enhancement Therapy in Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Gerald Cochran with Donohue, J., Lo-Ciganic, W., Gordon, A., Zemitzis, M., and Gelland, W., Opioid Use, Opioid Use Disorders, and Buprenorphine Use in Pennsylvania Medicaid, Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Center for Pharmaceutical Policy and Precribing, 2014.


Lauren Bishop-Fitzpatrick with Allen, M., and Murray, N., Transition from Pediatrics to Adult Medical Systems for Young Adults with Disabilities or Special Health Care Needs, Pittsburgh: ACHIEVA, 2014.


We are a school of activists.
We look at social conditions and effect change.
We experience racism and demand dialogue.
We see poverty and impact policy.

We are a school of dreamers.
We embrace challenge and believe in human potential.
We find dilemmas and visualize solutions.
We plumb the depths and imagine a better world.

We are a school of scholars.
We engage, empower, and enlighten.
We research, theorize, and test.
We instruct, learn, and share knowledge with the world.

We are a school of leaders.
And our voices rise on the strength of nearly a century of seminal work in community organization, child welfare, poverty, and public health, leading the way to social change.
More than 20 researchers and center directors from across the country gathered for the second summit of Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty (REAP) centers held at the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems on June 5 and 6. REAP was founded with a mission to identify and locate existing REAP centers, determine what these centers do and how they function as research entities, and create opportunities for future collaboration among centers. The event brought together researchers and practitioners from centers housed in universities such as Stanford University, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Michigan as well as independent centers, including the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the Urban Institute.

Attendees spent the first evening of the summit at a reception hosted by Larry E. Davis, dean and Donald M. Henderson professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and director of the Center on Race and Social Problems. The reception gave the attendees an opportunity to meet and mingle with REAP center directors as well as Pitt faculty members and administrators. Davis founded the REAP group in 2013. Participants expressed enthusiasm for the chance to meet with other centers. “The REAP summit is a very exciting initiative that promises to advance our impact as a group of research centers across the country working to promote and carry out research on racial and economic justice,” said Beth E. Richie, director of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The summit began the next morning with an opportunity for center representatives to introduce themselves and share information about the mission and activities of their organizations, some of which have been in existence for 50 years. Members then heard from Jocelyn Sargent, a program officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, who spoke about funding opportunities for race research. She reviewed the funding opportunities offered by the Kellogg Foundation and also shared information about foundations nationwide that support race, ethnicity, and poverty research. Her list of the top 20 funders in all three areas was of special interest to attendees. Sargent also urged participants to “do what you do best—use your network of relationships” and to “add value by connecting your work to the foundation’s current projects.”

Margery Turner, senior vice president at the Urban Institute, then led a spirited discussion about federal and foundation strategies for boys and men of color by addressing the new report from the Obama administration, My Brother’s Keeper.

After lunch, attendees reconvened and held three afternoon sessions. The first, Impact of REAP Centers, was moderated by Richie and included the following participants:

- John Burkhardt, director of the National Center for Institutional Diversity at the University of Michigan, who discussed the impact of affirmative action
- Nancy Lopez of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico, who focused on how centers can build strategic partnerships; leverage strategic opportunities to advance racial justice research, policy, and practice; and engage scholars, practitioners, and civic leaders in productive dialogues about equity-focused data collection, analysis, and reporting in health, education, criminal justice, employment, and housing
- Michael Teyman, director of the Institute on Race and Ethnicity at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, who discussed the impact REAP centers can have on college campuses by addressing issues of systemic racism and White privilege
- M. Belinda Tucker, vice provost of the Institute of American Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles, spoke about how faculty members can lead the way against on-campus discrimination. She suggested that REAP centers can create a community of scholars who are supportive of their efforts by offering request-for-proposal preparation services for faculty members and hosting dialogue sessions.

The second session of the afternoon was Discussion of Center Management. Led by Tim Ready, director of the Lewis Walker Institute at Western Michigan University, the session focused on questions of inequality and wealth. The group then discussed such topics as grooming future center leaders, succession planning (especially if it includes a national search), and the creation of faculty positions and joint appointments that are controlled by the centers themselves. Issues of funding also took center stage. During this discussion, it was suggested that endowments received from outside colleges and universities might contain a clause stating that the continuation of any endowment depends upon sustained university support.

The last session of the day was Where Does REAP Go From Here? Some ideas shared by attendees included the possibility of inviting students to attend future summits and publishing policy papers that could be added to the REAP Web site. Attendees noted that group communication could be improved by updating the REAP Web site and using the LISTSERV more often. The group also addressed the future of REAP by suggesting that members pay dues (on a sliding scale) and that next year’s summit be hosted by another REAP center. Strengthening connections between meetings—perhaps by hosting working meetings—was also explored, as was developing a REAP mission statement, goals, and objectives. For more information, please visit the REAP Web site at reap.pitt.edu.
IN MEMORIAM

James V. Cunningham

School of Social Work Professor Emeritus James V. Cunningham, or Jim, as most called him, passed away this spring at age 91, leaving a lasting legacy in a strong community organization concentration at the school. But, more than that, he was a force for neighborhood and community development in Pittsburgh and across the country.

Cunningham was a beloved teacher, mentor, and colleague, a notable author, and a strong community leader who practiced what he taught. He was prolific in other ways, especially as a devoted family man, who, with his cherished wife, Rita, raised 10 children and had 21 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He also was a humble man of deep and abiding faith who was a leader for social justice and racial reconciliation within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Born in Chicago, Ill., Cunningham was an alumnus of the University of Notre Dame, where he met his wife. Cunningham finished his doctorate in economics in 1971 at Pitt, where he had already served as a professor since 1966. He would come to chair the Community Organization and Social Action (COSA) department, and mentored in his many years at the school.

