

Distinguished Scholar Professor Sally M. Reis

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Sally M. Reis is the former Vice Provost of Academic Affairs at the University of Connecticut, as well as a former Department Head of the Educational Psychology Department in the Neag School of Education. She is a Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, and a Teaching Fellow in Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut. She currently holds the Letitia Neag Chair in Educational Psychology. She was a public school teacher and administrator for 12 years, prior to her work at the University of Connecticut (UConn). She has authored more than 250 articles, books, book chapters, monographs and technical reports. She has traveled extensively across the country conducting workshops and providing professional development for school districts on enrichment programs, differentiation, and talent development programs.

Sally also served as Principal Investigator of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented for almost two decades. She worked with a research team that has generated over 50 million dollars in grants in the last three decades. Her research interests are related to talent development in all children as well as special populations of gifted and talented students, including: students with learning disabilities, gifted females and diverse groups of talented students who are often underserved. She is also interested in extensions of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) for both gifted and talented students and as a way to expand offerings and provide general enrichment to identify talent and potential in students who have not been previously identified as gifted. Her most recent work has involved methods of using gifted education pedagogy to stimulate interests, learning styles and abilities in all children. She is co-author of *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model*, *The Secondary Triad Model*, *Dilemmas in Talent Development in the Middle Years*, and a book published in 1998 about women's talent development entitled *Work Left Undone: Choices and Compromises of Talented Females*.

Sally has served on several editorial boards and is the past President of the National Association for Gifted Children. She has won many professional awards including being named the Distinguished Scholar by the National Association for Gifted Children for her scholarly contributions to the field, as well as the Distinguished Service Award for outstanding service. She was also named a Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor at the University of Connecticut, awarded to only 3 faculty each year. She was named a Distinguished Scholar by The Center for Education and Study on the Gifted and Talented, University of Northern Colorado, 2007. She won the Neag School of Education Outstanding Research Award in 2006, was given the Educator of the Year Award from Future Problem Solving in 2003. She won the Pi Lambda Theta, Outstanding Educator Award in 2000, and other education awards, and was also named a UConn Teaching Fellow at the University of Connecticut in 1998.

Sally's scholarship is diverse and broad, as summarized by her numerous articles, books, book chapters, monographs, and technical reports. Her specialized research interests relate to diverse populations of gifted and talented students, including students with learning disabilities, gifted females, and culturally and linguistically diverse talented students. The American Psychological Association has cited her one of the 20 most influential psychologists in the world in the area of Talent Development and Gifted Education.



She is most proud of her continuous leadership in the field of gifted education and talent development, as well as enrichment pedagogy, her four decades of running Confratute, the summer residential program for gifted education at UConn, which began in 1978, and has served thousands of teachers and administrators from around the world, exposing them to enrichment and engagement for all children. She also credits her many graduate students, some of which will be contributing to this profile, as contributing to her scholarship and evolution in the field, saying how much she has learned from them. Her graduate students have become lifelong colleagues and friends. These include over 30 former doctoral students, many of whom are distinguished scholars and over 300 Master's degree students who are teachers, administrators and leaders in our field across the country.

Her work is diverse and extends across several themes, as summarized in several articles in this journal. But she believes her greatest gifts are her husband Joe, her daughters Sara and Liza Renzulli, and son Scott Renzulli, as well as their spouses, Nick, Laurie, and Jeff, and her three grandchildren, Samantha, Alexander and Abigail.

Reflections on an Academic Life

Sally M. Reis

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It is an honor to be profiled in this way and I am thankful that it gives me an opportunity to thank and acknowledge some of my colleagues and friends who agreed to write about our relationships and my career. I have been blessed in my life to work with people I respect and admire greatly, from my wonderful husband and partner Joe Renzulli, to special colleagues like Jean Gubbins, Karen Westberg, Sandy Kaplan, Bob Sternberg, Susan Baum, and Carolyn Callahan. I have also been fortunate to work with outstanding graduate students, both at the Master's and Doctoral level, many of whom have become dear friends, such as Marcia Gentry, Stuart Omdal, Terry Neu, Jonathan Plucker, Del Siegle, Marcia Gentry, Liz Fogarty, Betsy McCoach, and many, many others. Each of them has contributed in important ways to my academic, personal, and intellectual journey.



Following my graduation from college in 1973, I became a teacher in a public school system in Pittsburgh while I thought about my next steps, initially focusing on law school. This most likely was my strong positive reaction to and participation in the protests surrounding the Vietnam War. But then, I began feeling the draw of the high poverty students in my 9th grade English classes. I taught 6 classes a day of 30 students in each class and began to understand the work and effort required to be an effective teacher. It was in my first year of teaching that I met Chris, an academically talented, underachieving, turned off gifted girl, who was angry and negative towards school, her teachers and most of the other students in her classes. Chris made me want to learn more about academically

talented students, the choices, they made, the reasons they underachieved and what I could do to motivate and engage them. That in turn led me to coursework at the University of Pittsburgh about gifted education and gifted and creative students, and of course, to the early work of Joseph Renzulli, E. Paul Torrance, James Gallagher, and the continuation of my intellectual journey toward the practical scholar I have become.



