The Reading Connection

By Jordan Fabish and Kathi Bartle Angus

This issue of “The Reading Connection” spotlights both the creators and recipients of two scholarships designed to aid students who are preparing their Master’s degree in CSUF’s Reading Program.

EVIDENCE OF LIFE

“Reading Connection” readers know of the Hancock Fund to benefit the Reading Clinic, but may not be aware of two recently established scholarships linked to the Hancock family of educators: the Dorothy C. Klausner Scholarship and the Lewis and Deborah Hancock Scholarship. Both are awarded on the basis on need and merit, with the latter fund earmarked for single parents, whose path to an advanced degree can be doubly difficult and costly when the responsibility of child care is solely theirs. Dorothy. Lewis. Deborah. You are surely wondering who these people are and why they keep giving their money to others. I spoke recently with Deborah Hancock so that R.E.G. could show our members these inspiring life models.

Now a CSUF Professor Emeritus, Deborah Hancock, “Debbie,” began her career in education as many do, teaching K-12 English and social studies, and also as a reading specialist, working with both remedial and gifted students. Her English degree is from CSULB; a Master’s and Doctorate in education with a specialization in curriculum and educational psychology she completed at USC while beginning an assistant professorship at our own CSU Fullerton, eventually heading the Reading Program. Before returning to teach (and also to fight to save that Program, in jeopardy in the 90’s), Hancock assumed the Dean of Education position at CSU Bakersfield in 1979, the first woman to undertake a deanship in the California educational system, and then turned her energies to the California Academic Partnership Program, a cooperative entity, yet ongoing, of UCs, state universities, community colleges, and grades 7-12 public schools, working together to equip under-prepared students for college. This work still holds her heart.

An impressive résumé, if only just a hint of a lifetime of service in education. Yet such a list rarely adequately represents the person behind it. A more-defined portrait emerges when one sees Debbie Hancock in relationship with others. Meet her husband, Lewis. An American Indian, himself, he spent several years as a missionary to the Indians, then taught in Watts and, realizing he needed more education in the field of reading, found himself in Debbie’s Linguistics and Reading course at CSU Fullerton. She calls him “the most intriguing person” in her life. His “list” includes fluency in several languages and dialects and three Master’s degrees—divinity, reading, counseling. At retirement, the Hancocks co-authored workshops, articles, and curricula for churches.

And meet her mother, Dorothy Klausner. Educated at Mills College and at Berkeley, she was unique in her generation, establishing one of the first remedial-and-gifted reading programs of the 1930s and ‘40s at the high school where she taught. In addition to starting a reading clinic in her home, Klausner was a national-level Campfire Girls leader, working to draw in minorities and migrant workers. You may have heard of the “9 to 90” program, reading instruction for families, a progressive and cooperative effort between Fullerton University and Fullerton College. This was Klausner’s innovation. Adding a degree in counseling from Chapman University to her education, we can all imagine the wealth of knowledge and experience she brought to the presentations and articles she authored, often collaborating with Debbie or her other children. She had left full-time teaching to stay home and raise those children, yet a teacher she remained: tickets to the opera were preceded by introducing the intrigues of its plot and by arias and choruses on the piano. (Debbie still loves opera.) When mastery of Morse code eluded Debbie’s brother,
their mother wrote him directions in code to find special snacks. Questioning led the children through the thinking process; a cheerfully unpretentious Socratic method apparently permeated their days.

Lewis and Dorothy have passed away, but Deborah Hancock has honored their love of teaching, through the aforementioned scholarships, as a very tangible way of continuing their work and her own. As I interviewed Debbie for this article, the principles of success in their lives were just as tangible:

**EDUCATION.** No one in this mix was merely energetic. Every fresh thought rested on the underpinnings of an excellent and lifelong personal education.

**COLLABORATION.** These people were not loners, but sharers; never insulated, but connected. Competition was OUT; support was IN. As a professor at CSUF, Hancock consciously strove to blend theory and practice, creating teaching partnerships that paired classroom teachers with university professors, thus grounding research in reality and encouraging teachers with the inspiration of pedagogical postulates.

**BALANCE.** All three educators were thoroughly engaged in their respective professional raison d’être, but all were just as devoted to their families. How? Debbie explained that, for example, Lewis’s background in counseling made him wise about balancing their lives. They compartmentalized. At school, they gave 100% to school. At home, they gave 100% to family. On the other hand, together they enjoyed school dances, dinners, and sporting events. Whenever a school function required the presence of one, the other would often go along . . . just for fun.

Yes, **FUN.** As I listened to Deborah Hancock recount extraordinary and weighty career responsibilities, she often interjected, “Of course, I was having the time of my life! It was so much fun!” She gives much of the credit for this joyful attitude to her own Reading Program Chair, Hazel Croy, whose philosophy gave the instructors in her charge the freedom and encouragement to create and break new ground.

**GROWTH.** All three educators focused on growth—their own and their students’—embracing challenge, and finding great excitement in contributing to the growth of a student.

“Growth is the only evidence of life.” John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1864

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**Scholarship Awards Presented**

Three continuing graduate students are the grateful recipients of the new Reading Scholarships. The Dorothy C. Klausner Scholarship was awarded to Nicole Alvaro and Macy Luk. Nicole is a sixth grade teacher in the Anaheim School District. She is excited about using the knowledge gained in the Reading Program to help her own students and other teachers in her district. Her long range career goal is to become a resource specialist for the district. Nicole attends classes at the El Toro campus. Macy Luk teaches Kindergarten in the Norwalk/La Mirada Unified School District and attends classes on the Fullerton campus. She has a dual interest in classroom technology and multi-cultural education. Macy hopes to become a literacy specialist in her district.

The Lewis and Deborah Hancock Scholarship was awarded to Carol Segar. Carol is part of the Tustin cohort. She teaches first grade in Tustin and hopes to become a district reading specialist.

The three recipients and their guests were feted at a dinner attended by the scholarship committee (Rosie Jasis (Chair), Deborah Hancock, and Kathi Bartle Angus) and Ash Bishop. Scholarships were presented for the fall semester and renewable for spring. Contributions to the scholarship funds can be directed to Lisa Gallaway at University Advancement (278-4172).
In Memoriam

Julie Zeller Simpson

(1953-2003)

Julie, a Reading Program Outstanding Graduate, served as a master tutor in the 9 to 90 Reading Program at Fullerton College while working on her degree. She also taught middle school reading classes in Chino Unified School District for many years. In 1997, Julie was hired as a Reading Professor at Long Beach City College. Julie was actively involved in the Reading Educators Guild and twice served as President. She is survived by her husband, Bob Simpson.

A scholarship has been established in her name at Long Beach City College. Contributions can be sent to LBCC Foundation, 4901 E. Carson St., Long Beach, CA 90808.

REG Winter Dinner

"Why read? Keeping the focus on comprehension"

Dr. Ruth Yopp
Researcher, Author, and Professor
CSUF Reading Department

Fullerton Marriott at CSU
2701 E. Nutwood Avenue
Fullerton, CA 92831

Thursday, March 13, 2003
6 p.m. No Host Cocktails
6:30-9 p.m. Dinner & Speaker

RSVP
Please respond on or before March 7, 2003.
Make checks payable to REG and return to Donna Padgett CSUF, Reading Program -EC379.
800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92834

Please include:
Name, Phone, Number of Reservations @ $29 per person
For Information Contact: Donna Padgett - (562) 693-4641 or (714) 278-2758, ext. 7
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