

Prisons in the United States: Inmates, Policies, and Profits

By Patricia A. Maulden, Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution, pmaulden@gmu.edu

In October 2015, a program crafted by the independent U.S. Sentencing Commission allowed about 6,114 federal prisoners convicted of drug trafficking early release, reducing their sentences reduced by a ‘minus two’ recalibration of the Drug Quantity Table used to determine offense level. Another 8,500 prisoners may be released by November 2016, and over



Patricia A. Maulden.
Photo: Mason Creative Services.

time a total of 46,000 federal prisoners could benefit from sentencing adjustments.

Local news accounts of the initial release of about 6,000 caused some citizen concern and fear that the former inmates would increase crime in areas to which they returned, social and economic problems following in their wake. To be more precise, however, of the first cohort of returning former federal prisoners, about 1,000 will go directly back to their home

state, about 3,350 left for halfway houses or home confinement, and 1,763 will be turned over to the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement for possible deportation hearings. Of this group, 24% are white, 34% African American, and 38% Hispanic (See The Marshall Project, DOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics, ACLU, NAACP, Federal Register, and Global Research for additional information).

To give some sense of proportion to the prison population, in 1972 the U.S. population was 209.9 million with less than 300,000 inmates in federal and fewer state prisons. Today the population is about 320 million with about 2.2 million inmates in federal, state, local, and private prisons. Several dynamics embed within the description above, for example the war on drugs, urban deindustrialization, privatization policy, globalized economy, vanishing community public investment, superpredator theory, and the creation of the ‘dangerous’ youth of color, and race-based justice.

Continued on Page 7

Commentary

Inside This Issue...

- 2 Network: The Politics of Victimhood in Conflict Resolution
- 3 Initiatives: From Counter-Narrative to New Multi-Track Diplomacy
- 4 Event: Association for Conflict Resolution: October 6-10, 2015
- 5 Press: Media Appearances
Opinion: From Dictatorship to Democracy: Transitional Justice in Chile
- 6 Spotlight: Amanda Rauh
Spotlight: Nicole Pearson
- 7 Retirement Celebration for Sandra Cheldelin: The Fire that Kindled other Fires at S-CAR and Beyond

The Politics of Victimhood in Conflict Resolution

By Lauren C Kinney, MS Student, lkinney@masonlive.gmu.edu

On November 6, 2015, Dr. Sara Cobb and the Center for Narrative and Conflict Resolution hosted a conference on “The Politics of Victimhood in Conflict Resolution.” The event served as a space for scholars and practitioners to raise important questions regarding how we think about and categorize victims and perpetrators within a conflict context. The keynote speech was delivered by Diane Enns, with John Winslade as the discussant. Conference presentations were organized into five panels, each panel raising a different set of critical questions about the binary classification of victims and perpetrators. Each panel was followed by a facilitated discussion that engaged both presenters and the general audience in reflecting on the important questions and considerations that had been raised.

The first panel was on “Challenging categories.” Presentations by Sarah Federman, Claudine Kuradusenge, Chitra Nagarajan, and Margarida Hourmat addressed the power that can accompany victimhood and the victim’s ability to silence and marginalize others. They directed the audience to consider the importance of both challenging and destabilizing the categories that challenge narrative legitimacy. The discussant, Dr. Solon Simmons, raised important questions about the role of the victim-perpetrator binary in conflict resolution. When is this binary categorization necessary, for instance for the production of solidarity, and when does it limit our ability to move forward and recognize the gray areas between, and outside of, these categories?

Panel 2 focused on the stability and instability of victimhood, and included presentations by Tony Walsh, Samantha Borders, Ramzi Kysia, and Karina Korostelina, who encouraged the audience to think about the implications of victimhood as an identity. How is an individual positioned in society when he or she is labeled as a victim? How does victimhood affect an individual’s agency? Dr. Nathaniel Greenberg drew from these questions that were raised to discuss both the possibilities and limitations that are present in victim narratives, and in considering how we, as practitioners, can work with these narratives in the process of conflict transformation.