I met Joe soon after I returned to my Connecticut hometown from Pittsburgh, where I had become interested in gifted and talented students as a result, like so many of my colleagues, of my work as an English teacher in a large public junior high school that served students in grades 7–9. After meeting and teaching Chris, and eventually having success with her after eliminating her regular

work and engaging her in independent study, I experienced the classic exposure to the need to know more about gifted education, as Chris was and continued to be an incredibly smart and turned-off student who had absolutely no interest in learning anything in my class and whose motivation was waning by the day. Reading about what to do with gifted students also brought me back to the work of James Gallagher and classes at the University of Pittsburgh in gifted education. Eventually, Jack Birch at the University of Pittsburgh recommended that when I returned to my home state of Connecticut, I should contact a young scholar who was doing important work at UConn named Joe Renzulli. I did just that in a phone conversation in 1977.



Subsequently, Joe sent me a mimeographed copy of a two-part article he had written on The Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977). This was my first exposure to his work and the ideas that would influence the rest of my professional and personal life. As I had already taken some classes about academically talented students, motivated by my desire to help Chris, and had become interested in learning more, I became friendly with some of the emerging leaders of gifted students in CT. We were a young, irreverent, and creative group who eagerly sought interaction with some of the scholars in my field. My interactions with gifted education experts from the National Leadership Training Institute where I first met Sandy Kaplan, James Gallagher, Harry Passow and others in my field were intellectually and personally stimulating and life -changing. These pioneers were among my earliest intellectual influencers.

At that time, in the mid 1970's, I returned to Connecticut and began teaching in the school district I attended. I was selected to start a gifted program and this brought me the opportunity to

experiment directly with some of Joe's ideas—implementing first an Enrichment Triad Model in middle, then elementary, and last, our high school. Frustrated by the need to give individually administered IQ tests to select students for these gifted programs, and the time and expense this incurred, I became passionate about broadening the notion of who was gifted and who was not, and who could be served by enrichment that seemed to benefit a much broader pool of students. That journey became my life's work and introduced me to some of the collaborators with whom I still work, including Tom Hebert and Michele Fenc Bagwell who both worked with me in the gifted program I directed.



Joe has been and continues to be the biggest scholarly influence on my professional life. I take great pride in the outcomes of our successful joint work, for example, the many and diverse ways that students complete in-depth projects, the engaged atmosphere in the Renzulli Academy, the chance to develop innovative ideas, such as Renzulli Learning, and the many schools across the globe that implement the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). We are especially passionate about schools that are implementing SEM with diverse children who live in areas with high poverty rates, and who have never had the opportunity to engage in enrichment before. We are especially passionate about schools serving high poverty and diverse students that implement the SEM and serve students who have never had the opportunity to engage in enrichment before. We love working with certain kinds of teachers, whom Joe calls “positive malcontents” who question authority, especially when that authority results in rigid and non-creative educational experiences for young people.

In this summary, I expand upon different and related aspects of my work in our field, beginning with an expanded conception of giftedness.

Expanding conceptions of giftedness and talents

My first publication, the result of my doctoral dissertation, was related to Joe's Three Ring Conception of Giftedness. We were given permission from the state of Connecticut to expand the number of students served in gifted programs in 12 school districts, including the top 15% of

academically talented students, instead of the top 3-5 % or what state guidelines recommended. I was very interested in whether these top academic students could also produce creative products. In this journey, we were also influenced favorably by the expanding conceptions of intelligence of both Robert Sternberg and Howard Gardner, both of whom we had met and who had spoken at UConn. Their work was, and continues to be, both inspiring and influential. My dissertation article, published in *Phi Delta Kappan*, influenced much of our later school-based practitioner research that would have an impact on schools and educational practices. It was in this article that Joe and I first discussed the utility of a talent pool of students with high potential, students and the notion that more than the top 3-5% could benefit from gifted programs. We also described Joe's often misunderstood idea about a "revolving-door model for identifying and teaching gifted and talented students".



Accompanying this research were the 12 district evaluations, for each of the districts that had participated in our research; these evaluations had to be written by my colleague and collaborator and friend, E. Jean Gubbins, and my commitment to the districts that I worked with to have their efforts to work with us rewarded with the best possible research study we could conduct and the results that might help them with practice in the future. This study resulted in more flexible identification criteria and local norms being used to identify more students and in particular, more culturally diverse and poor students in urban and suburban districts across our state. The study also resulted in the expansion of the more conventional selection and identification processes that had largely excluded these students from gifted programs in prior years. I still regard this as one of the most important research studies I have ever completed. And after over 250 publications, the letter of acceptance from *Phi Delta Kappan* remains one of the most exciting professional moments of my life.

