

Betty Havens (1936-2005)

Betty Havens passed away on March 1, 2005 after two years of living with and battling cancer. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, she received her B.A. from Milwaukee-Downer College in 1958, majoring in sociology and psychology. Over the next dozen years she worked in a variety of professional jobs in Milwaukee -- as a social worker, a coordinator of programs for the aged in a housing project, a psychometric technician and later an Assistant Dean dealing with instructional resources in achievement testing and programmed learning, a sociology instructor at Milwaukee Junior College and Adult High School, as a consultant on a research project on older workers -- while simultaneously taking advanced training in psychometry, population studies and observation of mental diseases through continuing education programs and receiving her M.A. in sociology at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee in June 1965.

Betty then entered the PhD program in sociology and social welfare at Wisconsin in Madison in the fall of 1965, emphasizing work in medical and rural sociology. In the fall of 1966 she was awarded a U.S. National Institutes of Health pre-doctoral training fellowship and joined the first cohort of the new Training Program of the Midwest Council for Social Research in Aging (MCSRA) where she received her first intensive education in the field of gerontology. Betty left Wisconsin without

completing her PhD at the end of her NIH traineeship in 1970 and moved to Winnipeg in Canada where she spent two years as a independent research consultant before becoming the Director of Research for the Province of Manitoba's Health Department, a post she held for the next decade.

Betty was no stranger to Winnipeg, An avid outdoors person with a love for nature and rural areas, she had spent her summers from 1953 through 1970 as a Camp Counselor dealing with senior programs and waterfront activities at the camp of the Winnipeg Area Girl Guides of Canada. In 1971 she initiated the Aging in Manitoba Longitudinal Studies (AIM) which continues to this day. One of the world's largest and most comprehensive population studies, it is the only one that combines complete utilization data with extensive interview data. Building on this work and the organization of some of the most progressive health services for seniors (including home care and Support Services for Seniors programs) based on the results of the continuing studies and the efforts of Betty and her colleagues, she created a unique position in the Manitoba government, becoming the first, and Canada's only provincial Gerontologist, serving in this capacity from 1982 to 1994. She was responsible for the establishment in 1982 of Canada's first university-based research Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

At a time when many U.S. sociologists have been concerned with the role of "public sociology" and "sociological practice," Betty Havens was

fulfilling these functions since the early 1970's in her adopted Canada where she found a more positive social and political climate and where challenging work as a sociologist in the field of aging was available. She became a national and then international leader in the development of social gerontology and health services policy, influencing several generations of researchers in the field and, in Canada, spearheading the growth of social research and the field of aging. She helped create the Canadian Association of Gerontology, serving in many capacities over the years and as its President from 1981-1983. She served as a major advisor and consultant to numerous national research bodies and organizations, including Statistics Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

As an expert in population studies and health services delivery systems, she represented Canada at numerous United Nations world and regional conferences, chairing a World Health Organization expert panel on health care and the elderly, speaking at a Pan American Health Organization panel on health care for the elderly in Latin America, lecturing at the U.N. affiliated International Institute on Aging in Malta, and testifying before the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging on continuing care models among other legislative bodies.

At the same time she was an active participant in the Congresses of the International Association of Gerontology, serving as one of the

organizers of the North American programs for some of the congresses as well as presenting reports on her own research work. She received numerous awards and honors for her contributions to Canadian official and non-governmental organizations in the field of research, statistics and health care and services for the aged. These include an honorary doctorate in 1994 from the University of Waterloo in Ontario, the Commemorative Golden Jubilee Medal of Queen Elizabeth II awarded by the Canadian Association of Gerontology in 2002, the Health Services Research Advancement Award from the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation in 2003, and in February 2005, the highest honor that Canada can bestow on one of its Citizens: Member of The Order of Canada.

Betty Havens career was largely outside of the formal academic world, although she held minor appointments at the University of Manitoba during her years in Provincial office, especially in continuing education. From 1993 on she was on the faculty of the Department of Community Health Services as a Professor and also as a Senior Scholar after 1996.

Although she never held formal appointment as a sociologist in an academic department, Betty Havens never forgot her roots in sociology. She was a life-long member of the American Sociological Association and was the first signer of the petition to create a Section of Aging in ASA in 1976, attended many of the national meetings and served on the Section Council for a two year term. She also was one of the initial founders of the Research Committee on Aging of the International Sociological

Association in 1974 and served as the first Secretary-Treasurer and Newsletter editor, First Vice-President and was the third President of the ISA RC on Aging from 1982-1986, organizing the New Delhi Congress Program. Betty also was a life-long member of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Section of the Gerontological Society of America, serving as a Council member representing sociology and attended most of its Annual meetings.

But above all, Betty was a life-long member and ardent supporter of the MSS from her student days in Milwaukee in the 1960's. She served the MSS as a member of almost every important committee, especially in earlier years, when the MSS was establishing its financial stability, on the Endowment Funding Committee. And year after year, Betty quietly, along with Helena Lopata sat at the door of the old annual Jazz Night Dances, collecting the entrance fees which went to support the MSS's Minority Fellowship Fund. For her many years of devoted service in so many capacities, Betty was among the first three MSS members to receive the MSS Board's Distinguished Service Award in 1994 and in 2005 received the President's Special Award. Betty never missed a MSS meeting until her illness and at the same time she was a continuing presence and role model in the meetings and programs of the MCSRA, serving two terms as President and many others as a member of MCSRA's Council, She attended as many of MCSRA's student and faculty seminars as her schedule would allow but always participated in the MCSRA sessions at the Annual MSS meetings,

organizing many of those devoted to issues of health care and delivery of services to the aged where she presented her own research reports.

Last year we learned that Betty had left a bequest to MCSRA in her will, and as MCSRA had had its separate membership funds deposited with the MSS since the time when Jack Sigler, MCSRA's long-time coordinator of the training program was the MSS's Treasurer, the notice came to the MSS. The continuing Treasurer of MCSRA, Neil Bull of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, along with myself as a former President and Co-Director of the Program and a few other past members of the MCSRA council agreed that, in keeping with Betty's concerns for promoting research in aging, the most fitting use we could make of her bequest was to combine the funds along with the continuing MCSRA treasury funds into an endowment to support an annual Betty Havens Scholarship Prize for a student paper dealing with any aspect of research in aging and the provision of health or other services for the elderly to enable the awardee to attend the Annual Meetings of the MSS and present the paper. As there was not enough time to set up the procedures and publicize a competition this year -- and wanting to have a gathering of MCSRA alumni and others interested in research in aging to participate in creating these procedures and the first competition -- we decided instead to have a special Invited Lecture this year on Betty Haven's work. We were fortunate to be able to have Professor Neena L. Chappell who worked with Betty for more than a decade at the University of Manitoba and herself a

distinguished international researcher in the field of aging and health
and the delivery of services to the elderly agree to present a lecture
on "Betty Havens and the Development of Social Gerontology."

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