



In Memoriam • Gwen Morgan 1925-2015

by Roger Neugebauer



Gwen Morgan, one of the true visionaries in our field, worked tirelessly for over four decades to provide better care for America's children. Gwen died at her home in Lincoln, Massachusetts, on September 4, 2015.

Gwen's was a pioneering driving force in the arena of employer child care. Her influence in the business sector grew, leading her to co-found Work Family Directions where she was instrumental in launching the American Business Collaborative for Quality Dependent Care. Gwen's passion to uplift the quality of care for each of America's children resulted in her becoming a leading proponent for sound licensing practices.

To provide greater support for parents in their search for quality child care services, Gwen was a leader in the movement to establish child care resource and referral agencies. Her 1972 evaluation of the nation's 4 C system was instrumental in guiding the course of the R&R movement. At Wheelock, she pushed the envelope by expanding her Advanced Management Seminars to include a week for child care resource and referral directors.

Most importantly, Gwen was a leading advocate for improved child care funding and policies. Her advocacy for improved child care services in Massachusetts led to her being appointed the first director of the Massachusetts Office for Children in 1972. Her influence on the national scene was strengthened when she helped found the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, the leading national advocacy organization of the 1970s and early 1980s. Her publication in 1992 of *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Child Care Universe*, was a shrewd analysis of the early childhood policy environment. Her conceptualization of the 'child care trilemma' of affordability, accessibility, and quality concisely captured the tradeoffs in advocating for effective child care policies.

With all her great achievements, Gwen was primarily a behind the scenes leader. Possibly her greatest contributions were the countless people she took under her wing and mentored into major roles in our field. When Bonnie and I decided to launch a management magazine for early childhood leaders, Gwen was our main source of inspiration and encouragement. For decades, she continued as a great idea generator ("Roger, I think you need to do an article on..."), connector ("You guys really need to know..."), and cheerleader. Even in her final years she remained a supporter. Bonnie remembers a call from her a few years ago when she said, "Now here is what I think I need to write for you next."

Over the years we have encountered hundreds of leaders in our field who love to share stories about how Gwen got them started, rekindled their enthusiasm, pointed them in new directions, or connected them with people who advanced their careers. She was always ready to help, never said an unkind word (except about politicians), and approached most challenges with a unique perspective. When you were discouraged, she could either bring you back with some wise advice or by applying her great sense of humor.

She was in no way pretentious, very approachable, and comfortable with herself. For many she was known as the early childhood bag lady for all the bags of books, magazines, and reports she was always carting about. It seemed that no matter what problem you brought to her, she would be able to pull out just the resource you needed from one of those bags.

Gwen was a unique builder of our profession — she coupled a willingness to work extremely hard (usually with scant recognition or remuneration) with an uncanny ability to apply systems thinking to move a very diverse and disorganized field forward.

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