Joshua Stephani, Roxanne Krystalli, and Alison Castel presented the third panel on Colombia as a case study for applying some of the critical questions that had been raised surrounding the notion of victimhood. More specifically, speakers discussed the ways that victim-perpetrator dynamics determine who can and cannot speak out, and focused on the implications of victimhood within the context of the ongoing conflict and peace

process in Colombia. Jenny White led the follow-up discussion to consider the role of these binary categories in silencing certain storylines. Which stories are being legitimized, and who is working to resist the dominant narratives? Additionally, how is this narrative work affecting the quality of the peace process and, more specifically, what is the role of ascribed victims in shaping the process?

Following the third panel, keynote speaker Diane Enns focused on victim discourse as it applies to feminism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and child soldiers. She discussed the complexity of conflict and the way in which the moral clout that comes with victimhood can make it difficult for us to recognize any overlap between victims and perpetrators. How can we acknowledge and respond to the experience of the victim in a way that doesn’t solidify their identity as such? Enns’ closing argument was formulated around the notion of “survival justice” as a form of political power that comes from people—both victims and perpetrators—acting together to make being about change. John Winslade engaged the audience in discussing the idea of how we might escape the victim-perpetrator binary while still managing to acknowledge and attend to victims.

The panels resumed with the fourth group of presenters, who focused on victimhood from a gender-based perspective. Speakers Jessica Smith and Lisa McLean, discussed how gender affects one’s ability to voice narratives of violence in different spaces, and how the binary categories of victim and perpetrator oversimplify the complexity that is present in these experiences of violence. Discussant RJ Nickels suggested the importance of narrative praxis in destabilizing dominant narratives and supporting strong counternarratives, and our duty as practitioners to create a discursive space that allows people to assume roles other than that of the victim.

The final panel was focused on complicating voices. Mollie Pepper, Pamina Firchow, Carlos Sluzki, Sara Ochs, and Kristin Reed gave presentations to support the argument for making victimhood more complex and acknowledging the role of narratives in driving conflict. Their ideas focused on “victim” storylines and destabilizing the rigid categories of victims and perpetrators. The discussant, Derek Sweetman, called upon the audience to consider whether we might need a space for anger and, if so, how much or little it should be contained.

The overarching themes that emerged from the conference focused on several key questions to consider when doing narrative work within a conflict context. How are our thoughts and actions constrained by the simplified binary categories that distinguish victims from perpetrators? Who can be a victim and who cannot? These are important questions to consider if we, as practitioners, want to challenge the rigidity of these categories and work to make conflict storylines more complex. ■

network



Lauren C. Kinney.
Photo: Lauren C. Kinney.

From Counter-Narrative to New Multi-Track Diplomacy

By Adam R. Zemans, MS Student, Programs Director & Legal Advisor Program Manager, Climate Change & Human Security, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD)

Names like “John Burton,” “Joseph Montville,” “Harold Saunders,” and “John W. McDonald” will probably bring a bell if you are associated with George Mason University’s School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR). These are some of the founders of the field of Track II diplomacy, i.e., non-governmental, informal and unofficial dealmaking between actors of different States regarding matters of public concern. In the early 1990s, the term “Multi-Track Diplomacy” was coined by Louise Diamond and Ambassador (ret.) John McDonald to describe a systems-based approach to peacemaking and peacebuilding that goes beyond two tracks, to nine.

Ambassador McDonald, the founder of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), serves on S-CAR’s Advisory Board and was a U.S. State Department and United Nations diplomat for 40 years before becoming a peace activist. He began as a district attorney for the Allies in 1947 Berlin and is now 93 years old. Yet he continues to work five days a week and Multi-Track Diplomacy is more salient today than ever. The work of some S-CAR faculty and others hints at why building Multi-Track Diplomacy into what I call “New Multi-Track Diplomacy” (NMTD) matters and why we at IMTD hope S-CAR will think and talk about it as a community. I briefly describe some associated scholarship below and suggest how it might move the concept of New Multi-Track Diplomacy forward.

