



CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY Faculty Senate

Associate Professor Mareyjoyce Green (Sociology and Director of Women's Comprehensive Program)

Professor Mareyjoyce Green died peacefully on September 13, 2019 at the age of 91. Professor Green, known to almost all as Mareyjoyce, joined Cleveland State in 1966 as an Instructor in the Department of Sociology. She retired in 2009 as Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Women's Comprehensive Program. Many of us believe her to be the best known and most impactful of CSU sociologists. Mareyjoyce excelled in public sociology, using the sociological perspective for meaningful community engagement more than for research and writing. Her strong professional reputation was based on her service leadership, both to her profession and the community. The thrust of her engagement was inspired by her passionate mission to make successful degree earners of the hundreds of students she counselled in her Women's Comprehensive Program. As a member of CSU's first generation of faculty, this joint passion for her service activity and her students remains a leading example of how we strengthen our educational mission with service and community engagement activity.

At her funeral perhaps the most significant and certainly the most poignant of her memorabilia on display was a large stack of Professor Green's student evaluations, testimonials of her success and their gratitude for her belief in them. This bond with her students can be explained in part by her own life challenges.

Although she never ever talked about herself, we learned from her adult children that her own childhood was spent on a small family farm in the backwoods of East Texas, together with her seven brothers and sisters. Their home had no electricity or running water, but a passion for education. Along with being an excellent farm hand, specializing in weeding, Mareyjoyce graduated from high school at age 15, and then four years later, in 1947, from nearby Wiley College. Wiley College was the first HBCU west of the Mississippi and is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Mareyjoyce Bowie majored in sociology and education and also met her future husband, Charles Green. Her late husband was one of Cleveland's first African American CPAs, worked many years for the Internal Revenue Service, and later managed a church credit union. When the Greens arrived in Cleveland in the early 1950s looking for work, Mareyjoyce successfully auditioned at Karamu House, where she performed modern dance for a period of time. Soon however, she returned to sociology and received a Master's degree from Western Reserve University in 1960. After some initial adjunct appointments at Tri-C and Kent, followed by a three-year term as head of sociology for the new Ohio State extension campus in Lakewood, she joined fledgling CSU in its third year in 1966.



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In 1978 she developed and became director of the Women's Comprehensive Center, a position she held until her retirement. The program targeted reentry women, those whose educational careers had been interrupted after high school or a short period of college because of various other life responsibilities. She recruited these students to CSU and became their supercoach, always telling them they would succeed and providing critical advice to make that happen. She and colleague Roberta Steinbacher also successfully applied for a county grant for CSU that provided scholarships for women students on family assistance.

All women in the Comprehensive Program took her famous capstone seminar, Women in Corporate America. This was a learn by observation experience in which each student shadowed a leader in each of the public, private and nonprofit sectors.

Mareyjoyce served two years, from 1990-1992, as Interim Vice President for Minority Affairs. This was a troubled time in CSU's history, and although she was ambivalent about accepting an assignment many of her minority colleagues urged her not to take, her success in healing these wounds was vital for continuing the university's commitment to equity and diversity.

Outside the university Mareyjoyce always was much in demand for her service leadership. For her profession of sociology she was President of the Association of Black Sociologists; Vice President, Sociologists for Women in Society; Chair, Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities of the American Sociological Association and Co-Chair of its Committee on the Status of Women in Sociology; Treasurer of the North Central Sociological Association and Chair of its Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities. She also held elected offices in the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Local community service included Vice President, Federation for Community Planning; member of the Desegregation Commission for School Monitoring and Community Relations, and numerous Board memberships, including the League of Women Voters, the YWCA, the Center for Families and Children, Goodwill Industries, St. Ann's Foundation, League Park Center, and Women Space, among others. The significance of her contributions to these causes and groups is measured in the many awards, honors, and citations she received over the years.

Her final contribution to the Sociology Department was to co-chair the organizing committee for a dinner lecture series honoring Dr. Butler Jones, the department's highly respected former chair. This annual event was attended by sociology faculty and students from across Northeastern Ohio, by our university president and several Board members, and by distinguished community leaders. Mareyjoyce recruited the eminent sociologists who spoke at this event, and even persuaded each to waive their customary speaking fee. The endowment that resulted from this venture now supports fully paid speakers as well as student scholarships.

Mareyjoyce is survived by several generations of her large and high-achieving extended family, and most immediately by her beloved daughter Janet and son Wallace. Mareyjoyce as a warm human being will be sorely missed, but her legacy will surely be a lasting one for CSU.

 Written by Dr. William Morgan
and delivered to Faculty Senate on October 16, 2019