



# Department of Social Work and Gerontology

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## Prestigious Faculty Award Won by Dr. Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz



L to R: Marijo Rogers Kelly '77; Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz, professor and chair of the Department of Social Work and Gerontology, Director of the Social Work Program; President Carol Ann Mooney, and Kevin J. Kelly.

Dr. Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz, Professor, Chair of the Department of Social Work and Gerontology and Director of the Social Work Program, received the Kevin J. and Marijo Rogers Kelly '77 Faculty Service Award for her exemplified local, regional, and national commitment to social work education. This award was established through the recently completed *Faith Always, Action Now* campaign. The Saint Mary's College Academic Affairs Council, chaired by Saint Mary's College President Carol Ann Mooney and comprised of administrators, faculty, and staff, voted on this award.

Dr. Kominkiewicz has been a faculty member at Saint Mary's College for eighteen years. She has served as the Director of the Social Work Program for seventeen years. She successfully helped lead the Social Work Program to its first national Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation in 1998, and has led the Program to the national reaccreditations

of that Program since then, the last reaccreditation in 2011 with a perfect rating. Dr. Kominkiewicz earned her Ph.D. in Sociology and Master of Science in Administration degree at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, and her Master of Social Work and Bachelor of Social Work degrees at Indiana University School of Social Work, Indianapolis, Indiana. She holds three licenses, all with Indiana State Board of Certification: Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, and Clinical Addiction Counselor. Dr. Kominkiewicz has many publications and has presented numerous research sessions, including presentations in Germany and in China. One of her book chapters regarding child maltreatment interviewing is used in counselor trainings in Germany and is widely used and cited within the scholarly community in Europe. Her research interests include child maltreatment policy issues and homeless youth. Dr. Kominkiewicz served on the national board of the Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors as a member-at-large representing all baccalaureate social work programs, served a three-year term as the co-chair of the national Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) Research Committee, is a consulting editor for the *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, and is presently a member of the BPD Nominations Committee. She was appointed to the CSWE Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education and to the CSWE Council on Social Work Education Ad Hoc Group: Commission on Diversity & Social & Economic Justice & Religion & Spirituality Work Group. She was given a BPD award in March 2015 for her dedicated service on the BPD Board of Directors. Dr. Kominkiewicz thanks her husband, John, her son, Joseph, ND '05, and her daughter, Lauren, SMC '10, for all of their love and support, and also thanks her colleagues for their support. Congratulations, Dr. K.!

## Dr. JoAnn Burke and the Social Work Practice Mezzo Class Win Real Services Volunteer Group of the Year Award



Dr. JoAnn Burke won the Age of Excellence Award from the Real Services, Inc., on May 14, 2015, for the Memory and Music Project in the Social Work Practice II: Mezzo Methods course. Pictured with from L to R are, Jacqueline Werner, Caitlin Gibbons, Dr. JoAnn Burke, Bridget O'Rear, Social Work junior majors in this Social Work Practice course. Special thanks to Karen Martindale of Healthwin Specialized Care for her support of this project and our students.

## Social Work Hosts Veterans' Community Forum



R to L: Dr. Kent Laudeman, Director of the Judge Miller Center for Homeless Veterans; Mayor Peter Buttigieg, Mayor of South Bend; and Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, IN-2nd District

Social work students in the Human Behavior and the Social Environment II course (SW 236) taught by Dr. Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz have organized a community forum in that course for the last eleven years. Students in the course again chose a topic of importance to the South Bend community: the needs of our veterans. Students focused on issues of great relevance to veterans and organized a panel of three well-known local experts: Mayor Peter Buttigieg, Mayor of South Bend; Dr. Kent Laudeman, Director of the Judge Miller Center for Homeless Veterans; and Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, IN-2nd District. These experts participated in the community forum panel, "The Battle after the War: Veterans on Their Lives and Struggles" on March 31, 2015, and discussed such issues as traumatic stress disorder, depression, economic issues, homelessness, policies, laws, and services that challenge and impact veterans' lives. Participants in the forum were encouraged to ask questions and provide comments to the experts. We greatly appreciate our

panelists, community members, Social Work students, faculty, and our generous co-sponsors, the Collegiate Speaker Series through the Career Crossings Office at Saint Mary's College and Sodexo Dining Services at Saint Mary's College. All of you made this forum a great success.

