

Spring 2013

## [Social Work] Newsletter, Spring 2013

University of Northern Iowa. Department of Social Work.

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# University of Northern Iowa

Department of Social Work



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## Save the Date!

Graduate  
Commencement  
Friday  
7:00 p.m.  
5.10.13

Undergraduate  
Commencement  
Saturday  
2:00 p.m.  
5.11.13

## Dr. Ruth Bluford Anderson (1921-2013)

Dr. Ruth Anderson, founder of the Social Work Department (1969), and its first department head, died on January 22, 2013. Although she retired from UNI in 1981, her work in the local community continued well into her later years. In 1988, she was elected to the Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors, the first African-American woman to serve on that board. In 1990, she received a Doctor of Humane Letters from Simpson College. In 1992, she was named "Social Worker of the Year" by the Iowa NASW and, in May, 2012, received a lifetime achievement award from the Iowa NASW.

Dr. Anderson was the oldest of five children born to Oklahoma sharecroppers. The family moved to Sioux City when she was seven. She earned a B.A. from the University of California - Berkeley and a M.S.W. from Columbia University. In 1959, she came to Waterloo for what was to be a short visit, but ended up working at the Department of Public Welfare for eight years, eventually



serving as its Director of Social Services. She then taught briefly at Wartburg College before accepting a position at UNI. Her autobiography, *From Mother's Aid Child to University Professor*, was published in 1985.

Dr. Anderson was well-respected by her colleagues, as reflected in the following comments: *"I joined the Board of Pathways (the NECSA) on which Ruth was an active member. We often worked together. . . Ruth always stood up against injustice and for the rights of the staff . . . When I found out Ruth had written her autobiography, I read it with great interest. . . Then I understood her commitment to teaching students about the devastation that alcoholism causes to the family and her setting up of a substance abuse certificate for social work students. There are social workers today all over the state of Iowa who entered the profession due to the influence of Ruth Anderson."* (UNI Prof. Katherine van Wormer).

*"1972, San Francisco: I am completing my doctoral program and looking for a position at a small liberal arts college, which I thought would be the ideal respite from the physical and psychological rending of the Vietnam War. I'd spent two days at the social work conference interviewing and going to presentations. I was feeling like a small For Sale commodity in a market that had little to do with stopping the war, helping the poor, or pushing for revolution. I got a brief note to meet Ruth Anderson. . . I don't recall much of our interview, but I do remember being engaged and accepted. We talked for a long time--well beyond the needs of a job interview. Ruth talked about things that were meaningful to me; she smiled at my wanting to live in a communal setting . . . and I did not feel judged."* (UNI Prof. Tom Keefe).

*“Dr. Ruth Anderson was the best mentor a future social worker could have dreamed of. She knew first-hand and empathetically many of the social justice issues we work with, and she contributed her great intellect to helping our communities and state search for and find effective solutions. Ruth taught me to be a social change agent whether I was working with an individual, group, or community. She has always been and always will be an angel whispering in my public service career. She conveyed the social justice message to never give up, share your hope with others, and leave the world in a better place. She did, and I commit to follow her example.” (Rep. Marti Anderson, Iowa House of Representatives, B.A. in Social Work, 1973).*

In honoring her receipt of the NASW Lifetime Achievement Award, Dr. William Downs saluted Dr. Anderson’s efforts in developing the UNI Department of Social Work:

“To accomplish her goal, Dr. Anderson single-handedly built a social work library, worked with local agencies to develop the field practicum component, designed and built new social work courses, and worked with the Council on Social Work Education to get the program approved.”

“To use her own words from her autobiography, ‘I was it’. . . ‘I was teacher, coordinator, director, head, and chairperson.’ Yes, Professor Anderson, you were it. You taught, coordinated, directed, chaired, created, developed, grew, and got approved the social work program at UNI.

“The social work program has grown over the years, and now graduates about 55-60 BA students and 40-45 MSW students each year. But the roots of our Department of Social Work at UNI are Dr. Ruth Anderson. Thank you, Dr. Anderson, for your huge legacy to UNI. We will not only thank you today for that legacy, but we will in the future honor you by living up to that huge legacy that you have left for us.” (UNI Professor William Downs).



