

Open Court



VOLUME XII, NUMBER 3

JUNE 1, 2012

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President's Column: Share *YOUR* story

I want to greet all National Organization of Forensic Social Work (NOFSW) members and readers of our newsletter for which I am writing this first column and to thank the members for their support and for entrusting me to lead this organization over the next two years. As we move into our 30th anniversary year, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our past presidents in building and sustaining the organization to its current capacity. Special thanks to our most recent president, Dr. Kathy Carty, for her leadership and most notably, her exceptional work on the development and refinement of the NOFSW Code of Ethics.

As professional social workers, it is inevitable that we encounter diverse individuals, families, and/or communities affected by social/environmental and legal issues. Poverty, homelessness, aging in confinement, parental divorce, exposure to family or community violence, and racial/ethnic overrepresentation are just some of the hardships clients face. Frontline social workers in a variety of settings interact daily with clients who have multiple problems, including legal ones. For example, a social worker may have a client who is a single father facing allegations of child neglect. He knows little about the child welfare policies and laws affecting his family or how to navigate the court system. Thus, it is imperative that social workers supplement their specialized practice expertise, such as clinical social work, with knowledge of the laws and poli-

cies that influence their client populations or practice settings. NOFSW serves as an important resource and social network for ongoing professional development and peer support to achieve these goals.

Forensic social work is an exciting and dynamic field. It is even arguable that social workers across all fields of practice, not just those in juvenile and criminal justice settings, assist clients affected by laws and policies or regarding problems accessing resources. Therefore, social workers and members of interdisciplinary teams (e.g., medical, mental health, and legal professionals) must work more effectively to increase the well-being of marginalized and underserved populations and achieve human rights and social justice for all members of society. Membership and active participation in NOFSW can serve as educational and support network to help prepare social workers and members of other allied disciplines with additional knowledge, values, and skills to effectively navigate the social and legal issues that affect clients.

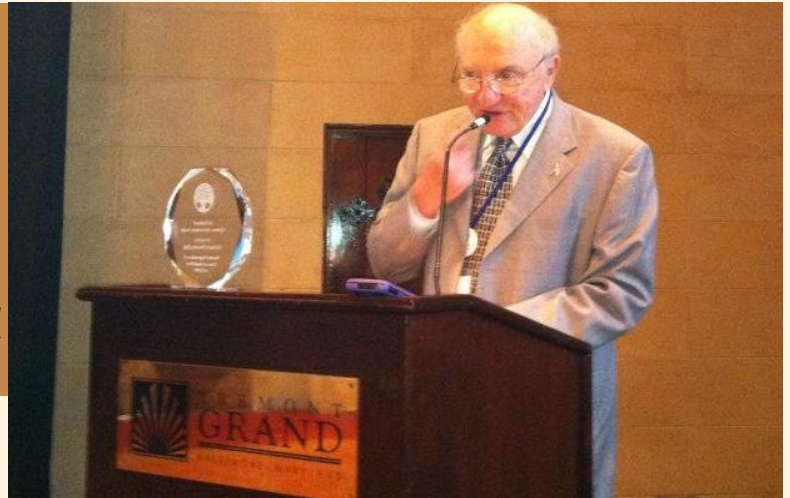
My vision for the organization is to increase the power and muscle of NOFSW as the human rights and social justice arm of the social work profession. As a collective we can begin to tackle major human rights issues in our everyday practice with marginalized populations. Over the next two years, my goal is to work collaboratively with members of the executive council and general membership to build our network so that we can collectively and effectively advocate for NOFSW and we can maximize our

collective presence as a powerful force for social change and policy reform such that no child, adolescent, adult, or older adult anywhere in the world is disregarded. I encourage those interested in what we do - to join us! For those who are members, I encourage you to become more actively engaged with the organization by joining one of our many committees to assist with such activities as conference planning and education and credentialing.



Highlights of our year ahead include a webinar series and 30th year anniversary conference in Seattle, Washington! The first three webinars (dates to be determined) include forensic interviewing with children, disproportionate minority contact, and aging in the criminal justice system. These are free to NOFSW members. Finally, I encourage each of you to share what you're doing - write an article, practice brief, or commentary for *Open Court*; submit a proposal for a paper or poster presentation at the 30th anniversary conference in 2013; or simply discuss your forensic social work with colleagues either informally or formally. Let's begin talking more and sharing more about the forensic social work that we do!

