



Faculty Members, L. to R. seated Lillian Lampkin, Ruth Brenner, Louise Hamilton, Reva Holtzman; standing, Phyllis Caroff, Diana Tendler, Florence Schwartz, Paul Schreiber—Chairman, Dorothy Becker, Greta Stanton

The Hunter College School of Social Work

Paul Schreiber

The Hunter College School of Social Work was established in the Fall of 1956 under a grant from the late Louis M. Rabinowitz. It was the first professional school of social work in any of the City Colleges, and the first in the entire State under public auspices. It was also the first — and only — division of Hunter College which had, and has, no organic relationship to an undergraduate Department. Thus, from its beginning, the school had to face a number of unique problems and to develop its own program and procedures. That it was able to do so is due in large measure to the fact that the tradition and standards of Hunter College offered an accepting and strong environment in which the school could gradually feel at home and grow, from which it could benefit and to which, in return, it could contribute.

The program began in September 1956 with a first class of twenty-five students and three full-time faculty members. Since then, each year has shown steady growth and development. Our plans for 1965 anticipate a student body of over ninety full-time matriculated and sixty to seventy part-time students, five full-time faculty mem-

bers of professorial rank, three full-time and a number of part-time lecturers, most of whom have been associated with the school for a number of years.

In the Spring of 1958 the program was accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, prior to the graduation of the first class. Since then, over one hundred and twenty-five Masters Degrees of Social Work have been awarded after completion of the two-year course of study. Graduates of the school are to be found in almost all areas of social work, and are beginning to spread out from New York into other parts of the country and of the world. Two of our alumnae have worked in Israel, one is going to Lebanon, while a former student has returned to Iraq. Several are working in California.

A school of social work introduces a certain degree of difference into the liberal arts college and the traditional graduate school or division. First and foremost, it is a professional school whose purpose is to educate *for use in practice*. This objective determines the nature of the curriculum, it influences the criteria for selection of applicants for admission, and it requires an active pro-

gram of community relationships as an integral part of its program.

Practical experience is an important component of the curriculum. Three days per week are spent in Field Instruction in various community agencies, and two days in class on Park Avenue. Since Field Instruction is considered part of the students' academic experience for which credit is granted, it is structured quite differently from apprenticeship or In-Service Training. In contrast to these two types of training which aim to prepare for a specific job in a particular setting, Field Instruction sees the student as the learner in a profession, where the focus is on the development of independent judgment as the basis for action. It is therefore of crucial importance that this learning experience be continuously and consciously related to the theoretical and methodological content of the classroom. Agencies and supervisors selected for participation must meet standards set by the school; the latter participate in joint meetings, and committees designed to bring class and field closer together, and the school's faculty maintains close liaison between these two elements. Regular agency visits, conferences with Field Instructors, students, and with classroom instructors, help to maintain integration of the total learning experience.

The field or practice phase of the program is carried on in over thirty social agencies in the metropolitan area. Included are family and children's agencies, general and

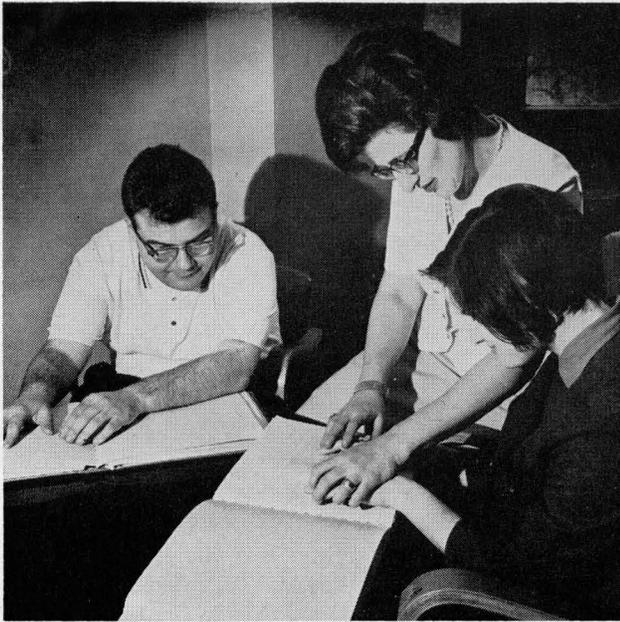
mental hospitals, institutions, settlement houses and community centers, private and public. In the majority of their settings our students learn under the guidance of a Field Supervisor provided by the agency.