*To honor this remarkable woman, the Social Work Department has established the Ruth Bluford Anderson Scholarship. We are currently soliciting contributions for this scholarship, intended to benefit an undergraduate social work student of color from East Waterloo who plans to practice social work in the Cedar Valley.*

*For more information or to contribute to this scholarship, please contact Nate Clapham, Director of Development for CSBS, UNI Foundation, at 319-273-5468, email [nathan.clapham@uni.edu](mailto:nathan.clapham@uni.edu)*



## Student Highlights

### Sara McDowell



Sara was awarded the Air Force Health Professions scholarship. A highly competitive award, this scholarship is granted to only seven individuals nationwide. Sara is excited and honored to begin her MSW career wearing the military uniform and offering service to military members and their families. Upon graduating, Sara will enter active duty in the Air Force as an O-1 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

### Meredith Stensland

Meredith was accepted into the University of Iowa doctoral program in the School of Social Work, which typically offers admission to only four students per year. Her research interests include attachment theory, human sexuality, and sex offender treatment. Meredith, who will receive her MSW from UNI this May, is excited for the opportunity and will begin pursuing her PhD in Fall 2013.



### Faith Fisher



While completing her graduate practicum at Operation Threshold, Faith organized a large Community Orientation and Networking Event. "The event is set up in a speed-dating format," Faith explains. "Ten agencies host a table and new and existing direct service staff at other agencies learn about what hosting agencies have to offer their clients." The event is the first of its kind and will serve as a model for similar events in the future. Upon graduating, Faith will begin a 37-day deployment to Guam, where she will serve as an Aerospace Ground Equipment mechanic in the Air National Guard. After returning to the US, she hopes to secure employment with the Veterans Administration.

## UNI Student Social Work Association

The undergraduate Student Social Work Association (SSWA) is committed to teaching students more about the social work profession and facilitating community involvement. The SSWA had a Fall 2012 membership of 29 students and has increased the Spring membership to 35 students.

Thirteen SSWA members recently traveled to Des Moines to spend a day at the Capitol working with the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The SSWA sought to raise awareness and advocate for improvements in dating violence laws. The group spoke with the following Congress members: Walt Rogers, Marti Anderson (UNI B.A. in Social Work, 1973), and Jeff Danielson. SSWA president Kaydee Vraspier commented on the day stating, "In one hour of our group talking to legislators, we were able to get five to support it and it was sent to be written and introduced . . . We are making a difference." Since the group's advocacy day at the Capitol, the dating violence bill has passed out of the senate judiciary and will now go to the floor for a vote.



### Other SSWA Endeavors

- △ Volunteered at Western Home's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary event
- △ Established a hospice training effort and assisted volunteers to become hospice-certified volunteers
- △ Held a bake sale that raised \$100 for the Job Foundation
- △ Supplied a family in need with coats and boots during the holiday season
- △ Volunteered at the Special Olympics

## A Message from the Interim Department Head

### Dr. Cindy Juby



The 2013-2014 academic year brings with it many changes to the Social Work Department. Some of the changes were initiated by the department, whereas, others are mandates from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). By far, the largest change is the addition of a new Master of Social Work (MSW) concentration. Since its inception in 2001, the MSW program has offered two concentrations: micro practice and social administration. Beginning this year, the micro practice concentration will be replaced with a new, trauma informed practice concentration.

The concept of trauma informed practice has been in development since the early 1990s with the publication of *Trauma and Recovery* by Judith Herman. Most clients who seek services from social work agencies have a history of trauma (e.g., childhood sexual abuse, domestic violence, war-related trauma) which has contributed to their current service needs (e.g., mental health, substance abuse).

Trauma informed service providers are informed about, and sensitive to, trauma-related issues present in survivors. A trauma informed system is one in which all components of a given service system have been reconsidered and evaluated in light of a basic understanding of the role that trauma plays in the lives of people.

Only some trauma victims are ready to process the trauma that has impacted their lives. Therefore, social workers need to address trauma at three levels: 1) designing service systems that accommodate the vulnerabilities of trauma

survivors and allows services to be delivered in a way that will avoid inadvertent re-traumatization in order to facilitate client participation in treatment, 2) developing closely knit collaborative relationships with other public sector service systems serving these clients, and 3) when clients so request, referring for or providing direct services that address the trauma and its effects.

During the past decade, an increasing number of social service agencies have begun to use a trauma informed approach to treatment. Although trauma-informed services constitute a new direction in the field of social work, very few Schools or Departments of Social Work have developed this as a concentration or even as a focus.

Another change that will be taking place within the department is the conversion from a content-drive curriculum to an outcome-based one to meet reaccreditation requirements. This approach is fundamentally different from how we have previously approached curriculum development. No longer are we required to offer specific courses like *HBSE* or *Practice I*. Instead, the focus is on students' mastery of specific practice behaviors. As a result, students are continuously evaluated on their mastery of social work knowledge, values, and skills.

While we are ensured an eventful year, we optimistically expect that our endeavors will improve an already successful program.

