

# **Baltimore City Public Schools Social Work Services (BCPS)**

## **Collection Introduction and Project History**

### Purposes of the BCPS Social Work Archival Preservation Project

a) To document and preserve the limited historically significant records of the School Social Work Service, in my possession, as a former school social worker, and retired (after 25years) supervisor and administrator in the Baltimore City Public Schools.b) To provide a unique perspective on the diverse roles, challenges and influences upon SSW staff, supervisors and administrators within a large, urban school system.c) To encourage research and documentation of BCPS social workers at all levels whose early services and contributions to the education and general well-being of students, parents, educational staff and the community may not be fully known and appreciated.d) To inform, encourage and inspire current and future school social workers with knowledge of the past that may lead to broader comprehension of the present and deeper insights into future possibilities for service. e) To broaden the perspectives and stimulate the thinking of local, state and national decision-makers regarding the unique educational needs of children, and the ramifications of such as the primary focus of educational reform.f) To assist the promotion of collaborative community and political actions to address and ameliorate the effects of social, economic and other societal inequities and conditions impacting educational reform and progress.

### ABBREVIATIONS

To facilitate the quest of those seeking knowledge and understanding of this Collection, I have included this section on abbreviations. Like all professions, fields and institutions, terms and names are often shortened in some manner to avoid repetition, save time and hopefully, promote efficiency.

In school systems, there may be frequent re-alignments with title changes, and more far-reaching re-organizations. The Baltimore City school system was not an exception. It is highly recommended that this section be consulted periodically, to avoid confusion. The School of Social Work Service has been assigned to various Divisions and Offices over the years, and sometimes has been re-named while retaining it's function, sometimes with added or diminished foci:

1. **BC - SSW** - Baltimore City - School Social Workers
2. **BCPS or BPS** (the latter in earlier days) - Baltimore City Public Schools
3. **BIM** - Bureau of Instructional Management - BCPS
4. **BTU** - Baltimore Teacher's Union
5. **DEC** - Division for Exceptional Children (an earlier name for special education)

section in BCPS)

6. **DSE** - Division of Special Education (BCPS)
7. **DSS - BPS** - Division of Special Services - Baltimore City Schools (as differentiated from DSS - the Department of Social Services -Baltimore City)
8. **ETS** - Educational Testing Service (in Princeton, New Jersey)
9. **LEA** - Local Education Agency (reference to Maryland's city and counties' education departments)
10. **MSDE** - Maryland State Department of Education (Referenced at one time as the Md. State Board of Education)
11. **NAPSO** - National Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations - Office in Washington, D.C.
12. **NASDTEC** - National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification
13. **NTE** - National Testing Exam (section of ETS)
14. **OPS** - Office of Pupil Services (The SSW Service was included in this office) At one time, this Office also was under the head of the Division of Vocational, Special, and Adult/Alternative Education and Compensatory Services.
15. **OSEP** - Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Dept. of Education
16. **OSP** - Office of Special Populations -(est.1993-94 in the Dept. of Family and Student Support Services, BCPS.) It replaced the Special Education designation and was headed by an Asst.Supt.
17. **OSP** - Office of Special Programs (BCPS)
18. **OSPS** - Office of Social and Psychological Services (The School Social Work Service was a part of this office)
19. **PS & D** - Division of Pupil Services and Development (An early Division in the BCPS)
20. **PS & SP** - Pupil Services and Special Programs ( one of the early Divisions in the BCPS)
21. **PSASA** - Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association (A bargaining unit of BCPS administrators and supervisors)
22. **PST** - Pupil Services Team (s) BCPS
23. **PSTEAB** - Professional Standards and Teacher Education Advisory Board (of the MSDE)

## 24. **SSW** - School Social Work or School Social Worker

### THE CONCEPTION OF THE COLLECTION: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Three primary factors prompted me to formally begin the process of documenting certain historical aspects of School Social Work in the Baltimore City Public Schools. It is difficult to categorize them without some overlap, but my provenance is first and foremost a function of personality and behaviors. Secondly, professional observations and experiences lent credence to this need. Finally, the opportunity arose to follow up on these inclinations.

#### Personality And Behaviors

Keeping notes, maintaining records, periodically writing down feelings and experiences before I knew about diaries and journaling, were important to me as a young person. Also, as a young child, reading was integral to my learning and development, and what I most enjoyed doing. Thus, I was a good student.

Because of my sensitivities to the lives of others and my own family experiences, I determined around the age of 10 years that my goal in life was to help others, especially children. Later, I realized that social work was the name for the professional field I would enter. Throughout my formal educational years, I saved report cards, diplomas, award certificates, and other such documents.

Additionally, some assigned papers in both college and graduate school were saved, and remain in my possession despite the many years that have since passed. Boxes of materials from paid and volunteer positions, as well as scrapbooks, ancestral information and photographs from childhood on fill space in my home. As a saver and undercover historian, I felt an obligation to inform future generations ... whether or not such knowledge was requested or considered desirable or necessary. My tendency to document, retain, and make copies of some of my activities during the 25 years of service as a social worker and then administrator and supervisor of the BCPS School Social Work Service resulted in boxed materials that were not seen, read or useful in any manner.

#### Professional Observations and Experiences

In 1973, the BCPS underwent a massive re-organization, changing from a centralized administrative structure to a decentralized one, encompassing nine regions. This meant that certain major executive and managerial functions were moved from close proximity headquarters to 9 buildings throughout the city, all headed by Regional Superintendents, with Regional heads for 5 different functions. The overall Head of the system, prior to the current CEO designation, remained the Superintendent of the BCPS, but the Regional Superintendents were given more governing authority than had previously been the case. As a result of this re-structuring, certain aspects of the old system changed dramatically. One effect that is relevant to this discussion is that the record-keeping system for the old service under which School Social Work (SSW) fell, was eliminated completely. Not

only was SSW affected, but so were Psychological Services, Psychiatric Services, Attendance and Court Services and the Home Visitors Service, a paraprofessional program supplementing the Attendance and other Pupil Services programs. This was a devastating blow for the continuity of service delivery! Professionals of various backgrounds had administrative and supervisory responsibilities for staff whose professional training and qualifications were vastly different from their own, etc. And new forms, recordings and other systems had to be developed by each of the nine (9) new entities. Many challenges had to be met and resolved.

This incident is recounted in this context because it highlighted one of the main concerns of professionals in the host-setting of an educational facility .... the apparent lack of understanding or respect for the ways in which others work to assist educators, students, and families, and the import of documentation. This occurrence is also relevant because I received valuable early documents about the SSW service when they were retrieved by the person who preceded me in my position as Educational Specialist for the SSW Service. It is unclear how much warning Pupil Services administrators and staff were given before the well-maintained records room was literally dumped. The Specialist somehow learned about the removal of records from offices and she was able to gather a few materials, some of which she gave to me after she retired, and I was promoted to that position. She just celebrated her 95th birthday on Feb 14th (Valentine's Day 2009) at an assisted living retirement facility.

Many years earlier, I had been informed that the BCPS Central Office Library did not have an archival section that would accept school social work materials. Unfortunately, public school libraries generally in this state declined in importance, and gradually Media Centers evolved in some systems. (Funding cuts had an impact on this development, as well as in the music, arts, and physical education areas.) I do not know how accurate the report about non-acceptance of SSW materials or records were, as I was a SSW at the time, but that information stayed with me. It was a disappointing fact to me and may have unconsciously affected my need to hold onto records about our service. During those times, I did not consider what I would do with them. I suppose I was satisfying a compulsive need.

