

MEDIAWATCH

September–October 2005



Los Angeles Times

CHAUNCEY ALEXANDER, 89; PROMOTED SOCIAL WELFARE

September 8, 2005

By Myrna Oliver



Chauncey Alexander, a former executive director of the National Association of Social Workers and who worked for better health care and other services for the poor, has died. He was 89.

Alexander, who lived in Huntington Beach, died Aug. 30 of pneumonia at Orange County Memorial Hospital in Fountain Valley, said his wife, Sally.

“Chauncey Alexander lived as a voice for the exploited, the misunderstood and for the disabled and disenfranchised of our community,” his friend and colleague, George Giacoppe, said in a statement.

A lifelong activist trained as a psychiatric social worker, Alexander organized, lobbied, and wrote articles to prod state and national officials into providing better overall social services, including health care and mental health care.

As executive director of the National Association of Social Workers for 23 years, Alexander helped to establish professional standards and develop legislation. Headquartered first in New York City and later Washington, D.C., he organized the Legislative Action Network, an organization of social workers to lobby and provide information to legislators.

Paul Abels, professor emeritus of social work at Cal State Long Beach, where Alexander taught in his retirement years, said this week that Alexander was also instrumental in setting up the licensing of social workers throughout the United States.

Before and after he headed the national organization, Alexander was an administrator for various care-giving organizations.

He spent 11 years as executive director of the Los Angeles County Heart Association after working with Dr. Sydney Sobin to help heart patients return to jobs. During his tenure with the association, Alexander built it into a massive fund-raising and educational operation involving 65,000 volunteers.

Earlier in his career, Alexander served as executive director of the Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene, organizing 11 chapters and working for an improved state mental health system.

And in retirement, he organized the Health Care Coalition of Orange County to obtain better health care for the elderly, poor and minorities.

Alexander was an active Democrat, even during his long years of residence in conservative Orange County. He served as a delegate to national presidential nominating conventions, was on the Orange County Democratic Central Committee and worked in the Democratic Club of West Orange County. He actively campaigned for his wife in her unsuccessful 1996 bid to unseat Rep. Dana Rohrabacher.

In addition to his wife of nearly 40 years, Sally, he is survived by their four daughters, eight grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. His son, Gregory, died in 1997.

This story also ran in the *OC Register*, *Boston Globe* and *Santa Cruz Sentinel*.

TOP HEADLINES



“FOR CHAIRWOMAN OF BREAKAWAY LABOR COALITION, DEEP ROOTS IN THE MOVEMENT”

The New York Times (October 7, 2005)
By Steven Greenhouse

Social worker **Anna Burger** has been recently elected chairwoman of a breakaway labor alliance, the Change to Win Federation, representing 5.4 million workers across the country. She saw an opportunity in working for a union to make a difference for working people, like her nurse mother and Teamster father. She worries about labor unions for the next generation and sees her role to revolutionize the labor movement for younger workers. Burger also says: “We are at a critical moment in our history for working families.”



“OVERSEAS ADOPTIONS HAVE A SOMBER SIDE”

USA Today (September 16, 2005)
By Steve Friess

Adoption can be a large adjustment for both the parents and the child. International adoption provides an even greater challenge because of the transition of the child to a new country, new customs and a new family. Case Western Reserve social work professor, **Dr. Victor Groza**, notes that adoption agencies can be so eager to place children that they forget to warn parents about the potential problems. Groza founded an experimental program in which MSW students visit newly adoptive families weekly to help with post-adoption concerns.



“SOCIAL WORKERS CRITICAL TO CARE FOR BABY BOOMERS”

Managed Healthcare Executive (September 1, 2005)

NASW Executive Director **Dr. Elizabeth Clark** wrote an article that highlighted the essential role of social workers with the aging baby boom population. She encouraged organizations, such as medical facilities and social service agencies, to prepare now for the increase in patients in the coming years. The role of social work in these organizations is imperative and deeply rooted in the values of medical social work – social justice, respect for patients and families, and commitment to quality care.



“THE CAPTAIN”

CBS News – 60 Minutes
(September 27, 2005)
Interviewed by Ed Bradley

Derek Jeter is a star on the baseball field. The NY Yankee short stop also developed the Turn 2 Foundation to create programs that turn children away from drugs and alcohol and “Turn 2” healthy lifestyles. Through his efforts, Jeter is also a hero to the beneficiaries of his Turn 2 Foundation. His father, social worker and NASW member **Dr. Charles Jeter**, is a vice president at the foundation. One of the foundation’s programs is run by social worker, **Dr. Evelyn Montanez** who is featured in the first print advertisement for NASW’s National Social Work Public Education Campaign. For more information about the Turn 2 Us Program, go to www.HelpStartsHere.org.

