Social justice still hallmark of professor emeritus

Since Bruce Hall, School of Social Work professor emeritus, first began teaching at Colorado State University in 1973, a lot has changed within the School and the student body.

Hall found that his students brought unique perspectives to the program with a lot of out-of-the-box thinking. Today, he finds that the School of Social Work still features unique students, but with more creative opportunities and the ability to share ideas faster via the internet.

“Social Work has always been the place where students can do things,” Hall explains. “They are not passive learners. Social Work students want to be active. That affected how I structured my classes.”

It's perspectives such as these that the Legacies Project in the College of Health and Human Sciences seeks to record through video projects honoring the memories of faculty emeriti.

Hall’s passion for social change and social justice also carried into the content of his classes, and he viewed community organization as the methodology for pursuing those goals. In his Community Organization class, his students were asked to go out and change the Fort Collins community, resulting in both his students, and the Fort Collins community, benefitting. Often tackling tough issues like poverty and prostitution, his students weren't afraid to ask difficult questions or to challenge community perceptions.

The Mission of Hospitality was first held out of St. Joseph's church in Fort Collins in the 1980s and was spearheaded by a group of his students who saw the growing issue of homelessness in their community. Initially, leaders in the community didn't believe that there was a hunger problem in Fort Collins.

“What a shock for what the people of Fort Collins considered the ‘Choice City,’ or the ‘best town in the country.’ Homelessness in Fort Collins came as a surprise to many,” says Hall. His students’ persistence led to the opening of the evening meals, which brought in 30 people on its first night. By the second meal, 60 people arrived and it grew into the Catholic Charities of Larimer County running today's meal program.

By encouraging students to participate and change their communities, Hall believes that this leads to the best kind of learning: that which is internalized by the student. Students are able to own their community accomplishments and to see how the material they are learning in class can be carried with them for a lifetime.

Hall sees this in many of his former students, whose projects from that Community Organization class grew into permanent fixtures in the Fort Collins community and on a nationwide scale.

“Many students don't know what they know, haven't yet internalized what they learned in class, until they need to harvest that information to help others,” Hall said. During his retirement, Hall has been working on doctoral committees with various CSU departments. He enjoys this work because he is able to be involved with students and his colleagues, helping both succeed in their respective fields. And, he says, “The priority of social justice and social change burns hot as ever.”

For more information on the CHHS Legacies Project, and to view a video honoring Hall, go to www.chhs.colostate.edu/brucehall.
The first cohort of Ph.D. students in the School of Social Work began in 2012.

Faculty
School welcomes new faculty for Fall 2013

Eunhee Choi joined the School of Social Work as an assistant professor. She received her Ph.D. from the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh and her M.S.W. from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. She has been a licensed social worker in Korea since 2004 with two years of social work field experience in the areas of aging, health, and policy. She is devoted to building policies and programs that support individuals who are willing to work and volunteer as a way to remain healthy and active in old age. Her additional research interests include racial inequality, health disparity, advanced methodology, theoretical development, and program evaluation. Her dissertation examined racial inequality among older workers with diverse racial backgrounds including whites, blacks, and Latinos, within the theoretical framework of cumulative advantage and disadvantage.

Jennifer Dickman Portz, an assistant professor, has research specializations in public health, gerontology, and the use of technology interventions with older adults. She was an anthropology major at the University of Denver. Portz then received her M.S.W. from Boston College Graduate School of Social Work before returning to DU to earn her Ph.D. For her dissertation, Portz examined aging and technology perspectives of a health information technology web-based chronic disease self-management. As a social worker, Portz spent the last six years conducting research at the Institute for Health Research at Kaiser Permanente Colorado and the University of Denver. She has also worked as an adjunct faculty at the University of Denver and Metropolitan State University of Denver, instructing courses in research, evaluation, policy, and theories of human development.

Human-Animal Bond in Colorado celebrates 20 years

A new monthly speaker series this year. Topics range from the historical impacts of activism, to the future of technology in social work, to diversity issues and changes in health care due to the Affordable Care Act. Please feel welcome to come and hear future speakers.