In *Soft Power*, Joseph Nye, former Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, famously explained the power of attraction and legitimacy in foreign relations. Describing the world as a ‘three-dimensional chess game,’ he outlined why and how, in the 21st century multipolar world, with its transnational challenges and links, legitimacy is connected to narratives. As Nye has stated, ‘national narratives are, indeed a type of currency’ and, as the Financial Times wrote in endorsing Nye’s *The Future of Power*, “the best military can lose to the adversary with the better story.”

Yet, S-CAR Professor Sara Cobb, Director of the Center for the Study of Narrative and Conflict Resolution, highlighted the destructive nature of counter-narrative in *Speaking of Violence, the Politics and Poetics of Narrative in Conflict Resolution*. Narrative feedback loops can spiral actors downwards, reducing complexity and often leading to ‘states of exception’ that do violence to both their creators and the objects of their attempts to control.

S-CAR Associate Professor Susan H. Allen has built her Problem Solving Workshop practice and conflict mitigation work partially on these bodies of knowledge. In so doing, she has advanced best practices and the evidence base in the field of Multi-Track Diplomacy beyond what its founders could have envisioned (see for example,

Theories of Change in Indicator Development in Conflict Management and Mitigation, USAID, 2010). One component of her Conflict Management and Mitigation work includes something we would describe as akin to “therapeutic diplomacy,” i.e., helping parties come to terms with the past and heal.

The foreign policy aim to heal the Other at that same time as we protect ourselves is at the root of Shaun Riordan’s “Dialogue-based Public Diplomacy: A New Foreign Policy Paradigm?” in Jan Melissen’s *The New Public Diplomacy*. Riordan highlights the essence of genuine dialogue – accepting the value of other traditions without sacrificing one’s own integrity. In a similar way as Riordan emphasized, the credibility of New Multi-Track Diplomacy is enhanced by some degree of independence from Western Governments. Thus, there is an increasing role for non-state actors in U.S. diplomacy.

Healing relationships is at the heart of S-CAR’s philosophy of conflict resolution and NMTD as well. Healing goes beyond Nye’s instrumentalist use of ‘attractive power.’ Healing does not exclude Hard Power. Facilitating healing is a matter of both soft and hard, just as military power is.

U.S. allied non-state actors helping countries to heal has much more potential for U.S. diplomacy than State-sponsored violent coercion alone does in a multipolar world full of transnational, diffuse problems. One thing that is new at IMTD is that we are learning how to operationalize healing through country assessment by facilitating Inclusive Nationalism. Our primary tool is a macro, strengths-based “therapy” of sorts, in the form of “Inclusive Nationalism Country Assessment” or “INCA” (see our partner’s website, sovereigntyfirst.com). We facilitate national understandings of power/alliance and generate national development on a large number of indices. We can measure incremental progress in which, a la Lederach’s (2004) call for imagination, we help foster an optimistic yet realistic vision of the future. Through such thinking and in such a way, we are transforming Multi-Track Diplomacy into New Multi-Track Diplomacy. The U.S. can leverage New Multi-Track Diplomacy by sculpting a future with partners in a common destiny rather than allowing ourselves to be thrown off balance through overly-broad use of violent coercion. ■



From left to right: Rajit Das, Ambassador (ret.) John McDonald (Chairman & CEO, IMTD), and Adam R. Zemans.

Photo: Adam R. Zemans.

initiatives

Association for Conflict Resolution: October 6-10, 2015

By Rochelle Arms, PhD Student, rams@masonlive.gmu.edu

With the help of S-CAR and George Mason University, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend this year's annual conference of the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR). The conference is an opportunity for conflict resolution practitioners, especially North American mediators to exchange innovative ideas in the field and build relationships. This year's conference drew approximately 300 participants around the theme of "Thinking about our Thinking" emphasizing workshops and presentations based on empirical studies or evidence based practices. It was a good chance for me and other academics to introduce research to a community of practitioners. In collaboration with Dr. Susan Allen and a mediator colleague, Dan Bernstein, I developed a three-hour workshop session called "Tools to Prove you Practice what you Preach." The title was in part stimulated by my colleague's interest in building a reflective practice tool that mediators can use to tout their ethics and profes-



Rochelle Arms.
Photo: S-CAR.

sionalism to clients, thereby increasing credibility. For Dr. Allen and I, the primary interest was in collecting practitioners' own reflective practice tools: how, when, and with whom these are used. Participants' feedback in the session will be used to expand our research and writing in the area of reflective practice for conflict resolution professionals.