Research on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model

I have been the primary researcher on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) published first in 1985 (Renzulli & Reis, 1985, 1997, 2014, 2020), combining the previously developed

Enrichment Triad Model into a broader talent development approach, the product of four decades of research and field-testing on this widely used approach. We began experimenting with methods of using the Triad Model to serve a broader pool of students in whom we could develop talents. This work with Joe emerged as the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). The SEM is one of the most often implemented enrichment models in the world, and we have spent the last four decades developing it, studying its implementation and impact, and traveling in our country and across the globe to expand its implementation. The SEM is used in thousands of school districts across the world, and we remain dedicated to the extensive evaluation and research with others who have worked to investigate the utility and effectiveness of the model. Our research that documents how the use of the SEM can result in the identification of and enrichment services for students from diverse groups and from lower socio-economic backgrounds can be included in an SEM talent pool. We have consulted with over 25 countries and all 50 states on the talent development, enrichment, and differentiation approach described in the SEM.



Research on the impact of extending gifted education pedagogy

Based on our work on the SEM, we have become increasingly interested in how the pedagogy of the SEM, what we call enrichment pedagogy, can be used to provide more engaging and interesting learning experiences for all students. Several years ago, I had the idea for Renzulli Learning, an on-line SEM pedagogy, with interactive online teaching and learning opportunities that provide personalized learning for students. It was, I believe, one of the best ways for teachers who are already overworked to provide numerous enrichment and differentiated opportunities, using students' achievement levels, interests, and preferred expression styles. We spent four years actively working with a team to build the system, writing most of the text and modifying previous instruments that Joe and I and others had developed.

During that time, I was also working with an Assistant Superintendent in Hartford CT to actively develop the first Renzulli Academy, with the idea that we would implement all components and parts of the SEM, including our related reading work, the Schoolwide Enrichment Model in Reading, as a full and total school approach to investigate how well our urban students with high potential would do in a very different type of school. With a very broad pool of students who were average and above average in achievement and using enrichment pedagogy, we built a climate and a school known for academic excellence and engagement. Without doing any test preparation, our students scored at the top of the district each year in state-wide achievement tests, but more

importantly, they have won “invention convention” competitions, History Day, and many arts and math awards. This work has been among my most important and compelling contributions, a product of over four decades of research and field-testing, that combines the previously developed Enrichment Triad and the SEM.

Talented readers and the Schoolwide Enrichment Reading Model (SEM-R)

As noted earlier, in some of my most recent work, a team of my former graduate students and colleagues and I conducted research about using enrichment strategies to challenge and engage readers of all achievement levels, but especially focused on talented readers. This work is actually a culmination of previous work, combining my love of reading, my background as an avid reader, and my experience in English language arts and as a reading teacher, as the parent of an early and precocious reader, and previous work on the SEM and curriculum compacting. This research was funded by two large federal grants produced exciting research has been published in competitive educational journals (<https://gifted.uconn.edu/semr-pubs/>). I worked with an amazing team including Liz Fogarty, Jean Gubbins, Catherine Little, Angela Housand, Brian Housand, Lisa Muller, and Rebecca Eckert, we received federal grants of approximately 6 million dollars grant to investigate, replicate, and publish several research articles about the SEM-R. The major result of this empirical work was that when using SEM-R, teachers could eliminate most of group reading instruction (up to 4-5 hours weekly) and replace it with targeted differentiated reading instruction applied to interest-based books that students select and actually want to read. When teachers implemented SEM-R for an academic year, students participating in the SEM-R, as compared to a randomly assigned treatment group achieved either higher scores or did just as well on standardized tests of reading fluency and achievement. Our results were published in some of the most competitive educational research journals and were a testimony to the efficacy of enrichment- based reading and differentiated instruction.



In other research with my friend and colleague, Marcia Gentry, we studied the use of enrichment clusters for the entire population of two schools in economically disadvantaged urban settings with a high percentage of culturally diverse students. Enrichment clusters provide a regularly scheduled time for students and adults, who share a common interest and purpose, to come together and complete enrichment work; and we found that high end learning opportunities can extend

opportunities for advanced learning to all students, further promoting the notion of Schoolwide Enrichment for all students.



Research on Curriculum Differentiation and Compacting

Perhaps as a result of the time I spent bored in classes when I was a student, and definitely due to my interactions and advocacy for Chris in my first year of teaching, I became interested in studying how differentiated teaching strategies enable teachers to streamline the regular curriculum, ensure student mastery of basic skills, and provide time for challenging enrichment activities or acceleration activities. This teaching strategy underlying Curriculum Compacting, one of the components of the SEM, enables every student in every classroom to be challenged. The research I conducted with a UConn team on this topic demonstrated that academically talented students can be compacted out of 40-50% of regular curriculum without any decrease in their achievement tests (Reis, Westberg, Kulikowich & Purcell, 1998).

