

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF HARRY SPECHT

Harry Specht, Dean of the School of Social Welfare at U. C. Berkeley, died at age 65 after a battle with cancer. Specht's intellectual contribution to the field of social work was extraordinary. His publications include over a dozen books and fifty articles. He won numerous honors and awards in recognition of his scholarly work and international leadership in the field: a Fulbright Fellowship, the National Association of Social Workers Presidential Award for Outstanding Leadership in Social Work Education, and the Berkeley Citation — the most prestigious accolade awarded by the University of California at Berkeley.

Specht was the single individual with the greatest influence on social welfare education over the last decade.

Neil Gilbert
Professor and Acting Dean

Milton and Gertrude Chernin
Professor of Social Welfare and
Social Services University of
California, Berkeley



Harry Specht died Sunday, March 12, 1995. He was Dean of the School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley. His brief autobiographical sketch "How I Didn't Become a Psychotherapist" was published in the first issue of REFLECTIONS. It was his last article.

With the first draft of his article, came a note "tell me what you think." We did, apprehensively we requested some substantive revisions. He was pleased, rewrote, and sent us a note saying how much he liked our questions. We were relieved and commented among ourselves about his humility. It took three drafts before he was able to clearly express the struggles he had within himself. "The issue of Psychotherapy was different," he wrote, "it was something I had to struggle with personally and intellectually..." That struggle never ended, in his final draft he wrote, "Only gradually was I able to shift from a focus on the intrapersonal and grasp the importance of the interpersonal aspects of practice." In the prior draft he had interchanged interpersonal and intrapersonal. He laughed when we pointed out the switch. Perhaps it was a recognition that he valued both.

Harry's most recent book *Unfaithful Angels: How Social Work Abandoned its Mission*, came out in 1994, and argued his ongoing theme that psychotherapy was not a proper mode

of intervention for Social Work.

We were fortunate to share the podium with Harry in Orange County, CA, last year when he was invited to discuss his book and his ideas. He was as always, respectful of those who saw social work differently, but as always unshaken in his belief that this profession had a much broader vision of social change and social justice.

Our experience with Harry as a contributor to the journal exemplified his humanity. He did not share the arrogance of some scholars. Yet the number of citations associated with his scholarship are notable. He behaved, perhaps like the leading scholars in Physics, who care deeply and passionately about their work and write about it with joy and purpose. He believed that social work education and practice could get it right if they followed the homely virtues his mother taught him. "Be true to yourself; Stand up for what you think is right; care about people in need." He wrote us following our first issue. Harry was pleased to have been published in REFLECTIONS. The honor was ours.

The Editors

Copyright of Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping is the property of Cleveland State University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.