

YOU'RE HIRED!

Putting Your Sociology Major to
Work

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BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2017

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78714-490-3 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-78714-489-7 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78714-945-8 (Epub)



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

This book is dedicated to my students — past, present, and future — as well as the teachers, mentors, and supporters who have provided me with direction and motivation throughout my own journey.

PREFACE

You're Hired! Putting Your Sociology Major to Work has its origins in the questions, concerns, and misconceptions that have emanated from my students, their parents, other faculty, counselors, advisors, and employers over the nearly 40 years that I have been teaching. I have also been deeply touched by the numbers of former students who continue to correspond with me long after graduation, excitedly extolling new jobs, job transitions, new-found career goals, and especially, the life changes brought through marriage, family life, travel, and relocation. I've been impressed by the variety of career opportunities these graduates have found and how often they speak of loving their job. I am equally amazed by those who have been plying their trade for years and yet still demonstrate the excitement of fledgling sociologists as they speak of new research, responsibilities, and interests at the professional meetings I attend.

Yet, I recognize that the nature and value of sociology still remains largely misunderstood. So, through the stories of practicing sociologists, I intend for this book to clarify and demystify the confusion often associated with this discipline. Further, I hope this book will nurture growing interest in sociology by providing insights about its use in our contemporary world and rapidly changing labor market. Moreover, I am hopeful that the information, particularly in Part III, will benefit not just sociology majors but anyone pursuing a new career or transitioning to another. Additionally, I anticipate this book will spark enthusiasm about the vast array of exciting and fulfilling career opportunities avail-

able to sociology majors in particular, but those with degrees in the liberal arts or other social sciences as well. Finally, I wish that you readers will find the stories of the people contained in this book enjoyable and that they will inspire each of you to pursue your dreams, however tentatively formed they might be at this time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nearly every work ever published begins with a lengthy roll call of those to whom the author is grateful. This book is no exception.

I am most ingratiated to the individuals who shared their experiences and insights with me then patiently persevered as I edited their stories to most accurately reflect them. These contributors include: Laura Barulich, Gary Battane, Diane Binson, Carolina Cervantes, Mel Coit, Lakeshia Freedman, Bee Friedlander, Lincoln Grahlfs, and Janet Hankin. I am equally indebted to Danica Wise Hill, Lynnett Hernandez Kinnard, Stephen La Plante, Maria Lara, William (Bill) McNeece, Carolina Cervantes, Eileen Monti, Rebecca Morrison and Sr. Roseanne Murphy, as well as Christine Oh, Adam Ortberg, Mylene Pangilinen-Cord, Casey Porter, Mario Rendon, Megan Scott, and Christina Risley-Curtiss. My appreciation also extends to Karen Schaumann, T.D. (Tom) Schuby, Kathleen Soto, Don Stannard-Friel, Amber Brazier Voorhees, and Jana Whitlock.

In addition, my thanks to those who briefly disclosed snippets about the multitude means by which they are using their bachelor's degrees as sociologists in fulfilling occupations. I am thankful as well to the employers who shared their thoughts about the unique skills that sociologists bring to the labor market. Moreover, I extend my appreciation to the American Sociological Association (ASA) for materials from which I drew for the section titled, "Sociologists in the Public Eye." I am also grateful to

Michelle Beese who provided the content that made Part III possible.

For my reviewers, I am immensely appreciative. From them, I received perhaps the most valuable feedback as they read the manuscript from the vantage point of my potential audience. The most noteworthy of these reviewers are Joshua Aguirre, Andrew Durham, Rebecca Flores, Jan Perinoni, and Victoria Strelnikova.

I also thank my colleague and friend, Margo DeMello at New Mexico State Community College, as well as Gina Horwitz from Wayne State University both of whom painstakingly reviewed my drafts and offered valuable suggestions. Of course, I am most appreciative of my publisher, Kim Chadwick, who took a chance on me. I thoroughly enjoyed her British wit and benefited immensely from her publishing expertise.

To Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) goes my sincere gratitude for the release time and sabbatical leave they granted me so that I could bring this book to fruition.

I am especially indebted to Tom Schuby, not only for the constructive criticism and direction he gave to this book, but for prodding me to begin my own journey into sociology so many years ago.

On a personal note and possibly most important of all, I am grateful to Russ, as well as Beethoven and Penny, my canine kids, for the infinite patience and emotional support they gave me during this endeavor.

Without all of these individuals, this book would have remained a mere manuscript. Most of all, however, I am indebted to you, the reader. Whether you are a student or someone interested in a student's future, embarking on that first job, or transitioning from one career to another, I wish you the inspiration to put wings to your dreams.