Research on gifted students with learning and other disabilities, twice exceptional students

The different research studies that I completed investigating the challenges and problems faced by high ability students with learning disabilities (2e) was inspired by my colleague and dear friend, Dr. Susan Baum, who is and remains one of the leading figures in the world in this area. Unbeknownst to Joe and me, our oldest daughter, born prematurely after experiencing some loss of oxygen, was identified, subsequent to my early research in this area, as having severe dyslexia, while also having very high verbal aptitude. Sue Baum's work and our subsequent insights about our

daughter continued to motivate me to learn more about this population and the challenges they face (Reis, Neu, & McGuire, 1997). In addition, we learned how to identify appropriately challenging, academic compensation strategies that helped talented students to be successful. I became focused on creating opportunities for educators to provide enrichment and talent development opportunities to these 2e students who have both extreme talents and deficits. Compensation strategies, such as extra time on tests, providing instruction in learning strategies, and a variety of deeper processing strategies, help 2e students learn to work smarter in school but don't ignite their interests or passions about learning. My research in this area remains a major theme of my professional career and will continue with a new federal grant to study 2e students with autism.

Research on talented students and eminent adults who achieved and underachieve

I also spent four years studying academically talented students who either achieve or underachieve in an urban high school, working with a core group of colleagues to identify alterable factors that had an impact on achievement. This resulted in research I conducted with special colleagues, such as Tom Hébert, and several publications that evolved from that research, including a review of research on underachievement with my colleague Betsy McCoach, published in 2000, and often cited in the literature about this perplexing phenomenon.



Following the broad path of my intellectual journey, some of my favorite and perhaps best-known work, may be my research on talented women and girls. I have loved the longitudinal research I have conducted on this population and have had the opportunity to give speeches on this topic all over the world, having been invited to speak in India, Spain, Germany, Italy, India, England, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Argentina, Panama and other countries, as well. Inspired by our

own two smart and independent daughters, my work on girls and women across all domains and life spans resulted in a new conception of eminence in women (Reis, 2005). This conception defined women's talent development as occurring when women with high intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership ability or potential achieve in an area they choose and make new and important contributions that they consider meaningful to society. The opportunity to conduct this research and propose new theories about women's talent development and creativity has been a highlight of my academic life.



In closing, I feel such gratitude for a career that has been both rewarding and exciting, but most important, for my family, friends, and colleagues. How fortunate I have been to have such a supportive husband, interesting and creative children of whom I am so proud, and siblings who make me laugh and cry, sometimes on the same day. How fortunate am I to have accomplished important work with interesting and intelligent colleagues and friends, persons of integrity and passion who have made my research and teaching so enjoyable. I acknowledge and thank them all—and appreciate the honor this journal has given me, as well as the opportunity to reflect and be thankful for my academic life and work.

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Sally Reis, Friend, Colleague, and “Leader Extraordinaire”

Susan Baum

Provost, Bridges Graduate School, California

I first met Sally when I entered the doctoral program in education of the gifted and talented at the University of Connecticut in 1980. Recently divorced and a mother of three I had no idea what the future would bring. Sally was a few years ahead of me and already successful in implementing a new enrichment model for gifted and talented students, *The Enrichment Triad Model* developed by our mentor, Joseph Renzulli. Indeed, Sally’s efforts as a teacher and budding researcher, then, helped to jumpstart this model to become the most popular enrichment model worldwide. Her enthusiasm and passion for advocating for talent development made her a role model for me and my work with Twice Exceptional students. In a sense, I wanted to be like her.



After we both graduated, we found that our professional journeys often intertwined. We both served on the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Board together. I was on executive committee during her years as President of that organization. Every summer for 40 years I have been part of Confratute which she directs and I feel one of her signature contributions to the field. I cherish teaching side by side with Sally during the Three Summers Program at UCONN where we have great joy in finding creative ways to celebrate Joe Renzulli’s birthday. Over the years, we also grew to be

close friends as we shared stories about our kids, celebrated family events together, and supported each other during the challenges we faced balancing family and our professional lives.

However, it is those joint projects that I remember as most significant –the ones involving Twice Exceptional children. Working with Sally on grants, joint publications, keynote addresses, symposiums and more enabled me to become a better writer, a better researcher, and a better leader as she always supported my creative ideas and continued to be my best cheer- leader.

Today, we still engage in long, meaningful discussions about life in general, our families, our work, and our continued enthusiasm for what we do. I couldn't ask for a better friend and colleague, nor can I think of someone more deserving than Sally for this honor.

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Putting People Over Papers

Elizabeth Fogarty

University of St. Thomas

I first met Sally when I was a 5th grade teacher and my principal had finally agreed to send me to Confratute in 2001. I was immediately struck by Sally's kindness and hospitality at the 700-person two-week long professional development event. In fact, I distinctly recall that when I met her, she asked me questions about myself, and when she did, she was genuinely interested in my response. Above all else, Sally cares for those around her by sharing her time and energy generously with others.