***Second Annual NOFSW
Sol Gothard Award Winner:
Richard Ducote
Presented by Judge Gothard***



I was first elected Juvenile Court Judge in Jefferson Parish, La., in 1972, some 40 years ago. Two years later, I hired Richard as a probation officer. He asked if he could go to law school at night. I told him that in 1958, I did the same thing when I was hired as a probation officer in the New Orleans Juvenile Court. My judge, Leo Blessing, allowed me flexibility so that I could attend Law School in the evening and also maintain a full time job. I did the same for Richard, and he worked Saturdays, holidays and other unusual times (as I also had done) to fulfill his obligations to the Court.

And he more than fulfilled the required obligations and duties...much more!! From the beginning of his tenure with the Juvenile Court, he was a different kind of probation officer. He brought original and innovative ideas regarding what we should be doing to help children, particularly abused and neglected children.

In 1978, while still a probation officer, he obtained a considerable grant and created a specialized program to train attorneys to represent and work in behalf of abuse and neglected children in my court. I forget how much money Richard was awarded, but in the use of these funds, there was no graft or scandal. Now that is pretty damned good for the State of Louisiana at that time; in fact, it was outstanding. (No joke about Louisiana Judges!) The other 2 judges in the Court were skeptical, saying that no lawyer would show up, on his/her own time, without compensation, on a Saturday morning, no less! Yet, as Richard had predicted about 40 lawyers showed up to volunteer. They were all specially-trained and then worked for free to represent these otherwise voiceless children. This project developed the Tulane

University School of Law - Juvenile Law Clinic, which was one of only four in the country to be nationally recognized by the federal government for its innovative court improvements.

Thus began Richard's life-long career of, for the most part, representing victims of child abuse and domestic violence. Richard claims I had an influence on him. I don't know how true this is, but in classic

"...he continues his good work and his fight on behalf of victims of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence...in these matters, he is, in my opinion, the preeminent attorney in the country today."

Jewish thought there is a Midrash, a teaching, that says that a parent is a success when his child surpasses him, and this was certainly the case with Richard. For the sake of full disclosure, there have been persistent rumors, that Richard is the result of an illicit relationship between me and a woman (who happened to be very beautiful and smart) many years ago (before I was married or even met my dear wife, I would add). I hereby state publicly, for the very first time, and to the world...that I will neither confirm nor deny these allegations. That should put this matter to rest from this moment on!!

Richard has written numerous learned and influential articles, published national-

ly, and cited in court decisions, I know this to be true, because I have read these articles and cases and have used them in my teaching. He has won many awards such as the one he is receiving today, from a variety of organizations, such as the Battered Women's Conference, NASW, and many others. He has presented at major conferences and trained members of every profession, lawyers, police, social workers, psychologists, teachers, and especially judges, dealing with a multitude of issues including: child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and related issues such as the reliability of children's memory, the so-called "false memory syndrome" and the even worse, the so-called "parental alienation syndrome." He has testified before many state legislatures, including committees of the U.S. Congress and has successfully written laws that have been enacted in many states. He has been on national television. And he even had an actor portray him in a movie about the nationally known trial and subsequent jail term of Dr. Elizabeth Morgan. Richard had been her attorney. She hid her young daughter from the father who, beyond any doubt in the minds of most of us (but not 2 different judges involved in the case) had sexually abused his daughter in the past. There was also evidence that he had done this to a child from a previous marriage. Dr. Morgan served over 2 years in jail for contempt of court...a longer sentence, than many, if not most, child abusers receive. Now I have never been on national television or testified before Congress or had a movie about me...remember what I said about a child surpassing his parent?

This is not to say that he is universally admired for these accomplishments! Shortly after leaving Court to go into private practice, he drafted a law regarding citizens' review of children in foster care because too many children were, and still are, languishing in foster care, for many years, in what is supposed to be a short-term solution. Richard enlisted me to testify on behalf of the legislation, before the Louisiana Legislature and I and two other judges were opposed by the other approximate 75 other judges in the state who had jurisdiction over juvenile matters.

Not only was he intensely disliked for having the audacity to say that the judges and Courts were not protecting these children, but he succeeded in having me put on the Judges' s---list as well. But you know something? The law passed! And, we both taught for many years at the National College of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. But, a

certain few judges did blackball me from becoming an officer in the organization. That was the only election I ever lost. Thanks a lot, Richard!