You may not be aware that for the past 20 years the Human-Animal Bond in Colorado, or HABIC, has been a program of the School of Social Work. HABIC’s mission is to improve the quality of life for people of all ages through the therapeutic use of companion animals. HABIC trains and supervises volunteer human-animal teams, working in 47 different programs, with more than 800 people weekly. HABIC conducts research and evaluation in the human-animal bond field and works with students who are interested in this area. Each spring semester a course is offered, SOWK 550: The Human-animal Bond and Animal-assisted Therapy. HABIC’s office is located in the School of Social Work.

Human-animal teams are pictured at a HABIC social event: Play in the Pasture.

Audrey Shillington, Director, audrey.shillington@colostate.edu

Human’s research interests are in mental health, psychopharmacology, and consumer empowerment. Her primary focus involves studying and developing participative technologies to empower social work professionals and mental health consumers to contribute to improved medication safety. She has previously instructed undergraduate courses in community mental health practice, and graduate courses in advanced research methods, psychopathology, psychopharmacology, and social work practice in communities and organizations.

Jennifer Dickman Portz, an assistant professor, has research specializations in public health, gerontology, and the use of technology interventions with older adults. She was an anthropology major at the University of Denver. Portz then received her M.S.W. from Boston College Graduate School of Social Work before returning to DU to earn her Ph.D. For her dissertation, Portz examined aging and technology perspectives of a health information technology web-based chronic disease self-management. As a social worker, Portz spent the last six years conducting research at the Institute for Health Research at Kaiser Permanente Colorado and the University of Denver. She has also worked as an adjunct faculty at the University of Denver and Metropolitan State University of Denver, instructing courses in research, evaluation, policy, and theories of human development.

The School of Social Work has experienced many exciting changes during the past year. In this newsletter, you will see the many ways our students, alumni, faculty, and staff all contribute to the health and well-being of those in our communities, state, and nationally.

We were fortunate to succeed in hiring three new assistant professors. You will read later in this newsletter details of their backgrounds as well as their teaching and research expertise. What all three bring in common to the School are creative and innovative approaches to their teaching and research.

Our first cohort of Ph.D. students was admitted and began their program a year ago. They are in their second year and have begun narrowing down their areas of research and forming their committees. Vicki Buchan, director of the Ph.D. program, has done an amazing job getting the new
Life’s mission inspires scholarship

By Tyler Drum

Ken Hoole (social work, ’76), and his partner, Tim Sagen, are deeply invested in inspiring students to earn their degrees from Colorado State University. After 46 years together, more than 40 of which living in Fort Collins, Hoole and Sagen wanted to do something to give back to the community that has been so accepting of them.

Sagen grew up in Sturgis, S.D., and Hoole is from Montana. They met in Seattle in the late 1960s. Hoole has spent many years providing crisis counseling to members of the Northern Colorado community, and Sagen had a long career with the City of Fort Collins Utilities. Hoole recalls his time in the School of Social Work as a period that changed his life. “It was finally a place where I could be myself,” he says.

In 2013, Hoole was diagnosed with cancer. Through his medical journey, he was inspired to make a lifelong commitment to the University, which has played a significant role in shaping his life. “The school of social work, for me, was where I got my education, and I never thought I would actually go back and do something like this,” he says.

In 2014, Hoole and Sagen established a scholarship in honor of their lives and careers with Colorado State University. The scholarship will provide funding for students pursuing a degree in social work. Hoole and Sagen hope their gift will inspire others to give back to the community.

Alumni spotlight

Malshey-Payan explores coping with grief, struggles in her own culture

Alumna finds inspiration in the classroom for new book on conflict in the Middle East

Growing up in Israel, Catrene Malshey-Payan was struck by the mixing of cultures that shared negative coping mechanisms for their anger, fear, and pain caused by widespread violence. Upon moving to the United States and beginning her Master of Social Work at Colorado State University, Malshey-Payan realized that her struggle to cope with her mother’s death reflected the emotional struggles of her homeland.

In her recently published book, Peace Through Healing: My Vision for a New Middle East, co-written with Carrie Glenny, Malshey-Payan explores the repercussions of this nation-wide grief and provides her take on how to end the conflict.

