



FYI

Professor's Book Addresses the Issue of Welfare Reform

A Temple University faculty member has written a timely new book about welfare reform.

Felice Davidson Perlmutter, professor of social administration, is the author of *From Welfare to Work*, published by Oxford University Press.

It's timely because yesterday was the deadline for states to reduce the number of able-bodied adults on welfare. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 stipulated that, by Oct. 1, states had to remove 25 percent of the welfare population from the rolls.

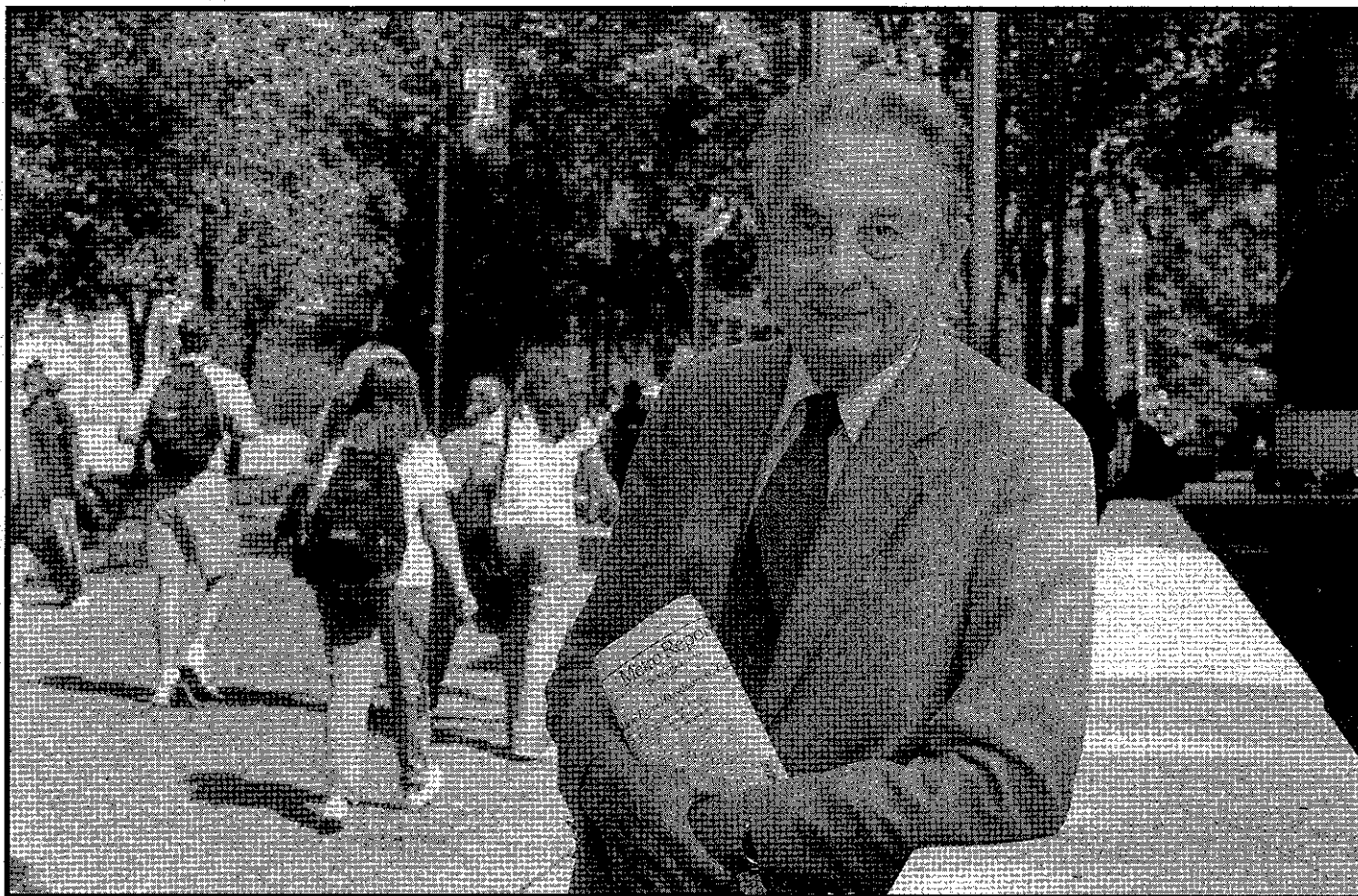
"Granted the welfare system was not working," says Perlmutter, "but the changes legislated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act moved too quickly, with too little thought, and with even less compassion."

