

"Determination"



Photo: Christian Steiner

"Working with her is like holding onto the tail of a rocket."

## PROFESSOR GERTRUD LENZER

**Professional** — New York, New York

That the walls of academia are an ivory tower, isolated and above the world at large is a myth. Gertrud Lenzer, professor of sociology at the City University of New York and coordinator for the Children's Studies Program at Brooklyn College, is proof that the university is a vital, concerned entity that actively serves the people of its local and much wider communities.

One can read in the newspaper about at-risk children who fall prey to drugs and violence. Or pass such children on the street. Or personally know a child who has succumbed. But what is one to do about it?

The answer may very well lie in the sociology of children, a field of academic studies that Gertrud singlehandedly created and founded within the American Sociological Association in the United States. The new field harnesses scholarly and policy-relevant knowledge about children and youth in order to create new child-centered programs in colleges and universities similar to the model program in children's studies that Gertrud created at Brooklyn College. She also integrates children's studies in the City University of New York at large.

The programs which she envisioned and which are now bearing fruit in the U.S. and abroad enhance the public's understanding of children. They encourage college students to pursue and train for children and youth-related occupations and professions such as social work, law, medicine and public health. These programs benefit young people everywhere because they encourage academic and policy research on issues addressing the needs of children and youth. And they promote the establishment of community-related programs

in order to assist community-based and non-governmental institutions in their advocacy and service functions to children and youth.

Thus, through Gertrud's single-minded determination, you will see more and more interdisciplinary Children's Studies Centers such as the one in development at Brooklyn College. College students can go to these centers to explore careers and identify occupations relating to children and youth — and then have the internship opportunities to test those career options with firsthand experience.

It is no wonder that *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and other national media have put Professor Lenzer in the spotlight. She will stay there — not to garner the accolades, but to continue to advocate for a deeper, more profound understanding of children and youth among scholars and among the caregivers of tomorrow. She will be at center stage this year when she speaks at an international conference on the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Prospects for the Year 2000", and when she addresses a major conference on "Children's Studies: Children Across the Disciplines".

Innovative creativity. Resourcefulness. And a commitment to promoting the cause of children and youth. As a professional recipient of the 1997 NCLC LEWIS HINE AWARD, Professor Gertrud Lenzer has rightfully earned another degree of recognition for her hard work and persistence.

**Nominator: Professor Laura Kitch, Chair, Department of Sociology, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York — Brooklyn, New York**

- National Child Labor Committee  
1997 Lewis Hines Awards -