Shortly after joining the school social work staff in October, 1966, I began to save materials related to Function and other Committees on which I served, as well as the records of my work with other entities, agencies and organizations within and outside of the school system . As a professional, I grew more aware of the value of thorough documentation and accountability for one's actions. An incident with an Assistant Superintendent occurred later in my career that crystallized my need to ensure that I accumulate my own personal notes, correspondence, files of actions, decisions, memos, etc., along with those maintained in official records. This tendency to affirm results of contacts or decisions was not always desired or appreciated by some officials.

### Defining Opportunity for Change

Ultimately, the records piled up in boxes and home files, and I was forced to consider what to do with them, particularly upon my retirement in March,1992. At that time, I was

involved in numerous activities, some of which I continued and added to, particularly on the Maryland State level. In 2001, I responded to a call from the Executive Director of the Md. Chapter of The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to assist her and other volunteers to archive about 60 boxes of records that had been dropped off at The Langsdale Library at The University of Baltimore before her service as Executive. Library staff had done some preliminary separation of their contents into categories, but much more needed to be accomplished if they were to be readily accessible as Archives on the University's web-site, and for scholarly use. This experience was very informative and inspired me to consider the Library's Special Collection as a potential resource for my SSW materials. Tom Hollowak, the Head of Special Collections, was very receptive to my inquiries and provided me with additional training materials to supplement my orientation to the process of preparing materials for archival storage. As a result of his consultative expertise and support, I have been working with this project since 2002.

#### EARLY HISTORICAL RECOLLECTIONS FROM MY PREDECESSOR -- NELVA O. HOBBS (1983)

The accuracy of these remembrances cannot be guaranteed, primarily due to my note-taking at the time, and my subsequent efforts to assemble them into a fairly concise format. I had visited Nelva in her neat, attractive apartment where she resided with a long-time friend. (For varied reasons, my later intention to tape-record interviews with long-time school social work supervisors and others did not work out.) Nelva and I had lunched at restaurants periodically after my promotion to her vacant position, but she may have been recuperating from a minor illness when we agreed that I would visit. Our conversation led to this information that she agreed to allow me to record in this manner. At the time, no thought of compiling an archival record of this and other materials had entered my conscious mind. It was all part of my instinctive awareness that I should save information relative to my job and school social work in the system. This process may have been prompted by her decision to give me materials that she had retrieved back in 1973 when the Pupil Services Division's student records and the office's records were destroyed. This occurred in the wake of the massive re-organization of the BCPS system in 1973.

For at least two years prior to beginning work as a visiting teacher (the early name for school social workers) in November, 1947, Nelva was employed as a teacher by the Baltimore City Schools. It happens that she had teaching credentials as well as a social work degree. The Baltimore City Child Guidance Clinic provided the staff supervision of visiting teachers. They also had the same salary as teachers, which salary was pro-rated over 11 months, instead of 10, but their hours were from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Teachers began work earlier and ended their days earlier.

The schools were segregated then and there were 4 or 5 Black workers. (Nelva is white; I did not note their numbers.) Twenty schools were assigned to each worker, including 2 high schools which received on-call services. Workers visited schools on a 2 week schedule – one-half day per school, and visited until 5 or up to 9 pm. Lunch-time was not scheduled as one had to transport oneself to the second school. Case write-ups took place during dinner, etc.

During the 11th month (July), medical and vision tests were arranged for students, home visits continued, camp referrals were handled; necessary items were solicited for their use from agencies and organizations. Workers also followed children who moved, and were transferred, until it was resolved whether they were in or out of the area. She did this for 3 or so years. Then more workers were hired and school assignments were decreased to 8 schools, with 2 on-call. This continued for a long time.

The first real change, as Nelva put it, occurred when the workers got two months off during the summer! They returned to work by September 1st. This was not the same return time for teachers. The visiting teachers worked very hard, with all of their tasks, and writing/maintaining continuing records of all that they did for each student. Concise summaries were not allowed. There were also detailed statistical reports.

One of the issues was that the visiting teachers (who were required to have a BA with teaching experience and or experience in social work), were not under the rule of the principals. This was problematic from their point of view. They wanted the same kind of control that they had over counselors, who were assigned full-time to their schools. Thus, visiting teachers had to understand this perspective and learn how to deal with it. They needed to respect the fact that the principal was responsible for the decisions made in that school, so that the importance of discussing views and situations could not be minimized. Nelva made known to me an interesting fact. Teachers once had been paid by the day when they entered the system. There was no salary, as such. They were kept at a Class 11 minimum for 3 months, and some remained for years at that level. Once they “passed” that level, they were on probation for two years before being granted tenure.

As Nelva and I talked in 1983, we noted that the pendulum was swinging back, as it always does, to desires on the part of some for longer school days, more school days, more teacher evaluations, fewer holidays and other measures, not always commensurate with meeting the learning and growth needs of individual students.

As of this writing, 95 years old Nelva and I remain in contact through phone calls, letters and visits to her at the retirement facility in which she resides in Baltimore County.

NOTE: I am saddened to report that Nelva died on June 18, 2010 at the age of 96. I was out of town at the time, so I learned of her death from retired school social work colleagues. Her financial advisor provided me with details of her interment, and that she is resting in peace next to her sister, her only sibling, at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens in Baltimore County.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES I - ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

This grouping, along with the next three, includes the richest and most extensive materials in the Collection. It also has historical relevance, primarily because of the diligence of my predecessor in this position, Nelva O. Hobbs, who saved some of her records, and retrieved early memos and other printed materials from extinction. These documents attest to the dedication and commitment of those early visiting teachers/social workers who worked tirelessly to advance the quality of their services to children and families, and to improve their professionalism. The memoranda, circulated during the mid-1950s, in particular, through the 60s, are noteworthy for the perspectives of social work professionals who continue to deal with the same problems. The early frustrations and concerns of overworked staff providing supervision and other professional services, without the requisite professional status and recognition, are well documented here.

Of additional significance are the Baltimore Bulletin of Education journals featuring program articles contributed by BPS social work staff, as well as other staff in the Division of Special Services. Organizational charts were also included in the two copies in this series --the September-October, 1958 and the 1962-1963 issues. The eventual demise of this publication can be deduced by the perceptive reader who observes differences in the time frames covered in these two issues, although others were published in between.

The general format of this series includes folders sequenced by years, covering varied subject matter, such as administrative and staffing issues, accountability, performance and action planning, flow charts, and other programmatic matters. The operational functions of the SSW Service must be viewed within the context of both its professional identity and BCPS system needs and expectations --which were not always congruent. One will note that there were several changes in administrative titles and division names over the years. The organizational charts in this series can assist greatly in understanding system changes during this period. Many informative management and inter-departmental communication documents are included here, in addition to public media articles.

In addition, my employee credentials, academic and employment records, and resumes from 1966-1993, plus pertinent pictures have been placed in this and other series' folders. Career goals, professional performance evaluations, commendations, etc., are in Series X. Exceptions may occur when professional program and service folders through-out the Collection include copies of evaluation or other comments.

There were occasions when the SSW Educational Specialist initiated or was granted authority for certain programs that involved school staff more so than students and families, such as The Baltimore City Reading Marathon, conducted under the auspices of the Mayor's Office in 1989. Such programs of collaboration and responsibility are included here. Others collaborative efforts fell under the headings of Series II, Series III or Series V.

Series I has been divided into sub-series ... A, B, and C.