MORE TOP HEADLINES

StatesmanJournal
SALEM, OREGON

"OREGON'S ASSISTED-SUICIDE CASE VITAL TO MANY ADVOCACY GROUPS"

The Oregon Statesman Journal (October 11, 2005)
By Bill Theobald

NASW and other mental health advocacy groups are making their opinions known about the recent Supreme Court case involving Oregon's Death with Dignity Act. NASW notes in a friend of the court brief that "not all terminally ill patients are mentally impaired and it is possible for some terminally ill patients to make a reasoned decision that is not a product of depression or psychiatric illness to hasten death and end their lives with dignity."

Chicago Tribune

"CHAMPIONING SOCIAL WORK"

The Chicago Tribune (September 28, 2005)
By Connie Lauerman

Dr. Fikila Mazibuko, a professor and head of the college of humanities at the University of Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, was profiled the day before she addressed a conference of 600 Illinois social workers organized by the NASW-IL Chapter. Dr. Mazibuka, 53, received a doctorate from the University of Illinois Chicago Jane Addams School of Social Work in 2001. She says that the reason that she entered social work was an accident of time and history in Africa. She comments that social work is "about people, about social justice, engaging and implementing policy. It's about quality of life."

SOCIAL WORKERS MAKING NEWS



"HUMOROUS BAKE SALE PLANNED TO RAISE AWARENESS OF MEDICAID"

Associated Press & WOWK-TV (October 13, 2005)

NASW West Virginia Chapter and other groups opposed the proposed state and federal Medicaid cuts by holding a bake sale that featured treats such as Medicaid crumb cake, upside down priorities cake, unemployment rolls, fib newtons, tax cut taffy and chocolate CHIPless cookies. NASW representative Susan Sobkoviak was interviewed by WOWK-TV, the Charleston CBS affiliate.

"STABENOW: SMILES OUTSIDE, STEEL INSIDE"

The Detroit Free Press (October 4, 2005)
By Ruby Bailey

Social worker Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) is running for re-election to the U.S. Senate in 2006. The paper comments, "Behind the sunshine smile framed by bright red hair, the warm, two-handed handshake and the sensible clothes, it's clear Stabenow believes she is ready." A senator since 2000, Stabenow supports abortion rights and voted against partial birth abortion. She also voted against a bill to ban same-sex marriage.

"TROOP 1500: GIRL SCOUTS BEYOND BARS"

KTBC-TV Fox 7 (October 21, 2005)

Enterprising Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, an innovative Girl Scout program led by NASW-TX social worker Dr. Darlene Grant, a professor at University of Texas-Austin brings daughters together with their inmate mothers. The program was the focus of a documentary about their struggle to rebuild broken relationships. The documentary chronicles the lives of several Girl Scouts revealing the conflicted feelings of anger and joy, abandonment and intimacy. It will air nationally in March, 2006.

"STATE'S FOSTER CARE ALUMNI MOSTLY HAPPY"

The Anchorage Daily News (September 6, 2005)
By Lisa Demer

The University of Alaska – Anchorage School of Social Work

reports that while foster children who age out of the foster care system have endured problematic childhoods, they generally consider themselves happy and look forward to jobs, school, marriage and children. Director of the Social Work program at UAA, **Dr. Beth Sirles**, notes that researchers will use the results of this study to guide improvements to the foster care system.

“EX-SOCIAL WORKER DEJESUS-CASTRO TAKES ON INCUMBENT JOLLY IN 14TH WARD”

New Haven Register (September 9, 2005)
By Maria Garriga

Social worker **Evelyn DeJesus-Castro** is running for election in Fair Haven’s 14th Ward. DeJesus-Castro will use her experience working with elderly populations to highlight the services that they need. She will also focus her attention on providing youth development services in the area. A Brooklyn, NY native, she notes that she can relate to crime and poverty problems from her own experience.

“SOCIAL WORK PROVES TO BE A FAMILY PROFESSION FOR DIRECTOR”

Marshfield News Herald (September 16, 2005)
By Jake Rigdon

Wisconsin social worker **Larry Hagar**, director of the Marathon County Department of Social Services, will be

retiring at the end of the year, ending his 37-year career as a social worker. Larry’s wife, Hope, holds a doctorate in social work. Social work appealed to the Hagers because it gave them a chance to make a difference in a child’s life.

