

Here in Our School

By Mona Wasow, Clinical Professor Emerita

Introduction

Some years ago I read a book called [Here on Our Hill](#), wherein the author had interviewed many people who lived off a lovely dirt road in the mountains of Vermont. It inspired me to write an article called “Here in Our School.” Ours is a wonderful School of Social Work, and I was interested in what many people who work there had to say about their experience in the school

Because I wanted to interview a large variety of people, including some who are retired, I chose a random sample of folks, and will present them here in alphabetical order.

It was a marvelous experience talking with such dedicated, compassionate, intelligent people.



Lonnie Berger, Associate Professor

He started in our school in 2004. “I’ve been extremely happy with this school from day one.” The personal connections are great and the environment is both supportive and respectful. He sensed all of this even in my very first interview here. “I really have no negatives.”

Colleagues help with everything from school work to helping each other move to a new house! This holds true for both junior and senior people in the department.



Norma Berkowitz, Clinical Assistant Professor Emerita

Norma had many different roles in our school, from the late 1960’s up to the present time. She was a master’s degree student in the 1960’s; a social worker at U.W. Hospital, then at the Waisman Center as a supervisor of students where she became section head of the social work program; and she became head of the field program

at the School.

Norma feels she got a very good education at our school, and is thankful for the Pincus Minahan Model of social work

practice. “It made, and continues to make, so much sense to me.” “I always knew I wanted to help people,” she said. And she always had an internationalist perspective in the field. Being a teenager during World War II led to this perspective. Norma went off to England to practice for a while. When she returned to U.W. she formed an International student group.

“Ours is a good school, but I wish we had more of a global perspective now.” Norma surely reflects this perspective in the wonderful work she has done for the Friends of Chernobyl Centers, US (FOCCUS), a group she started in 1986, to help Ukraine deal with the horrendous after-effects of the Chernobyl accident.



Aaron Brower, Professor of Social Work and Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning

Aaron started teaching in our school in January 1985. “The people in this school are so great.” Our school has always remained focused on what matters in society, and trying to achieve that. The message to me, as a new professor was: “if you think it’s important, pursue it.” He values that a lot.

One of his main interests was studying college success, and students transitioning to college. This was not mainstream material to study, and sometimes Aaron felt the school did not know why he was focusing on that, but no one ever said “don’t do it,” and he got good advice from his mentor to pursue his main interest.

Aaron loved the field program, and his unit in the U.W. mental health and social services. He is sorry that it no longer exists. He did try once to revive it, which gave him lots of contacts outside of the department with other people on campus. This led to a lot of program development, and his current job.



Rosemarie Carbino, Clinical Professor Emerita

Field teaching has waxed and waned over the years. In the old days, field faculty had a very shared mission; and we were more sociable then, there were more parties, and people talked with each other more. There were “an amazing set of different personalities on the faculty, and we were a powerful force. The school had more money then, and there were lots of experimentations going on.”

Clinical faculty had more to say, more influence in the old days. We no longer have the national presence we once had. After affirmative action, we had to compete more to get people.

It is quieter now; less dramatic; but people do get along better. With the part-time program, there are a whole new set of people we hardly know. Things are more structured now.

The massive field faculty review that we had many years ago was a “blood bath.” We moved into a different building three times in my 40 years with the school.

Rosemarie also notes that “in the 1970’s, we were the center of anti-Vietnam protest in the country.”



Beverly Flanigan, Clinical Professor Emerita

Beverly was hired as Admissions Director in January 1972, and then in September of that year started teaching undergraduate methods class out on Northport Drive, where faculty had offices. Faculty developed undergraduate field placements out in the community there.

She taught from three to four methods 440 classes a week!

In those early years, clinical faculty were unhappy about their lack of status. In 1979, their office at Northport Drive closed down, and they had to find new offices. There was a center in Marshfield, Wisconsin in the alcohol and other drugs area, and Beverly worked there. “That was a fantastic time!” She ran her own agency and was very active in the community. But she did not know what was going on with the rest of the social work faculty on campus.

From 1980-1983 Beverly had a Kellogg Fellowship, and studied in many different places. Out of that experience came her work on Ethics. In 1982 she taught a class on Ethics, which was her very favorite course.