Sub-Series A includes:

The BCPS administrative and organizational structure featured in Newsletters, Superintendents' Annual Reports and other system publications, not available in the general format of the series. Identification of board members, superintendents, top-level administrative staff and other officials from the mid-forties to early nineties. Special Education and other federal, state and local initiatives, as well as reports by system staff related to these directives. Newsletters, Circulars, Memoranda relevant to divisional and service programs. Employee matters, such as performance evaluations, assignments, office procedures and related matters.

Sub-Series B includes:

A Systems Approach to Solving Educational Problems: ERIC Reports (1967) System Reorganization (Newspaper Focus -2 Regions) September, 1973 Superintendent's Options for Reorganization and A Brief of the Plan January, 1972, August, 1972 Positions Available Upon Central Office Reorganization (1973-74) Principles and Strategies of Systematic Educational Planning: BCPS Course for Educational Staff (September, 1974) Systems Approach: Range and Scope of Educational Planning (October-November, 1974) Administration and Decision - Making: Models and Examples (December, 1974)

Sub-Series C includes: Parts of Volumes I and II of the BCPS Administrative Handbook. It is not possible to determine at this stage when the rules and regulations seen therein were formulated or became effective as dates are not provided.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*



## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES II: SOCIAL WORK POLICY, PERSONNEL, AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The contents of this series include extensive administrative and management/accountability records, depicting the influence of the educational environment in which the SSW Service operated. This is a natural and usual aspect of social work in a host setting (such as a medical clinic, correctional facility, human resources agency, etc.) In addition, evidence of close coordination among educational staff in other disciplines can be found, as well as indications of disagreements. The principles and methods of attaining system objectives sometimes were based upon differing perspectives, and this made for an interesting and challenging workplace setting. An on-going dilemma in social work service delivery was the system's emphasis on providing services primarily to special education students (to meet court mandates), which deprived the system of preventive services that could forestall greater problems. Insufficient staff aggravated the problem, along with insufficient administrative input at the decision-making level. However, most SSW staff loved their work with the children and developed effective and satisfying relationships with many parents and educational staff,

It was deemed essential that highly qualified, trained social workers with Master's degrees be hired to work in such a large urban school system as the BCPS. From its inception, the SSW program emphasized its Mission and its personnel needs. Committees were formed and re-formed over the years to define and refine how the Service might best assist educational staff in meeting the varied needs of students and families. The materials in this series document many aspects of this effort over the years. This effort encompasses extensive committee work, school system directives, SSW administrative memoranda, and other materials fostering knowledge of best practices in teaching and learning. There are papers and studies completed by individuals within and outside of the system dealing with childhood behaviors and learning styles, for example. Educational information for parents, as well as teachers, is included. An understanding of SSW policies and approaches to its program development will be gleaned from this series, and all that follow.

While community collaboration is covered in more detail in other series, it is important to mention here the SSW connection with the University of Maryland's (Baltimore) School of Social Work and Community Planning, as it was known for many years. Papers here attest to the liaison role the service assumed in training social work students in the BCPS system, and to the part played by the Educational Specialist in presentations to Field Instructors and students at the School. This professional relationship was mutually beneficial, in that the Specialist was given access to faculty staff meetings and programs, and faculty members periodically presented to the school social workers at their professional development meetings.

This series includes three (3) sub-series --- A, B, and C. Sub-Series A includes professional program assignments; B includes service report forms and related documents; and C includes supervision, schedules and guidelines. While they are self-explanatory, their content are very revealing of the tone and tenor of the time. The amount of deliberation and work involved in providing a service delivery system and maintaining a quality work force was enormous, particularly because of insufficient supervisory and administrative staff. I believe the reader will find this material most informative and more encompassing than one might expect.

Supplementing this information are copies of Annual Reports prepared on her own initiative by the Educational Specialist, to provide information to system administrators they would not otherwise know, and to inform and support the work of the workers themselves.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (BCPS) SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK (SSW) SERVICES

### HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES III: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS OF SERVICE / RELATED SERVICES

There is no way that I can adequately convey my admiration and respect for the quality of the professional social workers and their commitment and dedication to their work with students, families and staff of the Baltimore City Public Schools. There are always a few exceptions in any work environment, but there were exemplary staff persons I heard of before my tenure within the service and those I had the privilege of working with on various levels during my employment whom I will not name, for fear of forgetting someone. In the overall collection and especially in this series, names and pictures of some of the staff during this period will be evident. I am especially appreciative of the many supportive individuals, a few of whom were sometimes confidants, while assisting me with supervision and in other capacities, during these years. It is also important for me to acknowledge the divisional, administrative, supervisory, clerical and other individuals who worked with efficiency and flexibility to meet the ever changing mandates impacting the SSW programs of service, working hard and courageously to fulfill sometimes overwhelming demands. Professional colleagues in other fields with whom I worked within and beyond the system were also invaluable.

Series III is a comprehensive example of the nature of the services provided by social work staff. In addition to delivering clinical services to students and families, social workers were consultants to educational staff. Staff training in individual schools were conducted, as well as system-wide training on a variety of topics. Community referrals and contacts were integral to the process. Interagency collaborations were essential aspects of such involvement. These files include related resource materials such as mental health initiatives and ideas for early childhood intervention. Grant proposals were developed and are included here.

Additionally, this series encompasses four sub-series. Sub-series A, Supporting Reporting, incorporates the name of a staff training proposal we developed for which we were very happy to be awarded grant funding. It probably was the first and only child abuse and neglect training program in the nation in which all persons employed by the BCPS, from school board members, the superintendent, and clerical staff, to custodians were scheduled to receive this training. A small committee of social workers worked with me to write a script and to develop a Video-Tape, using BCPS students as actors, with their drama teacher directing them. This committee was also filmed during a session conferring discussing the issues of child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. This was a particularly difficult project, due to several factors, including confidentiality, (as the victim was a person recounting a true incident), and the loss of a key technical coordinator, whose system position was eliminated due to budget cuts. As the person ultimately responsible for this effort, I could not let all of our work disappear. With persistence and ingenuity, and hard work, we completed the tape; despite its limitations, it was well received and proved to be a very good learning tool for staff. This rather intricate venture took place during the 1989-90 school years. The tape has been placed in Series X1, Multi-Media and Photo files.

As the long -time liaison to the Department of Social Services (DSS), I had responsibilities for the child abuse and neglect reporting policies of the BCPS. Information was distributed primarily via official system circulars to staff. Our service had always worked collaboratively with DSS in this regard, and before she retired, my predecessor had chaired a SSW committee that developed an excellent staff training model. During subsequent years, staff had conducted training at various schools. This subject was sometimes a contentious one as principals and school staff sometimes viewed their reporting roles differently from their assigned SSW. At times, it was necessary for the educational specialist and other higher level administrators to become involved. Due to the confidential nature of these involvements, material of this nature in the Collection has been placed in a file for release in the distant future.

I initiated a discussion about the origin of the social work professional service in the BCPS, and using a set of criteria stemming from the tenure of Elizabeth Armstrong, the person who took the service from visiting teacher status to a professional social work service, it was agreed to credit the date of 1936 as the beginning of the SSW Service in the system. Thus, we decided to celebrate fifty (50) years of SSW services in the

Baltimore City Schools on May 20, 1987. The circumstances of that event and the history of the Service from Elizabeth Armstrong's tenure were obtained through personal interviews with her. In re-reading the account I wrote at that time for the program booklet, I have discovered errors I regret were somehow overlooked and obviously not proofread. Under the title, The Beginnings 1936-1949, it should be noted that the name of Miss Armstrong's sister, Helen Louise Armstrong, has been interjected in a confusing way in the text. I am taking full responsibility for this unfortunate confusion. It was intended to have been only a passing mention of her sister who had worked as a visiting teacher prior to Miss Elizabeth Armstrong's appearance in that role. It was when her sister left her employment that Elizabeth was hired to fill that vacant position. My account also is poorly written and should have been edited to ensure a coherent telling of this significant story. A corrected copy of that page will be attached to the program booklets shown in the file folder. ( It is my hope that scholars will do further research that will assist not only a more accurate history of Ms. Armstrong's legacy, but also document others who merit recognition for their significant contributions to the beginnings and professional development of the service.)