Upon sharing that I was interested in the doctoral program at the University of Connecticut, I recall that Sally asked me about whether my mom was a strong presence in my life. Her question demonstrated in a deep way her commitment to understanding those with whom she worked, and I later learned about the positive influence her own mother had played in her life. Sally also understood the toll that a PhD would exact, and wanted to know if I had a strong female mentor in my life, not

because having a male mentor would have been insufficient, but because her research had demonstrated the differences in challenges faced by females and males in the world of academe. Indeed, her work on gifted females has enabled the field of gifted education to recognize and better understand the unique challenges faced by eminent women.

In the early 2000's, Sally received a Javits Grant to study gifted readers and I was lucky enough to be involved. The research, which applied the Schoolwide Enrichment Model framework to the teaching of reading, was particularly powerful in that it moved beyond the field of gifted education to transform reading pedagogy in mainstream classrooms. The emphasis of the SEM-R on student interest was especially important because it provided an addition to the prevailing instructional practices at the time which focused on providing support for struggling readers and seldom allowed for student self-selection, or a challenge for gifted readers. In the SEM-R video, Sally says, “. . . with the current remedial mode in education and the current Gestalt in the country to try to get scores up, I think what we're doing is we're taking away every ounce of pleasure in the reading process and so if we raise scores by a couple of points but the kids don't want to pick up a book after that experience, then we really haven't accomplished anything important.” Our research results demonstrated that using SEM-R led to increased reading skills and enjoyment and English language learners showed the greatest growth. Presenting and publishing in journals and at conferences in the reading field allowed for the SEM-R research to challenge the notion of focusing on reading deficits in students, instead using a pedagogical approach based in enrichment and interest demonstrating the power of using enrichment pedagogy with all students; a principle which has been a central tenet in Sally's work over the years.

Despite the fact that she is one of the most prolific researchers in the field of gifted education, Sally positions people over papers by taking a relational focus in her work. She seems to understand that true influence in research and teaching must affect humans personally, before it can affect them academically. I know that to be true in my own experience as one of many graduate students she has mentored personally and professionally over the years; just imagine her influence multiplied by the many thousands of teachers at *Confratute* and conference audiences over the years multiplied by the hundreds of thousands of students they've reached. Perhaps that's why one of her favorite quotes is: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” (Margaret Mead). Through her research and her kindness, Sally has indeed changed the world.

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The Incomparable Sally Reis: Mentor, Scholar, Colleague, Friend

Marcia Gentry
Purdue University, USA

Like so many of us who appreciate Sally Reis, I met her one summer when I was sent by my employer to the University of Connecticut to learn more about the gifted education position for which I had just been hired. That was in 1988. She was accessible, smart, kind, open and welcoming. All I knew after spending that first two weeks in Connecticut, was that I needed more. So, I wrote to Sally, and I asked her if I might wear one of the t-shirts and work at *Confratute*. I told her I was a good worker, which was true. From that summer forward, save one summer when I battled breast cancer and the most recent shutdown due to Covid, I spent part of every summer in Connecticut, and in doing so helped develop my professional identity, guided by Sally.

Sally saw something in me, encouraged me to pursue my doctorate, and in doing so, she opened doors for me that I did not even know existed. Now, as I work with my own doctoral advisees, I remember how Sally took care of her graduate students, and I try to pay it forward in true Sally Reis style. Rarely does a day pass that I do not think about Sally and her profound influence upon my life and the lives of others. I am acutely aware that I hold my position today largely due to Sally's mentoring, modeling, teaching, and friendship and the outstanding education she afforded me at UConn. I cherish her friendship, and I consider it an honor to work with Sally as a colleague in our field of gifted education.



Her contributions to the field in terms of scholarship, grants, her graduates, and service including as president of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and as an American Psychological Association (APA) fellow are well-known and nothing short of superlative. These contributions comprise her long and impressive vita, but beyond her vitae lie her most important contributions. Sally is one of the giants in our field, her scholarship is far-reaching, and her influence is profound. At the same time, she is generous, kind, caring and gracious—a confluence of traits that make her truly one-of-a-kind, and someone everyone respects and admires.

Sally is generous. She always has (or makes) time for a chat, time to offer counsel, to be a mentor and friend. Because she knows what is important in life, her counsel is invaluable. She shares credit, acknowledges those who came before her and lifts up those who come after her. Whether writing a letter, making a phone call, offering advice, or just checking in on her former students, friends, family, and colleagues, her interests and connections are genuine and built from a place of deep caring and generosity. ***Sally is kind.*** She finds the best in everyone, and then helps them find the best in themselves. I believe her kindness helped to make her such an influential leader at UConn and throughout the field. ***Sally is caring.*** Sally is and has always been in demand, she is very busy, but she always finds time for her students, former students, friends, and family. She cares deeply and acts accordingly. During my eight-month breast cancer treatment, she called me at least weekly, and those calls mattered.