The years 1979-1984 were tough years for clinical faculty. Money dried up for the school, and many clinical faculty were not rehired. “Only five clinical faculty made it, out of about twenty-five of us.” There were a lot of stressed and angry people, and it took many years for the department to recover socially from that. On the other hand, there were more parties and social activities prior to 1980.

The concept of specialists versus the generalist model of social work practice came under a lot of discussion during that period. During the years 1983-1992 Beverly worked on her book Forgiving the Unforgivable. She also gave many workshops on “forgiveness.” Her second book, Forgiving Yourself, came out in 1996.

“My job,” said Beverly, “was the perfect fit for me.” She felt she had total academic freedom, and loved giving workshops around the country. “It was the perfect springboard to do the work I loved doing.”



Jan Greenberg, Professor and Director of the School of Social Work

Jan first came to our school in 1979 as a MSW student; in 1987 he came again, this time as an assistant professor. Now he is the Director of the School, so he has had many different roles in the department!

We are very unusual in our collegiality in this school; everybody has a voice. We have very committed students, too. Jan is “so proud to be part of this

school that generates knowledge about how to be helpful for the most vulnerable people.”

Jan expressed a great deal of pride in the school, past and present; and feels we will continue to be excellent in the future. He feels we have a long tradition of excellence in both teaching and research; and staying focused on the people who need the most help. Of his own experience in the school, Jan says, “The school has always been so good to me.”



William Heiss, Assistant Director

William started in the school in 1988. He has been an undergraduate and graduate student, an assistant to the director, and is now the assistant director. He also occasionally teaches a class in Interdisciplinary Rural Health Practice.

He is “very, very proud of this school.” The school has been a place of “so many firsts.” i.e. The

Pincus-Minahan model of social work practice, the Program of Assertive Community Training (PACT), the field unit in Severe Mental Illness, our field model, etc.

Our faculty do so much within the school, nationally, and internationally. William also talked about the atmosphere within our school: “It’s like a big family.”

Students have changed over the years, which means different teaching techniques for us. “There’s a whole new breed of students coming up.” In contrast to the students coming back from the peace corps of the 1960’s, today’s student seems to mature at a later age. Many seem to lack self-confidence; do not know who they are yet. He also feels some students have an exaggerated sense of fairness, and feel “that everyone should win.”



Alfred Kadushin, Professor Emeritus

Alfred started in our school in 1952, and retired in 1985. He feels strongly that a social work school's main purpose is to prepare social workers to provide for clients. He feels

our school leaned too far in the direction of emphasizing research. He also felt we hired too many people who did not have social work backgrounds; i.e. sociologists, economists, etc. These people did not have the knowledge or some of the identification with the profession of social work.

He also felt that the Pincus-Minahan model of social work practice should have taken a more activist stance. Alfred had been invited to join Pincus & Minahan in their book, but decided against doing so because of this.

Alfred also had other disagreements with the director of the school. When the school did away with the master's thesis requirement, "it weakened the education of our students." He felt that field supervisors were ignored too much; and he felt that both students and faculty should be selected primarily for their abilities and competence; not for reaching quotas on hiring minorities. "For this reason," said Alfred, "some considered me racist." In addition, he says, "I was raised in a sexist era (1920's-1950's), and many saw me as a male chauvinist.

After the bombing of the physics building during the Vietnam war, Alfred felt the school should take an official nonviolence stance, and once again he was wrongly seen as supporting the war. "I was respected, but not liked," he said.

He got offers from other social work schools, and our school made successful efforts to keep him here. Alfred felt the University as a whole was good, he liked Madison, and he enjoyed the people in our department. "I liked going down to lunch with colleagues. It was generally pleasant and I'd do it all over again."

He pointed out that our social work school used to be 7th in the country, and now (2011) we are 12th.

Alissa Karnaky, Program Associate



Alissa just came to our school in November of 2010, so "everything is very new to me." She said that "the faculty and staff here have been extremely welcoming and very appreciative of the work I've done for them." She enjoys feeling part of the department, and that her work is

helpful.

According to the 2010-2011 Data Digest, our School of Social Work has conferred more master's degrees than any other UW school between the years 2006-2010. Given those numbers she wonders why we are not in a bigger building. We need more room and physical resources for our programs and public events that

engage the larger community. For instance, because we do not have a big enough room, we have to go off site for events over 40 people.

Alissa says she enjoys working for a department that emphasizes making a positive difference in the world. She is contemplating the possibility of getting an MSW for herself one day.