Sub-series B folders include story details, including pictures of Anniversaries and Retirements, and other celebrations. The momentous 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the School Social Work Service in the Baltimore City Public Schools was followed in 1992 by the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary recognition which, while planned by a committee during my tenure, was actualized by an exhibition after I left on medical leave in January, 1992. Artifacts from both activities are included in this series, along with congratulatory messages. Other relevant retirements and communications are also included in this section. My official retirement was effective March 1, 1992, and a post -retirement resume and involvements from that date through 2002 are included in that section.

Sub-series C is entitled Special Education Reviews and Issues. This is essential reading for those interested in the complexities of this pervasive practical and legal problem that plagued the system for many years. Varied state and local documents and perspectives are included on the complex issues of educating children whose needs are outside of the so-called "normal" range, including the emotionally handicapped.

Project Return was a landmark effort for the system and the Maryland State Department of Education. Both the local and state Vocational Education entities were involved with the system's divisions handling the educational, psychological and psycho-social needs of emotionally handicapped adolescents. A newly opened state rehabilitation agency for adults was to be the site of a program ( not fully conceptualized) for a limited number of students whose needs were not being met in the settings in which they were placed, so some were out of school waiting for an appropriate placement, if any could be found. The jointly sponsored proposal was for a 8 week summer program, 6 months for students, to be held at this new facility. Upon learning of the need for a director for the program, I became very enthused with the concept and the creative opportunity this would afford. I relished the challenge and actively campaigned for the position. My application was successful, I believe, because that Spring, I had successfully headed a specially devised three (3) week full- time committee, leading a small, diverse group of educators (including a principal of a special school) in developing a paper entitled Programs and Services for Emotionally Handicapped Students. The details and news articles regarding Project Return (1973-74) are the focus of Sub-series D.

***Joan Y. Harris, ACSW***

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES IV: PUBLIC POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES / RELATED REPORTS, RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

As I began work on this Collection, this section was tentatively titled "Areas of Community Involvement." After several months, it became evident that the issues and materials in my possession encompassed much more than the original title denoted. The practice of Social Work, whether in a school setting or not, requires an understanding of the dynamics of human behavior in the environments in which people function. Behavior is influenced by innate and other factors in one's environment ... and that environment is a broad one. Parental influence and actions are known to be paramount in a child's school adjustment and success. In the effort to understand and influence positive learning attitudes and behaviors in children, one must be cognizant of this factor, and also keep abreast of the community's response to the problems and challenges confronting children and families. Influencing public opinion and policy in their myriad forms can be subtle, as well as direct, and is not often given the import it requires. Underlying much of the work of educators and other professionals within a school system is a focus on influencing the decision makers, lawmakers, politicians and community leaders. Conference papers and pamphlets related to managing child welfare services, and programs for parents and families, as well as helpful materials for parents and teachers, are among the diverse selections of printed materials included herein.

This series provides examples of the inter-relationships and actions in which I and others within varied local, state and national entities were involved as we sought to improve the lives and educational outcomes for children. Within the general folders of this series are examples of advocacy, including correspondence to newspapers, newsletters, and magazine articles, as well as professional reports and other information that can broaden readers' perceptions of the fields of education and social work. Intergovernmental and interagency collaborations and presentations by me are shown both throughout the series and in the sub-series.

In addition, documents address endeavors designed both to address serious community problems which impact learning behaviors, and to support educational issues in innovative ways. For several years, then Mayor William Donald Schaeffer convened, during the school year, an advisory group of business and professional women who met over lunch to hear the mayor's ideas and initiatives, and then reacted to them. They also brought forth ideas of their own to improve the life of the city and its residents in a broad spectrum of areas. The group consisted primarily of influential, professional, civic-minded, and creative women, some of whom served in notable capacities in city agencies and organizations. The primary catalyst for this endeavor was a civic-minded activist who was a trusted confidant and friend. She and her equally prominent husband would often host meetings in their home with the Mayor and other well-known citizens. Periodically, members of the Mayor's Advisory group were also entertained there.

I became a regular member of the group, which met bi-weekly, when an Assistant Superintendent in the BCPS retired and recommended that I serve in that capacity. It was an enlightening educational opportunity as well as a fun experience, which allowed me to interact with important decision makers, and to become more informed about "the other side" of city government, particularly the more caring, human side of our leaders that is not often as well known. I appreciated the deep devotion, dedication, commitment and involvement of a variety of regular people, like me, and those of greater means and influence, contributing their time and talents to an astonishing range of city promotion and other projects. After a few years, I decided that, due to my limited time availability to do committee work for this group and "pull my weight" as I desired, I would resign. However, I did coordinate for the city schools staff their participation in a significant collaborative venture that involved all city agencies. This very successful project with City Hall leadership was The Baltimore City Reading Marathon held in July, 1989. The folders informing readers regarding these topics are located in the general section of this Series.

There are a variety of reports depicting research and opinions, along with relevant resources in Series IV, as is the case throughout this Collection. Public policy and community services activism covers a broad spectrum of information, beyond the local level, and it is very helpful to learn how other communities are /or have handled similar situations to avoid re-inventing the wheel, so to speak. As the sole social work-

trained professional responsible for the School Social Work policy, program and services, I was the prime contact person with the University of Maryland School Of Social Work, and their field instruction program. Presentations and other contacts are shown in this series, as well as a later (post-retirement) interview by a UMBC social work student that was placed on the school's web-site under the subject category of Reflections. Also included in these materials is that of a former SSW colleague whom I had recommended for the interview process. Some of her writing has been included here because she possessed a unique intellect and personality.

Included among the sub-series are the following:

a) Sub-Series A - The Maryland Educational Coalition (MEC) ... an extensive compilation of materials saved from my active involvement in this effort to involve law-makers in adequately funding the Baltimore City Public Schools. Several years after I joined the group, then known as the Metropolitan Education Coalition, as the effort was more local in concept, it's focal points broadened. I continued meeting with this organization for a few years after my retirement, participating in its advocacy efforts and appearances before legislators in Annapolis. MEC's founding and other early documents are included here, as well as papers on funding and marketing proposals, minutes of executive board meetings, and papers related to other deliberations. Currently, a coalition of organizations remains actively involved in the on-going effort to remedy problems in the equitable funding and distribution of educational resources throughout the state.

Sub-Series B - The Transitional Housing Project / Project Fresh Start ... a collaboration that began with the Mid -Town Churches Community Association's approach to the school system regarding their concerns about the education of the homeless children coming to their attention. A SSW assisting me in my office picked up on these issues, and before long we developed a program in some of the schools to support these homeless children. State-wide, and nationally, this issue was being recognized and solutions were being proposed. Soon, I became involved in a photography project, using my novice skills to meet with homeless clients receiving support in the transitional dwellings where they lived, and making portraits of them and their children. (For several years, as a result of the kindness of an area professional who framed the pictures, they hung in an area of the Central Office BCPS building where my office was located.) Meanwhile, the church withdrew from the project which had been quite successful in some ways. My SSW assistant had taken the initiative to involve a local realtor in this effort, and built on this success to engage an organization affiliated with the Catholic Church, and others to raise funds and provide more services. Meanwhile, I had retired in 1992, and the social worker assumed even more responsibilities, as she was quite committed to the program. A very successful program evolved, for which the social worker and the Realtor eventually received just recognition. This initiative has been ongoing, and I am pleased to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of this individual who has accomplished so much for the homeless in Baltimore City.

