



# Child, Youth and Family Work In Practice

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## GONE AWAY BUT, NOT FORGOTTEN



Hugh O'Neill, 1936 - 1998  
CCAP President, 1992 - 1994

With the passing of our dear friend and colleague, Hugh O'Neill, I am stirred to write about him, and the influence he had in the field of Children, Youth and Family services.

I met Hugh through my involvement with PCYF (back when our name was CCAP). Hugh and his wife Sue were houseparents for Milton Hershey School. Throughout the 1980's, our Central Region held it's annual conference at Milton Hershey School. Hugh attended the conferences and immediately wanted more involvement for himself and other houseparents. He eventually was elected President of the Board of CCAP.

Hugh was fun to be around. This man had a great sense of humor; he was a thinker, and he was a doer. I think he had one speed, "fast".

I spent a couple of nights as a guest at Boone House where Hugh and Sue worked. It reminded me of a small day care program for five and six year olds. The only difference was this was their home, and Hugh was the guiding father figure. It was touching to see the emotion and love expressed to all these little girls and boys. He made them laugh. He held them close. He comforted them when life was rough.

As a guest, Hugh was a wonderful host, sometimes waiting up until midnight for me and John Bukovac to arrive in from Latrobe. We would have something to eat while we would talk about kids, families,

and child care in general.

Hugh was never short on conversation. His knowledge and experiences in life fed right into his gift of expression. He was also a great listener. He was the kind of person who could pick up the relationship at any point in time, no matter how long it had been since the last phone call or meeting.

His love for finding the humor in life, either through jokes or irony, was nearly equal to his love for kids and families. Being the treasurer for the Board, I would often receive correspondence from Hugh. He would end his notes with "remember C-CAPing is fun!" These words always brought a smile to my face as I remembered the big picture of what our work is all about.

High was a life time learner. In his early 50's he began to pursue a Doctoral Degree. He spent time overseas in Vietnam and Thailand and spoke five different languages. He was not afraid to create controversy especially when quality of purpose was being challenged by some bureaucratic policy. He knew how to keep the focus on the important tasks that needed done. He was a hard worker, often working on projects late into the night. Hugh could have been one of those people that only needed four hours of sleep a night.

Hugh did his best work when he was around other people he believed in. I was one of those people who didn't know this then, but rather experienced it. I did my best work knowing Hugh was involved in the project.

Those of us who knew him will cherish our memories. We will feel his presence in the challenges we face as professionals in the field of Children, Youth and Families, in every smile and laugh, in every ho, ho, ho, C-CAPing is fun there goes Hugh O'Neil.

Thank you friend for all that you have given us. You will be missed by all.

Gary J. Soltys  
The Board of Directors  
Professionals for Children, Youth, and Families

## ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

### PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILIES

*(Formerly the Child Care Association of Pennsylvania)*

Sept. 17 & 18, 1998

Holiday Inn East-Harrisburg

Full Conference: \$95  
Thurs.: \$65 Fri.: \$50

Keynote Presentation  
Thursday Luncheon

Presenter:  
Ms. Jeanne DeAngellis, A.C.S.W

Executive Director,  
The Pennsylvania Council  
of Children's

For her keynote presentation, Ms. DeAngellis will be addressing the current state of client care in the commonwealth. She will discuss the many state and county initiatives which now confront the field. This discussion will include how these changes impact on the delivery of services and individual agencies. Jeanne has graciously agreed to conduct a workshop, after lunch, to explore these issues in much more depth.

For more information contact:

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## Hugh O'Neill '55 Dies; Youth Welfare Specialist

Hugh O'Neill '55, a Life Member who dedicated his adult life to youth welfare around the globe, died in July. He was a 1993 recipient of our Award of Merit.

Mr. O'Neill attended Penn State on a soccer scholarship, then transferred to George Williams College in Chicago. At State College, he was a Youth Fellowship advisor and in Chicago a group social worker. He worked with YMCAs and boys clubs at both locales, then joined the Peace Corps.

He was a children's social worker in Turkey, worked in low income housing in Peru and, at 33, was appointed advisor to the Prime Minister of South Vietnam, organizing a School of Social Work, drafting model juvenile delinquency legislation and overseeing day care centers, orphanages and refugees. In Thailand, he worked on problems of displaced persons. He was a foreign service officer with the State Department's Agency for International Development. His work with the Prime Minister and the South Vietnam armed forces earned him that country's Medal of Honor.

Mr. O'Neill was a houseparent at Girard from 1982 to 1987 and later filled a similar role at the Hershey (PA) School. He was on special assignment in Owensboro, Kentucky concerning juvenile delinquency when he succumbed.

He was finishing course work toward a doctorate in public policy planning, centering on children and families. While on

the Girard staff, Mr. O'Neill devoted many hours to volunteer work with the Alumni Association to bolster membership. He is survived by his wife, Dara, a daughter and three grandchildren.

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*G. O'Neill '55  
Alumni*