Sandy Kohn, Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Field Education

Sandy came from a farm family. The family expectation was that she find someone to support her, marry him, and have children. She was the first college graduate from her family.

She got her BSW and MSW from our school, and says, "The education I received here made so much sense to me. The faculty

here challenged me in a meaningful way. This school is really home for me."

On all levels, as a student, a social worker, and as field director, this school has been such a good fit for for Sandy, and the faculty has always been interested in what she is doing. She sees the generalist framework as a holistic approach which sees the big picture.

"Our school is consistent with what I wanted to do professionally."

Elizabeth Kramer, Professor

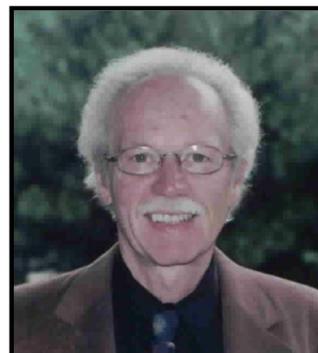


Elizabeth came to our school in 1992. She comments on how hard people work, and that they really want to make a difference in the field of social work. "I appreciate more than anything, that the people who work here are both brilliant and kind. They have a generosity of spirit in mentoring and supporting each other. We are a very diverse group; we focus on the strengths perspective; and we are very

caring."

The part-time program is wonderful, and meeting a big need in the state.

David LeCount, Field Lecturer



David finds that the School of Social Work is very rewarding. We have made many good innovations and changes working within the community. David is on the board of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and feels he is working with the entire system in Dane County: clients, educators, and

professionals in the social service systems.

David feels he has grown with teaching responsibilities. He loves to teach and finds it inspirational. "It's a nice enhancement in my life; like coming back to where I started. It's a privilege." The caliber of people is so good; it gives him hope for the future.



Jane Linzmeyer, Senior Academic Librarian

Jane started in our school on August 1st, 1995 and says, "it is the most fulfilling job I've ever had." She loves to do reference and research work, so is always learning new things.

Each director of the school is so different as are all the faculty. It is fun to see all the changes, and how people work. "The field of social work is so exciting to me."

Jane talks about contact with the outside community, too. She has always enjoyed that. For example, she gets lots of donated books from the community. There is a project called "Truth Start," that works with prison population. She enjoys contact with community practitioners, and makes sure they know they can take out books from our library too. Jane is also manager of the physical aspects of the library which she finds interesting. For example, there have been water leaks in the library.

She has enjoyed working with people who do the physical work on the buildings, and has learned to appreciate some of the complexities of their work worlds.

She has also enjoyed working with the students and getting feedback from them. Some students send her "thank you" notes, and tell her how much they appreciate her help, and that means a lot to Jane.

Amanda Lund, Payroll and Benefits Specialist

Amanda has been working in our school for 1 ½ years, and says, "I like helping out. We're all in this together. Everyone is so nice to work with." She also feels everyone is treated equally, and "There are no negatives."

Amanda enjoyed decorating the 4th floor for a Halloween Party, where both

Kerry Rusk and Jan Greenberg jumped out of the closet!

She was pleased to create a student database to keep track of all the student placements and agencies, and to keep this updated.



Sandra Magaña, Associate Professor

Sandra came to the school in 1998 as a post-doctoral student, and in 2000 as an assistant professor. Presently she works in three different offices: 50% in the Latino and Chicano department and the other 50% is divided between the Waisman Center and the Social Work Department. "That's an awful lot of stuff!"

We have a really good faculty, have a fine presence in the community and our field program is excellent.

We are trying to get a more racially mixed student body, and people have been very supportive of me.

Sandy finds it frustrating that we have no diversity (at present) in our Ph.D. program, and she has to go outside the department to get students. She developed a course called "Research Methods in Communities of Color," but does not have any social welfare students in the class. All the students are from other departments.

Colleen Mahoney, Assistant Professor

Colleen came to our school in 2006. She feels it is such "a great environment" in which to work. People are so friendly and positive, and things are transparent here, in a healthy way.

We take students seriously in a very good way, and likewise each other. This attitude gets passed down

to the new people, "the values are good in an ethical, fun environment." There is a lot of laughter and playfulness here.

The department excels in academic objectives. We have a reputation for being an excellent place to work. Social work probably has a natural bias towards recognizing the world beyond academia.