Sub-Series C - Morris Goldseker Foundation of Maryland: Broken Bodies, Broken Spirits ; a Family Violence Coalition. This was another hard-working group of individuals and organizations in which I was associated that was committed to changing what some perceived as the community's laissez-faire approach to family violence. It was recognized that an effective approach to changing that culture was to approach it on several levels, involving the community as well as the court system. Thus, committee representatives spanned the spectrum in terms of their knowledge, experiences and perspectives. Some of the details and minutes of the efforts and conclusions, and activities planned subsequent to the bound copy of the report, funded by the Goldseker Foundation, are included in these comprehensive folders.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES V: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION

Social Workers in the BCPS early recognized the need to bond as an organization within the school system, and to strengthen ties with their professional counterparts at the local, state and national levels. At least, some of them did. SERIES V and VI in the Collection detail aspects of these inter-connections beyond the BCPS school system.

As is often the case, relatively few social workers found the time to commit fully to leadership roles in the Association, but most contributed in varied ways to advocacy for themselves and their services on behalf of the students and families in the city schools. A comprehensive record of the formation and activities of the association is not available here. The information in the two Series mentioned is informative and can deepen the reader's understanding of those early years. I am very appreciative and respectful of the several named individuals who labored on behalf of the association, as well as those not cited.

When I was promoted to Educational Specialist in 1977, my periodic involvement shifted to a non-participatory supporter of the values and objectives of the organization. Inevitably, some tensions arose due to the inherent discordance between administrative leaders and those in a subordinate position in an hierarchal organization such as a school system. I am pleased to state that most of the SSW staff continued to relate to me in my changed role in an understanding, positive, and respectful manner.

The goal of parity for school social workers in their functioning, and related areas, led in the early years to supportive involvements by the Association with the Maryland Chapter of the NASW, particularly in the effort to obtain State Department of Education recognition for SSWs as an entity distinct from, yet integral to, the all encompassing term "pupil personnel workers." This was perceived as important because of the different training and skills set that trained social workers brought to the services children needed to achieve. Collaborative efforts with other professionals and paraprofessionals on the pupil services team, it was believed, could only enhance that cooperative effort. However, this effort was perceived by some other professional disciplines as too intimidating, as a competitive perception was dominant in their minds. There were other educational professionals within the school system, as well as those in other school systems throughout the state, who looked with some disfavor on the prospect of SSW certification. One could not discount the possible element of power concerns as another deterrent to full acceptance of social workers as employees of school systems.

The support and leadership over the years of the Md. Chapter, NASW cannot be over emphasized as the BCPS -SSW Association faced and overcame substantive challenges. Series VIII also provides more insight into the obstacles social workers faced, and conquered. It is hoped that scholarly research will eventually illuminate how intricate are the core objectives of acquiring and securing professional recognition in educational settings.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES VI: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK STATE CERTIFICATION EFFORTS

School social workers are licensed as “social workers” to practice their profession, and, must meet levels of credentialing standards and requirements in the various states. Departments of Education in Maryland and other states and jurisdictions develop their own education and practice qualifications which applicants must meet, and adhere to once they are hired. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) designated the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Advisory Board (PSTEAB) as the responsible entity for developing regulations and standards which would then be submitted to the Board for further actions.

For several decades, SSWs were included under the general category of Pupil Personnel Support staff, but not shown separately (with distinct standards related to their professional qualifications), as were the other professionals. School counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, and certain others had specific criteria to meet for employment certification by the state. These professionals were hired in virtually all of the Maryland counties and Baltimore city, whereas social workers were hired primarily in Baltimore City. When we initiated the effort to obtain MSDE certification, we learned that Montgomery County had at least three or four school social workers, who were hired at administrative levels. In Baltimore City, SSWs were teacher level professionals. None the less, those in the counties (later more were hired in some counties), recognized the value of MSDE certification and were involved and supportive of this state -wide effort. During the many years since the initial thrust, the effort grew stronger and then waned periodically, with a changing list of “leaders” in this effort.

It is important to note that all professional disciplines were required to be licensed. The Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners has the responsibility for developing standards and regulations. Physicians, dentists, psychologists, speech therapists, and other professionals, as well as certain other fields of endeavor have licensing and regulatory Boards.

In the provenance section of this Collection is an account of one person’s recollections of her early years in the system as both a teacher and a visiting teacher. “Visiting Teachers” in Baltimore City, and in a few other states, were the forerunners of school social workers, hired to perform certain tasks designed to assist mal-adjusted students and their families. This personal experience of a former visiting teacher, who was also a trained social worker, is rather revealing.

Series VI encompasses the richness of the involvements since the 1970s when social workers in schools committed to ensuring recognition of their contributions as fully qualified professionals to practice in schools under the same unique category as other disciplines practicing in schools. There was determined resistance from several quarters to granting such recognition to SSWs. As the educational specialist for the BCPS SSW Service, I became even more active in this effort, and received varied levels of staff and administrative support over time, along with professional organizations’ support. The records show that often the educational cultural-political environment was not amenable to these change efforts. A folder of communications between a BCPS administrator and the SSW Educational Specialist documents the lengths taken to stifle my influence.

Additionally, after serving on a MSDE Committee representing the varied professional disciplines and contributing verbal and written information describing the school social work roles and services to schools, subsequent printed materials did not include the designation of the school social worker. Instead, my contributions were incorporated in language used to describe tasks allegedly performed by Pupil Personnel Workers. It is known that some persons with both social work training and teacher education were hired by Pupil Personnel Services in some counties. However, it is also known that the job specifications do not allow PPWs to function in the manner that social workers do in schools. The effort to minimize the differences between these disciplines has been significant; materials in this series document this fact. One folder includes the tasks of Support Services staff printed in an MSDE manual. A particularly blatant example of how SSWs had been ignored by some officials at the MSDE can be found in a salmon-colored booklet dated 5-12-94 from the State reporting to a Sub-Committee on Children, Youth and Families from the School-Based / School-Linked Services Committee. The report was printed under the auspices of the Governor’s Office for Children, Youth and Families ... 301 West Preston St. Suite 1502 Baltimore, Md. 21201.



This Series also features an activity log of certification efforts from November 1978 - June, 1980, as well as several drafts of certification proposals, and internal and external system communications on all levels. A few prominent former (and then-current) state and local education officials wrote in support of this effort. State-wide responses were solicited and obtained at times from County educational administrators and staff. Information on certification efforts across the country and related resources are part of this Series. Included also are presentations made by me at a National School Social Work Conference in 1981 and before the PSTEAB at the MSDE in 1983.

Not until August 11, 2006 was a MSDE State Certification Bill for School Social Workers signed by the Governor, through the exemplary efforts of a Baltimore County SSW and a County Legislator whose support she had enlisted. Her persistent efforts and those of varied committees and NASW-MD are gratefully applauded.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES VII: MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MSDE) INVOLVEMENTS/ADVOCACY

This entire collection of series (BCPS) might be thought of as segments of narratives not fully told or revealed. All segments are interconnected. Because of these inter-relationships, there may be some overlap. Like many short stories, some may have more intrigue or value to the reader than others. Certain threads of these stories may require further exploration or review of these narratives to gain a comprehensive grasp of the total picture.