## Social Work Advisory Board Spring 2015 Meeting

We greatly appreciate our Advisory Board members and their commitment to our program: Roger Parent, Gladys Muhammad (President), Lorette Schmuhl (Secretary), Vickie Warner, Jessie Whitaker, Warren Outlaw, Greg Ballew (Vice President), and Lynn Coleman. Their dedication to the Social Work Program has so greatly contributed to student learning and to the continued success of the Social Work Program.



L to R: Vickie Warner, Lynn Coleman, Gladys Muhammad, Frances Kominkiewicz, Jessie Whitaker, and Leonard Sanchez.

# Notes from the Field



Merideth Mersits '15

The field in Social Work is much more than it seems. The field challenges us outside of our comfort zones through possible audible, blind spot tackles, and even onside kick offs. Although the field is not literally comparable to football, the comparison between the two does convey the rough and tough that is associated with the contact sport. The field to social workers is much more than just a grassy or even AstroTurf field, but a career or a profession. The field is simply the environment where social work is being practiced, which can be different based on every social worker's preference or niche.

Entering into senior year at Saint Mary's, I had an array of emotions flooding my mind. I was excited, yet nervous and confident, yet self-conscious. I have to attribute these mixed emotions to the field. Junior year gave me great prep time before senior year; I read the play-book, watched film, and even got first hand experiences. But even with this toolbox full of knowledge, education, and practice I still did not completely know what to expect out of senior year as a social work major.

My field placement has been at a local South Bend charter school in the Special Education Department. This placement fell into place after a prior field placement did not work out as hoped. I had no idea what to expect going into this particular field. I had never worked with children or students with different needs and abilities; I was feeling intimidated. Fortunately, my anxious feelings were completely defied after even just the first week. I found myself truly enjoying the company of the students in the Special Ed Department and connecting with them in ways I never thought I would be able to. This definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me realize that sometimes going for the two-point conversion, although risky, is definitely worth it.

And that is something that I have definitely learned this year through the field. Social work pushes you and pulls you in so many different directions, but at the end of the day even the smallest victories are so valuable. Social work requires you to be creative, to try the trick plays, and to not give up. This year at the school where I am interning I have been able to have such a diverse experience. I have been able to have one on one sessions with some of the special ed students, facilitate and co-facilitate different groups (Life and Social Skills, Anger Management, Girls Groups, Student Council), gain experience, and learn more about myself as a social worker.

Regardless of the bruises or hits that this year has given me with unexpected conflicts or students getting upset, I have found that I truly enjoy this profession. I find myself waking up on Tuesdays and Thursdays refreshed and ready to go to school and leaving school only wanting to go back. With this internship this year and my education through the Department of Social Work and Gerontology at Saint Mary's, I have found something that I love. I have found something that I do not merely call a job, but a passion. I have found a place where I belong. I call this field my home.

## Field Practicum Luncheon - March 26, 2015



From Left: Leonard Sanchez presents Leadership Award to Ken Cotter, St. Joseph County Prosecutor, for service to the South Bend Community. LaTonia Newhouse, pictured with Kendra Speckman, receives Phi Alpha National Social Work Honorary Member award. Above: Class of 2015 students inducted into the Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society.

# Honors Day Class of 2015



Professor Leonard Sanchez places the Social Work hood on Samantha Chittenden.



Elizabeth Stocklein and Dr. JoAnn Burke



The Kristi Morris Award was given to Ashley Dickson and Guadalupe Garcilazo. Pictured with the award recipients is Kristi's mother, Margie Wasoski, and members of her family.



**Please support the Department of Social Work and Gerontology educational goals—any amount you can donate to the Social Work Resource Center Fund and to the Gerontology Program assists in such areas as purchasing educational equipment, student community experiences and student research. Your support is greatly appreciated!**

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On the memo line of your check or on the online gift designation comment field, please indicate the designation: Social Work Resource Center Fund, or Gerontology Fund, or both.

The Department of Social Work has a Facebook Group, website, and photo site!

**The Facebook group name is:**

*Saint Mary's College Social Work*

**The department website is:**

*www.saintmarys.edu/departments/social-work*

**The department photo site is:**

*picasaweb.google.com/smcsocialwork*