

# A Short History of the School of Social Work

University of Hawaii at Manoa  
1936–1986



*This volume is dedicated to the students, the community,  
and the University—and to the half-century of class and  
field teachers, without whom there would be no school.*

## *Foreword*

Whether in the life of individuals or institutions, the 50th anniversary is a landmark which affords the opportunity to reflect on the past and to look ahead to future developments. It is to do the first of these things that this history was prepared; for views of the future, a series of anniversary conferences this year will examine the directions we foresee for the field of social work and our school.

The assembling of the historical materials presented here was the work of a committee of retired and current faculty members from the school. We are indebted to Mr. Frederick Y. Smith, the former Director of University Relations at the University, who edited their notes into this report. I hope you will find it interesting and informative.

Daniel S. Sanders  
Dean, School of Social Work

June, 1986  
Honolulu, Hawaii

## *Beginnings*

A College of Mechanic Arts created with land grant funds in 1907 to serve the young Territory of Hawaii had just taken on the status of a university when sociologist Romanzo Adams initiated two courses in social work in the department of sociology in 1922.

Hawaii, in this period, was governed by a plantation economy and a one-party political system. The social situation was complex. The Hawaiian people had already been stripped of their culture, including their language and their land, and they were often punished for speaking their language or engaging in cultural activities that had deep meaning for them. Deprived of identity, they had no cultural base and were clearly made to feel unacceptable and inferior.

Plantation laborers imported from Asia were beginning to rise up against conditions and inhumane treatment. The 30s brought the rise of labor unions, migration of laborers from the plantations to the towns, and meager support for the public schools, largely populated by the children of immigrants and Hawaiians (many Caucasian children attended private schools). An anti-German sentiment from World War I developed into an anti-foreigner attitude directed particularly toward Asian laborers' families.

Despite these strong "anti" attitudes, there was also an emerging interest and concern with Pacific and Asian cultural activities and with international issues. The Pan-Pacific Union sponsored East-West conferences, the Southeast Asian Women's Association was formed, Mid-Pacific Institute was established, and the YMCA ran an exchange program with young people from Asia. And there was speculation, both nationally and in Hawaii, that despite cross-cultural tensions and conflicts, a new world culture was being born, combining the strong elements of the East and the West.

Romanzo Adams had known of Jane Addams and her development of the Hull House program for families of immigrants in Chicago and he was familiar with social work. He came to Hawaii at a time when the negative effects of the industrial revolution had created concern about the deep and widespread poverty in the cities, child labor, corruption, problems of immigration, etc. The inhumane ways of dealing with these conditions led over the first two decades of the century to the realization of a need for people with "training" in social work. Indeed, in Hawaii in 1899 a group of separate sectarian and non-sectarian charitable organizations had set up a coalition known as the Associated Charities of Hawaii to provide financial relief to the needy. By 1921 the Associated Charities had become the Social Service Bureau (later Child and Family Service) and employed some professionally qualified social work staff.

Adams also appeared to understand the importance of melding educationally focused experiential learning with theoretical learning for the professionally oriented learner. He established a "reading course in the literature of some field of social service" to be combined with "a practical course in cooperation with some approved social service agency," the students to "carry out actual work under the direction of . . . and . . . responsible to the head worker."

During the 1920s students did the practical course in the Social Service Bureau and the International Institute and plans were made to use the Department of Social Service at The Queen's Hospital. Courses in the family and in community organization were added. The latter was a study of community programs that included types of community patterns and social organization. Field observation was required. The principle of granting regular university credit for educationally focused experiential learning in professional education was established.

Agencies in the community were seeking social work staff with some training. Soon a core of courses developed. Margaret Bergen, formerly director of the Social Service Bureau, taught "A General View of Social Work" and "Methods in Social Casework" (at a time when social casework was regarded by many as synonymous with social work). By 1931 Andrew Lind, a sociologist, was offering a course for social workers called "Personality and Culture," with a focus on culture as a determining factor in the formation of a person's philosophy, behavior, and general life organization.