Dan Meyer, Professor

In 1987, Dan came to this school as a Ph.D. student, wanting to learn about policy, research, and teaching. At that time he was more connected to the Institute on Poverty. Dan was 31 years old, with two pre-school children and a third on the way! So his mental energy was divided between being a father, husband, and student. He did not have much of a model for

teaching or research at that time.

His first memory of teaching is that he wanted his students to read things from every possible perspective, so he made out a huge reading list. A student told him so, in no uncertain terms.



Dan felt it was very important to be a good school citizen and pay attention to all aspects of being in the department. He really enjoys teaching and getting people to think. "A good classroom atmosphere where students feel free to try out lots of things is so important."

Dan was director of the school from 2001-2007. He says he never wanted to be running an organization, and became director accidentally. As director he was proud of the start-up of our part-time program.

He always felt that both research and teaching should be highly valued. Our school, like the rest of the University values research highly; but we should structure the system in such a way that teaching is equally valued.

Dan sees the many strengths of his colleagues and students, and "[feels] very positively about all aspects of our school." He does worry about the future because of the present University finances, and because our Wisconsin legislature is not invested enough in the University system.



Susan Michaud, Child Welfare Training Coordinator/ Instructor

Susan came to our school in 2001. Her background is in public child welfare, where she worked at U.W. Eau Claire and then Whitewater, before coming to U.W. Madison. "This has been a great experience for me; it's such a good place to work. People are friendly and helpful."

Because she is neither faculty nor staff, she sometimes feels a little on the margins. Nobody in the department does what she does. On the other hand, she has been free to do her own thing, and tries to keep people informed.

Susan feels our school is well known, respected, and very positive in all that it does. "This is a great place to be ending my long career in social work and child welfare."



Mel Morgenbesser, Clinical Professor Emeritus

Mel has had six different roles in our school! From 1970-72 he was a student getting his MSW. After working as a social worker in the community, he then became a field instructor, running a generalist field unit. In 2000 he became head of the field program; in 1985 Mel became associate director of the school, from 1997-2000 he was director of the school; then went back

to becoming field director where he remained until his retirement in 2005. Now he is the volunteer director of our Alumni Program. Mel has experienced and contributed to our school in many different roles!

He says: "I never started out planning to be an academic; things just evolved." But, he goes on to say... "It was a very good job and I have no regrets." Clinical faculty, he says, were technically second class citizens, but we were treated very well. Serendipity

played a big role, but he liked the school and the school liked him, so it all worked out.

Our faculty governance is very strong and it lets people pursue their own strengths. He "felt like the master of [his] own ship." Autonomy and freedom are strong in our school and that is wonderful. It enabled him to do a large variety of things: he wrote a book, did a lot of media projects, taught administration, developed video classes, etc.

Mel believes we were strongest when we had the two different faculties, the clinical and the research faculty. Our clinical faculty was strong and respected in his teaching years, 1970-1990. We had a good national reputation.

Mel talked about the primary influence our school had in the area of social work education, citing the well-known text books in this area, written by Pincus & Minahan, Kadushin, and Rose. We do not have the same prominence in the social work education area that we used to but it is still a very fine school!

Mel retired comparatively early at the age of 58. He said he felt "burned out" at the time. But he continues to enjoy school involvement with the very important alumni work he is doing.



Tally Moses, Associate Professor

Tally spoke of all the good relationships around the school: faculty, staff, and students alike. "There is great camaraderie, and people are respectful and kind to each other." She also feels there is strong commitment to social work values, teaching, and research.

We do not have all the resources we need so everyone is working very hard. We could be more politically active in the community. We're not a radical group—we're a very scholarly bunch.

There is a strong "live and let live environment," as long as you produce good quality work. There is also a strong ethic of being good and helpful to each other. Tally is very happy to be here.



Stephanie Robert, Professor and Ph.D. Program Chair

Stephanie came here in 1998 because she "felt here I could be a mother and not hide it." She says this turned out to be right.

She is also attracted to the intellectual atmosphere here, both within the department and across campus. Even when a junior faculty member, she always felt her ideas mattered.

All of us do our part in the department. "In fact, everyone does more than their share around here." These are hard times on campus, and we are all stretched pretty thin. There are not many full time faculty, and starting the part-time program has given us all a lot to do.