“He really embodied social work. He was a fighter for social justice,” said Larry E. Davis, dean of the school and Donald M. Henderson Professor. Tracy Soska, current COSA chair, was a student of Cunningham’s.

“Jim had his hands in so many things that dealt with communities and neighborhoods, that dealt with race and reconciliation,” Soska said. “For me, he was a teacher first, then a mentor, then a colleague and a friend.”

“When community organizing, CDCs [community development organizations], and community participation were not thought about, Jim was an evangelist in Pittsburgh, encouraging engagement and community empowerment,” said former Pittsburgh mayor Tom Murphy. “From the early 1970s, his quiet but tenacious way influenced many of us who were involved with citizen advocacy. The fact that we take for granted the participation of community members is a remarkable change in public discourse.”

“Jim Cunningham was a great man. He was deeply committed to the community, the school, the church, and especially his family,” said Morton “Moe” Coleman, professor emeritus in the School of Social Work and a longtime friend of Cunningham’s. “He was a tremendous friend and overall embodied all of the best of human beings.”

— MOE COLEMAN

IN REMEMBRANCE

Elaine M. Brody (MSW ’49), a pioneer in social work who helped to establish the field of gerontology, passed away on July 9, 2014. She was 91.

Brody was the recipient of the school’s 1982 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Gerri Kay (MSW ’62), a tireless advocate for social justice, school desegregation, and equal rights, died September 1, 2014, in Pittsburgh.

Kay was the recipient of the 2005 Distinguished Alumni Award for social work practice from the School of Social Work.

Thelma Williams Lovette (MSW ’72), known throughout Pittsburgh for her lifelong commitment to community engagement and civil rights, particularly in the Hill District neighborhood of Pittsburgh, died May 24, 2014, at the age of 98. Lovette was the first Black social worker at UPMC Mercy and retired as supervisor of social workers. Her constant dedication to the community was recognized with the naming of the new 4,400-square-foot YMCA on Centre Avenue as the Thelma Lovette YMCA in April 2012. Lovette also served on the Pittsburgh City Planning Commission, was one of the first women on the Board of Management of the Centre Avenue YMCA, and was a member of the Metropolitan Board of Directors of the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh. In addition, she helped to plan the forerunner to what is now known as the Hill Community Development Corporation.

“Because she was educated early, she was always the first one to do this and that,” former city council member Sala Udin said of her longtime friend and colleague. “Some people, when they go through a door, they close it behind them, or when they go through a window, they pull up the ladder behind them. Thelma was the opposite. ... She was always one to encourage others to come up behind her.”

George Plutchok, professor emeritus and former associate dean, died July 21, 2014, in Atlanta, Ga. He was 93.

After receiving his BA from New York University in 1942, Plutchok served in the South Pacific during World War II. Following the war, he was a group counselor for the U.S. Committee for the Care of Refugees, assisting Jewish children just rescued from Nazi concentration camps. After teaching at Atlanta University and the University of Kentucky, Plutchok joined the University of Pittsburgh in the early 1970s.

“George Plutchok was truly a man for all seasons,” said former colleague Edward W. Sites, also a professor emeritus in the school. “His academic, spiritual, professional, and personal lives were a seamless whole. He was well known for his graciousness, selflessness, social activism, fierce loyalty, humor, and kindness.”

A musician, theologian, award-winning social worker, and public citizen, he was a colleague extraordinary.

IN MEMORIAM

Shannon Plush (MSW ’09) ran the 2014 Dick’s Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon and helped to raise funds for a local social service agency. This was her first marathon.

Samantha Teixeira (MSW ’07, PhD ’12) has accepted a position as an assistant professor at West Virginia University.

Dan’Talisha Deans (MSW ’10), former Center on Race and Social Problems project coordinator, was selected as a Presidential Management Fellow (PMF). She is working at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Strategic Planning and Management in the Performance Management Division. “It is truly a huge accomplishment,” said Deans, and it says a lot about the faculty and staff here at Pitt. They have all contributed to my success along the way,” says Deans.

According to the PMF program’s Web site, the program is “a flagship leadership development program at the entry level for emerging federal degree candidates. It was created more than three decades ago by Executive Order and attracts and selects the best candidates possible, but is really designed with a more narrow focus—developing a cadre of potential government leaders. ... The PMF Program is extremely competitive, with only 600 Finalists selected out of nearly 7,000 applicants [for 2014].”
All lectures are from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the School of Social Work Conference Center, 2017 Cathedral of Learning. Lunch will be provided; registration is not required. For more information, visit socialwork.pitt.edu or call 412-624-6304.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014
“Collateral Consequences of Incarceration: Exploring the Impact on Children and Families”
ANNA HOLLIS, Executive Director, Amachi Pittsburgh

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014
“Sustainability and the Social Services”
PAUL SHELDON, Senior Advisor, GreenPrisons.org and Planting Justice, and Development Consultant, Insight Garden Program

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2015
WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY | Sidney A. Teller Lecture
“Sustainable Development and Social Justice Pillars: A Platform for Setting the Global Agenda That Links the Economy, Society, and Environment”
DeBRENNIA LaFa AGBENYIGA, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Inclusion and Associate Professor, Human Development and Family Studies, College of Social Science, and Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Michigan State University

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014
“Understanding Racial and Ethnic Differences in Physical and Psychiatric Health”
JAMES JACKSON, Professor of Psychology, Research Professor, Research Center for Group Dynamics; and Director, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014
“On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City”
ALICE GOFFMAN, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin—Madison

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2014
“Building Assets for All: Research and Policy for Universal Children’s Accounts”
MICHAEL SHERRADEN, George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor and Director, Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2014
“Reinventing the Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century”
FREDERICK THIEMAN, President, Buhl Foundation