In addition, we have five student units, in which a full-time Field Instructor works with groups of five or six students. Two of these units, in the Department of Welfare and in the Community Service Society, are maintained by the agencies themselves, while the other three, at Kings County Hospital, Metropolitan Hospital and Family Court, are maintained by the school under grants received from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. A grant for a sixth unit has been received from the Children's Bureau. It will be located in the newly established Bronx office of the Bureau of Child Welfare.

Selection of candidates for admission has been given the most careful attention from the very beginning of the school's establishment. Applicants must meet the general admission requirements of the Graduate Division of the Arts and Sciences of an undergraduate index of at least 2.5. However, since our objective is preparation for professional practice of social work, other qualities in addition to academic ability are of importance. The school, therefore, has invested a great deal of effort in the selection process which consists of a review of credentials, references, and a personal statement, and of an

Lewis Chartock, first year group work student, teaches new skills to group at the Educational Alliance





Miriam Tepfer, first year group work student, helping the handicapped at the Jewish Guild for the Blind

extensive interview. This is a time-consuming and costly procedure. But it is essential, if we want to maintain a program of high standards. We are currently engaged in assessing three hundred applications in order to fill the fifty places which we have available for the 1964-65 entering class.

The nature of our program with its heavy component of field work and its orientation towards practice requires the maintenance of close working relationships with the community. The school has an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the social welfare agencies, of citizens active in social welfare, and of members of the College and University administration. Even prior to the opening of the school, this committee assisted the College in planning and in the selection of the director. Its current chairman is Mrs. Richard J. Bernhard whose leadership has been of great help in the development of the school.

The faculty of the school is likewise active in many areas of professional and community work. Professor Louise Hamilton teaches seminars at the Columbia University School of Social Work during the summer and has led institutes in New Jersey, Florida, and Connecticut for various statewide and national organizations. Professor Irving Weisman is currently spending a year on sabbatical leave as U.N. Social Welfare Adviser to the government of Ceylon. Professor Reva Holtzman, the Coordinator of Field Work, is completing a major study on Field Instruction at Columbia's School of Social Work. Mrs. Florence Schwartz and Miss Diana Tandler are currently completing their dissertations. The writer is co-editor of the *Handbook of Counseling Techniques*

which has just been published. He and Professor Weisman have contributed articles to the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* which will be published in 1965.

Building a new school from the ground has been an exciting, challenging experience. Starting a professional program at Hunter College with its strong tradition in the liberal arts has presented many difficulties for school and College alike. That they have been in general successfully overcome is due to the understanding and the support of the College. This support was originally offered by President Shuster and Dean Rees, has been continued by President Meng and Dean Gambrell, and has always been maintained by Professor Ruth Weintraub, who as Director of the Graduate Division has been most directly involved in the school's operation. The school is now established in the organization and the curriculum, and has become a member of the College family. Lack of space and of adequate clerical assistance have been continuing problems, but improvement of the space situation seems at last to be in sight.

The availability of financial aid to students is of crucial importance in attracting a well qualified group of applicants because the full-time nature of social work education prevents students from working while attending school. A grant from the Wollman Fund helped us in the early years, but it is now exhausted. Two \$5000 gifts from the Moses and Gottesman Funds are currently used for tuition assistance. The school was also the recipient of a gift from the Charlotte Slater Memorial Fund which was used to establish a student loan fund. A gift of \$50,000 has just been announced by the Lehman Fund to establish a Herbert H. Lehman Fund in memory of the late Senator. Without tuition assistance, many well qualified candidates could not afford to attend the school at this time when manpower needs in the field far exceed the number of available graduates.

The school is also the recipient of approximately \$125,000 annually in Federal grants. In addition to the student units, mentioned earlier, these funds provide for over twenty traineeships, and for an In-service training program at the Interdepartmental Neighborhood Service Center in Harlem, under a grant from the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. A substantial number of fellowships from local and national agencies are also made available to our students.

As the school moves towards its tenth anniversary in 1966, it will face new challenges and enjoy new opportunities. What should be the special role of a publicly sponsored School of Social Work in a community in which there are five similar schools? What is its function within the City University? How can it play its part in the further development of social services in this metropolis? No easy answer can be found to these questions. But the very fact that we can raise them is indicative of the growth of the school.