

Jim Gripton's Social Work Career: Innovation and the pursuit of social justice

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A historical examination of the 60 year career of James Macpherson Gripton (1921-2005) within the Canadian social work context. As a caseworker/clinician, field instructor, administrator, professor, researcher, welfare grants officer, social policy analyst, advocate and activist, he was consistently an innovator who sought to advance social work practice and education for the betterment of individual, organizational and community functioning. To achieve social work goals, he employed social work research. The pursuit of social justice and elimination of oppression characterized his career activities, many of which contributed significantly to major directions in Canadian social work education and practice. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2011 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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James Gripton's social work career spanned 60 years from the late 1940s to 2005. While one person is rarely entirely responsible for innovative directions in social work, his influence is significant because of his enduring commitment to social justice coupled with his being in the forefront of emerging trends. The purpose of this article is first to present a biographical overview of his career and secondly, within the context of his career, to identify his major contributions to Canadian social work. These included addressing sexism in social work, developing a gender perspective in research, introducing computers to social work, conceptualizing social work as a research-based profession, promoting doctoral education, initiating Human Sexuality in social work curricula

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and practice, foundation building in private social work practice and examining ethical issues related to sexual and non-sexual dual and multiple relationships of social workers and clients.

The author's knowledge derives from her 37 years of professional collaboration and 33 as his personal partner, including two videotaped interviews of 50 to 90 minutes conducted by the author (2003) as well as other primary sources identified in the References. Gripton's quotations in the text derive from these sources.

BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Jim Gripton was born in Toronto, Ontario on October 19, 1921 to James Macpherson Gripton and Ida Edna (Thompson) Gripton. His paternal grandfather had emigrated from England and worked as an itinerant salesperson of stamps used in packaging. His work evolved into the Canada Stamp Company which Jim's father ultimately took over. Having married late in life, Jim's father devoted considerable attention to "little Jimmy" who benefited from travels with his father and the "best" in private school education. Jim's mother was a well-organized woman who was current about healthy life styles, oversaw the family's several moves, and helped run the business. She died in 1945 at age 47 of heart disease; Jim's father lived until his late 80s.

Both parents fostered Jimmy's and younger sister, Catherine's independence, problem-solving, curiosity and love of reading, learning and sports. Gripton attributed his inclination to social work to the modeling provided by his parents who were always ready to lend a helping hand, for example, taking in relatives or assisting those with lesser means: "You never knew who my Dad would bring home to have supper with us." Catherine Thuro-Gripton credits their parents as "provid[ing] my brother and me with an environment that nurtured observation, education, love and trust" (1994). James excelled in academics and sports, including basketball, cricket, football, tennis, squash, and track and field. He shied away from marksmanship in high school, nearly not fulfilling graduation requirements. His aversion to militaristic pursuits gave rise to his Conscientious Objector status during WWII and involvement in the 1990s with his university friend, Murray Thomson, in research related to Project Ploughshares peace initiatives.

Despite his academic capacity, he failed his first year in Engineering at Queens University, Kingston, Ontario. While drawn by technology, he realized he was more interested in working with people. He enrolled at the University of Toronto, but did not write his first year final

examinations. However, he viewed his immersion in arts, politics and issues of social justice as the foundation for many of his future life goals and satisfactions. He attributed much of his learning to one room-mate in Sociology and another in Fine Arts who had experienced oppression related to his homosexual orientation.

During his undergraduate years, Gripton's commitment to social issues was also fostered by the YMCA Fellowship Program that entailed twenty hours work per week with individuals living in poverty. In his second university year (1943), he, Murray Thomson and another friend formed the University of Toronto's first social action club which had to be named the Humanist Club because the University was suspicious of left-wing ventures like "social action." Gripton identified its underlying principle as follows: "that persons of different religious faiths or no religious faith at all could unite about particular social values and social goals and could organize to take action in relation to those". As the club's representative, Gripton joined the Co-ordinating Committee protesting the internment and confiscation of properties of Japanese Canadians during WWII, an initiative that reached the Supreme Court of Canada and ultimately, a negative resolution by the Privy Council of the Court of Westminster, Great Britain. During this protest, Gripton met many social activists and civil rights people who influenced his emerging leftist ideology.

