



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 17
Issue 2 *June*

Article 2

June 1990

Norman N. Goroff - In Memoriam

Shimon S. Gottschalk

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

Gottschalk, Shimon S. (1990) "Norman N. Goroff - In Memoriam," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol17/iss2/2>

This Article is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



NORMAN N. GOROFF IN MEMORIAM

“Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person: it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole. . . .” Thus, in his own words, we might sum up the thoughts and the living embrace of Norman N. Goroff, a founding editor of the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. Norm’s spirit passed from among us in November 1989. He was 64.

Norman was a radical humanist — not a secular humanist, but a spiritual one. His definition of self was inextricably intertwined with his affirmation of life and of all humanity. He loved all of us, and in turn, he taught us all how to better love each other.

Norm, almost singlehandedly, was the creator of this Journal. Together with Ralph Segalman, he set its original direction. He brought together an editorial board which was both, committed to excellence, yet open to innovation. We aimed to model ourselves after Norm in his role as our leader. He insisted on creativity with a sense for tradition and competence without stuffiness. Within the editorial board Norman brought into being a genuine participatory democracy in action.

Norm began his social work career as a group worker among families of new immigrants at the Educational Alliance on the Lower East Side of New York. When later he moved on, to serve on the faculty of the School of Social Work at the University of Connecticut, he continued to build and expand upon his first experience as an advocate for those who are disadvantaged. He was angered by a society which, while promising opportunity, continued to hobble individuals in the attainment of their goals by fostering within them a pervasive sense of inadequacy — a sense of never being good enough. Quoting Martin Buber, and calling upon his knowledge of the Jewish Chassidic tradition, Norm sought to teach us, his co-workers, his students, and his readers, to recognize the “thou” in one another. He taught us to nurture and support each other in order that we might affirm the power that is within us.

As we continue upon the path that Norm has laid out for us we will aim to sustain his vision of a more caring, more just

world. Norm taught and inspired us to think and act critically. Caring for one another, respecting one another, responding to one another, and understanding one another, these are the elements of the “love paradigm” that he taught us. He and his spirit will always remain by our side.

Shimon S. Gottschalk
April 9, 1990