Mary Q. Hawkes, a life of service to justice for women

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Community Resources for Justice (CRJ) has lost a longtime and active supporter with the passing of Mary Q. Hawkes Sanders in March of this year. In 1969, Mary joined the Board of Directors of the Crime and Justice Foundation, where she was a strong, and sometimes boisterous, voice for programming for female offenders. Mary was also a member of the Board of Directors of Massachusetts Half-Way Houses, Inc. (MHHI) from 1988 to 1999, when MHHI merged with CRJ. In 2002, she retired as an active member of CRJ's board, and was made an honorary member for life. The President of CRJ’s Board of Directors, Brian A. Callery wrote in the organization's 2002 Annual Report: "My deep thanks go out to two longtime directors who have now left the Board. Mary Q. Hawkes' long and fruitful career in corrections, focusing on women prisoners' issues as both academician and practitioner, gave her a unique and valuable perspective, which she shared for our benefit for more than 30 years."

In 1929, when she was only 5 years old, her mother was appointed to the Board of Managers of the New Jersey Reformatory for Women. Mary Ann would become acquainted with her mother's work and as she grew up. When she was getting ready for college, Edna Mahan, one of the first women superintendents of a female correctional facility, became her mentor. The summer before her high school graduation she worked as an assistant at the Reformatory which she had visited as a young girl. This job would determine her life long passion about the condition of women in prison and also about the women who worked in the justice system.

Mary Ann graduated from Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts in 1947 with an undergraduate degree in biochemistry. From there she attended the School of Social Work in Philadelphia for one semester, where she determined that social work and not science was her calling. That same year, she decided to move to Kentucky to work for the Frontier Nursing Service (FNS). Mary Ann worked providing social services administrative support. Many years later she would declare to the Townsman Correspondent newspaper in Wellesley, "I went to Appalachia in 1948 to do social work but I realized that I needed to grow up myself. I worked with the Nurses on Horseback, an organization that began in the last century after Daniel Boone opened the Wilderness Road".

Mary Ann Quarles was born on December 31, 1924 in Plainfield, New Jersey. Her parents were Anita Mary Stillman and Emmet Augustus Quarles. She had three older brothers, James, Francis and Thomas. She grew up in the midst of activities related to social services for women in trouble with the law. Her mother Anita was the first female Deputy Sheriff of Union County.
Her practical experience with the FNS shifted her interest one more time, this time to the field of sociology. In a Nunn Center Oral History interview (1979) she declared "After two years of working at the Frontier Nursing Service, I realized that social work was not gonna aid me, as social work was set up at that time, it was not gonna aid me in doing work in that kind of a setting. But that sociology would. That learning the background of the people in that whole area was much more important than the kinds of things they trained you for in social work." (p. 7)

She graduated with a Masters in Sociology from the University of Kentucky in 1950, incorporating to her academic work the experience she received while with the FNS. During her years in Kentucky Mary Ann was also influenced by another outstanding female leader, Ms. Mary Breckinridge, director of the FNS until her death in 1965.

Mary Ann remained in Kentucky until 1957. She worked as an Instructor in Sociology at Berea College from 1954 to 1957. In her curriculum vitae, Mary Ann wrote that "during the summer of 1956 she supervised five Berea College students at the New Jersey Reformatory for two months. Upon graduation from Berea College in 1957, one student returned to work at the New Jersey Reformatory for over ten years and one went to work at the Federal Reformatory for Women in Alderson, West Virginia." Clearly, Mary Ann saw her academic work intrinsically linked to work in the field.

Mary Ann married her first husband, Robert Hawkes, a Communications professor at Boston University in 1963. During this time the Hawkes set residency in Newton, Massachusetts. Unfortunately, Robert passed away in 1967 afflicted by cancer.

During this time she also taught as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In 1964, she started a distinguished career as a Professor of Sociology at Rhode Island College. In 1966, Mary Ann completed her Ph.D. at Boston University, in Sociology with a concentration in Criminology. The title of her doctoral dissertation was "Organizational Analysis of the New Jersey Reformatory for Women in Relation to Stated Principles of Corrections, 1913-1963". She was the Rhode Island College Chairperson of the Sociology Department between 1976 and 1980. Her academic career at RIC ended in 1988, when she retired. Currently her memory remains alive at RIC through the Mary Ann Hawkes Award in Justice Studies, granted to an academically qualified graduating senior, who demonstrates recognition of and concern for national, regional, or local problems of justice and their solutions.

As if life had planned to close a circle that opened during her Kentucky years, Mary Ann would find in Massachusetts Professor Irwin Sanders, whom she knew as head of the sociology department at the University of Kentucky in the 50s. Mary Ann and Irwin, "Sandy", Sanders would get married on November 1, 1998, about 47 years after they first met. In the 1999 Townsman interview she said, "Sandy and I have common backgrounds. My grandfather taught his father at Washington & Lee. We believe in predestination." Sandy" passed away in 2005 at the age of 96.

The practical and academic work of Mary Ann in the field of justice, criminology, and community corrections deserves special attention. In her 1997 Curriculum Vitae Mary Ann wrote: "Through my 25 plus years of college teaching, I consistently taught courses dealing with corrections. I utilized numerous ACA (American Correctional Association) publications in my courses. I encourage students and colleagues to join ACA. I regularly placed students in internships in both community and institutional settings. I supervised the students in their internships, consulted regularly with their placement supervisors and visited each site. Many of my students are currently working in corrections and have made it a career. In my
1993-1995 consulting at the Rhode Island Department of Corrections I met many of my former students who are employed in the Department of Corrections which includes probation and parole.”