Gripton graduated in 1945 in Honours Psychology, the lone man with six women, all of whom proceeded with further education. He identified his awareness of women's issues and the obstacles faced by career-minded women as stemming from interaction with these achievement-oriented colleagues and his marriage in the late 1940s to Evelyn Ewins who brought an early feminist perspective to her work in child care.

A year after graduation (1946), Don Franco, Jim Gripton and Murray Thomson started Camp Robin Hood, the first urban day camp in Toronto to familiarize children with the urban environment, a camp that continues to this day. In such ventures, Thomson credits Jim with always being the "ideas man" though "Jim had a lot of that organizing ability, too" (M. Thomson, personal communication, November 7, 2005).

Choosing social work as a career was directly related to what Gripton described as his radicalization during his undergraduate years. Believing that all persons should have equal access to societal benefits, he left his first position with the Central YMCA (1945-46) when he saw that the agency ignored the working class people of the neighbourhood. A more ideologically suitable position with the Big Brother Movement (1946-47) followed. During this period, Gripton organized social workers in

Toronto into their first union and became the first President of the Toronto Local, Social Services Employees Union of America; in the United States this union had been labeled “communist.” The union was a short-lived venture, but demonstrated Gripton’s commitment to improving working conditions of social workers.

During 1947-48, Gripton pursued his BSW at the University of Toronto in a class of 125 students; his transcript notes that “this student stood first in the class with first class honours.” He had clearly found his field and applied to the MSW program at Columbia University. He recalled writing a frank statement outlining his undergraduate social activism and later union organizing activities; perhaps not surprising, given the McCarthyism prevalent in the United States, he was denied admission.

In 1948, Gripton accepted a casework position with the Toronto Children’s Aid Society (which later became the Children’s Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto) where he had just completed a practicum in foster care. He, Ben Schlesinger and another man from the same BSW class were hired to work in foster care; they were likely the first men employed by Children’s Aid as caseworkers. The idea was that troubled male youth might be better able to relate to male social workers; for three years, Gripton engaged with approximately 70 acting-out youth and their families, culled from other social workers’ caseloads. The placements were located in Toronto and the surrounding countryside as far away as Burlington and Milton, Ontario. When the Children’s Aid Society set up its own internal Child Guidance Clinic with a part-time psychiatrist and six social workers, Gripton and the other social workers carried caseloads of 10-12, permitting them unusual, intensive work.

In one instance, Gripton was Ralph Armstrong’s social worker. In his first 12 ½ years, Ralph had experienced 35 foster, boarding home, shelter, and camp placements, before being placed in 1948 in a private boarding school, Pickering College, the first “alternative” arrangement by the Children’s Aid Society. Eventually, Armstrong and another boy became the Griptons’ foster sons. Armstrong who ultimately established a respected journalism career and family life summarized his experiences as follows: “When you asked Jim a question, you didn’t just get an answer. You heard every side of the issue – The Man was a Genius!” (R. Armstrong, personal communication, May 3, 2007), a “genius whose brilliance flashed across my life so many times that it enhanced me as a person and significantly enriched my understanding of human interaction” (1998, p. 111).

As a casework supervisor (1951-54) and training supervisor (1955-56),

Gripton realized that he enjoyed teaching and enrolled in the MSW program at the University of Toronto, graduating in 1958. From 1956-1960 as Director of Training and Personnel, Gripton focused on building up the profession with qualified social workers. Through an agency responsible for overseas placement of women, he recruited social workers from Great Britain. Those hired could visit England within their first two years to offset the sense of loss usually experienced by immigrants. He also helped women to remain in the profession by permitting flexible job arrangements such as part-time work in adoptions from their homes.