In addition to presenting at this year's conference, I also continued my work with the leadership committee of ACR's international section, which hosts an annual international day at the conference. Every year, the section presents an International Outstanding Leadership award to a peacemaker. Mediator Mohammad Faizal, from Singapore, received this year's award and gave a richly informative talk about adapting western models of mediation to an Asian context.

If you would like more information, please check out these sites: www.acrnet.org - Association for Conflict Resolution main website; reno.acrnet.org - for information about the ACR 2015 conference; <http://acrinternational.polisci.txstate.edu/> - The ACR International Section website ■

EVENTS

Upcoming S-CAR Community Events

Friday, December 11, 2015

Winter Recognition Ceremony
5:30pm-6:00pm

Thursday, January 14, 2016

Spring 2016 New Student Orientation
4:30pm-9:00pm

Monday, January 18, 2016

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service
9:00pm-2:00pm

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Reducing Racial Stereotyping and Violence by Police: The Victimization of Roma People in Europe
12:30pm-2:00pm

For more, visit scar.gmu.edu/events-roster

Winter Celebration

Theme: Game night!
Bring your favorite game and enjoy pizza and drinks provided by S-CAR

Friday, December 11th
6:00pm - 7:30pm
Metropolitan Building Room 5183

The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution cordially invites you to our Annual Winter Celebration! Family and friends of S-CAR students, alumni, staff, and faculty are invited to attend.

Student Opinion: From Dictatorship to Democracy: Transitional Justice in Chile

By Montserrat Lopez Skoknic, PhD Student, mlopezsk@masonlive.gmu.edu

On October 5, 2015, Chile commemorated 25 years since its return to democracy after the violent and repressive dictatorship headed by Augusto Pinochet. Although Chile has adopted some transitional justice measures to address the gross human rights violations committed during the dictatorship, there is still work to be done in order to bring truth and justice to the victims and the society as a whole.

Just this past July, a soldier revealed to a judge the true facts regarding one of the most heinous crimes committed by the armed forces during the dictatorship. I am referring to the so called “Caso Quemados,” in which two young students, Carmen Quintana and Rodrigo Rojas de Negri, were burned and left for dead near a highway by a group of soldiers. When they regained consciousness, they were able to ask for help from a passing police patrol, which took them to the nearest hospital. With approximately 65% of his body covered in burns from the incident, Rodrigo past away four days later, while Carmen was able to recover, despite 70% of her body being covered in burns. Although Carmen has always told this story about what actually happened that day, the official story of the Army was quite different. According to the Armed Forces, Carmen and Rodrigo were carrying homemade bombs to a protest and it was these bombs, which accidentally exploded, that caused their injuries. Since the Army’s version of events has always been cited as the “official truth,” after a military judicial proceeding in 1988 Commander Fernandez Dittus was sentenced only to 300 days in prison for failing to provide medical care to Carmen and Rodrigo. In 1994, the Supreme Court sentenced him to 600 days in prison.



Montserrat Lopez (first from left) at History Educators International Research Network (HEIRNET) 12th International Conference held on 7-9 September in the University College London, Institute of Education.
Photo: Maria Georgiou.

This past July, twenty-nine years after the crime was committed, a soldier called Fernando Guzman came forward to testify in front of a judge that the “official story” of the armed forces was not true. Guzman stated that he was part of one of the patrol that was present at the time of the crime, and after the crime his superiors had constructed the “official story,” thereafter coercing those present to tell only this official version of events. Thanks to the declaration of this key witness, the Judge, Mario Carroza, issued seven arrest warrants against the military personnel involved in the crime.