Sally is gracious. One only has to spend a few minutes with Sally or hear her speak to know the depth of class and graciousness that guides her words and her actions. She is always and genuinely gracious. Through her writing about gifted women and the manner in which she has lived her scholarly and personal life, she is a model and an inspiration to gifted women across the world. I am not sure she really knows how important she is in the lives of those, like me, who were lucky enough to study with her and to become her friend. I hope this special feature gives her a glimpse into the depth of her influence and reach as a scholar and as an extraordinary human being. The rest of us already knows the incomparable Sally Reis is a rare and special treasure.

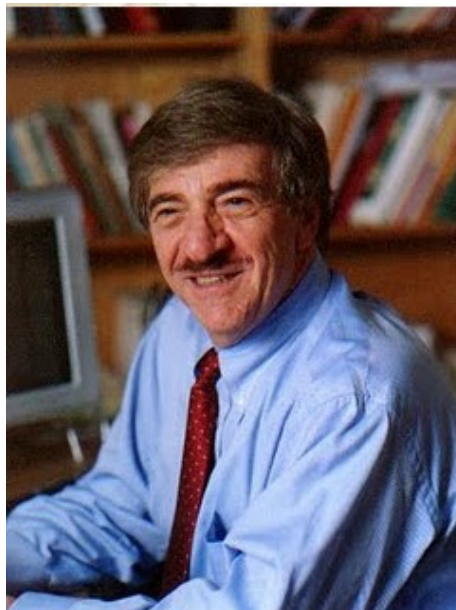
Sally M. Reis: A Champion of Real and Lasting Change Written in Stone

Joseph Renzulli

Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, USA

A great deal of very good research has taken place in gifted education, but most research has had limited consequential impacts on educational practices and policy making. Sally's work has not only addressed the big questions that challenge our field, but also provided answers to those questions that have had a direct effect on policy and practice.

One of her early studies, for example, resulted in a change in the Connecticut State student identification policy, thus allowing for more opportunities for students who were underrepresented in gifted programs that were based solely on IQ or other cognitive ability and achievement test scores. Working with the state Commissioner of Education, she recruited the superintendents in several districts that served low income and minority students and designed an identification system that used universal screening, local norms, and teacher ratings to identify students who would not have been selected solely on test scores. She provided numerous professional development sessions for implementing the new identification system in participating schools, continued to revise and modify the system to make it more user friendly, and presented her findings to the state department of education and the Connecticut State Task Force on Gifted Education. The Connecticut State Board of Education subsequently approved the recommended changes and this policy change is still in practice to this day, enabling a more flexible identification system that enabled more students who are from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This also enabled more students from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in gifted and enrichment programs. In the years that followed, a number of other states adopted identification procedures similar more flexible approaches based on Sally's original research.



Another example of Sally's indefatigable determination to make real and sustainable change in schools and classroom practice is a study she conducted for making curriculum modification changes for high ability students in regular classrooms. Realizing that these students participated mainly in pull-out programs, but spent the majority of their time in unchallenging and prescriptive learning environments, she decided to take on the larger challenge of providing regular classroom teachers with training in a process called Curriculum Compacting. Having an impact on this target population is a very different task than influencing gifted education specialists, who, by the very nature of their jobs and commitment to talent development, are generally more open to new ideas than the general teacher population.

She began this challenge by developing a professional development program that she conducted for classroom teachers in the school district where she served as the gifted program coordinator. Knowing that she would need to organize many more training sessions than she could

conduct herself, she used her local experience to develop a videotape professional development model that could be exported to many teachers around the country. Articles pointing out the importance of this process for high achieving students, slides and video clips, and case study materials were built into this professional development model and special training sessions were provided that included teacher's actual experiences and frequently asked questions. A part of this study was convincing superintendents and principals to participate in this professional development and the corresponding experimental study. This was a new addition to the work of teachers, some of whom were quick to complain about the already burdensome nature of their jobs and being overwhelmed with the tidal wave of "innovations" flooding across the country. At the time this research was being conducted, the concept of *differentiation* was becoming very popular in the education literature. As Curriculum Compacting is one strategy that is a regular practice in the differentiation movement, she would more easily engage the attention of superintendents, principals, and policy makers who are generally responsible (and sometimes reluctant) for allowing new initiatives to make their way through the schoolhouse door.

The research was remarkably successful and Sally and her team showed clearly and unequivocally that upwards of 40-70% of the required regular curriculum could be eliminated from reading, math, and science curriculum for identified gifted and talented students without any loss on out-of-grade level student achievement test scores. Other writers have acknowledged that curriculum compacting is the most widely used form of differentiation and acceleration in making accommodations for high achieving students.