He was invited to join the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto in 1960 where he chaired the Social Welfare Administration sequence and almost immediately began his doctoral studies. Interested in staff utilization of social workers with varying degrees, he attempted to engage with city welfare organizations in Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton, but was unsuccessful. His mentor, Professor John Morgan heard of a large-scale research project in Chicago with a similar focus. Following an interview, Gripton was invited to join the Mid-Way Project (Schwartz & Sample, 1972) and for several years spent some time each month in Chicago as well as his summers, conducting his research on staff morale and job satisfaction in the welfare agency in Chicago's Black ghetto. His awareness of racial tensions and the turbulence of the Civil Rights Movement were brought home to him on his daily walk to work.

At the University of Chicago he had access to top social researchers, other doctoral students, and computers. In that period, he learned two computer languages, Fortran and Cobol, developed in 1954 and 1959-60, respectively (The Vintage Computer Forums). In this pre-SPSS era, he wrote his own programs for his data analysis that involved non-parametric statistics and was the first social work doctoral student at the University of Toronto to use a computer in his thesis research. He graduated with his DSW (later changed to a PhD) in 1967, the fifth of the early PhDs.

From 1960 to 1966, Gripton worked full-time at the University of Toronto as a Lecturer and Administrative Assistant to the Director of the School of Social Work, Dr. "Chick" Hendry. He supervised 22 University of Toronto MSW thesis students and in 1964-65 he was the first instructor to have MSW students use the computer in their thesis research. He also engaged with an ad hoc Committee of Canadian Schools of Social Work that had met in the late 1950s and early 1960s to discuss a more permanent organization to promote and coordinate

university social work education (A. Irving, personal communication, March 13, 1997). The Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) was established in 1967.

Known as a promoter of research to foster social change, Gripton was invited to become the first Consultant on Welfare Research and Principal Grants Officer, National Welfare Grants, Department of National Health and Welfare (1966-1968). Charged with offering research consultation on welfare and mental retardation research and demonstration grants, he travelled across Canada, becoming familiar with regional social issues, eliciting practitioners' research questions, helping with the development of sound proposals, and ensuring the distribution of funds. Those with whom he consulted praised his facilitative work as one of his great strengths (R. Hall, M. Orris, personal communications, May 27, 1968). His commitment was also evident: Evariste Theriault writes that Gripton "helped us (The Canadian Welfare Council) to develop a national housing survey of recipients of social assistance and continued to assist with the analysis of the housing survey though he was no longer with the National Welfare Grants program (E. Theriault, personal communication, Nov. 6, 2005).

A leadership and philosophical change at Welfare Grants prompted Gripton's return to teaching in 1968, this time to the St. Patrick's School of Social Welfare, University of Ottawa headed by the legendary Swithun Bowers. Gripton was a member of the House of Delegates of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) from 1968 to 1971 when St. Patrick's completed its last CSWE accreditation. With Canadian social work educators wishing to take charge of their own accreditation processes, Gripton invested heavily in the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. From 1968 to 1971 he was a CASSW delegate representing St. Patrick's, a member of the Nominations Committee (1969-70) and a member of a five person Constitution Committee (1970-71). Gripton was also Treasurer of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and a board member.

Gripton oversaw the move of St. Patrick's School of Social Welfare from the University of Ottawa to Carleton University in the early 1970s and generally, provided the impetus for change that Bowers had envisioned, developing the social policy component in the curriculum, introducing the first elective in the school's history since 1949, Human Sexuality, and initiating one of the earliest videotaping units for use in teaching students interviewing and practice skills, a unit that was dismantled after Gripton's departure and converted to office space. Unrest within the School was such that Gripton recognized that his

Directorship ambitions would not be fulfilled at St. Patrick's upon Bowers' retirement and Shaun Govenlock's one year tenure (1971-72).

While on sabbatical in 1972-73, Gripton was asked to join the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver where his partner, Mary Valentich was studying for her PhD. Initially a Visiting Professor, he was unwilling to wait out an uncertain immigration process, and remained at the University of Denver from 1973 to 1976 when he joined the School of Social Welfare at the University of Calgary. His primary task was the development of a PhD proposal (Gripton, 1980). He taught in all three program levels, with his teaching areas including social welfare policy, social work research, human sexuality and thesis/project supervision.