Through her mother’s death from cancer and the loss of a friend in a bombing, Malshey-Payan realized the immense learning that could take place out of the pain and grief. “It was finally a place where I could be myself,” she says.

In her recently published book, Peace Through Healing: My Vision for a New Middle East, co-written with Carrie Glenny, Malshey-Payan explores the repercussions of this nation-wide grief and provides her take on how to end the conflict. “It was finally a place where I could be myself,” she says.

In her recently published book, Peace Through Healing: My Vision for a New Middle East, co-written with Carrie Glenny, Malshey-Payan explores the repercussions of this nation-wide grief and provides her take on how to end the conflict. “It was finally a place where I could be myself,” she says.

In her recently published book, Peace Through Healing: My Vision for a New Middle East, co-written with Carrie Glenny, Malshey-Payan explores the repercussions of this nation-wide grief and provides her take on how to end the conflict. “It was finally a place where I could be myself,” she says.

In her recently published book, Peace Through Healing: My Vision for a New Middle East, co-written with Carrie Glenny, Malshey-Payan explores the repercussions of this nation-wide grief and provides her take on how to end the conflict. “It was finally a place where I could be myself,” she says.
Researchers find early assessments, services help reduce future child abuse

In the last 10 years, the Social Work Research Center, housed in the School of Social Work, has conducted innovative research that has yielded significant enhancements to local and national social work practice. Director Marc Winokur, Ph.D., Assistant Director Helen Holmquist-Johnson, Ph.D., and Statistician/Methodologist Rebecca Orsi, Ph.D., operate the center with a focus on providing data-driven results for social work interventions and programs. In their largest study to date, the SWRC conducted a process, outcome, and cost evaluation of the Colorado Consortium on Differential Response. The main goal of this project was to determine the effectiveness of a non-investigatory track in Child Protective Services in keeping children safe. In a family assessment response, or FAR, families that present with a low to moderate risk of future maltreatment are offered an easily accessible and consumable source for the SWRC, which works closely with CSU’s Extension Program. Reaching out to Fort Collins area media and many unique cases through HICAHS, the SWRC has found that children in kinship care experience fewer behavioral problems, fewer mental health disorders, better well-being, and less placement disruption than the children in foster care. “There has been an increase in Colorado in the placement of children with kin,” says Winokur. “We have probably contributed to this trend through our work with state and county child welfare agencies in providing them with evidence that this practice is safe and effective.”

Working with the Campbell and Cochrane Collaborations has brought international recognition for the SWRC. By analyzing over 20 years of research on kinship care, SWRC compiled the best available evidence into one systematic review. This has been especially helpful for child welfare practitioners who are more likely to read an easily accessible and consumable resource for the latest research on kinship care than sort through all of the research on their own. The SWRC is happy to announce its most recent grant, which provides an opportunity to evaluate Colorado’s Title IV-E Waiver Program from 2013-2018. With 43 Colorado counties already participating, the grant provides flexible funding for counties to test new approaches to delivering services to the community. “The project is just getting started, but we are excited to evaluate child welfare interventions that provide kinship supports, family engagement, permanency outcomes, trauma screening, and trauma treatments,” said Winokur.

Looking forward to the next 10 years, the SWRC hopes to work with School of Social Work alumni on new opportunities for research and community outreach. 

Interdisciplinary projects improve working conditions on dairy farms

Real-life examples inspire applying social work to other fields

Social work and dairy cows seem like distant spheres— but when working with the High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health & Safety, Victoria Buchan, professor and Ph.D. graduate program director, and Louise Quajano, associate professor, both from the School of Social Work, have found themselves face-to-face with local dairy cows and deeply engaged in the health concerns surrounding agricultural jobs.

This interdisciplinary organization, housed at Colorado State University, is one of 10 national Agricultural Centers funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to conduct research, education, and prevention intervention programs on agricultural health in the United States. Two large HICAHS projects focus on the dairy industry, one for improving the safety training on dairy farms and the other to decrease the mental stress of parlor workers, those who work in large milking and holding facilities.