A few personal annotations about Sally's style and disposition might help to explain the reasons underlying the many superlative comments provided in this tribute to her work, mentorship, and friendship by her colleagues and former students. My life has been honored and enriched by being married to this remarkable person for almost forty years. In addition to being a wonderful wife and mother to our children, she is truly my best friend and professional colleague. No idea that I have come up with or written about goes out the door without first being reviewed by Sally. And I can say without reservation she is not the least bit reluctant to kick ass if she feels that something is in need of major revision or suggesting that it should go straight into the trash basket. She has contributed creative and innovative ideas to every project we have worked on together. She constantly reminds me that if our work is to have any lasting impact in real schools and classrooms it must first and foremost pass the "common sense test" for the teachers and administrators who are hopefully going to approve and implement it.

A few other areas that you should know about Sally before I try to summarize her most foremost trait in single word! Sally is the mother of three children and three grandchildren. She is also the oldest of six children, has twenty-six cousins, many of whom have children as well. She is considered the matriarch of this extended family, and for anyone in need, she is always there to help. Helping a distraught nephew finish a term paper that is due the next day or searching out the best college options for career decisions, and writing a check for a family member in need is common in her life. And if the phone rings late at night she dresses and rushes out the door to take a sister who is ill to the hospital. She has never uttered a single complaint about serving as the matriarch of our family. Countless numbers of friends have also received the same kinds of guidance, especially in relation to college applications and options for their children.

This story will tell you about the word I have selected to summarize the life of this remarkable woman who is the love of my life and why every day with her is a joyous treasure. We were having a birthday party for Sally and family, friends, and graduate students arrived with flowers, bottles of her favorite wine, and other gifts. I observed one graduate student drive up, open the trunk of her car and struggle to lift out a big stone. She entered the beautiful garden that Sally created in front of our house, removed a trowel from her purse, and proceeded to carve out a crater in the garden in which she placed the stone. On it was carved the one word that anyone who knows Sally will agree is what best describes her and what makes her so special. And that word is "**Kindness.**"

{5}

Sally Reis, Teacher, Mentor, and Friend

D. Betsy McCoach

Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, USA

I will never forget the excitement that I felt when Dr. Sally Reis called to tell me that I had been admitted to the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut. Back in 1998, Sally Reis was already a world-renowned researcher in gifted education, President-Elect of the National Association of Gifted Children, and a highly sought-after speaker on nearly every issue related to gifted education. I had read many of her articles, book chapters, and books--- she was a celebrity to me.



Sally was my doctoral advisor during my Ph.D. program, and she was so much more than that; she was a mentor, a friend, a confidant, and a role model. I watched as Sally balanced a rigorous academic career with motherhood with grace, ease, and poise. I marvelled at her ability to “make things happen” in our program, in our department, and in the University, as she seamlessly transitioned from Professor to department chair to Vice Provost. I admired her creativity and acumen, her uncanny knack for recognizing opportunities and solving problems. She has been an inspiration to me over the past 22 years, and I have looked to her for guidance and wisdom on countless occasions.

In my first year as a doctoral student, she and I co-authored an article for *Gifted Child Quarterly* on underachievement that stands as one of my most cited works. She and I have continued to conduct research together on underachievement, SEM-R, Jack Kent Cooke scholars. Working with her is always a pleasure because she is so quick, creative, wise, witty, and positive. Sally is one of the most gifted women that I have ever known, and it has been my honor and pleasure to be her pupil, her mentee, and her friend.

{6}

Tribute to Sally Reis

Del Siegle

Neag School of Education, The University of Connecticut, USA

It is rare for an individual to gain eminence in multiple areas. Dr. Sally Reis is such an individual. Aside from her ground-breaking work with Joe Renzulli on talent development through the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, Sally is the eminent researcher on gifted females, talented readers, and twice-exceptional students. She is currently expanding her early calls to recognize gifted students with learning disabilities by undertaking new cutting-edge research on post-secondary gifted students with autism.

Through her research, publications, leadership, and presentations, Dr. Sally Reis has improved educational opportunities for young people not only in the United States, but around the world. Equally important, she has touched the lives of cohorts of graduate students who have elected to study talent develop with her at the University of Connecticut.

Sally is the single most effective leader I have known. I have never seen Sally encounter a problem she could not solve, a difficult situation she could not defuse or a stranger she did not make feel welcome. I count myself lucky to be among those who have been blessed not only with knowing Sally, but having her as an advisor, collaborator, colleague, administrator, mentor, and friend.

{7}

Dr. Sally M. Reis: Friend, Colleague, International Leader

Karen L. Westberg

Professor Emerita, University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Having first met Sally Reis forty-one years ago, I am pleased to see her honored in this profile. When we first met, I was a Masters student and she was a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut. I appreciated her warm, caring nature, and she has been a long-time friend. Without fail, the first thing she says to anyone she meets is, "How are you doing?" Her support and concern for others is renowned, and everyone she meets considers her to be a friend.