### *Social Work Comes into Its Own: 1936–1939*

Repercussions of the Great Depression in the period from 1935 to 1937 intensified the need in Hawaii for agencies that could provide financial aid to families, help for children, and health services.

While problems in the islands were substantial, they did not approach the dimension of tragedy in other parts of the United States. The Social Security Act of 1935 was evidence of the national proportions of the social and economic problem. Hawaii created its own Department of Social Security in 1937 and thereafter searched for qualified people to staff the operation.

Social work training became a separate section of the University and the beginnings of the School of Social Work were established. The year was 1936. In 1937 Eileen Blackey was hired to give direction to the "Social Work Training Course." Its first home was in Blackey's office in Hawaii Hall.

The training course was intended to meet both local and national needs. Priority for admission went to personnel already employed by the new public welfare agency, although applicants from other agencies and students with senior standing also were accepted. The course sought to provide students with the opportunity to understand social work in historical perspective and to give them a look at current trends: "family care, children's agencies and institutions, medical social work, the courts, schools and other community groups. . . ." Students taking the basic theory course used their own experience and casework records "to study needs and problems which bring individuals to agencies for help" and analyze attitudes and activities of the social caseworker in dealing with problems. Field practice in an agency was required.

The statement "to study needs and problems which bring individuals to agencies for help" reflected the limited perspective and role of social casework at the time. In retrospect, the required courses in the training course were instructive: "Introduction to Social Work," "Theory of Social Casework," "Methods of Social Casework," "Health and Disease," "Public Welfare Administration," and "Personality Problems of Children." These were buttressed by such special courses as "Introduction to Child Welfare," "Theory and Practice of Child Placement," and "Behavior Problems of Children."

Blackey's immersion in the community and her association with sociologist Lind led to her conviction that culture was a major determinant of behavior, life style, and philosophy of living. An article she wrote for *Social Process* in 1939, "Cultural Aspects of Casework in Hawaii," implied that social work students needed more than learning about culture or a specific culture—they needed to learn the meaning of any culture. She later carried her conviction to Israel, where she worked for five years with Hebrew University to develop its School of Social Work.

Her legacy is found in a description of the Social Work Training Course: ". . . the program is not only for persons already engaged in social work, but aims to provide a year of professional training for graduates and undergraduates who have

fulfilled certain basic academic requirements”—basic objectives for the school that was to follow.

### ***Formative Years: 1940–1946***

By the end of 1941, Hawaii was under martial law following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Travel to the islands was virtually impossible for all except military and defense personnel. Public schools and the University were closed and some schools were used for the war effort. Every available body was pressed into defense work. A number of families of Japanese ancestry were broken up by the internment of the fathers in camps in the continental United States.

The trauma of events and of life following the attack changed for all time the patterns of social stability and the concepts of economic and social values of innumerable families. Two of the courses added to the social work curriculum in the early '40s—“Juvenile Delinquency” and “Legal Aspects of Social Work”—suggested aspects of emerging social change. As the war progressed, both parents in many families worked. Teachers left the classroom for higher paying defense work and public school pupils might have had as many as 10 substitute teachers in a term. With the stability of two major social institutions so changed, the ideas and behavior of young people changed as well. Juvenile delinquency rose rapidly.

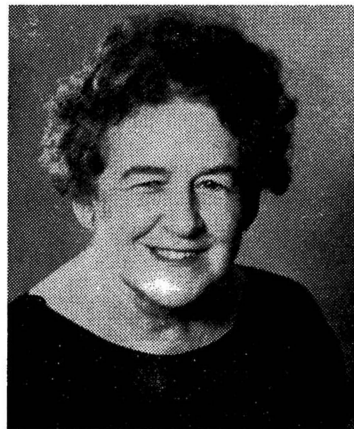
The new director of social work training at the University was Ferris Laune, head of the Honolulu Council of Social Agencies; his appointment in 1940 was regarded as a step toward the creation of a full-fledged school of social work. Martha Wood (later Hosch) and Margaretta Frisbee were faculty members.