Such an approach to this series is relevant to the comparatively limited number of folders in Series VII. The impact of the MSDE (and politics) on the local education agency (LEA) in Baltimore City and the Counties in Maryland has varied greatly over the decades, affecting financially the policies and practices of the 24 jurisdictions. Partially, due to the political climates within the jurisdictions and the state as a whole, Baltimore City Public Schools, and School Social Work programs have suffered. The impact has had its positives. The degree of each is, of course, debatable. Materials in the folders do provide a sense of the broad range of involvements and influences of the MSDE on programming and inter-agency cooperation.

The professionals providing support services to students and families were as concerned about the implications of these interactions as was some educational staff. As the professional leader of the SSW Service, the Educational Specialist (Ed. Spec.) was an advocate for students and families, and responded to those proposals, programs and policies that were believed to require clarification, adjustments, other perspectives, and/or support. Sometimes, these communications were warmly received. At other times, a tension existed because of the differing perspectives offered, and sometimes not welcomed. This was more often the case because of real and imagined professional competitiveness; also, some thought support personnel did not have the professional knowledge of educational staff, to comment on curriculum and related matters. In addition, since school social workers were recognized differently by MSDE certification level standards, there were subtle and more open efforts over the years to further limit the influence of the SSW Service.

Eventually, in 1988, the MSDE re-defined and codified regulations for pupil services providers. School Social Workers were omitted from the categories specifically described in a handbook distributed throughout the state outlining the roles of Pupil Services Providers. This material is included among the folders in this Series. This action was very disturbing to professional school social workers throughout the state. As the Educational Specialist for the SSW Service in the BCPS, I was a member of the initial state group convened to formulate the tasks, skills, performance goals and qualifications for the professions providing these support services. While each support staff category has some apparent overlap roles and objectives, it was well known that the professional education and training of these professionals varied, thus defining to a large degree their knowledge, skill sets and abilities. It was very disconcerting to see that the information I had provided regarding social worker competencies had been minimized and incorporated into tasks and roles allegedly performed primarily by Pupil Personnel Workers. The intention partially was to show that state jurisdictions did not need to hire School Social Workers, as such would be a duplication of services. Thus, the glaring omission of SSWs from the MSDE's official handbook categorizing pupil services personnel.

It has been felt by many over the years that community social workers and mental health clinics could better meet the "non-educational" needs of students. The service delivery mission differences and community agencies approaches were not fully understood, except by those schools and principals fortunate enough to have the services of competent school social workers, employed by the school system. And, of course, those SSWs knew how to appropriately refer, collaborate with and support the needed mental health and other resources of their social work colleagues in the community.

Unfortunately a few local, as well as state educational personnel were exclusive in their actions, attempting to effectively decrease the influence of the School Social Work representative within the State. One such example occurred when a BCPS official actually forbid the Educational Specialist from attending certain State meetings that she had attended for years and that clearly were important for the professional representative of the SSW service to be present. It was declared that attendance at the meetings by his designated individual would suffice. She also was not invited to serve on other relevant committees, such as

a Mental Health Task Force on Children and Youth. On the other hand, there were State leaders who were embarrassed by these political influences and actions, as they valued SSW input. They were as warm and supportive as they could be under the difficult conditions under which they had to function. Later historical events rewarded the Specialist's refusal to accept such behaviors, as well the persistent actions of local and state social workers to change the status quo.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES VIII. NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK / NASW - MD.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has been a significant force and influence during my professional career. Both the local chapter, NASW- Md. , and the national office in Washington, D.C. were instrumental in the inculcation of values, attitudes, and behaviors that define the roles of a professional social worker. I was fortunate to live and work in the Baltimore, MD. / Washington, D.C. area, upon returning to this area in 1964 after an absence of 10 years. Upon college graduation in 1954, I matriculated in graduate school in Chicago, and graduated from the 2 year program in 1956. I then moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where I was employed at a private state-wide children's agency. (A full 2 years tuition scholarship had been awarded me by the University of Chicago and a maternal uncle had paid my living and other expenses during the first year. The Children's Service Society of Wisconsin granted me a scholarship to cover the second year's expenses.) After later marrying and spending two years in Germany, I returned to Baltimore, Maryland where I worked for Travelers Aid Society for 2 years before applying for, and accepting a position as a school social worker in the Baltimore City School system. It was this position that eventually solidified a more active involvement in issues germane to social work, as well as educational concerns.

This series includes examples of advocacy efforts, policy matters and other interactions in which individuals and groups were involved to address social, educational, economic injustices or inequities, and other factors that affected students and families, as well as communities. Periodically, as feasible, NASW staff and leaders were engaged in activities supportive of students, educational staff and school social workers. Folders of materials and periodicals document the subject matters and range of ideas, goals and values fought for over the years. In conjunction with other organizations working towards similar goals, I, along with other practitioners, worked to influence legislators and other decision-makers, of changes advised to promote better student achievement. Coalitions worked together conversely to prevent decisions we felt would be detrimental to students' welfare and academic progress.

The matter of insufficient social work staff and lack of adequate supervisory personnel were on-going issues during my tenure, as well as in the early years of the service. Additionally, lack of SSW trained staff in the system's mid-level and top level echelons was extremely disadvantageous, as their professional perspectives were not heard. At the State Board of Education level, the opinions and expertise of the school social work staff also was not of much value, as has been noted elsewhere in this Collection. NASW staff, locally and nationally, participated in and sponsored conferences, seminars, and in the professional literature, offered insights and strategies, to deal with these obstacles to more effective services. A wealth of materials is included in this series, depicting school social workers' and personal involvement.

In this series, an historical context has been included to assist knowledge of the beginnings and progress of the social work profession and school social work. Some who have been recognized for their professional accomplishments and other achievements are included also. There are early references in the minutes of the MD.NASW chapter of the some Baltimore City school social workers participating in their meetings. Social work practice issues papers are a prime aspect of this collection, along with leaflets describing the policy and standards of the varied fields in which professionals practice.

Three sub-series have been differentiated with a wealth of interesting and informative materials among them:

Sub-Series A describes the Commission on Education, a group consisting of school social workers considered leaders in their states in this field. The national office convened these meetings, headed by one of their accomplished staff. Individuals participating in these regularly scheduled meetings during the years were compensated for their expenses and represented portions of the regions across the country. Thus, not all of the states were individually represented. As a result of my obvious interest in issues ( demonstrated by my written responses to articles and other information sent out by the National office), I was invited to join this Commission. This was an enlightening and enjoyable learning and participatory experience that I valued greatly. Meeting with like-minded professionals from across the country enhanced my work with my staff and other professional colleagues within the community. There were

several other surrounding states each Commission represented, as necessary. The beginnings and conclusion of this particular commitment are available in these files.

Sub-Series B - The NTE/ETS Committee ( The SSW Specialty Exam Committee) developed as an outgrowth of a smaller SSW staff group that had been working earlier with a staff representative of The National Testing Exam/ Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Eight of us were recruited to assist in reviewing the proposed exam for an ETS administered test that would specify for States that exam takers met requirements to be certified as Specialists in School Social Work. Our specific job was to develop questions for the exam, based on a set of parameters defined already by the earlier working group, as well as the testing service's quality specifications. We traveled to the New Jersey site several times, and we also worked from home to complete the assignments, over many months. It was a result of my NASW Commission work that this opportunity was offered to me. This was an even more challenging learning experience, but also extremely informative and fun. Those who completed this task were awarded by the NASW Competence Certification Commission of the NASW with the School Social Work Specialist Certification as of March 28, 1992. Our names were included on the pamphlets subsequently distributed to inform professionals of the existence, substance, and importance of this credential for their futures.