#### Did You Know?

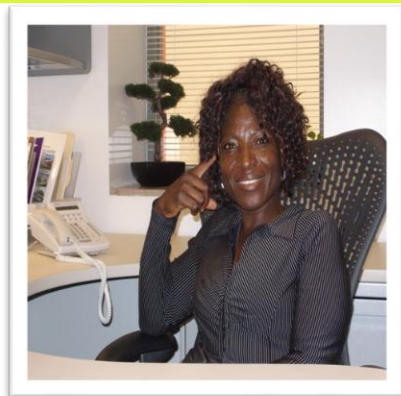
The National Association of Social Workers is the largest professional organization of social workers with 145,000 members.

~NASW



## Faculty Highlights

### Augustina Naami



Tina, our newest faculty member, came to the department in 2011. Her interests lie in the area of disabilities and she has published several articles on this topic. It would not be surprising if she developed a disability course in the near future which would greatly benefit the department.

Tina conducted a study last year in Ghana, her home country. The study entitled “Disability, Gender, and Employment Relationships in Africa: The Case of Ghana,” is an exploratory quantitative study designed to examine employment issues of persons with physical disabilities in Ghana. The study was accepted as a poster presentation for

the 2013 UNI Research Symposium and she plans to disseminate the research findings at the annual conference of the *Society for Disability Studies* or the *Council of Social Work Education* (CSWE).

Tina is also working on another research project that examines the impact of the physical environment (including transportation) on the daily lives of persons with physical disabilities in the Cedar Valley. She intends using photovoice methodology to enable participants photograph to tell their stories about the barriers they encounter. Tina chose photovoice because it is participatory, empowering, and gives a voice to the disabled population in this area

### Katherine van Wormer

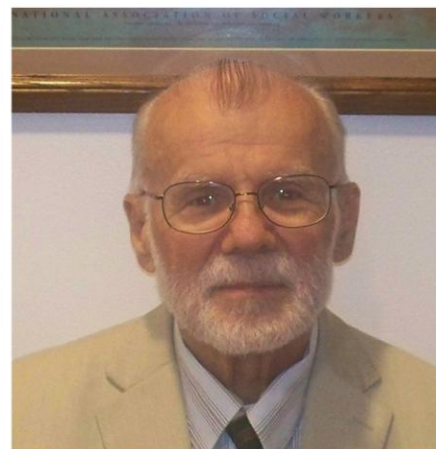
Katherine van Wormer (blue sweater), Charletta Sudduth, and David W. Jackson III published *The Maid Narratives: Black Domesticity and White Families in the Jim Crow South* this year through *LSU Press*. This book describes cultural conditions, norms, and etiquette, and mistress/maid relationships in the Deep South during the days of segregation. The highlight of the book is the narratives from women of the Great Migration who moved to Iowa from Mississippi, and one chapter describes the Great Migration to Iowa in fascinating detail.





## Jim McCullagh

Jim is the author of *The Teachers of the Cherokee Nation Public Schools: 1870's-1907* and Volume II of *Marriages Reported by Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation Newspapers: 1843-1917*. These books are the result of his substantial conversations with members of the Cherokee tribe in Oklahoma. Jim has been researching Cherokee members since 1999 and has written multiple articles that reflect their experiences and the tribe overall.

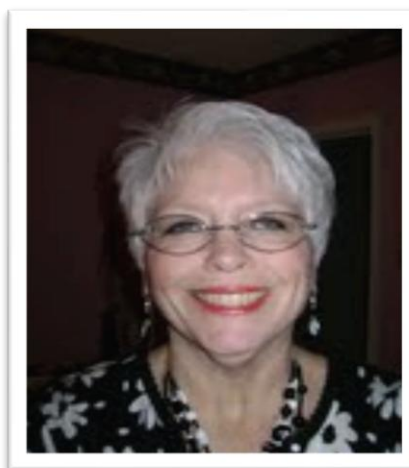


## Tom Keefe

Tom is currently working on a paper titled "Mindfulness and Coping: Some New Directions." The paper seeks to define mindfulness through two models that may clarify its use as a variable in research settings and as a tool in clinical practice. Tom notes that this clarification may also be helpful for everyday life.

## Mary Boes

Mary is currently co-authoring a chapter in the *Social Workers' Desk Reference* with fellow UNI faculty member Katherine van Wormer. The chapter focuses on Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender clients. The book will be published by Oxford University Press.

