

Miranda Ow '84

Let's examine the serendipitous and somewhat redundant route that I took for my HumBio core which broadened my perspective of the world: genetics/culture, evolution/genetics, general psychology, principles of society, principles of individual, problems of aging, elderly support, mental health care, seniors and drug use, social structures, the human organization, human health, colloquium, formal organizations; organizations, theory and management; organizational behavior; organizations and environment; organizations and public policy; abnormal behavior, hum bio workshop and statistics. The subject matter dovetailed into each other, which made me learn the subject matter very well, and grad school was a breeze. In what manner did these classes relate to my career? Well, after graduating from the Farm in 1984, I matriculated to UCLA for a Master's in Social Welfare, in what is now known as the UCLA School of Public Policy, and was the youngest in my class of 84 students. I took Social Welfare, Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Planning, Public Policy, Budget, Statistics, Community Organizing, and Management, which helped me in my work as a social worker. Grad school augmented the things learned in HumBio, our Stanford professors taught us so well. I reputedly received one of the two A+'s ever given for my Master's thesis from a professor who had taught there for over 30 years. After graduation, I started a new non-profit, senior day care center for one year, (running and organizing programs, doing recruitment from senior centers, making flyers & brochures about services in various languages), I then changed jobs. I was the first staff hired by a social service agency to start the state of California's seventh Adult Day Health Care Center in existence (ADHC), and the first ADHC in Los Angeles. My 80 year old boss and I formed the center to take care of seniors and others with physical health problems. I helped start the "Central Adult Day Health Care Center" in 1987, and it has miraculously been in continued existence for 23 years, I wrote its first budget, wrote and was funded several grants, wrote and composed the 3" thick operations/organizational manual in DOS format on 5 1/4" floppy disks, (whose files I generously passed along to other non-profit organizations to start other Adult Day Health Care Centers to compete with mine), I organized the first bookkeeping system for a non-profit (501-C3 tax exempt status), calculated paychecks with FICA and other withholdings, I started the partitioned patient records system, made the first patient assessment/input forms and even supervised a staff of 15 at the age of 25. I can tell you, that it was so much work starting a brand new social service agency! I found that the only way we could keep in the black was to run five days a week, including all holidays, not pay benefits or pensions or allow holidays for staff and put everyone on salary (often working 9-10 hours a day!!!). We even worked on our breaks. I had five minute lunches on-site for the 2.5 years I was there! Thus, these were my formative years as a young adult....thank goodness, I learned how to think and analyze while I was at the Farm! Anyone who has worked for a small non-profit organization knows how much work it can be, so I moved on to greener pastures. It is years later, as a Senior Management Analyst I at the Los Angeles Department of Transportation in special funds/grants, I have worked for the City of L.A. for 21 years at decent salary, with 13 paid holidays, health benefits and a even a pension! Seriously, I am forever grateful to those illustrious, dedicated and prescient professors: Donald Kennedy, Sandy Dornbush, Shirley Feldman, Bill Durham, and all of the many other professors for their leadership, inspired teaching and encouragement to all students in the Hum Bio core those twenty eight years ago. The professors really believed in all of us, that we could storm the world and accomplish so much. They taught us that we could do ground breaking work in so many different fields of study that they exposed to us, and they believed that we undergrads could actually make a difference in the world! Thanks, HumBio professors! The funniest things from my HumBio experience was: 1) I made a pact with my cousin that if I didn't get into a PhD program, that I would get married and settle down. Since U.C. Berkeley put me on a waiting list as the 13th person for their doctoral program, and they had only accepted 12, I decided to marry and had three kids instead! 2) Professor Rick chipped a stone arrowhead out of a rock shard as a demonstration of how early man made weapons to bring down their prey! A stray piece accidentally dropped on someone and he apologized! The strangest thing that happened during my Hum Bio core was having to take one required class in the Stanford School of Management, IE100, in Organization, Theory and Management, and I was turned down twice to take the class by the same professor, before finally being allowed to take her class during my senior year. Without that class, I might not have been allowed to graduate! Finally, as a mother

of three, my oldest son is graduating in Psychology from U.C. Riverside in June 2011, hoping to attend a clinical psychology doctoral program in 2012, my second son is a freshman at Johns Hopkins U. in biomedical engineering (\$82K in tuition costs this year, can you believe it?). I am grateful for the broad background provided to me in HumBio, that I can discuss psychology, sociology, micro and macroeconomics, animal physiology, genetics, early childhood development, chemistry, organic chemistry and biology with my college aged kids with knowledgeable proficiency and let them know that I'm not as stupid as they think I am. And yes, they do test me! My youngest daughter will be applying to college in two years time, at which point I will be paying for three college tuitions! Retirement won't be an option for quite a while! To my classmates, who are accomplishing so much in their own lives as doctors, lawyers, teachers, botanists, health and mental health professionals, etc. I regret that I've kept missing the HumBio reunions because I've been too busy saying "hello" to alumni friends. Someday, I hope to attend a HumBio reunion on an off-year and hang out! Thanks to the HumBio program and the professors who teach the core, who have influenced me in a lifetime interest in learning. When I attend evening seminars at Caltech, including talks about DNA, the CERN circular particle electron accelerator in Switzerland, etc., I am strongly reminded of those memorable and fascinating HumBio core days. God bless you all and take care! Miranda Ow, Class of 1984 miranda\_ow1@juno.com