Sub-Series C - Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. This body licenses and regulates, at variously defined levels, those who wish to practice social work in Maryland. At one point, after my March 1, 1992 official retirement date, I was invited to attend time-limited meetings designed to formulate a consensus on certain policies related to license issues. Those materials and other papers and bulletins related to the licensing process, including my own personal decisions, are included in this series.

*Joan Y. Harris*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES IX: PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION (PSASA)

The Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association (PSASA) and the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), were the largest and most prominent among the bargaining units representing employees of the Baltimore City Public Schools. School social workers and other teacher level staff were represented by the BTU in negotiations regarding salaries and other personnel matters. Principals and certain other school and central office educational staff with administrative and supervisory responsibilities were represented by PSASA. Educational Specialists in educational support roles such as mine were under the negotiating auspices of PSASA. Thus, negotiations related to salary differences and other categorical disputes were handled by this organization, whose membership priorities were heavily weighted towards school leadership personnel, such as principals and vice-principals, as well as certain higher level central office educational staff. Despite this, I found commendable assistance was provided me over the years, as I attempted to rectify certain perceived injustices. Series IX provides a more generic look at the involvements and actions of this very effective organization, during this period. In the following Series X, the focus will be more on the specifics of disputes and arbitration brought before it by the Educational Specialist of the School Social Work Service.

Personnel announcements and circulars emanating from higher level school system officials are included in some of the folders as they provide contextual and comparative data relevant to some of the issues faced by the SSW Educational Specialist. In a few instances, some materials in this section may be duplicates of the focus in Series X because of their implications. Circulars describing positions and salaries offered to those applying for positions, with tasks and responsibilities similar to or less demanding than the job of the SSW Educational Specialist, are provided for comparative purposes. Folder headings attempt to facilitate understandings of these matters. For example, one folder is entitled BCPS-Personnel Division/ Initial and PSASA Negotiated Salaries (1977-87) Some PSASA Newsletters therein offer vivid content regarding some of the contentious salary matters discussed and resolved (or not) over the years. PSASA "Red Letters" / Negotiated Salary/Position Agreements demonstrates the passion over these issues from 1986-1988.

Other wide-ranging issues with broader implications for educational specialists, for example, include Position Upgrade proposals/Objectives (1986-90); Instructional Support Supervisory Studies/ Models (1984-85); Salary and Position Classification-Review Issues (1984-85) and City of Baltimore Position Classification Study (Jan.1991).

One should note that, due to variations in the geographic, demographic and political environments faced by educators throughout the state, there were and remain vast inequities in the amount and quality of financial and human resources allocated to educational jurisdictions within the state of Maryland.

***Joan Y. Harris, ACSW***

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES X : EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST'S PERSONNEL MATTERS AND COMMENDATIONS

Series X includes compilations of data and materials that can serve as a backdrop or provide a context for the preceding sections. Personal and professional information from the beginning of my tenure in the school system through my retirement, and subsequently, adds a certain dimension to this account of the school social work profession, as experienced and perceived by me. There may be unexpected insights others can derive from this entire Collection, as I believe what is included here is truly representative of the experiences of both educators and staff (educational and other professionals) in many public school systems. The political dynamics, in conjunction with the social environment and culture of school systems across the country vary primarily in the minute details.

I was privileged to serve with and under many sterling examples of professional dedication and commitment to assisting and supporting the mission of the Baltimore City Public Schools. This includes all levels of educational and support services staff within schools and central offices. From the Board of School Commissioners, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, and their staffs, down to the lowest echelons staff persons, whatever their titles, over the 25 years of my service, it was my good fortune to have known and respected many fine individuals. (Throughout the series in this Collection are examples of the breadth of my involvement. Due to privacy concerns, some of these situations will be held in a confidential file for specified periods of time). I am fortunate that during my tenure, I received personal notes and memoranda of appreciation, as well as official commendations, some of which are included here.

I truly enjoyed and felt invigorated by my work, despite the challenges. And there were many. My decision to leave the system was extremely difficult, because of the implications for the longer range viability of the SSW Service and the professional staff. There were underlying aspects of my resolve and goals for the Service that were not accepted or desired by some in positions of greater power and authority; additionally, some desired to limit the impact of SSW services, focusing it only on a category of "special education" students. Additionally, there were financial concerns and differences of opinion regarding hiring social workers to work within the system, or contracting with outside individuals or other social work agencies. Thus, insufficient supervisory and other assistance to meet program needs was the norm. (This remained the case after my retirement. Later, more social workers were hired as the impact of federal guidelines and lawsuits grew increasingly more evident, but needed supervisory level personnel within the Service continued to be a serious void)

I debated with myself and commiserated for three months before informing the system or anyone of my decision to retire. In order to give my staff sufficient time to adjust to this news, I planned how best to inform them, and to assist the transition process. For example, I gave them (and the system) six months notice, and when school resumed the Fall of 1991, I adjusted my normal routine to in order to ease the transition. For example, I set up a revised system of professional contacts with staff. It was my normal routine to issue schedules of supervisory meetings during each semester. But at that point, I had decided that no supervisory conferences would be held. I would no longer be writing 40 plus professional evaluations prior to leaving the system on medical leave (for foot surgery and recovery) in January, 1992. My official retirement date was March 1, 1992. While I was asked to remain or at least, to return at some point, my decision was a firm one. It was a difficult decision as most of my professional relationships were warm and congenial, and because of my obvious commitment, many of my staff did not believe I would follow through with my decision.

In May, 1992, the SSW staff gave me a beautiful retirement dinner dance in a lovely hotel setting in Columbia, Maryland where I lived. Very professional pictures of the warm, impressive, and very enjoyable affair were taken by one of the staff and later presented to me in a lovely album. Other members of the retirement planning committee prepared a beautiful album of cards and well-wishes. Another unexpected gift was that of a video-tape of that lovely affair made by the husband of another SSW. Members of my family, guests, and staff were given the opportunity to appear on the video-tape speaking to me and wishing me well in my retirement. I remain impressed by the memories that will always be kept alive of this

wonderful acknowledgement of my presence and services to the students, parents and educators in the Baltimore City Public Schools. I acknowledge with love and gratitude the fantastic work of the large number of persons who served on the committee, and especially those who brought their spouses with them to this event. It was impressive!

On a different note, I will mention that the depth and breadth of my involvements as a school social worker, including supervising social workers in the Teenage Pregnancy Program (a funded program headed by another social worker), serving as a social work field instructor, serving on Community committees, as an unofficial assistant to the Regional Specialist, Pupil Services Team in Region 8, and in numerous other capacities, cannot be fully captured here. But that is not the purpose of this Collection. The point to be emphasized is that school social work is multi-faceted and has a rich history in the Baltimore City Public Schools, and that the professional responsibilities and capabilities of those hired by and working within the system far exceeds what many decision-makers realize. When community agencies' social work staff are hired to provide services within school systems, it is often not as easy a task as they perceive it to be. Their roles are influenced by the nature and mission of their agencies. Many seek out those employed by the system to help them to negotiate the system. There are limitations inherent in coming into a system as an "outsider", not privy to the knowledge, culture, and sense of trust and confidence built between educators and SSW staff that results in enhanced communications and positive student changes. In the same manner, parents and outside agencies benefit from the deeper understandings and collaboration that occurs in such an environment. Knowledge of community problems and needs and the impact of societal factors affecting student learning and behavior are critical in influencing changes in teacher understandings and school climates.

