



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Story of Collaborative Publishing

When Jane Roberts Wood, instructor of English at Brookhaven College in the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD), asked her friend Frances Vick, Director of the Press at the University of North Texas (UNT), how to go about getting a book of short stories she had edited in print, a joint venture was born that has proved highly successful and fulfilling to all the participants, as well as the institutions they represent.

Like all good stories, this one begins with an idea. Jane Roberts Wood, a published novelist herself (*The Train to Estelline*), knew there are many talented writers in the DCCCD, and she saw the need for a vehicle to showcase their talents. She became committed to the idea that faculty and staff of the DCCCD would benefit from having their writing efforts recognized by their colleagues and the community in which they lived, and that students would benefit from knowing that their instructors were actively engaged in the creative process. Thus, the idea of publishing a juried book of short stories was born.

The faculty and staff of DCCCD were notified and given a four-month period in which to submit their stories. Sixty-three stories were submitted by the faculty, staff, and administrators from all seven campuses. Jane asked Sally Schrup, an instructor in art at Eastfield, and Donna Gormly, an instructor in English at Eastfield, to assist her in working on the project. Together they met with Carol Slipak, Vice President of the DCCCD Foundation, Inc., and asked for funds with which to publish the collection. They believed the project would cost approximately \$7,000. Ms. Slipak offered them a challenge grant of \$3,500 from the Chancellor's Fund of the DCCCD Foundation; so with some money in hand, the editors set about to brainstorm ways to raise the remaining \$3,500. Feeling certain they would raise the rest of the money somehow, Jane was determined to pull the collection together.

First, judges were needed to select the stories to be published. Wanting to be as impartial as possible, the editors asked two writers who were not a part of the district to act as judges. Pete A. Y. Gunter, philosophy

professor at the UNT and a published author, and Celia Morris of Washington, D.C., whose book had won the Texas Institute of Letters Carr P. Collins Award for Distinguished Nonfiction, were asked to read and select the stories. As Jane describes the process in the introduction to the book: "Over a period of weeks they read each story several times and, finally, compiled a list of 'best' stories. The lists, not surprisingly, were not identical. Then phone calls between the two began, followed by more reading. Letters passed back and forth, followed by still more reading until, finally, on a cold day in March, I came home from Brookhaven College and found these 14 stories in my mailbox."

With the stories now chosen for the publication, the task of editing the stories began. The three editors read and edited, when necessary, each of the 14 stories, meeting over a period of two months to collaborate on the editing. Jane met with each of the writers at least once, and sometimes on several occasions, to fine-tune the final product. When the editors and the writers were finally satisfied with the result of the editing and rewriting, Jane set out to discover how to get the book published with the \$3,500 the foundation had provided.

Enter Fran Vick. As Fran tells it, "I try never to miss gatherings of writers and publishers. Those are *my* people—the ones who share the same interests and the ones whose causes I support in whatever way I can. And, selfishly, one never knows what project or idea or interesting people one may run across. At such a gathering, my good friend Jane Roberts Wood said she needed to come talk to me about how to go about getting a book published. I knew Jane meant *publish* in the sense of how to go about putting a book together.

I was somewhat daunted by the task of explaining about trade paperbacks, hardbacks, signatures, type fonts, ppi of paper stock, grade A, B, & C cloth, 2-3-4 color covers, CIS cover stock, perfect binding, headbands and end sheets, designing, cataloging-in-publication, ISBNs, Advance Book Information—all that and dozens more of the small details that go into putting a book together after the initial editing, footnoting, and indexing is done. And, the difficult task of distribution



and marketing in today's competitive book world had not yet been broached.

I had just recently become part of the newly formed press at the University of North Texas. Without any books actually in production at the time, we were looking for some fresh manuscripts and fresh faces with which to make our mark on the university press publishing world. It occurred to me that co-publication between the DCCCD and UNT Press would solve some major problems on both of our parts, and it would also free me from having to teach Jane how to publish a book! Besides, I wanted her writing, not publishing."

A bonus for UNT and the DCCCD would be that the co-publishing venture would open another avenue where both institutions could be cooperative. UNT already values the DCCCD as an excellent source of students who wish to continue past the associate degree, and this cooperative publishing effort would be another point of contact for the two. It provided a focus for a number of faculty, staff, and administrators to work together on a project that both enjoyed, and provided a happy occasion for the two chancellors to meet and fete the accomplishments of the project.

"The real treat for us at the Press," according to Fran, "was to receive the stories and start reading them. We loved the stories, and we loved what Jane had to say in the Introduction about the stories: She had written of her delight at the variety of voices she heard in the collection. We used that in the promotional material about the book."

The design of the book was placed in the hands of Rick Sale, professor of English and editor of *Texas Books in Review* at UNT. UNT Press members and the DCCCD editors met several times to discuss the progress of the design of the book and the title. By now the thought was growing about the book being "out of Dallas," in the sense of the writers being employed by the county's community college system (although the stories are set all over the world), so the natural place to look for cover art was the area's artists. The paintings of Dallas artist Donald Vogel, founder of the Valley House Gallery in Dallas and one who has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as an artist and gallery owner in Dallas, were sought. Teel Sale, Rick's wife and an artist herself, helped choose the appropriate painting for the cover, "Shaded Walk." Mr. Vogel generously gave permission to use the painting for the cover and provided the color slide for the four-color separation.

The book was produced as a trade paperback, with the list price of \$12.95, in the hopes that creative

writing teachers and teachers of short stories would use the book as a text. The two institutions hope to realize enough profit from the sale of *Out of Dallas: 14 Stories* to finance other co-publishing ventures, such as poetry and essays.

To promote the book, the two chancellors, Dr. Alfred F. Hurley of the University of North Texas and Dr. Lawrence Tyree of the Dallas County Community College District, hosted an announcement party to introduce the book to the media and to interested patrons of both institutions. The party itself was co-hosted, with complete cooperation between the two groups on decisions ranging from invitations to decorations and food. The event was held in the City Club, on the 69th floor of the NCNB Plaza, appropriately overlooking the city of Dallas. The wine and cheese reception honoring the editors, writers, and the artist, included author signings and was a successful launching of the book.

Publishing *Out of Dallas* has been an enriching experience for those who worked together to get the book into the hands of students and members of both communities. As many as 30 to 40 people voluntarily contributed their talents and time to bring about the publication of the collection, and in the process each has come to know and value the other more fully. If, as Dr. Tyree says, it is true that a comprehensive community college worth its salt is in constant conversation with its various communities, both among colleagues within the institutions and among the neighborhoods and constituencies beyond, then DCCCD fulfilled these criteria in this joint publication. The opening of still another path between the two schools has been a happy and profitable creative venture. The cooperative effort on this first venture will encourage them to seek further publishing projects and, doubtless, will encourage further joint ventures between the two groups in other areas, as well.

Jane Roberts Wood, *Instructor, Brookhaven College*
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Out of Dallas: 14 Stories is available from University Distribution, Drawer C, College Station, TX 77843-4354, 1-800-826-8911.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

August 24, 1990, Vol. XII, No. 16
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Subscriptions are available to nonconsortium members for \$40 per year. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms and once during the summer. ISSN 0199-106X.