This event put human rights abuses committed during the dictatorship back on the political agenda. The commonly called “pact of silence” throughout the military was revealed through the story of the concealment of this crime, but also by Fernando Guzman who affirmatively stated the existence of these pacts as a common practice among the armed forces.

In order to put an end to these “pacts of silence” President Michelle Bachelet announced the creation of a Human Rights Unit within the Defense Ministry to facilitate the exchange of information about the crimes committed during the dictatorship.

Moreover, there has been broad, multiparty political support for the eradication of these pacts of silence and encouragement from all sides of the political spectrum for those with any information to come forward and testify. The fact remains, however, that according to official numbers, Chile continues to have 3,216 disappeared or murdered persons from the period between 1973 and 1990.

It has been 25 years since the return to democracy and members of the Armed Forces are still covering crimes and withholding vital information that could potentially lead to finding the disappeared and bring some peace to the victims and their families. It is time to break the pact of silence and contribute to the ongoing judicial proceedings and human rights investigations.

Finally, the members of the armed forces need to understand that a fundamental key to open the door towards reconciliation is in their hands and, after 25 years, it is time for them to uncover history. ■

Recent S-CAR Media

Palestinian Child Attackers are Victims, not Terrorists

*Carol Daniel Kasbari, S-CAR PhD Student
Haaretz 11/17/15*

Why More Federal Prisoners will be Released in Virginia than D.C., Maryland

*Patricia Maulden, S-CAR PhD Alumna
WAMU 11/09/15*

'Delenda Carthago': ISIS, Threat and Recovery

*David Alpher, S-CAR PhD Alumnus
Middle East Monitor 11/01/15*

Conflict Analysts from S-CAR have appeared on 18 occasions since the last newsletter. These 3 represent a sample of those publications. For a complete list, visit <http://scar.gmu.edu/media>

PRESS

Amanda Rauh, Malta Dual Degree Student

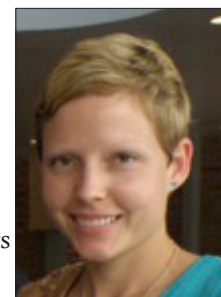
By Jackie Finch, Career and Academic Advisor, jfinch4@gmu.edu

Amanda Rauh who is currently pursuing a dual degree program in Malta, moved to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area from Oklahoma City to prepare for her first course at S-CAR, in spring 2015.

Amanda, who had been admitted to S-CAR starting in the summer, felt that she had to get ahead of her studies by moving to the vicinity of the program. She hit the ground running by networking and exploring the vast opportunities that S-CAR and Washington, D.C. had to offer. Amanda immediately became a member of Alliance for Peacebuilding, an organization that operates worldwide to catalyze lasting, constructive, and peaceful change in fragile and chaotic settings around the world. "I got to attend the first day of the 2015 Annual Alliance for Peacebuilding Conference, which was a great experience! There, I met many peacebuilding practitioners and did a ton of professional networking." Amanda found out about this organization through the S-CAR Community Network and Forum, which serves as a platform for current, past, and potential students to connect with organizations that work in similar fields that they are interested in. By joining a professional organization, we demonstrate

our commitment to the field and our development. We can meet key people in the field and keep up with current trends and develop our areas of expertise.

Amanda also attended many of the events at S-CAR and she credits the interactions she had with students and staff for her decision to enroll in the dual Masters degree in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security. The 13-month dual degree program combines the faculties of George Mason University and the University of Malta's Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, with students primarily taking classes at the 400-year old University of Malta's, Valletta campus. "I am excited to live abroad and to complete two degrees!" Building on our skills is a life-long process and there are experiences to be had. The bottom line is that employers want people who have experience and skills. It is up to us to make it happen. Amanda is a good example of that for us. Good luck in Malta, Amanda! ■



Amanda Rauh.
Photo: Amanda Rauh.

