



# Unfinished Business: Social Action In Suburbia: Long Island NY 1945-2014

*Paul M. Arfin*

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## **Unfinished Business: Social Action In Suburbia: Long Island NY 1945-2014** Paul M. Arfin

In reading this book, your view of a backward, conservative Long Island will be challenged. Long Island NY is America's first suburb. The book chronicles key highlights of the seventy-year time period 1945-2014 and describes the personal and organizational struggles and accomplishments of Long Island social work pioneers and civil rights, environmental, disabilities, and mental health leaders during an exciting and challenging time in Nassau and Suffolk Counties' history. The book features 630+ pages filled with inspirational stories, milestone events and lessons learned by professionals and lay people. There are over 500 names of organizations and people; 75 photos of lay and professional leaders; 100 Newsday headline stories concerning social issues; and 40 illustrations of "trail-blazing" projects in which Long Island launched "firsts" in the state and/or nation. From the Foreword by Ruth A. Brandwein, Ph.D., MSW, Professor Emerita and former Dean, School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University and former Commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Social Services: "I wish I had had a book like this one when I entered the fray. It is a great Who's Who on Long Island, a primer of the cast of characters who have struggled for social justice over decades and also provides a chronological catalogue of the many social service agencies that developed on Long Island. To attempt to capture in one book the complexity of this sprawling place known as Long Island, and to do it through so many years is a major accomplishment. Arfin has done a prodigious job in compiling an enormous array of information about people, programs and policies over more than half a century, a time of great changes and upheavals. By framing the chapters in a national context, we are helped to understand what was happening on Long Island within the political and economic currents of national social movements that were occurring at the time. This book will be a valuable guide to those new to Long Island; it will be an excellent text for social work, human service, public administration, political science and history students. Most of all, it will be an invaluable reminder to those of us who lived through some or all of the struggles described. We will meet or reconnect with old friends and colleagues, we will understand better what motivated people to do what they did. For me, learning the "back stories" of so many of my colleagues who had worked and struggled in Long Island well before I arrived on the scene is invaluable,-- I just wish I had this book when I arrived. It could have saved me from making many mistakes and would have helped me be more effective in my efforts." Spanish philosopher, essayist, novelist and poet George Santayana said that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." History never quite repeats in the same way, but that understanding can help us learn from the past to work for a better future.

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