

Bettyann Dubansky was on the faculty of the MU School of Social work for 28 years, and served for many years as the director of undergraduate studies. She received her BA from the University of Iowa and her MSW from Washington University in St. Louis. After working with rehabilitation and chronic disease services at Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, she left to help develop a one-year graduate program in social work at the University of Missouri, where she remained until her retirement in 1992.

Professor Dubansky had polio as a child and in her later years used first a scooter and then an electric wheelchair to get around. She was extremely independent and served as a role model and teacher about disabilities to all who encountered her.

When she was 8 years old, she spent nine months in the Junior League Convalescent Home in Des Moines, which she and her friends called the “red brick concentration camp.” She had to stay at the hospital day and night, even though there was no medical reason she couldn’t go home each evening.

At age 11, she started a six-month stay at another hospital where she instigated gurney and wheelchair races. She went to elementary school at the Smouse Opportunity School for Handicapped Children in Des Moines and moved to a public school in ninth grade.

Moving to the public school turned out to be the best thing for her because it provided her with the opportunity to be mainstreamed with non-disabled children. The school was more competitive and it took her away from the spectre of prolonged institutionalization.

The series of experiences gave her a unique perspective on health care. She found the current trend toward getting patients, particularly elderly ones, out of the hospital quickly for financial reasons depressing. She believed that social workers have a responsibility to help patients through the transition from inpatient to outpatient.

Medially, Dubansky’s focus was on helping people be in the environment that they want, or the one they think is possible. She believed that advocacy—for oneself and others—is the most important part of independent living for the consumer as well as the professional.

Dubansky was an advocate for the Independent Living movement, and served on the Board of Directors for *Services for Independent Living* in Columbia. She took a twelve-month sabbatical in 1980-1981 to work with *Paragad, Inc.*, an independent living agency in St. Louis for the severely disabled. There, she developed and promoted independent living programs. She also spent a five-month sabbatical in 1988 working at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center and served as the interim executive director of *Services for Independent Living* after her retirement. She served on the Governor's Commission on the Handicapped in the mid-1980’s.

Dubansky was President of the Hillel Board of Directors and she was an advocate for the Jewish students on the MU Campus. She was instrumental in the establishment of Congregation Beth

Shalom, the synagogue for the Columbia congregation. She was active in Hadassah and served as president of the local chapter.

In addition to the classroom, she also served as field instructor and taught field units at Fulton State Hospital, as well as at other agencies in Central Missouri and Kansas City. She was an excellent role model for students trying to learn to be effective social workers in medical, mental health and public welfare settings. She was a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Missouri Association for Social Welfare.

Bettyann Dubansky had many friends and she was a good friend to them all. She taught people about disability and independence through how she lived her life. She had a great love of animals as well as people—always taking in strays and spoiling them rotten.

Dubansky was a fierce defender of civil rights, stayed abreast of current events, and voted in every election. Even in her last days at Lenoir Health Care Center she still tried to recruit staff and friends to enter the social work profession. Scholarships in her name would give her the greatest pleasure. This scholarship in her name, endowed by her family, is a tribute to her feisty spirit, independence, and friendship.