Nicole Pearson, Undergrad Student

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, PhD Candidate and Newsletter Editor, kdegraff@masonlive.gmu.edu

In fall 2014, Nicole Pearson moved to the Washington, D.C. area from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to study conflict analysis and resolution at Mason. "I knew this was something I would love to get a degree in as I had always considered myself to be a healer and problem solver." Since then, she has been enjoying her academic life and has come to learn about herself and from people she has encountered. Nicole, who says she suffers from "wanderlust," loves to travel and desires to see the world and experience different cultures. Although she admitted that she had not seen as much of the world like she would have liked to, one of the regions she has visited is the Middle East. "I spent some time in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. I found that the conflict there was so multifaceted and it became an illuminating experience that challenged me both analytically and ideologically." When Nicole returned to the U.S., one of the things that made her frustrated were one-sided views from people who almost claimed to be authorities on the conflict in the region but never actually studied or experienced it. In talking about negative media, Nicole said, "We only really get to see a lot of the negatives that come out of the region but that negativity is a common tendency I think we see everywhere, even in our own media, so I felt an obligation to go, see it for myself and give the narrative of my experience." All of her traveling experiences have also made Nicole "very humble and cul-

turally aware." "It's hard to understand how intricate the conflict is until you visit, meet the people, and hear their narratives. Meeting people like Aida Touma-Suleiman, Saeb Erekat, Mark Regev (Netanyahu's Spokesperson), and Aluf Benn (Editor-In-Chief of Haaretz), as well as refugees and different community members of Nazareth [where she interned and lived for eight weeks with a host family], I was really able to humanize my understanding of the conflict."

Nicole is involved with many organizations on campus, like Mason's Model United Nations Club where she gets to travel to other schools for conferences. She also serves on the secretariat staff of the high school conference, the Mid-Atlantic Simulation of the United Nations (MASUN). Nicole is also the Philanthropy Chairwoman of her sorority, which means that she oversees all of the fundraising and outreach to local organizations to help make a direct impact on her community.

Although Nicole is not set on her future right now, she would like to attend graduate school. "After graduate school, I would really like to work in the Foreign Service but my dream job is to be a mediator for the United Nations. There are these people that comprise the Standby Team of Mediation Experts for the United Nations who are on call for high profile negotiations revolving around many issues and I would love to be a part of something like that." Nicole indicated that she will act on the many amazing opportunities that come to her as "the world is my oyster." ■



Nicole Pearson.
Photo: Nicole Pearson.

Prisons in the United States: Inmates, Policies, and Profits

Continued from page 1

The harsh drug sentencing policies began during the Nixon administration in response to the spike in drug trafficking and associated crimes particularly within the African American and Hispanic communities which, in part, emerged from deindustrialization, loss of jobs, increased poverty, race-based housing and employment practices, and decreased community investment. In some ways, the enormous growth in the U.S.



Riot Training at West Virginia state penitentiary.
Photo: Flickr user macwagen

prison population can be seen as a 2.2 million-person indicator of the disorder of a system, providing the system is framed around human rights, social justice, needs met, and opportunities available.

From one point of view, the limited release plan can be seen as a beginning from which a larger correction of former sentencing practices can build. In fact, H.R. 71 – Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Relief Act of 2015 – has been referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations and could provide early release for a wider swath of nonviolent offenders. The sentence reduction program could also be seen as a federal recognition of the high cost to the federal as well as state governments. On the other hand, the policy of reduced federal workforce and the subsequent privatization of prisons, begun during the Reagan administration but seriously expanded during the Clinton administration, provided the opportunity for corporations to move into the prison business, staffing all aspects of the day-to-day administration as well as security. The profit derives from spending less than the state or federal guaranteed amount for each prisoner, essentially reducing inmate services and assigning fewer guards to more inmates. The private prisons and the corporations that run them also import inmates with longer sentences in cases of federal or state prison overcrowding, guaranteeing a long-term source of revenue. Another source of prison-based earnings comes from private contracting of prisoners for work. At least 37 states legalized the contracting of prison labor by private corporations, with operations inside state prisons. Hourly payment for inmate labor ranges between \$0.23 and \$1.25 depending upon the prison and the nature of the work. The federal government also profits from prison labor. In 1934, Congress allowed the formation of a United States Government-owned corpora-