Because of Richard, I was in a movie, as was he, shown on public television, called "Breaking the Silence: Children's Stories." It was about children's experiences of abuse. It had a variety of victims, including Joe Torres, former manager of the N. Y. Yankees, the president and CEO of Parade magazine, and other prominent adults. There was an extreme reaction to this movie and it was cancelled after a short time and was not seen in the majority of the country. In fairness, though, it should have been more balanced. Soon afterwards, however, the so-called "Fathers' Rights" groups started targeting me in some of their writings and monitoring my presentations, etc. Again, thanks a lot, Richard!

But they really went after Richard in a variety of vicious ways that I will not talk about here. They caused him a great deal of money, time, and anguish. I cannot emphasize enough the long, lonely battles he fought, as did other professionals who were also targeted. But, with tenacity, very hard work, and perseverance, he won every battle that I am aware of, and these mean-spirited people have almost, but not quite, given up. And, most importantly, he continues his good work and his fight on behalf of victims of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence, as he refuses to be intimidated. In these matters, he is, in my opinion, the preeminent attorney in the country today.

So, this is a very brief and simplified insight into the man whom NOFSW honors today. You have chosen well, and I am grateful to you to present this tribute to my long-time friend and colleague, Richard Ducote.

Lifetime Achievement Award Winner: Richard Ducote

I deeply appreciate your *Sol Gothard Lifetime Achievement Award* given to me on April 17. Judge Gothard's support, confidence, and encouragement throughout my career were indispensable, and I thank him for the 36 years I have known him. NOFSW could not have selected a more iconic figure to embody lifetime achievement than Judge Gothard, who has always led a life of service, humanity, scholarship, leadership, inspiration, and courage. Few judges have so boldly challenged their own ranks to shed the bias, ignorance, complacency, and lethargy which have gravely disserved the abused, battered, and troubled appearing before them for redress daily. Now, long after his "retirement," he continues to energize and shape the practical and intellectual debates confronting all of us in the classrooms and court-

rooms, with the same acuity and wit endearing him to us for decades.

I also thank Dr. Viola Vaughan-Eden for nominating me, and for bringing to the field- locally, nationally, and internationally - a whirlwind of competence, integrity, and professional coalescence.

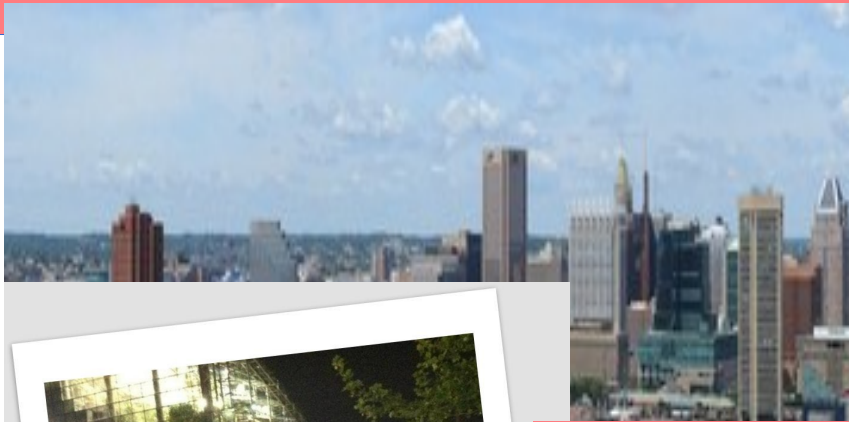
So many are indebted to forensic social workers. Child sexual abuse victims would still be chained by the misguided Freudian psychiatrists, were it not for pioneering insightful social workers

in the early 70's. Special needs adoption would likewise be an alien notion, and effective therapeutic intervention for the traumatized would not exist, were it not for those in your profession.

I thank you again for this honor, and hope to continue to work with you in the years ahead.



NOFSW's 29th Annual Conference: Building Bridges— Interdisciplinary Collaboration

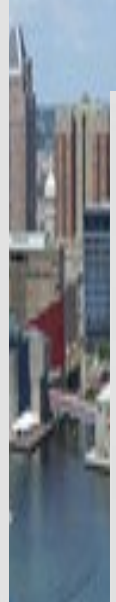


Presentation Topics Included:
Expert Witness Testimony
Response to Abuse of the Elderly
Releasing Incarcerated Veterans
Immigration and Child Welfare
Human Trafficking
Treating the Non-Offending Parent
Identifying Family Violence
Capital Offense Mitigation
Forensic Social Work Research
Therapeutic Jurisprudence
Mentally Ill in Correctional Settings



Presenters Included: Jacqueline Blatt, Rebecca Bowman-Rivas, Rob Butters, Valerie Carson, Sol Gothard, Stacy Hardy, Elizabeth Hart, Jennifer Hill, William Holt, Maureen Kennedy, Myra Kirkland, Karen Keroack, Craig Lea, Ellen Levin, Viola Lindsey, Kathryn Maietta, Patricia McArdle, Susan McCarter, Angele' Morgan, Robert Mulligan, Carlton Munson, Matthew Rosenbaum, Matthew Silvey, Amanda Sisselman, Chris Smith, Alicia White.

