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The Heart of Social Work Winner: Nancy Jefferson Mance

Author(s)

*Deborah L. Winters, LCSW
USC School of Social Work*

Skill in Field Instruction and Teaching

It is our great honor as the Field Faculty of the University of Southern California, School of Social Work to nominate Nancy Jefferson Mance for the 2013 Heart of Social Work Award. At the University of Southern California, Nancy Jefferson has been a field instructor with both foundation-year students and students in the Family and Child Concentration with the Pupil Personnel School (PPS) Credential Sub-Concentration for over 20 years. She provided direct field supervision for more than 30 students annually, and it is not an exaggeration to say that she has touched the lives of hundreds of USC, UCLA, Cal State LA and Cal State Northridge MSW students and colleagues.

Ms. Jefferson embraces her role as Field Educator Supervisor, teacher, administrator, mentor, role-model and supporter wholeheartedly. One colleague, the field coordinator of the School Mental Health Program at USC, stated that Ms. Jefferson is, “possibly the most thoughtful, responsive, caring and influential Field Educator I have ever worked with.” Ms. Jefferson has the ability to accept students for who they are and where they are in regards to their learning. Other colleagues have shared that she has been open to welcoming students with challenges and different learning styles and has been committed to helping them to be successful. She is warm, considerate, and supportive while challenging all students to be non-judgmental, well-informed, and to always approach social work with ethical responsibility. She teaches students to do extensive assessments from a bio, psycho, social perspective, including looking at the intersectionality of race, culture, class, and power.



It is with this understanding that students flourish under her guidance. Ms. Jefferson demonstrates that she grows as a field instructor as her students grow. She imparts to students the importance of

learning and utilizing the most relevant evidenced-based practices and how clients /consumers can be experts to their own stories. She teaches cultural competence by first getting to know her students. She builds relationships with them and helps students to focus on their understanding of their own background, experiences, and biases while understanding the critical importance of self-awareness and self- reflection.

Ms. Jefferson teaches by modeling and leadership. She demonstrates calmness, good judgment, and thoughtfulness in the midst of daily professional life and in times of crisis when intense situations arise and critical decisions need to be made. She is skilled as a peacemaker who has trained and guided numerous colleagues and students to be good crisis responders.

Service to the University/School/Program

The University of Southern California has a rich history of interaction with its local, regional, and international constituents. Ms. Jefferson was an ally of the University in helping to stabilize and heal the local community in 1992. She was among a small cadre of African American social workers who developed a coalition to respond to the social-emotional and environmental needs of the South Los Angeles Community following the civil unrest, LA riots and fires precipitated by the Rodney King verdict.

Ms. Jefferson has helped to perpetuate national and local networks affiliated with the University in that she has served several terms as President of the National Association of Black Social Workers, Los Angeles Chapter and has held regional and national offices with NABSW as well. Moreover, many of Ms. Jefferson's current colleagues at the USC, School Of Social Work and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) were past interns of hers, and she was responsible for launching them into their profession and bringing qualified committed social workers to school mental health.

School. Nancy Jefferson has also been a part-time instructor at the USC School of Social Work from 1995-2009 when she taught Social Work Practice in School Settings to rave student reviews. Her 30 years of experience as a Psychiatric Social Worker in the Los Angeles Unified School District was a perfect match for teaching this course. Nancy Jefferson recruited many community-based mental health professionals to present in her classes. She fully understood the interconnection between the school and the community. Prior to it being popular, she embraced the importance of treating the "whole" child within the context of the family and community.

During this time, Nancy Jefferson served as the point-person for the local District 7 crisis team and developed an expertise in crisis management in school settings. Ms. Jefferson continues in this role to this day as a field administrator for school mental health. She assists with the development and training of crisis teams in local schools in order to restore and maintain safe and healthy learning environments for the students and staff of LAUSD after critical incidents occur on or near a school campus. Much of her expertise in this area benefits students at USC. She is always open to collabo-

rate with others and shares her leadership, wisdom and knowledge of field instruction. So many of us are honored to call her a colleague, mentor, and friend and to have created long lasting relationships with her. We are forever indebted to her for her passion and contributions to the USC School of Social Work and to our profession

Program. In the past three years, Ms. Jefferson has been instrumental in assisting a USC field faculty member to develop a new internship program in LAUSD placing first year MSW interns in the Kindergarten Intervention Program (KIP). This innovative program provides prevention and early intervention to young children and families from a strengths-based perspective. Early in Ms. Jefferson's career, she provided consultation and training in children's centers to center administrators and faculty on early child development. She worked directly with pre-school and elementary school children and taught professionals and paraprofessional staff members to recognize early signs of social and emotional difficulties in young children as well as ways to ameliorate them. Ms. Jefferson helped create and implement a joint USC/LAUSD training for social work interns involved in the Kindergarten Intervention Program. She also reached out to many LAUSD colleagues to participate in the training and to commit to being field instructors.

Creativity and Innovation in Field Instruction

Ms. Jefferson has been a Social Worker since 1982 when she started working for the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic. In 1990, she joined the Los Angeles Unified School District and became the Clinical Supervisor and Field Instructor at Carson Guidance Program until 2006. Ms. Jefferson was the field instructor responsible for the supervision and field placement of a cadre of interns from most of the universities in the Los Angeles area. There were usually 10-12 interns each year and several M.F.T interns to whom Ms. Jefferson provided direct supervision and group supervision. The Carson Program provided mental health services to LAUSD schools in the Carson area. Ms. Jefferson was the lead psychiatric social worker responsible for administrative duties as well as writing grants to continue the program each year. One of the grants she wrote provided for mental health services to 13 schools in the Carson area, including individual, counseling, case management, parenting workshops, classroom interventions, crisis interventions, community outreach, and child abuse identification and education. Ms. Jefferson's job was to place interns in each of these schools and to make sure that each school received the full scope of mental health services from a well-supervised and well-trained social worker.

When Nancy Jefferson began this social work internship program, it was unprecedented in the LAUSD. She wrote the guidelines for interns and the school mental health handbook for field instruction in the LAUSD. Each psychiatric social worker in school mental health called upon Nancy for field instruction consultation and guidance. Nancy Jefferson became the guru for LAUSD field instruction and was a vital part of continuing the close relationship that is experienced between the USC School of Social Work and LAUSD. Nancy has had a close relationship with all six of the school mental health directors, and each of them speaks of the great work she did with the intern program at

LAUSD.

In closing, Ms. Jefferson exemplifies the heart and spirit of social work with a kind of pride and dignity that is constructively contagious for students and colleagues. All the interns that Ms. Jefferson supervised have expressed their love and gratitude for her contributions to their growth and learning. As one colleague described, "Students quite simply become better Social Workers after a year of practice with her." Likewise, her colleagues have the utmost trust, respect, gratitude, and admiration for her. Nancy Jefferson Mance is a truly genuine person and the epitome of a great social worker: a true, quiet, kind, gentle leader with a heart of gold and the heart of social work!