In 1941 the University catalog announced a graduate program in social work with admission limited to graduate students. Courses at the senior level were “Introduction to Social Work” and “Social Work in Hawaii.” Curriculum for the one-year program reflected the standards established by the American Association of Schools of Social Work (later the Council on Social Work Education) and included courses in social casework, mental hygiene for social workers, community organization, child welfare, health and disease, public welfare administration, social research, and supervised field work. Most field placements were in the general assistance division of the Territorial Department of Social Security with supervision by University faculty. Some students were placed in “more specialized agencies” and supervised by social workers selected by the University. The program was provisionally accredited in 1942.

### ***The Early Years: 1947–1967***

In mid-1945, as the war was ending in the Pacific, Gladys W. Goettling was appointed director of the School of Social Work and held the post for two years. Her successor was Katharine N. Handley. In 1948 the school won full accreditation as a one-year graduate school. Two new faculty appointments brought the total faculty to five; there were also eight field supervisors from local agencies.

Handley came from the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois, Urbana, which had a well-developed social group work sequence. She also was familiar with the work of Jane Addams in the Hull House program. Possibly



*Dean Katharine N. Handley*



*Classroom Faculty and Staff in the 1950's. Left to right: W. Walsh, E. Chocran, H. Jambor, K. Handley, F. Merritt, and A. Zaloba*

recognizing the potential that group approaches could have with Hawaii's cultural mix of people, she added a social group work sequence, as well as courses in public welfare and psychiatric and medical information, and requirements for a thesis and oral comprehensives. Accreditation as a two-year school first came in 1950 and was granted continuously thereafter.

In that same year, Handley, Lind and others offered a course in "Cultural Factors in Social Work Practice" emphasizing the significance of psychocultural factors in the development of personality and behavior. It was a course that would be continued, with modifications, for 20 years. In 1957, the school's *Bulletin* stated:

The School, because of the Territory of Hawaii's geographical location, ethnic composition and racial harmony, recognizes its special attribute for providing an opportunity through its educational activities to contribute to the furtherance of interracial, intercultural and international understanding.

Except for the "Cultural Factors" course and inclusion of content in one or two other courses, however, providing this opportunity did not become an active objective until the end of the 1960s.

In 1955, the University president accepted an offer from the Hospital Flower Society to give \$30,000 for the School of Social Work to plan and initiate a medical social work sequence. The sequence was abandoned four years later despite consultation and work by a medical social work faculty member. Hospitals were not ready to establish their own social services.

Eleven years later, however, the University recognized the natural interrelationship, the opportunities, and the responsibilities for interdisciplinary and interprofessional activities in professional education and practice among its schools of medicine, public health, nursing, and social welfare by establishing the College of Health Sciences and Social Welfare. It was at this time that the directorship of the social work school was changed to a deanship. Thus Katherine N. Handley became the first dean of the School of Social Work.

### *Winds of Change: The 1960s*

Meanwhile, a different social welfare scene was emerging. The 1954 Supreme Court decision on segregation had created a framework for social justice. President John F. Kennedy saw social problems in the perspective of his New Frontiers policies. New organizations, like the Peace Corps, were created. The Economic Opportunity Act under President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" program was a significant piece of legislation. "Participation of the poor" became a focus of community action agencies in the "war on poverty."

These new directions threatened entrenched social welfare agencies whose structures were not adapted to include client participation. Community Action Programs, Head Start, Job Corps, VISTA, legal services, and others represented a new concept in welfare—one that called for serious rethinking of social work curricula.

In social work education, the Curriculum Study (1959) of the Council on Social Work Education focused national attention on curriculum. Richard Titmuss, speaking of social work as a profession, said, "It becomes important for social work to reexamine its basic reason for being, the development of human beings to participate in and contribute to development and change in the social and economic institutions of our country."

The University of Hawaii began to move in similar directions. Workshops stimulated theoretical educational notions and ideas. Field teachers developed a manual that reflected skill in identifying both content and types of learning opportunities, ability to express concepts about the learning process, and commitment to field experience as an essential component of professional learning.

