

Ina J. Javellas Selected As 2014 Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumna

By Barbara W. Sessions

March 2014

The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work recently celebrated Ina J. Javellas, LCSW, 1956 Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and 1958 Master of Social Work graduate.

In February 2014, Javellas was selected as the 2014 Distinguished Alumna of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Highest Honor in Arts and Sciences

This is the College of Arts and Sciences' highest honor, bestowed upon no more than

four graduates a year. (Social work is an undergraduate and graduate major in the College of Arts and Sciences).

The Award cited Javellas as “a pioneer in social work and mental health services” in Oklahoma.

Her professional career and volunteerism extended more than 50 years and encompassed key policy and initiatives in mental health, the social work profession, and the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work.

From writing the grant for the first community mental health center in the nation in the 1960s, to advocating for the Social Worker’s Licensing Act in Oklahoma in 1980, to consulting with the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers in the 1990s, to starting the school’s Board of Visitors in the 2000s, Javellas worked steadily and impressively for improvement in the health of citizens and the stature of the social work profession.



Encouragement for Other Social Workers

Ina Javellas (left) visits in Rhyne Community Room with Sheyda Zakerion, Tulsa junior, following a panel presentation to the public as part of Javellas’ recognition as College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumna. She advised prospective social workers to call on their colleagues and friends when they need advice or encouragement.

Public Presentation

As part of the recognition, Distinguished Alumni are asked to give a presentation that is open to the public.

Javellas chose to assemble a panel presentation of social workers from her areas of influence on February 27, 2014, in Rhyne Community Room. Dozens

Panelists and Friends

(Front Row) Ina Javellas, Tim O'Connor, Mike McCurtain; (Back Row): Dr. Julie Miller-Cribbs, Jackie Cook, Robert Lee, Evelyn Seaton, Connie Schlittler (Chair of the Board of Visitors).



of alumni, students, friends, and associates attended.

The panel, rather than an individual talk, Javellas said in introductory remarks, illustrated “teamwork,” the hallmark of her approach to work and to service.

Javellas recalled that, after being admitted to the first year master’s program of the OU School of Social Work, she was told by some of the staff that she was too young and lacking in experience compared to the majority of the class. “But I persisted,” she said.

I put forward my experience from growing up in a family restaurant business (in Pawhuska), working with people in church activities, and taking care of animals on the farm. In high school, I participated in 4-H Club, served as the Future Homemakers of America parliamentarian, and was in the Speech Club. I was always interested in mental health. I had a dream. I believed in it,” she said.

The lesson for students, she said, is to “stay focused and motivated. Talk through

discouragements. You can do it.”

The panelists picked up the story from there. They included:

- Robert Lee, MSW, LCSW, and (absent but submitting written remarks) Jeff Chace, MSW, LCSW, describing Javellas’ work in mental health;
- Evelyn Seaton, MSW, LCSW, on Javellas’ role in the organization and regulation of social work practice in Oklahoma; and
- Tim O’Connor, MS, retired director of Catholic Charities, who addressed Javellas’ collaboration with faith groups and others in the establishment of a day center for homeless people in downtown Oklahoma City in 1988, and on mental health services in response to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

Javellas served as a planner and facilitator with the Oklahoma City Long Range Bombing and Response Committee and with the Federal Emergency

Management Agency-funded disaster relief.

The panelists also are active or emeritus members of the Board of Visitors, for which Javellas was the first and only chairperson from 2000-2011.

Contributions in Mental Health

Following graduation in 1958, Ms. Javellas became a staff psychiatric social worker at Central State Memorial (Griffin) Hospital in Norman. The hospital had 4,500 patients.

An Employees Administrative Council was established at the hospital, and she was its first chair. A state Mental Health Association was organized.

The Commissioner of Mental Health, Dr. Hayden Donohue noted her competence.

In 1962, she was assigned to develop social work at the Enid State School, a 1,000 bed institution for the mentally retarded.

In 1952, Dr. Donohue had been instrumental in editing and supporting passage of the Oklahoma Mental Health Act by the Oklahoma Legislature.

Ten years later, he contributed to editing and assisted in passage of the federal Community Mental Health Centers Act. This legislation was signed into law

by President John F. Kennedy on October 31, 1963.

Javellas assisted Donohue in the drafting, and, in her position as state administrator of the Community Mental Health Clinic Program, implemented the new federal law in Oklahoma.

Based on her 1969 grant for funding, Norman opened the nation's first community-based services, Central Oklahoma Mental Health Center.

Three more community mental health centers soon opened in Lawton, McAlester, and Tulsa. In 2014, Oklahoma has 15 centers.

In 1974, Javellas chaired the Conference of Social Workers and State/Territorial Mental Health Programs.