During his Calgary years, Gripton developed his clinical private practice, focusing on sexuality. In 1975 he became an early Life Member of the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT), certifying as a Sex Educator (1976), Sex Counselor (1979), Sex Therapist (1980) and Diplomate of Sex Therapy (2002). In 1978 he had joined the Canadian Sex Research Forum, one of its earliest social work members.

Believing that private practice was a legitimate domain for social workers, Gripton, in 1978, became one of six founding members of a private practice group, Janus Associates, naming the organization Janus because therapy looked to the past and the future. He worked on the Private Practice Committee of the Alberta College of Social Workers for seven years to strengthen the voices of private practitioners (2000). He developed a web site in 1999, helped devise standards for practice, and lobbied insurance companies to cover social work services. In 2000, with Audrey Ferber, he offered the first university course in Canada on Private Practice in Social Work. He offered the course a second time with the author and had prepared materials for a book on this evolving area of practice, but ran out of time.

He had left his full-time university position in 1987 and taken a three year part-time position during which time he focused on *A Study of the State of the Art of Social Work Research in Canada* (Gripton, Nutter, Irving & Murphy, 1995), examined the progress of women and men with social work doctorates (Gripton, 1996), and initiated a qualitative research project on sex offenders in Colorado (Warren, Gripton, Francis & Green, 1994). He served on the Disciplinary Committee of the Alberta College of Social Workers (1995-2005), sometimes in the role of an Expert Witness. He gave numerous workshops as a sex educator on ethical dilemmas of human service providers pertaining to sexual and

non-sexual aspects of dual and multiple practice relationships (Valentich & Gripton, 1992; Gripton & Valentich, 2004) as well as sexuality issues of the elderly. He was involved in several advocacy projects relating to community issues and in 2005 he was providing consultation on addictions and family violence to First Nations in southern Alberta.

In June 2005 he participated in a six part television series on *The Future of Aging*, appearing both as the respected professor in blue suit and tie commenting on sex research and in his bathing suit in the hot tub with his partner. He presented his last paper entitled “Love in the slow lane” at the World Congress in Sexology in Montreal, Quebec in July, 2005. Though he lived with heart disease for over 17 years, and diabetes and multiple myeloma for 7, even in his last month, he continued to work on his golf score, kept in close touch with the international PhD student he was coaching, and further refined the Exit interview questions he had devised for University of Calgary MSW students.

Gripton’s career activities may be understood in relation to several themes that characterize both his work as well as major directions in Canadian social work practice and education.

THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

As a profession, social work has waxed and waned in its pursuit of social justice; for Gripton, it was a priority throughout his career. He strongly believed that the social work profession and social workers as citizens of the world were responsible, along with other helping professions and governments at all levels, for improving life for all persons through a planned, persistent approach that relied on social research to inform social policy and practice. He always tried to get data on problematic human conditions before proceeding with action. His undergraduate university activities had grounded him in social advocacy and activism. His ideological perspectives remained left-wing: in Canada, that meant CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and NDP (New Democrat) politics. He was an early feminist believing that women and men should be treated fairly in their family and career pursuits and he never hesitated to identify the oppression experienced by less powerful individuals and groups who typically did not have a voice.

Through the media, briefs and prolonged efforts at social reform, he challenged institutions such as organized religion, the military, government, education, the traditional family, business, and law – most of which he saw as organized on patriarchal/hierarchical lines with those in charge unmindful of the systemic discrimination which permeated

their practices. The obstacles to individual self-fulfillment and well-functioning communities included poverty, lack of basic resources, ignorance, elitism, arrogance and prejudice deriving from sexism, racism, ageism and homophobia. Gripton believed that social work should do what it could, within the law, to remove these obstacles.

He communicated this philosophy in his practice and teaching. Some colleagues at the St. Patrick's School of Social Welfare, known popularly as *the Casework School*, perceived his stance as an affront to the predominant psychodynamic model that focused on individual clients and their relationships. Believing in the integration of social policy and direct practice, Gripton developed friendships with like-minded individuals in Ottawa, Andrew Armitage, a policy-oriented social worker and Bill Zimmerman, a community organizer. The social policy approach espoused by Gripton, his teaching colleague, Jim Mair and sessional instructors, Andrew Armitage and Bill Zimmerman, was too different and provocative for those who either did not see the social context for individual troubles or know how to engage with it as a caseworker. With the student rights movement gaining ground in Canada in the 1960s, students were keen on social action. However, the university was not oriented to social change; nor did it favour greater democracy or transparency within the institution.