Included among the materials in this Series are my early academic records and transcripts from 1950 to 1975 and annual evaluations from 1969 to 1976. In 1970, after being persuaded to do so by a supervisor, I took the system's administrative/supervisory exam, required by all employees aspiring for promotion and the score was one that the supervisor exclaimed was the highest he had known anyone to receive. It was slightly below the highest possible score. This report is included here, along with numerous other materials related to promotions and later performance evaluations and academic endeavors. State licenses and certificates related to continuing education and Maryland State Department of Education position certifications are part of the materials that assist in clarifying qualifications deemed important when working in schools.

Position up-grade proposals and management issues, along with personnel circulars are included here to provide additional context for some of the relevant concerns. Evaluation forms and guidelines during the 25 years of my tenure can be compared for changes; salary review communications and documents are also included here.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the gender bias that many faced then, and still do in their efforts to advance and/or receive employee status and salaries comparable to their male counter-parts. However, there were three factors that I believe influenced behaviors I faced in that educational culture during the 70's to 90's. First, I was an African- American; secondly, I was a woman, and finally, I had a soft voice. There was an initial tendency to under-estimate me and my abilities. These facts, however, ultimately worked in my favor, as I was able to discern and act in ways that ultimately gained respect and support from those who were so inclined. Although, I was not able to achieve all I sought for the service in terms of paid senior staff to assist with supervision, and professional status comparable to the wide-ranging roles I performed within, out-side and for the system, my contributions were acknowledged in other ways by those who were not competitive or non-supportive. I believe the School Social Work Service has survived because of the long history of those who preceded me and those who worked with me with tenacity and diligence to demonstrate the value of the service.

There were various efforts to undermine me, some more subtle, as evidenced by the Divisional Assistant Superintendent who invited me to speak at a cabinet meeting with the system's Superintendent, and changed the topic, as well as the amount of time I would be allowed, as he introduced me to the Cabinet. My intuition had informed me that I could not trust this person, and in speaking to a SSW confidant prior to the day of the suddenly arranged meeting with the Cabinet, I shared with her my thoughts, and I later



prepared how I would handle it should he attempt “to place me on the spot.” My timed talk was ready for my presentation that morning, but I had included in my prepared remarks, a statement with which I would begin should he “try something.” And indeed he did. I was unperturbed as I indicated my appreciation for this opportunity to share with the Superintendent and her Cabinet. I indicated that there was important information about the SSW service’s activities and the children with whom we had worked, and I would appreciate their indulgence as I proceeded with my plan to inform them about this. Should there be time, and they had questions about the subject mentioned by the Asst. Superintendent, which was not actually within my purview, I would be happy to respond. I then immediately proceeded with my original presentation. All listened respectfully, and the Superintendent asked a few questions before I left. Later, the Asst. Superintendent approached my Office Head complaining angrily about the time I took from the other business that had to be conducted by the Cabinet. My Supervisor reported this to me, but she did not express discontent with my actions, as she understood what had transpired. Materials in another Series details another action he attempted in an effort to minimize my influence on the state level. This person eventually resigned his position, leaving for an out of state job.

Finally, in this series are comments, suggestions and information from some of the social workers with whom I worked, and notes of thanks and congratulations for differing endeavors. Most materials, especially supervisory records of my staff, were destroyed by me, due to confidentiality and ethical codes. Commendations and recognitions from those outside of the system, and professional references are among the other documents herein provided.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SERIES XI. MULTI-MEDIA and PHOTOS

It is important to note that many events documented in this Collection were captured in pictures which have been placed in folders within the Series to which they apply. The same is true of news articles in various publications, such as professional journals and local newspapers. The photos in this series, taken by others, primarily, show scenes of divisional staff socializing at varied functions. One of the Divisional Assistant Superintendents of Pupil Services and Development was an exceptionally out-going and talented individual. His term was characterized by annual celebratory gatherings of all staff, clerical and professional, during certain holidays and at the end of the school year. As he was preparing to leave his position or the system, he gave to me several envelopes of pictures taken during the early 1980s, for reasons unclear. It was apparent that he had retained better copies of these photos. The retirements of varied personnel were included. Many of the names of persons in these pictures I cannot now recall, but where possible, I have identified others on the backs of the photos. These events were fun for all, and much enjoyed for the piano playing and joking comments of this executive, as well as the talents displayed by other staff, at the differing sites where we met.

Pictures placed within the folders document relevant activities featured involving the social work profession and it's staff. Some local and state executive bill signings, as well as special celebratory depictions of School Social Work in the City Schools for 50 and 55 years, are shown in this section. Pictures of former SSW heads and supervisors, as well as mini-bios are included in some of the displays. In addition, the Retirement of the Educational Specialist who followed me in that position is featured in this Series. Other landmark national and local involvements with write-ups and pictures are shown here. There are a few duplicates of materials in this section and another Series.

Due to the size and nature of older media, such as slides, and tapes, as well as videos, they are included here. An important group of videos related to the training of staff in the BCPS in child abuse and neglect reporting, including sexual abuse, is among the tapes saved here. They are labeled here by the department and school staff who provided the technical support and other staff required to complete the task. This was a tremendous endeavor, made even more arduous by the release of a key Central Office Coordinator in the BCPS system who was assisting me with this effort. I was left with no one coordinator/collaborator who knew the process and people necessary to continue the vast amount of work that needed to be done. There was no real concern demonstrated by system heads to assign someone else to his task. (Funding was one aspect of this, as he was the sole person in his Office for several years.)

I became in effect, the overall producer/coordinator, and with dogged determination and persistence, and the psychological support of the school social workers on my team, as well as the involvement of those school staff providing the child characters in the storyline we had written, we prevailed. Many hours were spent as I went to a school to speak with the principal and to communicate with the person doing the field photography. Another person in the Central office, in the same building as I, was responsible for creating the music portion of the video story for the review and approval of our team. That also involved much time and coordination, as there were several aspects to the story and message we wanted school staff to see and learn. One of our five (including me) member team of SSW program writers allowed us to use her home for the scenes shot in the home environment of the characters. These were middle school students whose principal and theatre staff person worked very well with us, as did the staff and student at The Baltimore School for the Arts, who agreed to provide another student and site for our production storyline. We were fortunate to acquire the volunteer services of a woman who had been the victim of sexual abuse and was photographed in silhouette, to conceal her identity, as she told her true story.

This project, Supporting Reporting ..., is included in Series 111, Sub-Series A. The several tapes included show varied aspects of the production work in progress. Some of the work is not as clear as we would have desired. The tapes provide a good perspective on the decisions that were necessary and the editing required to produce a viable training video, under very limited financial and personnel constraints. We received high marks for the quality of our training, and evaluators were very understanding of the tape's limitations, but still found it very informative. Also placed in this section are the 34 slides of scenic and human shots taken for possible use in the video.

To support Series IV - Areas of Community Involvement - is a video-cassette of a Public Service Program

sponsored by The Health and Welfare Council of Baltimore. One of the school social workers and I were guests on the program entitled "Information is Our Business" twice. Our initial interview was aired on Sunday, April 19, 1987 at 12 am in the early morning hours. The interviewer was so pleased with our conversation that she held another interview session on May 17, 1987. Our discussions involved aspects of social work in schools, including the fact of the celebration that year of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BCPS Social Work Service. Tapes were provided to each of us of the broadcasts and we were very pleased with the results.

*Joan Y. Harris, ACSW*