“EACH STUDENT COUNTS”

The Indianapolis Star (September 16, 2005)
By Kim Hooper

Social worker **Andrew Cook**’s most recent role is to keep track of children in the Indiana public schools. With phone calls, home visits and word of mouth, Cook and another social worker have pared the number of unaccounted for students to 10 from 100 at the start of the school year.

“BACKGROUND AS FOSTER CHILD GUIDES WORK”

South Florida Sun Sentinel (September 16, 2005)
By Kelly Landy

Andria Cunningham has beaten the odds of the average foster child. She holds a Master of Social Work degree from Barry University in Miami and is an independent living coordinator for the nonprofit organization Kids@Home. She helps foster teens become self-sufficient as they turn 18 and age out of the foster care system. Her supervisor says that Andria clearly has insight that can guide youth in ways that other employees cannot.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Miami Herald, Seattle Post Intelligencer, Centre Daily Times (PA) (September 5, 2005)

In honor of the celebration of Labor Day, social worker **Jess McDonald** and **Mary Bissel**, a child welfare advocate, submitted the article “Dedicated, overworked, underfunded” to highlight needed improvement of the nation’s child welfare social workers. They wrote: “Sensational cases of child abuse and neglect have kept the spotlight on the failures of the state child-welfare agencies and the thousands of workers responsible for protecting children...If the American public is truly serious about preventing abuse and neglect and helping children lead better lives, child-welfare caseworkers and administrators must be given the financial and moral support they need to succeed.”

The Idaho Statesman (September 20, 2005)

Charles S. Pohl, a NASW member, responded to a commentary regarding the 1960’s as the “good old days.” He commented that the ‘60s were a time of great political and social upheaval in the country and in the world. He encouraged the author of the commentary to look beyond the stereotype of the time and realize the many positive changes made in the world since that time. He wrote: “A moral compass in your own bathtub is little credit when the sea of humanity is being thoroughly ignored.”

Valley Morning Star (October 27, 2005)

Candace Guillen, chairwoman of the Rio Grande Valley Branch of NASW-TX, commended the Morning Star’s coverage of the Legislature’s revamping of the mental health care system and highlighted the essential role of social work in all aspects of mental health. Additionally, she notes that social workers are in a unique position to monitor and assess the impact of legislation and funding for critical health care programs. She writes: “We are dedicated to the health and well-being of people and communities on the front lines and in the background of policy making.”

HURRICANE KATRINA

August 29 is a day that will go down in history as the worst natural disaster in American history. Hurricane Katrina not only caused billions of dollars in damage to the Gulf Region, it exposed the reality of many urban and rural areas – extreme poverty, marginalized ethnic groups and inadequate social services for the most vulnerable, including people who are elderly, disabled and living in poverty.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, social workers from across the country offered assistance to those affected by the devastation.

There have been countless stories of social workers assisting those in need. NASW would like to highlight some of the best of the Hurricane Katrina coverage. For more stories, please visit the Hurricane Katrina information page on the NASW Web Site www.socialworkers.org.

“THIS IS INDEFINITE”

Dallas Morning News (September 7, 2005)

Social worker **Debra Morton** evacuated her New Orleans home fully expecting to return in a few days. But Hurricane Katrina had other plans for her family and other displaced victims. Morton and her family are now in Dallas, seeking some sense of stability and searching for homes and jobs. Morton describes this situation as disconcerting and humbling since, as a social worker, she is usually the one giving help to others.

“STILL STANDING”

Good Morning America
(September 8, 2005)



ABC Correspondent Robin Roberts, her mom and her sister, social worker **Dorothy Roberts McEwen**, returned to their childhood home to examine the devastation by Hurricane Katrina. Robin and Dorothy examine the home for any remnants of their life - including a green desk used for homework and a flowering plant still growing in the garden. Dorothy said that it's a miracle and an inspiration that some flowers are still in bloom.

“HELPING CHILDREN TRAUMATIZED BY KATRINA”



National Public Radio (September 9, 2005)
By Allison Aubrey

Social worker **Michelle Maney** talks about a social worker's role in providing mental health screening techniques to the teachers in the Louisiana Department of Education. She comments that the teachers are the eyes and ears of the school system and that they need to be trained to not only look at the child acting out, but to pay particular attention to the quiet child, or the child whose behavior has changed since the disaster. This training for teachers will be provided in person and via video conferencing.

“STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH STRESSES, NEAR AND FAR”

The Delaware Coast Press (September 15, 2005)

Social worker **Sturges Dodge** provides practical information for individuals who feel overwhelmed by the increased threat of terrorism, the war in Iraq, and the most recent tragedy in the Gulf Region. Dodge advises to adopt practices to deal with the effects of stress well before the crisis occurs, so that we are better able to respond. She also advises that if an individual is feeling overwhelmed by the Hurricane Katrina coverage to limit the exposure to the news media reports.

“HOME IS CALLING TO STORM'S SURVIVORS”

Tallahassee Democrat (September 19, 2005)
By Kathleen Laufenberg

Florida State University social work professor **Dr. Charles Figley** describes the need of some displaced residents to return to their homes. He notes that their heritage and history is in their homes. “Home is where their connection is; home is where their memories are,” says Figley.

“CULTURE GAPS COULD INHIBIT COUNSELING OF KATRINA VICTIMS”



USA Today (September 20, 2005)
By Sharon Jayson

As the American Red Cross struggles to get mental health professionals into the areas who need it, there is an increasing concern about the culture gaps that may prohibit people from getting the mental health assistance that they need. Social worker **Lisa Taylor** notes that most mental health professionals are aware of the cultural concerns and work to build trusting relationships with their clients.

“STRESS, ANXIETY, VARIETY OF EMOTIONS NORMAL AFTER A DISASTER, EXPERTS SAY”

San Diego Union Tribune (September 23, 2005)

By Elena Gerona

Social worker **Ann Tanner** has witnessed a common response to an uncommon event. Stress, anxiety, emotions and lack of sleep are taking a serious toll on the mental health of evacuees of Hurricane Katrina. Tanner notes that 85 percent of the people she’s talked to had been in a life-threatening situation. She also said that healing can be facilitated by returning to normal activities, such as getting a job, getting children into schools and volunteering to help others.

“SOCIAL WORKER TAKES SKILLS TO LOUISIANA”

The Ann Arbor News (September 26, 2005)

By John Mulcahy

Susan Sefansky got the call from the Red Cross and she was ready to go. Arriving in Baton Rouge after Labor Day, the social worker was assigned to a shelter with people from New Orleans, many of whom had lost everything. As a mental health worker, Sefansky’s job was to help them deal with stress and any other mental health problems they might be having. She also helped other relief workers with their stress.

“FOR THIS RELIEF AGENCY WORKER, EVERY DAY IS A DISASTER”



The Wall Street Journal (September 27, 2005)

By Michael Phillips

International social worker **Diane Johnson** no sooner left the devastation from the tsunami, when she was thrust into her hometown in a similar state of crisis. Johnson works for Mercy Corps in international disaster relief, but never thought that she would be using her relief and recovery expertise in America. She notes that these situations bring out the best and worst in people, but mostly people’s eagerness to assist others in need shines through.

“STORMS’ COLLATERAL DAMAGE”

USA Today (September 28, 2005)

By Marilyn Elias



Social workers are at the forefront of treating people with mental health issues related to the recent disasters. *USA Today* uses three social workers as experts in their story about the stress and anxiety disorders that can exist after a disaster. Social worker **Anita Laffey** is a mental health supervisor for the American Red Cross in San Antonio.

She has been working with evacuees from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita for several weeks. **Chris Rule**, a social worker in Hot Springs, Ark., is working with people in shelters who are still confused about the next steps in the rebuilding of their lives. Social worker **Dr. Nancy Smyth** notes the painful flashbacks that people are experiencing from Katrina. She says that old terrors resurface because disasters can trigger symptoms from earlier traumas.

“UNCERTAINTY’S SECOND WAVE”

The Washington Post (October 13, 2005)

By Theola Labbe

While the DC Armory is empty from the almost 700 evacuees who once lived there, there is still much uncertainty about where they will live on a more permanent basis. Social workers are assisting hurricane evacuees in finding services, such as affordable housing, food stamps and Medicaid. Social worker **Malve Abuhatab** is one of the social workers connecting evacuees with resources in the DC area.

“KATRINA STORIES, TOLD AND RETOLD, ADD TO KIDS’ STRESS”

The Washington Post (October 23, 2005)

By Kevin Merida

The tragedy of Hurricane Katrina for most children was tragedy enough. But as children continually hear the traumatic stories told again and again, it only adds to their stress and anxiety about their future. NASW-TX President, **Libby Kay**, says that a mental health professional’s greatest concern is the retraumatization of children who have heard terrible storm-related stories multiple times.



