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Reflection on the Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare

NASW's Impact

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) website which details the Milestones in the Development of Social Work and Social Welfare is a great resource regarding the contribution of social work in the United States. This website helps the researcher become acquainted with the nuances associated with NASW's origins, and its timeline in the field of social work. In fact, from NASW's inception to the present, social workers have been on the front lines providing services to those in need. While I admit to possessing minimal knowledge of the general types of contributions social workers engaged in, what I lacked was a more in-depth knowledge of the specific actors and events involved. For instance, I personally had no knowledge that Columbia University played such an integral role in helping to lay the groundwork for social work. As someone who prides myself on knowing things of this nature, I was like, "Moshe, how did I let this one slip by?" Despite this, however, it made me appreciate the breadth of Columbia's impact in this field and all the arduous work they have contributed towards this massive endeavor. I now know why so many people when pursuing their graduate degrees in social work elect to attend Columbia University.

Dynamic Predecessors of Social Work

In addition, at a time in America when women did not even enjoy the right to vote, it is comforting knowing that there were trailblazers like Jane Addams, Ida Barnett Wells—and countless others—who were innovative in their approach of ameliorating the conditions of the needy. These pioneers were instrumental of doing the kind of work that, unfortunately, many of

us take for granted. Personally, I do not think that they get the credit that their sacrifices rightfully deserve.

NASW's Merger

Another critical factor that stuck out to me was the merger which led to the formation of NASW. This well sophisticated ensemble of organizations coordinated their efforts to enhance the quality of their social welfare endeavors. Consequently, NASW has approximately 140,000 professional social workers within its ranks and are a national powerhouse who utilizes their influence to impact the lives of millions. As the timeline illustrates, their work has crossed all boundaries, even impacting newly arrived immigrants who come to this country fleeing their homelands in search of a better opportunity in America.

Personal Connection to Social Work

For over 40-years, my late mother was employed by the Human Resource Administration. When she retired, she did so having worked the last 20-years of her career as a supervisor. Both of my mother's sisters were also employed with HRA, as were my maternal grandmother and her sisters as well. Social work is deeply rooted in my family. During those challenging moments of my early childhood where my mother struggled to raise my sister and I alone, we were recipients of social programs that helped us live with a degree of respect and dignity without it appearing like we were in dire need when in fact we were. Therefore, I write these words having a deep appreciation for the altruism that the profession of social work espouses.