Emphasizing research to obtain data for social work practice was equally foreign for some faculty and practitioners. Bowers had long recognized the importance of using research in practice (Bowers, 1953), but a strong proponent of research, Frank Turner, was no longer with the School. The newcomers advocating research were Gripton and Kurt Fuerst who also brought a cognitive-behavioral perspective. As Assistant Director, Gripton applied his research-oriented style to daily administration. For example, he enlisted faculty in reviewing blind files of applicants, rather than "trying for" a balance of women and men in the program. The unanticipated outcome was an admission rate of over 70 % women when the admissions criteria were applied fairly.

Gripton pioneered in the late 1960s in promoting a holistic approach to practice through the integration of direct intervention, social policy and research. His early support of feminist perspectives provided the impetus for hiring Helen Levine as a sessional instructor and her subsequent development of a feminist approach in the School. At the University of Denver (1973-76), Gripton immersed himself in the American social policy scene and taught research and social policy in the MSW and PhD programs, becoming a highly valued mentor for many of the School's doctoral students (M. Fraser, personal communication, April 28, 1977).

At the University of Calgary his social justice and policy interests led to his proposing a national conference on provincial social policy to his colleague, Jacqueline Ismael. Up to that time, provincial social policy had typically been overlooked by academics, but Gripton's work as the first Principal Grants Officer had given him familiarity with significant policy and practice ventures at the provincial level as well as numerous professional contacts. Gripton and Ismael developed the 1st National Conference on Provincial Social Welfare Policy (1982) held in Calgary and offered a second in 1985; Gripton co-ordinated the 3rd National Conference in May 1987 in Banff, AB. These conferences were the forerunners of later social welfare policy conferences held in Calgary and other settings.

The third conference was personally challenging as Gripton was awaiting the first of his two angioplasties. Ever the activist, his first angioplasty, conducted in early June, was televised to promote provincial funding for operating grants for the theatre equipped for cardiac surgery.

EQUITY FOR WOMEN AND THE EVOLUTION OF A GENDER ANALYSIS

Based on his sensitization to women's issues during his undergraduate years, Gripton was attuned to second wave feminism of the early 1970s. In 1969-70 he completed the analysis of data from Canada's first national day care study (1974). This venture gave him direct information of how essential child care was in the pursuit of women's careers, a point he made whenever the opportunity arose.

His most significant contribution to promoting equity for women was his ground-breaking study entitled *Sexism in social work: male takeover of a female profession* (Gripton, 1974). The research began in the early 1970s as a study of the work force within the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the first national study of its kind. The data revealed that women were systematically discriminated against in terms of salaries, progress in their careers, and type of positions held within practice and education. The differences between women and men could not be explained on the basis of different career interests, qualifications or other factors. Gripton's definition of sexism and proclamation that social work was not treating women and men equally shattered the profession's complacency with respect to the status of women in the social work labour force and prompted the profession to examine exactly how women were treated in comparison to men.

Although the journal *Social Work* rejected the article because it was

addressing Canadian data and there was a query about the source of Gripton's *own* definition of sexism, it was later cited in two articles in the *Special Issue on Women, Social Work*, 1976 (Kravetz, 1976; Kadushin, 1976). Social work researchers in the United States were focusing on how women and men fared in their careers though no survey of members of The National Association of Social Workers had been conducted to elicit information specifically relating to sexism (Fanschel, D., 1976). Gripton's study was unique in its timing, scope, use of a gender analysis, findings and implications in challenging the profession to address equity within social work.

Gripton's leadership and guidance prompted the author's interest in sex differences and career management (Valentich & Gripton, 1978), followed by the development of workshops and materials on acting assertively in the workplace (Valentich & Gripton, 1990, 1995).