We are very nice to new faculty, and celebrate each other's accomplishments. We do whatever we can to help new people make tenure.



Kerry Rusk, Academic Department Supervisor

Kerry came here in July 2007. She used to work as a social worker and as such, was particularly interested in working in the department.

When she first arrived here the 4th floor of the building was an abandoned laboratory and a filthy mess. No one asked her to clean it up, but she did so anyway. "I did what was right; I couldn't ignore it."

Kerry feels this department is the nicest department there is. "The culture here is one of kindness and equality. The director, Jan Greenberg, treats me like gold." There is no hierarchy here and everyone is so understanding.



Tracy Schroeffer, Associate Professor and Part Time MSW Program Director

Tracy came in 2003. She feels that everyone seems to be invested in the school, and treats each other well. When conflicts arise, we handle it well.

There is way more work than our relatively small faculty and staff can comfortably handle. We have our teaching, research, committee work, students, etc.,

and that is a big challenge. Tracy wishes she had a video lab in the school.

Our students are wonderful—she really enjoy them. "They challenge me to be a better professor and person." The students also want to feel a part of our community.

Tracy said: "My experience with the school has been great; I've found a home here." People really care about each other. We are relatively poor in resources, but rich in community.



Judy Sikora, Lecturer Emerita

Judy got her MSW in 1991, at the age of 50. She graduated in December of 1996, because she was working full time at the state, while also being a student. She enjoyed all of

her classes, and opted not to test out of any of them because she "wanted to experience it all." For the most part, all of her experiences were positive.

She did a good job of seeking out what she wanted from classes and teachers, even though as a part-time student she did not feel part of a cohort of students.

Judy was lucky enough to be part of the first semester of the new part-time program. She taught SW 605, The Field of Social Work, and really loved it. It was great to see the enthusiasm of these returning students, who were finally able to get a master's without having to give up their employment. They certainly kept Judy on her toes with all their field experience.

She taught the undergraduate SW205, Introduction to the Field of Social Work, for 8 years. We had from 150-200 students in each class. It was exhilarating, exhausting, and stressful all at the same time. Overall, she really enjoyed it. The problem with these larger lectures is that the lecturer does not get to know very many students on a personal level. The level of volunteer work and activism that these young students were involved in impressed her.

Judy also taught SW 605, The Field of Social Work, for 5 years. This is the master's level equivalent to SW 205. She loved the opportunity to increase her knowledge of social welfare and social work history.

She was made to feel more a part of the school by being asked to serve on the Admissions Committee where she served for eight years. Overall, it has been a very positive experience for Judy, both as a student and as a professor.



Peggy Sleeper, Clinical Associate Professor

Peggy started part-time with the school in 1989; went to full time in 2005.

Clinical social work practice used to take up most of her time and energy. When she started teaching full time, it got her to think even more about clinical practice. "I just love teaching. Students ask great questions." She feels fortunate to be able to teach.

She feels that the last six years there have been particularly good communication between all different faculty, and a fine sense of shared mission.



Judy Switzky, Senior Student Services Coordinator

Judy was a MSW student here in 1975. When the position of student advisor opened up in 1994, she successfully applied for it.

When she first started working for the school, it was "top heavy with male power," even though the field has more females than males.

Changing directors of the school almost every three years makes her job a little bit harder. Every director does things differently. When she first started working here, Irv Piliavin was the director.

All the new technology helps on some levels, but on another level it makes it harder, because there is much less verbal

exchange. "Talking with people can give you so much more to go on." Connecting with people is always good.

Judy emphasized how much she enjoys her job here. "I love helping students reach their full potential and develop their talents." She is also pleased to have met so many different kinds of people, and to have learned a great deal on the job. "It's a mission for me."



Mary Ann Test, Professor Emerita

Mary Ann was initially working as a psychologist at Mendota Mental Hospital. While there, along with Dr. Len Stein and Dr. Marx, they developed the Program of Assertive Community

Training (PACT). PACT became an internationally famous modality for helping people with mental illness survive out in the community. Mary Ann said that "working in PACT was so rewarding."