“INSIDE THE LIVES OF AMERICA’S POOR”

The Oprah Winfrey Show

October 12, 2005

CNN Anchor Anderson Cooper joined Oprah Winfrey in discussing the reality of poverty in America following to Hurricane Katrina. Cooper noted throughout the show the dedication of social workers he had witnessed while covering the tragedy. Cooper said that social workers provide opportunities for those who are looking to rebuild their lives. He addressed the implications of mental health and poverty by saying that social workers told him that it’s not completely about connecting people with services, but treating the root cause of why people are on the streets. Finally, when Oprah asked Cooper about what he thought the answers for this cycle in our country, he responded “God bless the social workers who are out there, not getting paid any money to do what they’re doing. Because it really is only – it’s individuals helping individuals.”

PRESS RELEASES

NASW PRESS RELEASES (SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER)

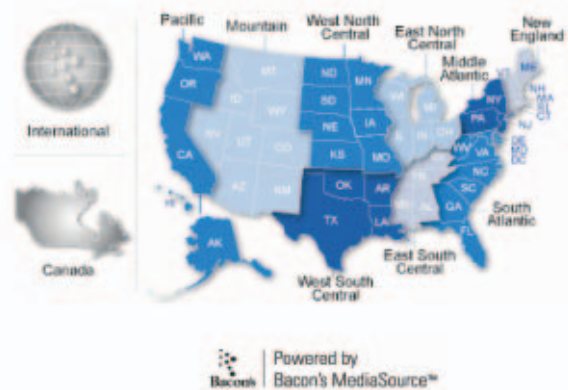
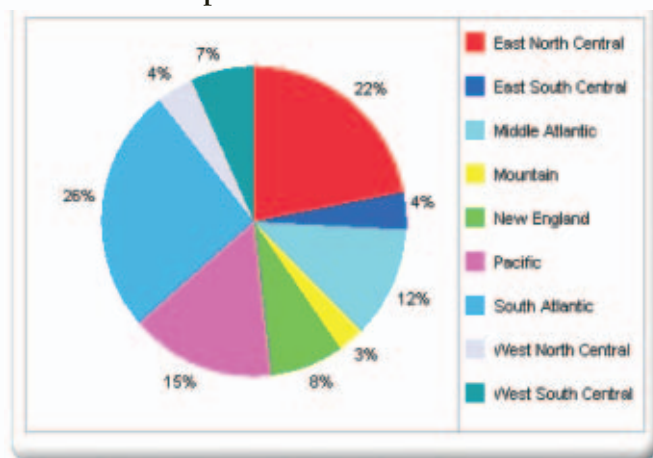
- Social Workers Support National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Recovery Month (September 1, 2005)
- Social Workers Mobilize in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina (September 7, 2005)
- Social Work Professionals Greatly Affected by Hurricane Katrina (September 15, 2005)
- The National Association of Social Workers Foundation Honors Phyllis Solomon, PhD with the 2005 Knee/Wittman Lifetime Achievement Award (September 16, 2005)
- The National Association of Social Workers Foundation Honors Janet Williams, MS, DSW, with the 2005 Knee/Wittman Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award (September 16, 2005)
- Strong Social Safety Net Essential to Katrina Recovery Effort (September 23, 2005)
- Social Workers Oppose Harmful Budget Cuts (October 14, 2005)

Individual Story Pitches/Press Requests

- **Nancy McFall Jean**, NASW Senior Policy Associate for Children and Families, spoke with a reporter from **People Magazine** who was working on a story about special needs adoptions.
- Social workers **Faye McAneny**, **Stan Hyman** and **Jim Hardeman** spoke with a writer for **Monster.com** for an article she was writing on Employee Assistance Programs and the role of social work.
- In the *Boise State Arbitor*, NASW Foundation Consuelo Gosnell Memorial Scholarship winner, **Josephine Halfhide**, was profiled about her scholarship award.
- **Jim Finley**, NASW Senior Government Relations Associate, was interviewed on KPSI-AM in San Diego about potentially harmful cuts to the social services safety net. Services such as Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Food Stamps are among the services on the proposed cut list.
- **Lisa Yagoda**, ACSW, NASW Senior Policy Associate for Aging, was interviewed by a reporter from *Caring Today* about approaching aging parents about entering an assisted living or retirement community.

COVERAGE STATISTICS

September/October 2005



For more information, contact NASW Communications at media@naswdc.org or (202) 336-8228.