

MS. FEENEY RESTRUCTURED
(Originally published March 1972)

The calling card on the desk at the end of office hours announced a visitor in the waiting room. It read, "Ms. J. Feeney, Field Representative." The name was familiar, but we couldn't have been more surprised when we saw our old friend, Jay Feeney, come fluttering in. Her hair, the color of mucked out stable straw, was frizzed into the newest Afro-style and her dry-twig legs wobbled unsteadily in knee-length boots of black, crinkly patent leather. Her bright bird eyes danced behind a pair of sequined granny glasses. There was no mistaking the shrill authoritative cackle.

"It's me, sugar! Bet you thought I'd passed by now."

The last time we had heard from Mrs. Feeney was the summer of '69 while she was still serving as part-time housekeeper at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, the California think tank. (At the time, she was still on the waiting list for a heart transplant, but she says she gave up the idea when Christian Barnard ran off with that teenager and joined Jackie in the Jet Set.)

"What is this 'Ms' business?" we asked.

"You gotta be kidding, son," she said. "You can't still be suffering from a case of piggy male chauvinism! Besides, who could ever pronounce Miz?"

"And you pronounce Ms?"

"Mzzz."

We asked if she were still connected with the Center.

"Absolutely. I'm on a full, part-time status now. One more year and I'll have tenure. But I been assigned to a special field project for more than six months now. Actually, I gotta get me some new cards printed. I been promoted to Regional Project Coordinator for all Field Representatives since January."

"What's the project?"

"That's what I come to talk to you about. Somebody mentioned it in the editorial of your last month's Bulletin."

"You mean, PIUSS?"

"You said it, honey, not me. The Preventative Institute for Unstructured Sociologic Serendipity."

"Well, some of us weren't quite clear . . ."

"Affirmative. That's why I'm here to dialogue with you. I figured you could use some orientationing."

"Well, exactly what is all this, er . . . PIUSS?"

"We're functioned to train paraprofessional, generalist, human-service workers to supply people-oriented comprehensive community services. And that ain't just all."

"You mean . . ."

"Right. We're programmed to provide a continuum that will adequately respond to the unfilled needs of the service area."

"And that calls for . . ."

"A complete reordering of presently structured priorities."

"What are the program specifics, involvement wise, in PIUSS?" we asked, falling into dialogue dialect.

"Actually, dearie, our steering committee feels a minimized need to be doctrinaire at this phase. We go in more for flexible, in-depth programming geared to upgrading and transforming the unserved into productive members of society."

Ms. Feeney, warming to her subject now, flapped excitedly on the edge of her chair. She took a quick swig of her eggnog supplement and ruffled her pinfeathers.

"You see, the Institute's work, when conceptually viewed, makes you immediately aware of the potential need, not only in the service area itself but in the parameters for providing after-care service by expanding the outreach."

"What you're saying is . . ."

"Precisely. An available umbrella arrangement to afford full-spectrum visibility for a

people-helping program of the family advocacy system. We've already identified the interfaces and will soon initiate a viable alternative for unnerved retardates."

"It sounds significantly relevant."

"Wow! You hit the nail on the head. It evolves gradient ally once you phase out the false notion concept in your pre-stage planning. After you restructure that, the whole thrust of the development elevates holistically into an innovative organic systems approach that will encourage ongoing research."

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"That could cost money."

"Right on! But we're already processed to call for full implementation. The Institute likes to set a realistic but high goal. We can use ongoing people. That's me, sugar. Anyhow," said Ms. Feeney as she went out the door toward her ancient, air-cooled Franklin. "Don't worry about old Jay, baby. I ain't been serviced lately, but I just been refunded."

** Ms. Feeney has acknowledged indebtedness for all borrowed terminology to the recently circulated report of CISEHG (the Governor's Commission to Improve Services for Emotionally Handicapped Georgians.)

(c) *The Bulletin of the Muscogee County (Georgia) Medical Society*, "The Doctor's Lounge", Mar 1972, Vol. XIX Vol 3, p.12