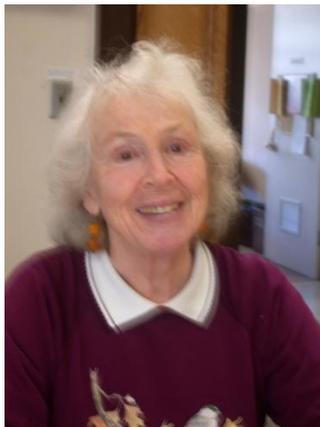
She became the director of Psychology and Research at Mendota, but did not like working in that bureaucracy. When she heard there was an opening in the School of Social Work, she applied for and got it. Here she worked from 1979 until her retirement in 2001.

Mary Ann taught psychopathology at school, and said: "I was always able to teach the courses I loved teaching." She developed a Ph.D. seminar in the severe mental illness area. "Our students in this area were so wonderful, in both the MSW and Ph.D. programs."

Mary Ann said she consciously stayed out of administrative work. She taught only part-time when her parents were aging, so she could better care for them.

She says she has so many fond memories of the school and is very happy that we have maintained a strong concentration in the area of mental illness.

She smiled broadly as she remembered her wonderful retirement party.



Mona Wasow, Clinical Professor Emerita

It took me thirteen years to get my undergraduate degree, from 1955-1968, because I had three small children, no money for child care, and no idea what to study. My degree was in European History, because that's what was offered between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., which is when my friend could look after my kids!

By 1968 I was used to going to school, and my youngest child was now in public school, so I kept going. This time I chose to get a master's degree in social work. That turned out to be a wonderful choice for me. I enjoyed school thoroughly, and got a fine job shortly after graduation. The job, however, was a one hour drive from my home, so after a year I started looking for a job in Madison, WI.

I was having coffee with a friend, who mentioned that there was a "temporary" opening for a clinical professor at our School of Social Work, because a faculty member had unexpectedly become too ill to teach. Alright, I thought, I'll apply for that while I'm looking for a permanent job. I never did find that permanent job outside of the university!

There were no tenure pressures on me, as I was only "temporary." That left me relaxed and happy to follow my passions in social work ("What Are We Doing to Ourselves?" Op-Ed in Social Work, Vol. 37 No. 6, Nov. 1992 P. 485-7) which in turn led to an indefinite appointment, and thirty years of the most wonderful job I could possibly have had.

There was another factor that played a big role in my job at the school. One of my children developed a severe form of schizophrenia. It was during the tail end of what many parents of the mentally ill refer to as "the family bashing" era, when we were being blamed for causing these illnesses.

I went to the director of our school, asking if I could start a concentration in the area of Severe Mental Illness (SMI). "Go to it," he said. "Aren't you afraid of my lack of objectivity?" I responded. "No I'm not," he said.

So started my years of training social work students to work in the SMI area. "How grateful I was, and am, to have had this positive channel into which I could direct some of my grief and frustration." (Psychiatric Services)

My experiences with the School of Social Work both as a student and as a clinical professor were positive, exciting and life enhancing. Colleagues and students were the greatest. Because of these experiences within school, I was eager to hear what others working here had to say; and thus, I started this project interviewing people.



Susan Kidd Webster, Senior Lecturer

Susan started in our school in 1980, when she was hired to fill in for someone. "Then they just kept me on!" She spent the first fifteen years at the Waisman Center. Then she got an office at the School of Social Work, where she felt much more integrated with the school. Here she has taught methods, and

homelessness.

She very much likes the climate of our current school, where people are more supportive of each other than when she first began thirty years ago. "Both Dan Meyer and Jan Greenberg are such great directors, and seek input from all levels."

Susan now works in international social work, which makes her more aware of other departments on campus. She finds this very exciting and enriching, and thoroughly enjoys knowing others across campus. International social work is now her favorite area to teach. She does find teaching somewhat different in recent years. "For us older folks, keeping up with computer technology has been a challenge; but now I find it quite exciting."

Susan really enjoys the students. She feels they live in quite a different world than we lived in as students. She also

comments that today's students seem to expect the whole semester planned out before it even starts! "I'm more of a 'seize the moment' type!"

In Conclusion

People interviewed knew their words would likely appear in print. This may have skewed words towards the positive. Even so, I was struck by the strong, enthusiastic attitudes expressed by most everyone. This surely says wonderful things about our University of Wisconsin School of Social Work.

The words of pleasure and total commitment towards the field of social work, and our school, were the dominant themes. It was a joy to interview you all.

In mutual appreciation,

Most Sincerely Yours,

Mona Wasow

June, 2011