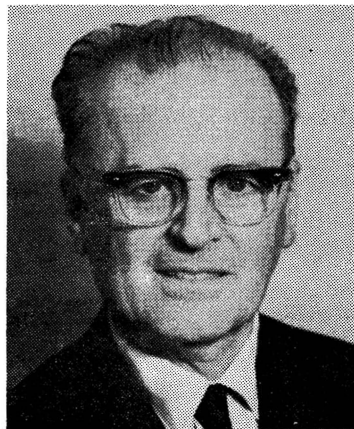
Katharine Handley retired in 1967. The former dean of the New York School of Social Work, Fred DelliQuadri, was named as her successor. Interested in juvenile delinquency, he agreed to have the Youth Development Center become an administrative unit of the school. The center developed avenues of communication with community agencies and had potential as a research center.

New objectives for the school placed broadened responsibility on the faculty to continue development of the undergraduate social welfare program, stimulate scholarship and research, participate in advancing the profession and professional practice, and "recognize and fulfill the unique opportunity and responsibility inherent in the geographic location and ethnic composition of . . . Hawaii in meeting the educational needs specific to the state and the Pacific area."

DelliQuadri left in 1968 to become Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau. Raymond Fisher, a faculty member, served as acting dean until the appointment of Herbert H. Aptekar late in the year. Aptekar had taught at Brandeis University School of Social Welfare, a school devoted to broadened approaches in social work practice and to a non-traditional curriculum. And he had had prior careers in practice and administration and as a consultant to schools of social work in India.



*Dean Fred DelliQuadri*



*Dean Herbert H. Aptekar*

### *A Shift in Focus: 1969–1974*

The forces of the 1960s carried into the next decade the new concepts in social welfare and changes in social work education. Aptekar understood the significance of the new objectives set forth for the school, and he moved to set them in motion. He also believed a professional school should be an integral part of the University, utilizing its resources and in turn contributing to it.

The school sought increased involvement with the social work practice community. There was interest in mutual involvement in areas such as policy development, research, and the ongoing search for solutions to social problems.

The curriculum was planned to be coherent, balanced, and enriched with knowledge content from related fields. It aimed toward development of social workers with a broad orientation to cultural influences and community needs in Hawaii and was geared to train students as social workers, not technicians. Students were encouraged to take relevant courses in other professional schools and the social sciences. First-year sequences were in social work practice with individuals and groups, general social work practice, or community organization. A previous sequence in social services was replaced by one in policies and services in world service welfare, and a human behavior and social environment sequence was replaced with one in human development and behavior in cross-cultural perspective. First year practicum took place in learning practice centers or in single agency settings and included work with individuals, families, groups, neighborhoods, organizations, and communities. The practice learning centers offered opportunities for learning in various outreach programs in rural areas, work with newly arrived immigrants, the police department, mental health programs, job corps training, and others.

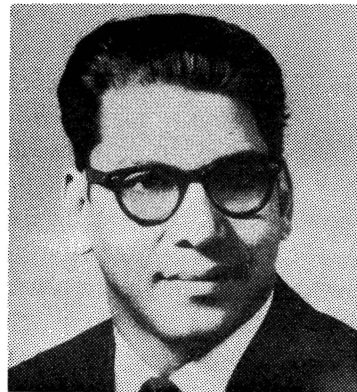
The second year provided a choice of sequences in general social work practice, social casework, social group work, or planning processes in social welfare, with a seminar in community processes plus individual or group research, practicum, and the opportunity to take an elective.

Interdisciplinary and interprofessional activities with other schools in the College of Health Sciences and Social Welfare proved productive. The Schools of Public Health and Social Work, for instance, jointly sponsored a short-term training project for Philippine social workers in family planning, and engaged in joint consultation in the Trust Territories and several Pacific and Asian countries. The school also worked with the East-West Center on various workshops and other programs.

By 1972 enrollment had quadrupled from its 1964 level, with 203 full-time students, including 15 from other countries.