Held at the
Tremont Plaza
Hotel in Balti-
more, MD;
April 15-18,
2012



Be sure to stay tuned for more information about NOFSW's
30th annual conference next spring in Seattle!!

Viola Vaughan-Eden honored with NASW VA's Lifetime Achievement Award

On Saturday March 10, 2012, Viola Vaughan-Eden of Williamsburg, Virginia received the 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Social Workers' Virginia Chapter. NASW VA honors those who are steadfast in their pursuit of professional excellence and commitment to the values of social work. This is what the NASW VA had to say:

Dr. Vaughan-Eden was recognized at the National Association of Social Workers Virginia Chapter 2012 Continuing Education Annual Conference in Richmond, Virginia for her great



fortitude and immense effort in the field of social work. Viola Vaughan-Eden is an experienced and skilled social worker with an established history of serving the best interest of children and families. She advances the social work profession through a variety of settings throughout Virginia as well as nationally and internationally. She is an outstanding and experience practitioner, teacher, and advocate.

A graduate of Norfolk State University, she completed her dissertation on parenting sexually abused children earning a PhD in Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

A founding member of the Child Advocacy Center in Norfolk, representative for the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children on a National Children's Advocacy Center White Paper, member of the Collaborative Divorce Solutions of Tidewater practice group, president-elect of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Board and executive councilor for the National Organization of Forensic Social Work. In 2010 she was elected to represent the National Organization of Forensic Social Work in Japan, and in 2011 participated in the First Russian-American Child Welfare forum, a historic event in Russia as part of Obama-Medvedev's Bilateral Presidential Commission's Civil Society Working Group.

Viola Vaughan-Eden is a woman who is sensitive enough to be moved by the problems of society and strong enough to confront them head on. It is the Virginia Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers' great honor to recognize Mrs. Vaughan-Eden for her 27 remarkable years of hard work and dedication to the field of social work.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest and most recognized membership organization of professional social workers in the world. Representing 155,000 members from 56 chapters in the United States and abroad, the association promotes, develops and protects the practice of social work and social workers. Virginia Chapter represents more than 3,200 professional social workers.

Consider National Board Service on NOFSW's Executive Council— visit www.nofsw.org to learn more

Councilor: A Councilor shall render active service on at least one NOFSW committee, act as liaison between the membership of NOFSW and the Executive Council, and in general perform all of the duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the Executive Council or by the President.

Duties of the Executive Council: The Executive Council will act for NOFSW, speak in its name, have title to its property, and perform all acts necessary to achieve the purposes of NOFSW, except when the membership is assembled in general meeting. On those occasions, the general membership shall assume such powers. Councilors shall serve for 3 years with 3 Councilors elected each year.

Eligibility For Executive Council: Members eligible to stand for election to the Executive Council shall hold a degree in social work at the masters or doctoral level, have a minimum of 5 years of continuous, full-time professional experience in forensic social work, have been a full NOFSW member for at least 2 years, confirm a willingness to host a conference, and confirm a willingness to actively serve on at least one committee.

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Next Open Court will be published
September 1, 2012—Get your copy in
by August 1, 2012!

To submit to Open Court, email your articles to
the co-editors by the deadline (one month prior
to publication). All submissions become prop-
erty of NOFSW.

*Forensic social work is the application of
social work to questions and issues
relating to law and legal systems.*

Let us know

If you need to update your contact
information—or would like us to
send a friend the newsletter!

NEXT NOFSW WEBINAR!

*Mark your Calendars Now!
Monday, September 24, 2012
12:30 p.m.—2:15 p.m. (EDT)*

Aging in the Criminal Justice System: Forging An Interdisciplinary Human Rights Practice and Policy Response

Tina Maschi, PhD, LCSW, ACSW

Stay tuned to the website (www.nofsw.org) for more information on how to participate in NOFSW's next webinar!