In her book, Perlmutter examines how Pennsylvania Blue Shield pioneered a program that trained and hired more than 200 welfare recipients for permanent jobs in its workforce. After five years, 72 percent had not returned to welfare.

But, she adds, "the private sector cannot be expected to go it alone, since it must pay attention to the bottom line. An employment strategy to replace welfare requires that the risks be pooled, that there be collaboration and careful planning as well as a substantial financial investment from both the public and the private sectors."

Poets & Writers Series

The New York-based poet, author



George Gerbner, the new Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication, calls teaching "the oxygen of academic life."

Renowned Media Analyst George Gerbner Named Bell Atlantic Professor in SCAT

George Gerbner, a leading communication scholar and authority known worldwide for his research on the impact of the media on society, particularly the long-term effects of television violence, has been named Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication at Temple University.

"We are extremely proud and fortunate to have George Gerbner join our telecommunications program in the department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media," said Robert Greenberg,

acting dean of the School of Communications and Theater. "His experience and reputation, and the exciting initiatives he is planning—including an international conference on the global emergence of digital television—will provide us with a special opportunity to achieve more public involvement."

At Temple, Dr. Gerbner is teaching a course in Media Analysis to undergraduate and graduate students. Teaching, he says, is "the oxygen of academic life."

"What brought me to Temple was the students — they're hard-working

and self-propelling, more self-motivated than many students I've encountered."

Before being awarded the Bell Atlantic Chair, Dr. Gerbner was professor and dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania from 1964 through 1989.

Since 1967, he has directed the Cultural Indicators research project, analyzing the way in which the mass media depict the American cultural environment. Its database has

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Gerbner is Bell Professor of Telecommunication

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amassed information on over 3,000 television programs and 35,000 characters. The project recently launched an industry "report card" on cultural diversity. The Diversity Index, which will be generated annually, identifies the proportionate representation of diversity (PROD) in prime time television programs, based on representative samples, and in the year's 40 top-grossing movies.

His much-heralded work on violence continues to be an ongoing concern. In an interview by Temple journalism professor John Lent published in *A Different Road Taken: Profiles in Critical Communication*, Dr. Gerbner said, "There may have been more violent periods than the present, although I am not sure of that, but I'm sure that there has never been an era where every home was drenched with violent imagery. It is mass-produced, happily sanitized, violent imagery with which our children grow up."

The cultural process of storytelling, he warns—once the domain of family, school, church and other community institutions—is being taken over increasingly by global corporate interests who have something to sell. It's the nature of the cultural environment into which children are born that shapes their view of themselves and the world.

Last year, Dr. Gerbner founded the Cultural Environment Movement, an international media reform coalition dedicated to fairness, equity and diversity in media.

Dr. Gerbner's American and international research projects have been supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Administration on Aging, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory

Committee on Television and Social Behavior, the Screen Actors Guild, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Sloan Foundation, and other organizations.

In the course of his academic career, he has been visiting lecturer at the University of Athens, Greece; visiting professor at the University of Budapest, Hungary, and at Salesian University, Rome, Italy; and distinguished visiting professor at American University in Washington, DC and in Cairo, Egypt. He has also taught at the Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois; the University of Southern California; El Camino College and John Muir College, both in California.

He was executive editor of the quarterly *Journal of Communication* and chair of the editorial board of the *International Encyclopedia of Communication*. He is the editor or author of numerous books and publications, including *Invisible Crises: What Conglomerate Media Control Means for America and the World*; "TV Violence and What to do About It," *Nieman Reports, Fall 1996*; "Casting and Fate: Women and Minorities on Television Drama, Game Shows, and News" in *Communication, Culture and Community*; and "Stories that Hurt: Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Mass Media" in *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*.

Born in Hungary, Dr. Gerbner fled fascism in his native country in 1939 and came to the United States, where he enlisted in the 101st Airborne and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Parachuting into Eastern Europe, he fought with the partisans for six months against the Germans and received a field commission and Bronze Star for service behind enemy lines.

He studied psychology at the University of California at Los

Angeles and earned a degree in journalism at the University of California at Berkeley. He worked as a reporter and editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle* before pursuing advanced degrees at the University of Southern California, where he was awarded a master's degree in 1951 and the Ph.D. degree in 1955. His dissertation, "Toward a General Theory of Communication," won USC's award for "best dissertation."

His career has continued to reap honors and awards, among them: honorary degrees from Emerson College, La Salle University and Worcester State College; the Excellence in Media Award from the International Television Association; the Paul J. Deutschman Award for Excellence in Research from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and the Media Achievement Award of Excellence from the Philadelphia Bar Association.

— BY HARRIET GOODHEART

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