Medicare and Medicaid, the nation's first public health insurance programs, were signed into law in 1965. Javellas was one of the first psychiatric social workers selected by the National Institute of Mental Health to participate on survey teams of psychiatric facilities for compliance with Medicare/Medicaid provider standards.

She participated for 30 years, and helped write specialized training manuals and survey protocols for the program.

Early in her career, Javellas had become acquainted with Ruth Irelan Knee, one of Oklahoma's and the nation's foremost social work practitioners, and Knee's



Two Generations of Friends, Colleagues

Ina Javellas being congratulated by Mike McCurtain, who served with her on the Board of Visitors. McCurtain's mother, Eloise McCurtain, was Javellas' colleague in the 1960s.

mentorship further propelled Javellas to professional excellence.

Both are honored as National Association of Social Work Pioneers for their contributions to the evolution and enrichment of the profession.

In Oklahoma, Javellas is the only person to be twice recognized as Social Worker of the Year (in 1978 and 1996) by the Oklahoma Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Contributions to Profession

In 1965, Oklahoma became only the third state to pass legislation regulating the practice of social work. This gave social workers the impetus to develop their own model licensing law by defining minimum competencies and setting a code for professional behavior.

Lee recounted how Javellas became an advocate for professional recognition, which finally occurred in 1980 with adoption of the Social Worker's Licensing Act.

Over the years, she supervised candidates and practicum students, putting energy into the profession as she had into mental health policy and practice.

In 1988, Javellas was asked to consult with the licensing board on best practices, a role that she continued until 2003.

Evelyn Seaton, who became chair of the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers in 2000, recalled the profession's fight for autonomy and separateness, and the key influence that Javellas' counsel played.

"Ina is the epitome of steadfastness. She taught me we are never in this profession alone, that success means helping others succeed. She personally influences people to make a difference – how to collaborate, how to be a professional in need but not be needy."

Seaton further described Javellas' interactive

approach: "She didn't text or email, she called on the telephone. She thought it was important to get the person's reaction."

Collaboration in Community

Ethical and advocate are words I use to describe Ina Javellas," said Tim O'Connor, who retired recently after 28 years as director of Catholic Charities.

He recalled how her (Episcopal) church started the idea for establishing a Day Center for Oklahoma City homeless people. "I met Ina through this initiative. She served on our Board. Other downtown churches joined, and the center opened in 1988."

Their paths crossed again over tragedy and disaster response following the Murrah Federal Building bombing in 1995. "Lots of organizations joined in to work with individual rescue workers and families. But what was needed for long-term recovery was taking names and assisting over time. We became the 'care manager' for the city," O'Connor said.

Ina Javellas Scholarship Announced

It was all I hoped it would be. I'm highly honored," Javellas said afterward about her Award and the panel presentation.

Among admirers congratulating her was the social worker she has known the longest: Jacqueline Cook, ACSW, LSW, LMFT, Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at OU Health Sciences Center. Cook and Javellas met as freshman roommates in Hume House in 1952.

Also present was Alisa West Cahill, LSW, Research Assistant in the Office of Planning, Research, and Statistics at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Javellas was

her practice supervisor in 1999. “She gave good guidance to me and lots of others seeking their administration or clinical license,” Cahill said.

Dr. Julie Miller-Cribbs, Professor and Interim Director, announced formation of the Ina J. Javellas Scholarship in social work. It will benefit students pursuing the mental health field.

Social Workers Prominent Among Distinguished Alumni

Javellas is the fifth social worker to receive the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumnus Award since the Award began in 1994. They include:

1999 - Ruth Irelan Knee

2004 - Linda Larason Edmondson

2010 - Mike Fogarty

2011 - Bernard Albaugh

2014 - Ina J. Javellas

Inducted as the 2014 Distinguished Alumni of the College of Arts and Sciences along with Javellas were William Roger Louis, 1959 BA in Letters; Ramez Maluf, 1985 PhD in History of Science; and Vance Raye, 1967 BA in Political Science.

Louis is the Kerr Chair in English History and Culture at the University of Texas at Austin. Maluf is chairperson of the department of mass communication at the University of Balamand in north Lebanon; Raye is Presiding Justice of the Third District court of Appeal in California. Receiving the Distinguished Service Award was Joe Castiglione, Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Programs and Director of Athletics. Castiglione completed a master’s of education degree from OU in 2007.

The College of Arts and Sciences held a dinner in their honor on February 28, 2014.

Arts and Sciences is the University of Oklahoma’s largest and oldest college, accounting for half of all graduates since 1898.



2014 College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumna

Ina J. Javellas is inducted at the annual Kaleidoscope Dinner of the College of Arts and Sciences on February 28, 2014. Dean Kelly Damphousse does the honors.