In assessing the development of a gender analysis in his research on women's and men's social work careers, Gripton recalled a study by Elizabeth Govan of the University of Toronto in the 1950s, on "manpower" but with no consideration of data from the perspective of women and men. Application of a gender lens is now a given, facilitated by a mainstay of social research, the use of computers.

COMPUTERS IN SOCIAL WORK

While engaged in his doctoral research at the University of Chicago in the early 1960s, Gripton realized the potential of computers to change the face of social work research. He was among the earliest in Canada to use the computer in social work research and consistently demonstrated its usage in research, practice and education, thereby preparing many students and practitioners for a newly emerging technologically oriented world.

Understanding the fears of many social work students about research, statistics and technology, Gripton sought to devise non-threatening ways for students to achieve comfort and skill in using the computer. Not all was smooth sailing as staff resources such as teaching assistants were not available nor were the technical aspects sufficiently functional, thereby heightening students' frustration with the new techniques and expectations. There was much tension in the first undergraduate social work research course at the University of Calgary in the 1980s when Gripton introduced computers into regular class use for weekly quizzes and computer-based assignments. Some faculty as well as students felt that such mechanistic techniques would destroy the "art" that was

involved in social work practice.

Nonetheless, Gripton persisted with his use of the computer, believing that social workers could learn to collect data for practice purposes, not simply collect information that sometimes was not even available to them. To this end, he offered free consultation to agency staff interested in conducting on-site research. By the early 1980s he was presenting papers at international conferences and demonstrating in his own practice and research how one could benefit by greater use of technology (Gripton, 1981; 1983; 1985). He was a great supporter of Walter Hudson's scales (The Walmyr, 1997) and envisioned clients completing the scales on the office computer, and social workers doing their notes on their laptops at the end of the session. The culmination of his activities in the mid-1980s was a major demonstration project conducted at the Alberta Children's Hospital, *The Digital Social Worker: Microcomputers in Clinical Social Work Practice* (de Groot, Gripton & Licker, 1986).

For some, social work's embrace of the computer signaled nirvana; others found themselves increasingly alienated by this technology. For those who shared his vision of a research-based profession, fully embracing technologies for purposes of improving practice and fostering social justice, he was a guiding light, particularly if they were passionate about questionnaire design, survey research and single system design. His legacy is most evident in the appreciation shown by former PhD students whom he assisted: without his calm, non-threatening approach, they believed they might never have completed their data analyses (J. Gandy, personal communication, May 24, 2007; S.Thibodeau, personal communication, Nov. 6, 2005).

A RESEARCH-BASED PROFESSION

Social work provided Gripton with an unending series of fascinating questions, resulting in his ongoing research engagement and demonstration of the importance of research to social work's stature as a profession. At the Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto in 1964, he developed a computer simulation of adoption services that demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of intensive services for adoption of hard-to-place children. As Principal Grants Officer (1966-68), he sparked numerous research and demonstration projects across Canada and offered intensive consultation to bring the projects to a successful conclusion. With the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (1968-70), he conducted research to more accurately assess suitable foster homes and to predict adoption placement outcomes. At St Patrick's (1968-72) he determined

factors that increased the likelihood of accepted candidates for admission actually following through on their acceptance. In 1974, thanks to his having one Economics course, he qualified as a Social Services Research Analyst with the Policy and Program Development and Coordination Branch, Health and Welfare where he was a member of special unit considering implementation of recommendations from a federal social security review. His heart issues led him to study the psychosocial aspects of cardiovascular surgery (Gripton, 1984), later followed by a demonstration of the potential of social work services in a hospital emergency area. From 2000 to 2004, he conducted annual Exit Surveys of MSW graduates to better understand the employment patterns of graduates and how educational programs could enhance their performance. Invariably, his research changed established practice.