Social work plays a major role. Buchan and Quajano evaluate the effectiveness of the research and programs coming out of HICAHS. They also review stakeholder feedback via surveys and interviews to make sure HICAHS’s stakeholders understand and are implementing the HICAHS-provided health information to improve their working conditions. It is an emphasis on the “human side” of what the HICAHS researchers hope to accomplish, by providing ideas for changing behavioral practices in agricultural jobs to improve working conditions and safety.

Buchan and Quajano have been involved in many unique cases through HICAHS, which works closely with CSU’s Extension program. Reaching out to Fort Collins businesses has resulted in successful collaborations between the campus and local agriculture companies. Fort Collins dairy farm, La Luna Dairy, and its owner, Jon Shafley, have been especially open to HICAHS and they readily responded with groups on tours to see the inner workings of a dairy farm and to hold interviews with their staff to gauge major physical and psychological stressors for migrant workers. “It has been very helpful to bring these real-life examples into the classroom,” Buchan explains. Their work has provided numerous examples for their classrooms, giving students new ideas for applying social work to a variety of different fields. Social work has had many graduate and doctoral students involved in a variety of projects, most recently a CD to help 4H children learn about farm safety.

Thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of HICAHS and the work of Center Director Stephen Reynolds in the Department of Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences, the CSU group was awarded a substantial grant renewal from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of $8,770,620 over a five-year cycle. This project is a unique interdisciplinary collaboration that involves several colleges across seven disciplines. The Center serves PHS Region VIII and provides pilot grants to researchers in the region to increase research and collaborative capacity. Impressively, this grant to establish HICAHS was first awarded to Colorado State University more than 20 years ago.

Social Work in Action honored by local Bahai’s for service, social justice

In Spring 2013, the undergraduate student organization Social Work in Action, along with their adviser, Malcolm Scott, were honored with the second annual Taberh Elamami Community Service Award for their social action, community outreach, and social justice advocacy benefiting the CSU and Fort Collins community. In 2011, Saba Coleman, a local Bahai’s member working on the Education Under Fire initiative, wanted to screen a documentary film that chronicled the systematic denial of young Bahai’s higher education. Scott thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to engage social work students in social action that had broad international implications and potential local impact.

Social Work in Action subsequently sponsored several on-campus screenings of the film as part of their outreach and advocacy initiatives. This advocacy and screening of the film led Colorado State University to consider recognizing credits earned by young Bahai’s denied formal tertiary educational opportunities in Iran.

With the work of key supporters, credits from the Bahai’s Institute of Higher Education are now accepted at CSU. Follow the recent UN report on Bahai’s in Iran at http://news.baha.org/story/941. From left to right, Charlie Johnson, Alice Johnston, and Whitney Walker-Mead of student group Social Work in Action, the group’s adviser Malcolm Scott, and David Spencer of the Fort Collins Bahai’s Spiritual Assembly.
When Brad Sheafor retired after a 38-year career at Colorado State, the School of Social Work ensured that his national leadership and contributions to the field of social work would be carried on through the Brad Sheafor Lecture Series in Social Work. This lecture series has recently reached endowment status thanks to the support of Sheafor and other generous donors, and will begin to generate interest to fund the annual lectures.

The purpose of the fund is to provide a lecture series that will build on Sheafor’s legacy of strengthening human services by bringing recognized experts to better inform CSU faculty, students, and social work practitioners on cutting-edge topics of current interest in social work and human services. The first lecture is anticipated to be held during the 2014-2015 school year.

Coming to CSU in 1974, Sheafor served as director of the fledgling Division of Social Work. In 1986 he stepped into the role of interim dean for the College of Applied Human Sciences (now the College of Health and Human Sciences). Sheafor has made significant contributions as a teacher and administrator, a leader in national professional groups, and an author of key textbooks used throughout the world. He was honored by the Council on Social Work Education in 2006 with its award for Significant Lifetime Achievement in Social Work Education and by the CSU Alumni Association in 2010 with its Distinguished Faculty Award.

Sheafor was interviewed as part of the College of Health and Human Sciences Legacies project which seeks to highlight the contributions of faculty emeriti and retired employees. For a video and more information on Sheafor, go to the following website: www.chhs.colostate.edu/bradsheafor.