

**Mourning Maeda Galinsky**

Maeda Galinsky, Ph.D., a long-time social work scholar, researcher, teacher and mentor, died on Sept. 9, 2019. She was 84.

Known as the “Grand Dame of Social Work,” Galinsky retired from the UNC School of Social Work in 2015 following 50 years of service. A pioneer scholar for her work with groups and with intervention research, Galinsky was the longest-serving member of the School’s faculty.

“Dr. Maeda Galinsky has meant so much to our School of Social Work, this University, and to the profession of social work,” said Dean Gary Bowen. “A distinguished scholar, Maeda was a wonderful mentor, colleague and friend to so many. Her presence is going to be greatly missed.

“Her legacy of dedication, humor and caring for others will live on in our minds and hearts,” he added.

Galinsky began her social work career in the 1950s, though her passion for helping others developed much earlier, she explained in an interview several years ago. “I’ve had a rebellious streak since I was little,” said Galinsky, who grew up in College Point, N.Y. “I would always talk to the person in trouble — someone whom you weren’t supposed to talk to.”

Her professional path began to take shape as an undergraduate student majoring in social relations at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Mass. While there, she served as a volunteer and then director of a program that enabled student volunteers to work with people with mental illnesses in a psychiatric hospital. That experience further fueled Galinsky’s interest in the field of social work. She went on to receive an MSW and Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, where she also taught for a year.

She arrived in Chapel Hill in 1965, when her husband David was offered a position with UNC’s psychology department. Soon after, Galinsky was hired as an assistant professor at UNC School of Social Work. She couldn’t imagine spending her life doing anything else, she told those gathered for her retirement party in June 2015.

“I am grateful that I found social work as a career,” she said. “It has given me a deep satisfaction and a richness in my life. It has provided a feeling of connectedness to many people and to many issues that are important in the lives of all of us. It has sustained me not only because of what I have gotten to do but also because of the people with whom I have been involved — clients, students, mentors, colleagues.”

Galinsky’s influence on the field, especially on social work theory and practice with groups, continues to be felt today. Although she was trained as a researcher and practitioner, when she first arrived at UNC, Galinsky found a School that was much more focused on teaching the functional model of social work, including building relationships, casework and working within agency requirements. At that time, research in the School was practically nonexistent; there was no structure in place to develop it or funding to support it.

But Galinsky and colleague Janice Schopler were undeterred and quickly began to pursue various pilot studies, most of which they funded out of their own pockets. Over the following decades, their work and publishing flourished, as did Galinsky’s reputation for being a critical thinker who embraced every opportunity to debate issues and ideas.

“She was both the heart and the head of so many of our research projects,” praised long-time Tate Distinguished Professor Mark Fraser, who co-authored and co-edited numerous journal articles, journals, book chapters, books and presentations with Galinsky.

A staunch advocate for students, Galinsky was often their biggest cheerleader; she loved to attend and participate in student-led events. Many of her faculty colleagues, some of whom were also her former students, said Galinsky’s enthusiasm for the classroom influence their own teaching today.

“The thing that I really took away [from her] and strive with my own students is to really know them as people, and then I tailor the academic work to what those students really care about,” noted Marilyn Ghezzi, a clinical assistant professor and one of Galinsky’s former students.

Upon her retirement, Galinsky reflected on her time in the social work profession and her work within the School – both of which, she admitted, were difficult to leave behind.

“This place has allowed me to be a thinker and a doer, a teacher and a learner, a loner and a groupie,” Galinsky said. “The School has provided me with resources and encouragement and support and love.”

*Details of any services for Maeda Galinsky will be shared when details are available.*