### *Meeting New Challenges: 1975–1986*

Dean Aptekar retired in 1974. Daniel S. Sanders, a faculty member, was named acting dean and subsequently was appointed to the deanship in 1975. Sanders came to the school with a background of educational and practice experience in Asia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. His early life and education were in Sri Lanka, where he was associated with the development of professional social work education and served as director of the Sri Lanka Institute of Social Work. He pursued graduate study in international social policy and administration at the University of Wales, Swansea, and obtained



*Dean Daniel S. Sanders*



his master's and doctoral degrees in social work at the University of Minnesota. Sanders brought to the school a strong background in community organization and research, child welfare, comparative social policy, and international/cross-cultural social work.

At both the international and national levels, social change was demanding both attention and adjustment from social work professionals. On the world scene, changing philosophies of some governments were transforming society in their countries. U.S. models and techniques of social work developed for Western cultures were being renounced by some, including countries in Asia and the Pacific. It was an era of an increasingly reciprocal learning exchange.

The developmental function of social work came into prominence. Social work educators in the West were challenged to reflect on the preparation of graduates to function in some unexpected and relatively unknown practice *milieu*. And there was a worldwide concern for finding ways to develop new curricula in the face of highly restricted funding.

On the national scene, the Economic Opportunity Act had underlined the recognized complexity of most social problems, the obstacle created by the welfare bureaucracy, and the need for more widely considered legislative solutions to the welfare needs. There was a new focus on community organization and planning and an enduring involvement of interested people in decision making about needed services, and there was a recognition of the continuing value of certain experimental programs like Head Start.

By the late 70s, however, federal funds were diminishing for the training, service, and research programs that had been aimed at getting rid of poverty. Starting in 1981 the federal government began taking a radically different approach to some social programs, viewing them as essentially detrimental to people and therefore expendable.

Social work education became concerned with developing sequential programs of study from the baccalaureate through the doctorate; with increasing academic rigor; with recognition of the way that nonconscious cultural attitudes affect ethnic and minority groups; and with providing new emphasis on the developmental as well as the preventive and remedial functions of social work.

In Hawaii during the same period there was an increase in violence and a continuing concern for delinquency, crime, family violence, child abuse, and the problems of single parent families. The state continued to place importance on its overall relationship with Pacific and Asian countries, and one important aspect of the social work scene became assistance to new refugee and immigrant populations. Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians moved toward regaining their identity and sense of dignity.

Against this backdrop, Sanders and his faculty moved to keep the school abreast of contemporary developments, with special concern both for Hawaii and for the broader Asian-Pacific community that the school also serves.

A first step was commitment to a continuum of social work education from the bachelor's degree to a proposed doctorate in social welfare. An undergraduate program leading to the degree of bachelor of social work was approved by the University regents in 1976 in response to a need for beginning level social work practitioners in the community. Initiated in 1977, the program was accredited in 1981.

Development of a research concentration in the master's program was evidence of the school's recognition of the importance of research and research based practice. There were also new areas of curricular emphasis—gerontology, child abuse, refugee concerns, delinquency prevention, evaluation of practice, and peace—and a planned effort to periodically reassess the curriculum to assure current and



*40th Anniversary: Left to right: Amatai Etzioni, President Matsuda, and Dean Sanders*



*Lunch Break: Left to right: N. Ibrahim, K. Matsuura, and W. Isbimoto*

relevant educational offerings. An active program of continuing education responded to the needs of the social work community.

The dean himself served as director of international studies and placed strong emphasis on cross-cultural concerns, especially as they were reflected in the cultural and social heritage of Hawaii. Graduate level work was added in such areas as international social work and social work education, social work practice with peoples of Hawaii, cultural factors in work with Hawaiians, and ethnic and minority content in social work. Collaboration with the East-West Center and internationally-oriented departments of the University was strengthened and the first joint appointment with the Center was initiated.

An important aspect of the school's commitment to work in this area was a concern for the social welfare needs of the diverse cultural and ethnic groups in Hawaii, especially part-Hawaiians. In collaboration with the Hawaii chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and with funding support from the National Institutes of Mental Health, the school started a Hawaiian Learning Program in 1975. One of the graduates of that program was appointed assistant dean in 1985.