Mary Ann continued her professional connections with the State of Rhode Island. In the 1980s she worked as a consultant for the Justice Resource Corporation. Later on she worked evaluating the programs of Justice Assistance, a private correctional service agency in Providence, Rhode Island. In the 1990s, again making a clear link between theory and practice, Mary Ann worked for the Rhode Island Department of Corrections to evaluate the Associate Degree Programs for Corrections offered by the Community College of Rhode Island at the Department of Corrections.

Mary Ann wrote articles, essays and books on the subject of corrections including:

- "How one women’s reformatory interested students in the correctional field", American Journal of Corrections (1964),
- "Rhode Island – a case study in compliance", Corrections Today (1985),
- "Women and corrections in the United States", co-authored by Tamara Holden and presented at the Australian Bicentennial International Congress on Corrective Services, Australia (1988),
- "Women’s changing roles in corrections", ACA, (1991),
- Excellent Effect: the Edna Mahan Story, ACA (1994), and

There is also a long list of organizations that Mary Ann supported, usually for long terms, as with her tenure as a CRJ board member. Her curriculum vitae gives us an illustration of her incredible energy and passion for human rights and women’s rights in the field of corrections. A few of her professional associations include:

- Since 1957, American Association of University Women
- 1960, Chairperson Juvenile Justice Committee, Hunterdon County, New Jersey
- 1961-1996, American Sociological Association
- Since 1961, American Correctional Association
- Since 1969, New England Sociological Association
- Since 1973, Sociologists for Women in Society
- Since 1980, Correctional Association of Massachusetts
- 1983-1988, Medical Advisory Board at the RI Department of Children and Their Families
- 1986-1996, People to People at MCI Framingham
- 1989-1992, Citizens Advisory Committee to Suffolk County House of Correction
- 1996, Coordinator Association on Programs for Female Offenders

An interesting note about her affiliation with MHHI clearly reveals the humility of this outstanding professor and scholar. This is a particular trait that was endearing to all who crossed her path, from her social service days in Kentucky to her death. As she refers to one of the houses that MHHI operated, and described it a "transition house for homeless women in conflict with the law and their children", she indicated that as a member of the Board of Directors she "worked actively with staff and residents of the house on various projects from fund raising to gardening".
Mary Ann’s work was acknowledged and properly recognized by her peers, just as she made an effort to do the same to others. Among other awards, she received:

- In 1980 the Rhode Island Commission on Volunteerism and Citizen Participation recognized her as "Administrative Volunteer of the Year", for conducting extensive review of policies and procedures of the Adult Correctional Institutions in the State.
- In 1982, she received an award from Justice Resource Corporation in RI "in recognition of outstanding service to Rhode Island’s Correctional System and Support of Justice Resource Corporation’s goals and objectives".
- In 1987, she received the Distinguished Service Award at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Rhode Island College.
- In 1989, Justice Assistance of RI granted her the Neil J. Houston, Jr. Award for Dedicated Service and Citizen Contribution Towards the Criminal Justice Profession and Public Interest".
- In 1995, she was recognized at the 6th National Workshop on Adult and Juvenile Female Offenders in South Carolina, "for dedicated teaching, research and service toward improving programs and services for female offenders".
- In 1999, she received the distinguished E. R. Cass Correctional Achievement Award from the American Correctional Association, the highest honor granted by the ACA.
- In 2001 she received the Volunteers of America’s highest honor, the Maud Booth award, “in recognition of your dedicated service and leadership in corrections”.
- In 2004, she received the Howard B. Gill Lifetime Achievement Award from the Correctional Association of Massachusetts, which recognized her outstanding contributions to corrections and the female offender.

Mary Ann established her own award at the Crime and Justice Foundation, the “Mary Q. Hawkes Award” to recognize individuals or groups who manifest a true and steady commitment to the betterment of treatment of the criminal offender – especially females and juveniles."

After living in Newton and Wellesley, Sandy and Mary Ann decided to move to an independent and assisted facility for older, active adults. Indeed, while at Norumbega Point, Mary Ann continued her activities as much as health permitted. Ms. Sandra West, the current Director at Norumbega Point recalls, "Mary Ann shared sage advice to me as a new executive director to Norumbega Point more than 6 years ago. She confidently instructed me to create the community the resident’s want, not what others “including the owner” think the residents want. “Ask, listen, do”...or “watch, do, teach” she would tell the staff. Mary Ann encouraged everyone to seize every opportunity. “Step out of your comfort zone and explore all the day has to offer!”

In 2008, as her health deteriorated Mary Ann relocated to Sudbury Pines Extended Care, in Sudbury, Massachusetts. There, Mary Ann passed away Friday, March 15, 2013, at age 88. She is survived by her brother Thomas, sister-in-law Carolyn and nieces and nephews. She will also be survived by generations of people with a commitment to true justice for all, with particular attention to the condition of women involved in the justice systems. Mary Ann followed in the steps of the great women she so
admired like Edna Mahan and Mary
Brickenridge. We and new generations can look
back at her example and learn from her work. It
is, in fact, our responsibility to make sure that
her legacy endures.
References