However, Gripton envisioned all social workers as research-oriented. For many years, especially after Fischer's stunning inditement of social casework (1973), Gripton had allied himself with an emerging movement to strengthen social work roles as research-based. By 1978 he had proposed a redefinition of the role of the clinical social worker as a practitioner-researcher and was teaching a series of courses involving practicum-related assignments to prepare students for this role (Gripton, 1978). In his own clinical practice, he used Goal Attainment Scaling, simulation games, development of scales and/or use of the Hudson scales, and charting of behavioral changes. He espoused a variety of single-system designs for clinical practice and taught social workers to demonstrate effectiveness of their interventions through systematically evaluating their practice (Allison, Gripton, & Rodway, 1990). In this regard, he likely misjudged many social workers' aptitudes or capacity in their existing work settings to engage in the careful evaluative processes he advocated. He later acknowledged that "despite heroic and creative efforts on the part of a number of leading social work researchers... little progress was made" (Gripton, Nutter, Irving & Murphy, 1995, p. 204).

To demonstrate the nature of social work as a research-based profession, Gripton and several colleagues produced an enormous compendium of knowledge about research in Canada entitled *A study of the State-of-the-art of social work research in Canada* (1995). Gripton was Principal Investigator, and conducted the surveys of social work faculty members and administrators of social work education units in Canadian universities. Richard Nutter surveyed the research activities of professional social workers as well as social service information units. Al Irving prepared chapters on the early history of social work research, and Irving and Gripton collaborated on history since 1930. Mary Ann

Murphy assisted in all the foregoing studies and surveyed university research administration offices regarding applications for research funds and grants. This highly collaborative venture reflected Gripton's ideal with respect to use of research groups for achieving desired goals.

While the study's definition of social work research focused on the personal social services, Gripton and Irving's examination of the commitment of Canadian social work to the scientific imperative addressed the broader stage of social welfare research. Gripton and Irving planned a separate historical assessment of the evolution of the scientific imperative in social work: only the first article was published (Gripton & Irving, 1996) though others were in preparation.

PROMOTION OF SOCIAL WORK DOCTORAL STUDIES

One impediment to the development of a research-based profession was the dearth of educators with social work doctorates: from 1955 to 1987 only the University of Toronto in English-speaking Canada offered a doctoral program. Gripton believed that more programs were a necessity if social work was to become an important contributor to the resolution of social problems through social work research. Further, with no program in Western Canada, potential students faced major dilemmas regarding their career goals. Given his experience in supervising social work doctorates at the University of Toronto and the University of Denver, he was one of the few Canadians qualified to initiate Canada's third doctoral program.

The path to the PhD at the University of Calgary was not without obstacles, namely, an anti-PhD sentiment espoused by some faculty who believed there was no need for social work doctoral education or a new program to drain resources from established programs. Ultimately, Gripton did supervise Dr. Kathleen Kufeldt, the University of Calgary's first social work special case graduate (1980). The PhD program was approved in principle by the Faculty of Graduate Studies in the 1980s, but with the requirement that the research component in the MSW program be strengthened before proceeding with implementation. Although disappointed by the outcome, Gripton realized that a foundation had been laid. Other proposals evolved, with a PhD program beginning in 1993.

During the development of the first PhD proposal, Gripton conducted the first Canadian study of social work doctorates (1982) in terms of their careers and their research accomplishments. Applying a gender analysis, he showed that women were not doing as well as their male counterparts,

even though they had achieved social work's highest degree. His questioned whether equity was a guiding value with respect to women's career progress and often drew attention to the scarcity of female deans of schools of social work during this period, applauding the appointment of Dr. Gayla Rogers in 1998 as the first female social work dean at the University of Calgary.

Gripton was also active in the US-based Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education (GADE), making visible the achievements of Canadian doctoral programs and their graduates.

HUMAN SEXUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

One of his most successful innovations was introducing Human Sexuality courses into social work curricula (Valentich, M. & Gripton, J., 1975) and preparing social workers for differentiated practice (Gripton, J. & Valentich, M., 1978) with a range of sexual problems (Gripton, J. & Valentich, M., 1985) that was much broader than the set of sexual dysfunctions typically identified in the non-social work sexuality literature. At St. Patrick's School of Social Welfare in 1971, surveys of students and field practice instructors revealed that human sexuality content in social work curricula was highly desired. However, some faculty believed that human sexuality was a medical matter and did not fit with the school's psychodynamic perspective. It took two years of intensive lobbying before the non-credit elective for 5 women and 5 men was approved by Carleton's University Senate and taught in the spring of 1973.