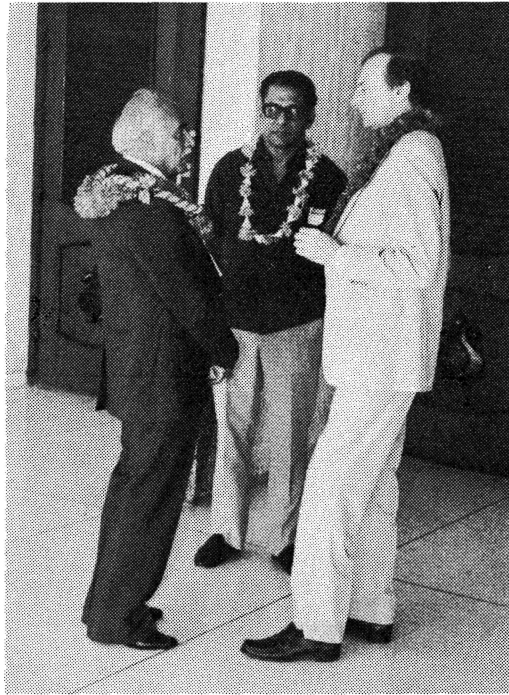


*Classroom Faculty and Staff in the 1980's*

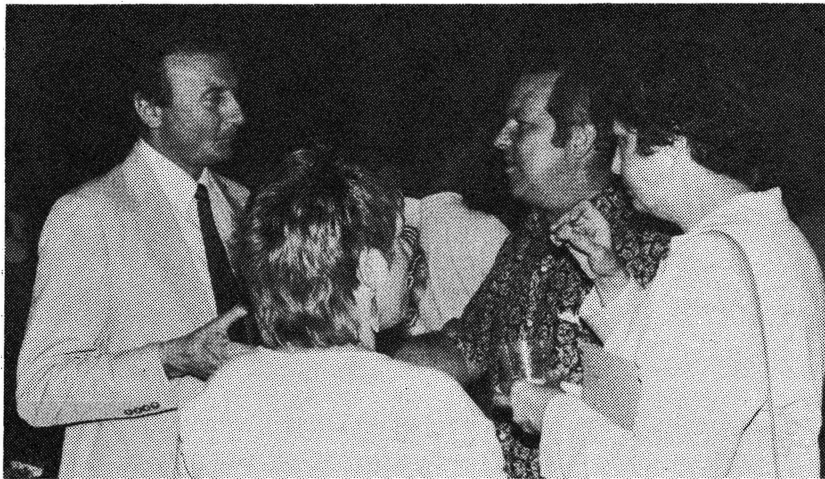
The developmental function became an integral part of the University of Hawaii School of Social Work curriculum, along with an emphasis on international/cross-cultural social work focused on both perspective and content. As part of the school's international commitment to Asia and the Pacific region, it established links with various educational institutions in the region, including Chung-Ang University in Korea, Tunghai University in Taiwan, the University of the Philippines, Thammasat University in Thailand, and the Sri Lanka School of Social Work. Student field placements and research/study projects reached out to Guam, American Samoa, the Philippines, and Thailand. Consultation projects in both education and practice embraced Taiwan, Korea, Samoa, and Sri Lanka.

*Postscript: Today and Tomorrow*

The School of Social Work at the University of Hawaii has emerged from its simple beginnings in two sociology courses to one of the leading schools in the country today. International and cross-cultural activities—in curriculum, publica-



*50th Anniversary Conference. Left to right:  
T. Sbuman, D. Sanders, and D. Liederman*



*50th Anniversary Conference Participants*

tions, and consultations—have enhanced the School's role in the international arena, especially in the Pacific-Asian region. The establishment of a proposed Ph.D. program in Social Work with an international (Pacific/Asian) focus will further strengthen the school's role as a leading center for the study and research of social welfare problems and development in Asia and the Pacific.

Of his experience at the school, one student from Asia said, "It takes me three days of reflection to make sense of and understand the meaning of a day's experience—before I can put it together with other fragments of learning to give me new perceptions."

So it is with the first 50 years of School of Social Work. With sustained reflection, we may begin to connect the fragments of experience and open our minds to visions for the future.