tion, Federal Prison Industries (FPI), also known as UNICOR. UNICOR supplies prisoner-made (described as ‘Factories with Fences’) furniture found in most university classrooms and as well as more formal office furnishings. The wage scale for UNICOR also ranges between \$0.23 and \$1.15 per hour worked. So, on the other hand, if the construction of the system (privatization, low-wage slave-like labor, corporate dividends, increased stock prices, inexpensive products) depends upon a large number of incarcerated individuals, then the system is functioning properly

and everyone benefits, at least according to federal and state documents that support the prison-labor scheme.

The stark difference in system view depends, perhaps, on whether or not we can ‘see’ the effects of incarceration on individuals, families, communities, and the nation and whether or not we would care if we did see. Prisoners are by default separated and unless we have a relative or friend that we visit, the horrific reality of prison life remains out of sight and out of mind. Setting aside the claims from UNICOR that the focus is on preparing prisoners for life outside of prison, it could be strongly argued that the billions of dollars spent on prisons could be much better utilized in communities, schools, and assisting individuals and families to gain access to skills for a better life. This would require a much higher-level recalibration of policy and resourcing than the “minus two” of the Drug Quality Table used to reduce some drug trafficking sentences. It would demand a vision of a system that moved away from old patterns (think slave labor, draconian punishment, systemized oppression) and toward ending homelessness, resourcing mental health services, strengthening early childhood education, and so on. In other words, citizens and policy makers would be required to acknowledge social, political, and economic problems for what they are, and stop attributing these problems to individual bodies and to make it all go away removing those bodies from sight.

This article briefly explores entrenched aspects of the prison system in the United States, the disposal of millions of individuals for the sake of perceived security, the palliative of mass incarceration, and the profits available from disposal and punishment. Working to change these patterns, policies, and practices can engage scholars, researchers, activists, and practitioners for years to come. ■

Retirement Celebration for Sandra Cheldelin: A Fire that Kindled Other Fires at S-CAR and Beyond

By Innocent Rugaragu, PhD Candidate, irugarag@masonlive.gmu.edu

Voltaire once said “Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.” Voltaire’s words have always had a profound effect on me, but they held a new meaning on the evening of November 11, 2015, when the S-CAR community, friends, and loved ones, gathered for what proved to be a very joyful retirement celebration for Sandra Cheldelin.

Sandy is the Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Sandy is perhaps best known as one of the pivotal figures in the growth of the field of conflict analysis and resolution at Mason and beyond. The important role she played in the transition of the program from a center, to an institute, and eventually to a school, made me think of her as the “Matriarch of S-CAR,” a sentiment that many people also alluded to.

The venue for Sandy’s retirement celebration was Northside Social, a setting known for its wide array of exotic quality wines and sumptuous cuisine from all over the world. In a sense, this place serves as one-stop shop



Sandra Cheldelin (left) thanking everyone at her retirement celebration.

Photo: Innocent Rugaragu.

for individuals who want to experience foods and beverages from other cultures. Much like the all-inclusive atmosphere that Northside Social tends to convey, Sandy’s wealth of knowledge made her the one stop person for anyone to brainstorm with or even work with.

The climax of Sandy’s retirement celebration was when Dean Kevin Avruch, Associate Dean Julie Shedd, Sandy’s colleagues, former students, and friends made speeches to remember some of their fondest moments with her. A common theme was how much she loved her family and the School and how her sense of nurturing creativity, communal leadership, and mentorship improved the culture at S-CAR.

Indeed, her humility and magnanimity of heart and mind embody what the field and School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution is all about and her “radical” empathy has brought healing to many people. Dear Sandy, we will always remember you as we try to emulate your many examples. You are leaving behind a great team of people who will carry on your legacy. ■



School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

3351 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 4D3, Arlington, VA 22201

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Fairfax, VA
Permit No. 1532

