

Maynard Hesselbarth, MSW, LCSW – 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award

“Having the opportunity to work with Maynard and get to know him personally has enlightened my view on aging as well as advocacy. His appreciation for life, willingness to help, constant striving for improvement, willingness to learn and take risks, and genuine kindness are only a few of his admired traits.”

Maynard was born in Abilene, Kansas on June 15th, 1922. He was one of nine children and grew up one block from Dwight Eisenhower’s parent’s home in Abilene.

Maynard received his B.A. Degree in Sociology from the University of Kansas in 1947. He received his Master of Social Work Degree in 1949 from the same University. Maynard was employed with eight different agencies from June of 1949 until his retirement as Director of the Morgan County Department of Social Services in 1987. His varied work included casework, social work, psychotherapy, supervision, liaison, acting as a director, and managing budgets, and grants. Maynard has work experience with children, youth, adults, different races and cultures, and the developmentally challenged.

Maynard retired in 1987 and began his volunteer work which included 12 years as a tutor for Mesa County Public Library. He was selected as Outstanding Tutor at the Lauback Literacy Action Organization in Orlando, Florida. Maynard has volunteered at the elementary schools for ten years in Mesa County. In addition, he served in the Rotary Club and Lions Club. Maynard has always been active in his church and continues to do so.

Maynard first joined the American Association of Social Workers (the precursor to NASW) around 1950. He served as a delegate to the National Conference in Atlantic City as well as recording secretary and executive committee in 1952. In 1957, Maynard helped form a new NASW chapter called the Fox River Valley chapter in Illinois. In 1958, Maynard served as 2nd Vice Chairman for the Kansas City, Missouri chapter.

In May of 2000, Maynard began practicing outpatient psychotherapy at the Alpha Center in Grand Junction. Of course, this was just shy of his 78th birthday and after passing the licensing exam again. He continues to see clients to date often at a reduced fee or what the client can afford. He has been diligent in working with insurance companies and is a provider with many of them. He has had to become more adept with his technological skills as a great deal of the billing, applications, treatment plans and authorizations are completed on the computer. He is a true client advocate, always willing to do what ever he can to assist and empower his clients. This has included meeting with caseworkers, directors, Child Welfare Action Committee members or whoever is necessary to ensure fair treatment to his clients.

The above describes Maynard's work life. What is even more profound and inspiring is his personal life. Maynard married his wife, Opal, in May of 1948. They had two children, Woody and Dennis. When Woody was born in May of 1949, Opal suffered a massive aneurism leaving one side of her body paralyzed. This did not deter either one of them as they went on to have Dennis in March of 1951. However, it did make life more difficult and complicated. Maynard continued to care for his wife up until her death in November of 2006 after 58 years of marriage. In fact, the main reason Maynard returned to work in 2000 was due to the need to provide additional health care for Opal and their inability to afford the care without extra income. After being single for a few years, Maynard recently remarried. His oldest son, Woody, died of cancer in 2008. Maynard has also had his own bouts with cancer over the past ten years but no one would ever know it.

Maynard's positive, can-do attitude, as well as his humbleness, are major assets to anyone who has the opportunity to get to know or work with him. He is not an individual that is not often in the limelight nor would he ever boast of his achievements; however, the manner in which he has led his life speaks volumes. Maynard is often referred to by colleagues as the energizer bunny as he just never quits. He is clearly one that lives by example and action which benefits and empowers those around him.