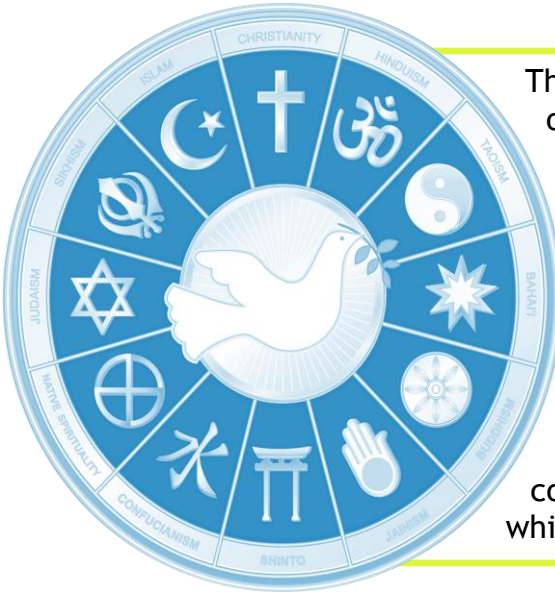


## Carole Gustafson

Carole, an adjunct in the Department of Social Work, is currently working on a series of articles that document her work experiences with immigrants and ethnic minorities. For the last 15 years, Carole has worked with immigrants and refugees in the Waterloo Area, assisting in the resettlement of approximately 3,500 Bosnian refugees. She also has extensive experience working with the Latino community and established six non-profit organizations.

## Faculty Achievements

### Laura Praglin



Thanks to an American Democracy Project Fellowship, offered through the UNI Provost's Office, Dr. Laura Praglin recently instituted a service-learning component to her seminar on "Spiritual Diversity and Social Work Practice." Through 15-hours of community service at Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Services of Iowa (Bremwood), the East Side Ministerial Alliance, Hospitality House, and the Peace and Justice Center of the Cedar Valley, students reflected upon how values such as social justice and compassion are manifested in the mission and everyday activities of these faith-based community agencies. The project benefited UNI students while meeting vital community needs in the Cedar Valley.

### Katherine van Wormer

Dr. Katherine van Wormer has been named the university's Distinguished Scholar for 2012-2013. This award is presented to a senior scholar or artist who has demonstrated a long and distinguished career of publications, exhibits, and/or creative activities. The recipient must have a professional reputation that is national or international and be a member of the graduate faculty with five years of full-time service at UNI.



### Did You Know?

The employment of social workers is expected to grow by 25% from 2010 to 2020. That is faster than the average rate of growth for all occupations.

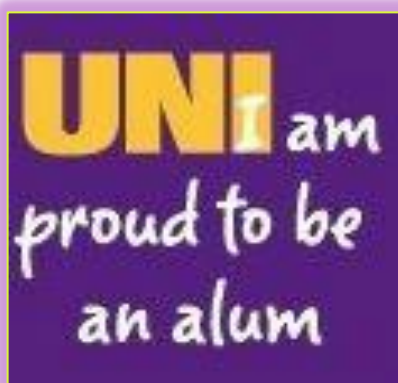
~ Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Alumni News

### Miranda Kracke



Miranda is a 2012 graduate of the UNI Master's of Social Work program. She received her LMSW shortly after graduating and began working as a Forensic Interviewer at Allen Child Protection Center where she continues to work as a PRN employee. She also is a trained facilitator of the *Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children* child abuse prevention workshop. In December of 2012, she accepted a full-time position as a program manager at Exceptional Persons, Inc., where she oversees two sites for adults with special healthcare needs. Miranda is also a member of the Human Rights Committee within Exceptional Persons, Inc.



### Erika Meyer

Erika Meyer is a 2009 graduate of the MSW program. She currently works within the child protection and children's court system to rehabilitate parents and reunite them with their children whenever possible. Erika enjoys "working with the entire family system and getting to understand and meet their needs. Our agency is a national leader in Trauma-Informed Care and that perspective has been incredibly enlightening and empowering. We are also one of the only agencies to be able to conduct assessments based on the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics in which the impact of trauma on development is measured (neurological, social, relational, emotional, etc.)." This experience has encouraged Erika to further explore how to incorporate knowledge of Trauma-Informed Care in other environments such as school, the mental health field, and foster care.



# Program Mission

The mission of the Department of Social Work, in keeping with the broader mission of the University and the purposes of professional social work education, is to prepare students for competent, effective, and ethical—beginning and advanced—professional practice and leadership; to conduct scholarship that advances

knowledge; and to provide services to local, state, national, and international communities. Using multidimensional theory, knowledge, and skills, students and faculty are committed to enhancing human potential and growth in diverse human systems. This commitment is

supported by the promotion of multi-cultural sensitivity, human rights, and social and economic justice within a framework of social work values and ethics.



UNI SOCIAL WORK

319.273.6249

Sabin Hall 235

Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614