Later, I had the good fortune of being Sally's colleague at the University of Connecticut. We continued to socialize, presented at conferences, and collaborated in conducting research at The National Research Center for the Gifted and Talented. One of these studies was the national study on curriculum compacting, which has been one of the most cited studies in the field of gifted education. I saw first-hand how passionate and dedicated she was about her work, which included efforts to recognize and address the needs of twice-exceptional students and highly capable females. She would probably say that her advocacy for educating bright girls is her most important contribution. Her productivity is a testament to her commitment to being a scholar and making a difference.

Sally is obviously now an international leader, having influenced the development of gifted education services and programs throughout the world. Teachers and administrators appreciate her knowledge and guidance. Bright children throughout the world benefit from her passion, dedication, and service. Sally has had a storied career, but she is not done yet. My friend continues to help educators make informed decisions about how best to meet the academic and affective needs of our precious children.

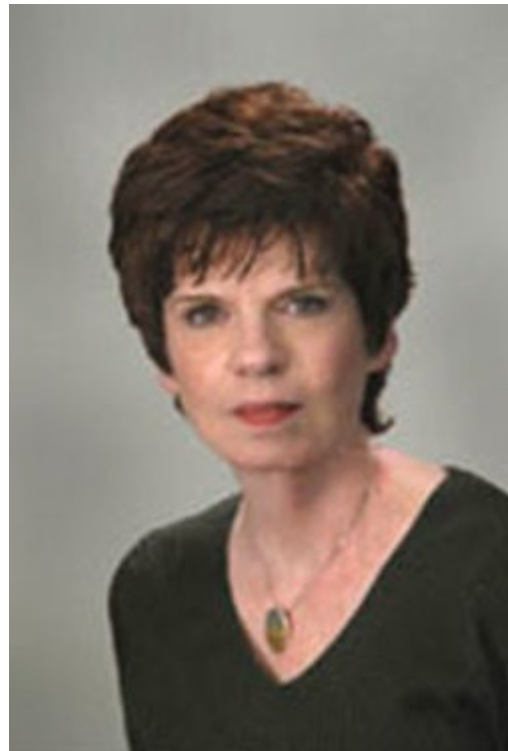
{8}

Sally M. Reis: Colleague, Friend, Leader, and Advocate

E. Jean Gubbins

Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development,
Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT USA

Colleague and friend are two words describing many decades of my professional and personal connections with Dr. Sally M. Reis. At first, we connected with other Connecticut professionals in nearby towns as we were responsible for designing and implementing programs for students with academic gifts and talents. We benefited from each other's experiences as gifted specialists and program coordinators. We willingly shared ideas about how to create the best possible programs and services for students who revelled in challenges to their thinking and designed interest-based investigations addressing problems needing attention. Our initial group of geographically-convenient colleagues reached out to professionals across the state and formed a network of educators who wanted to make a difference for young people whose talents and gifted needed to be recognized, developed, and enhanced. During these early years, friendship was an important attribute, as Sally has an incredible ability to invite people into her world that revolves around making schools the best possible learning spaces possible.



These early connections grew as Sally pursued advanced degrees at the University of Connecticut. As a graduate student, her goals for making a difference for local students expanded exponentially. I witnessed how Sally transferred her professional experiences to more and more people and initiated research studies to support what she believed would make an educational difference for students and their teachers. From state, to regional, to national, and to international venues, she connected with educators aware of her contributions to the literature on gifted and talented education and with educators beginning to ask relevant questions about effective educational talent development practices.

It has been an honor to work with Sally during graduate school and beyond graduation throughout our respective roles and responsibilities in academia at the University of Connecticut. She invites people to be collaborators in all projects, whether they focus on designing robust graduate programs; implementing the famous conference/institute, known as Confratute; creating and

implementing research proposals; writing articles; or presenting at conferences worldwide. Sally is a role model as she has applied her intelligence, talents, creativity, and energy to make a difference for others.



Sally has produced hundreds of publications, conducted innumerable presentations, and received many awards. These contributions are certainly noteworthy because of their impact on the field of gifted education and talent development. The quantity of her scholarly contributions related to identification, programming, curriculum compacting, reading, twice-exceptional students, gifted females, leadership, and advocacy illustrate the breadth and depth of Sally's expertise. As a colleague and friend, I always learn from Sally as she understands educational issues of importance as a scholar and educator. As a leader and advocate in the field of gifted education and talent development, Sally has made it possible for us to recognize potential talents and abilities among all children and adults and to find ways to make a difference in their lives. As a colleague and friend, she has influenced me as an educator. On a daily basis, she continues to pave the way for other educators to achieve their goals. Sally's remarkable professional contributions will continue to influence policies, procedures, and programming throughout the world for many decades to come. It is truly an honor to be a colleague and friend of Dr. Sally M. Reis.