The content remained provocative for some: explicit sexual behavior on film and video; no use of the DSM for topics such as sexual orientation; and critiques of institutional practices of organized religion, mental health and the traditional family that resulted in some persons being sexually oppressed. Sex roles (later known as gender) of women and men were critically examined and the implications of the sexual revolution considered for social work practice. Additionally, the course was experientially taught with individual and small group teaching exercises involving development of self awareness and communication skills, a modality that was not yet viewed positively within the university. Films for the course were usually picked up by the University of Windsor in Detroit, driven across the border and then sent to Ottawa. Thus, both course content and teaching approaches challenged existing ways of doing things and in particular, traditional conservative/religious

ideologies that saw sexuality as a private matter, not open for educational discussion, debate and diversity of views.

In promoting human sexuality content in social work, Gripton and Valentich were not alone: Ben Schlesinger at the University of Toronto, Bert Marcuse at the University of Calgary and Joyce Askwith at McMaster all pioneered in Canada to advance this direction. There was a great sense of promise and adventure felt by participants in the first National Conference on Family Planning for sex educators convened by Family Planning Ottawa in Hamilton, ON in 1972 (February 28-March 2); the program even offered an early SAR (Sexual Attitude Reassessment) workshop.

In 1975, Gripton and Valentich introduced the first MSW course in Human Sexuality at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work. At the University of Calgary, Valentich and Gripton developed several courses in human sexuality at various levels and contributed to the social work knowledge base about sexuality (Gripton & Valentich, 1982, Gripton & Valentich, 1986; Gripton & Valentich, 1990; Valentich & Gripton, 1981; Valentich & Gripton, 1984; Valentich & Gripton, 1985). Gripton also took a leadership role as Executive Director with the Canadian Sex Research Forum (1992-93) prior to his second angioplasty, organizing one conference in Banff and assisting with another in Fredericton.

Because he was prominent in advocating for the sexual rights of the marginalized, such as gays, lesbians and transgender persons, he often took the brunt of criticism from those in conservative regions of Alberta who believed that sexuality was an entirely private matter designed for heterosexually oriented persons for purposes of procreation. An ally of the gay community, Gripton was open about his heterosexual orientation, but resisted rigid categorization of individuals by orientation. Despite the media's tendency to sensationalize stories related to sexuality or to misrepresent the speaker's views, he did not hesitate to speak out, believing strongly that social workers were ethically bound to present research-based views or value-based commentary that challenged prejudicial perspectives and discriminatory behaviors. He assisted organizations in developing policy positions on sex-related issues such as abortion, birth control, the definition of the family, and sexual abuse by clergy and helping professionals. He was one of the few men who quietly volunteered in traditional women's organizations such as the Calgary Birth Control Agency, the Women's Centre and the University of Calgary's December 6 Committee.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As an innovator, Gripton identified issues early in their development, envisioned new ways of seeing and solving problems and was prepared to take risks in implementing his ideas. He disregarded personal and professional costs and persisted with his ideas until there was some desired outcome. He considered his most significant contributions to have been in the administration of services, namely, staff utilization, staff training, developing standards of practice, and applications of computers to social services administration and practice; and also, in teaching social policy and building social work's research capacity. He was proud of his work in sexuality, promotion of women's rights, and development of professional organizations. He never conceived of himself as "retired," initiating projects until the end.

Despite his frailty, he was a member of a small group in the 2000s that organized to change the sexist designation of Calgary's elected municipal officials from "alderman to "councillor" (Valentich, 2009). When lobbying aldermen, he noted the importance of demonstrating that a man was concerned about fair treatment of women. After his death, his oncologist stated that there was "no medical explanation for Jim's living his last three years!" (W. Blahey, personal communication, January 17, 2006). When this information was shared with friends, the general consensus was that "apart from his determination to live, it was his love of his professional work that kept him going" (G. Gilchrist James, personal communication, January 20, 2006). A paramount value for Gripton was to "complete" his work and thereby to strengthen the profession so that reasoned, credible and compassionate voices could advocate for justice for all persons.

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