

# Editorial: The Birth of *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*

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Welcome to the first edition of *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*! Values and ethics are at the heart of social work practice and education. They determine both what constitutes a “social problem” and the responses that may be taken to intervene in the problem.

Today, especially relevant are developing new technologies, increasing polarization of values in US society, value conflicts inherent in a diverse society, growing debate over the most effective and appropriate service models, theoretical development, and the study of values and ethics is especially relevant. Through the development of a body of literature, *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* (JSWV&E) seeks to inform and influence social work practice and education. JSWV&E addresses scholarly inquiry including:

- Development of models for analyzing and resolving value and ethical conflicts.
- Description of new value dilemmas and their impact on social work practice.
- Research studies on the influence of values and ethics in social work practice decision-making and in agency program development.

Examples of good practice that clearly highlight ethical and value considerations; Theoretical articles that explain the origin, development and evolution of social work values and ethics; Discussion of ethical and value dilemmas related to the development of new technologies; Review and analysis of scholarly and practice books, monographs, and articles written on the topic of social work values and ethics.

The original concept for this journal was conceived as a response to a mandate established by the Board of Directors of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD). In the fall of 1998, the president of BPD requested that the Committee on Information Technology and Distance Education (CIFTSWE) establish a system to provide BPD members with technological information that could serve across the entire generalist curriculum. During a CIFTSWE Committee meeting, the members decided to divide themselves into nine subcommittees each representing a curriculum area of the Counsel on Social Work Education (CSWE). The committee members decided that each subcommittee would offer a web page to disseminate “bleeding edge” information to the BPD membership.

One subcommittee emerging from the discussion was, of course, the Subcommittee on Values and Ethics. Steve Marson became the chair. During the first meeting, a discussion ensued regarding strategies to offer current information about values and ethics to the BPD membership. The original discussion involved a values and ethics newsletter. That concept soon was replaced by that of a scholarly and applied journal. Because no social work journals exclusively address the topic of values and ethics, there was an immediate and enthusiastic response among the entire membership.

Steve Marson had just completed 10 years of being the co-editor of *The Journal of Law and Social Work* (JLSW) and since the journal was transferred to another owner, he was free and excited about the prospects of editing a new journal. While working with JLSW, he quickly learned that the major problem associated with a highly specialized journal is the cost of publication and dissemination of a paper journal. The concept of maintaining the journal on the committee's web page was attractive -- particularly since the BPD Board of Directors requested technological advances for each curriculum area. Upon deciding to pursue an online journal, Marson approached Jerry Finn (well-known for his technological expertise) to accept the position as co-editor. Marson and Finn found that their respective campuses couldn't offer the necessary technical support or time to maintain an online journal. Thus, they began the search for corporate sponsor.

Searching for a corporate sponsor took about three years. White Hat Communications volunteered to take on *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*. Early in the conception of JSWVE, the committee decided that the online publication must *not* have a subscription fee. Not only is the editorial board made up of volunteers, the publisher must be a volunteer. White Hat Communications, a for-profit company, makes no profit from JSWVE. The editorial board is indebted to Linda May Grobman, ACSW, LSW, owner of White Hat Communications, for her willingness to support our efforts.

In seeking a publisher, two particular goals were necessary to achieve. First was to establish a sample web page for the journal. For several years, Marson had been reading the online and free publication, *The Journal of Teaching Statistics* (JTS). JTS became the role model. Second, Finn and Marson sought an editorial board with the skills and knowledge beyond those of the members of the Subcommittee of Social Work Values and Ethics. They began to recruit members outside of the subcommittee and BPD. All invited to participate in membership to the editorial board accepted the invitation. Members of the editorial board are listed on the Journal's web site. Thus, members of the Editorial Board represent a wide diversity of participants, including ethnic,

geographic regions (including international representation), gender, disability, academic, practice and most importantly philosophy. Although, the board members have a wide variety of difference, they share one critical commonality. All members are devoted to the study and analysis of social work values and ethics. All recognize the importance of maintaining and supporting a scholarly and practice journal that addresses current issues of values and ethics. Thus, *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* is born.