Distinguished Alumni – Social Work Education

Michael Lindsey (PhD ’02)
Associate Professor, New York University

Credited with inspiring the reformatting of Pitt Social Work’s doctoral program, Michael Lindsey has accomplished a tremendous amount in a relatively short period of time. Michael’s work is focused on at-risk young people, particularly African American males. Dr. Lindsey has published 28 journal articles and six book chapters and has received significant funding from private foundations and federal grants, including a $12 million dollar grant from NIH. He is a standing member of the NIMH Services Research Committee and a board member-at-large for the Society for Social Work and Research.

Distinguished Alumni – Social Work Practice

James Bernardo (MSW ’76)
Executive Vice President and COO, Presbyterian Senior Living

Jim Bernardo is responsible for the operational and expansion-related activities of 25 senior-living communities, 11 continuing care retirement communities, two long-term skilled care centers, two personal care communities and a number of rental-assistance housing complexes. Jim’s commitment to and impact on aging services is further stressed by his past receipt of the prestigious Paul Haas Lifetime Achievement Award from LeadingAge PA.

Outstanding Alumni Award

Rodney Rutkowski (MSW ’80, BASW ’75)
Director of Health Management, UPMC St. Margaret

Rod Rutkowski is responsible for the management of a 25 member care management team, providing administrative oversight and management of St. Margaret’s community health needs assessment and management of the hospital’s “bed fund” in conjunction with the St. Margaret Foundation. He is a longtime field instructor and adjunct professor at Pitt Social Work. Rod is lauded by his colleagues for his expertise, warmth and compassion.

Outstanding Field Instructor Award

Carol Brackett (MSW ’79)
Prevention Division Chief, Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS)/Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Carol Brackett has been a field instructor for Pitt Social Work for more than 10 years and has mentored more than 15 social work students. In fact, many of her students have gone on to become field instructors. Ms. Brackett has taught as an adjunct professor at Pitt Social Work and her expertise is working with older adults.

Rising Star Award

Benjamin Bishop (MSW ’11)
Founder-Coordinator, Nature-Related Programming, Pittsburgh Mercy

Benjamin Bishop is a Licensed Masters Social Work professional with experience in direct practice inpatient, community, and residential behavioral health settings. Lauded by his colleagues and contemporaries, his founding and coordination of an innovative and pioneering program using the environment to improve engagement and wellness in clients is transforming lives in the community. He was published as a sole author in a peer-reviewed journal describing the foundations of his work and has created and facilitated an accredited training for professionals on the implementation of the model.