

# George Yefchak

## NJACA Corrections Quarterly

*"This is your organization and we want you to be a dynamic component of it."*

A Publication of the New Jersey Chapter: American Correctional Association

### A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE READERS

In your hands, you hold the premier issue of the **GEORGE YEFCHAK NJACA CORRECTIONS QUARTERLY**. It is named to honor the memory of our friend and criminal justice colleague.

This inaugural issue is intended as a **special tribute** to the work and contributions of George in his many diverse roles. During his all too brief time, he touched many lives, and we are better individuals today that he passed our way and spent that time with us.

As President of the NJACA, George had a special relationship with the design and development of the **CORRECTIONS QUARTERLY**. He encouraged a wide range of multidiscipline interest and articles that would showcase "the best and brightest" in New Jersey criminal justice.

Although not adverse to controversy, George's viewpoint was that far too many found it easy to be negative and focus on "nothing works" ---but if that was truly the nature of things, then what was any of us doing here?

One of the key contributions of George to the **CORRECTIONS QUARTERLY** was the development of a series of "White Papers", or Special Fact Sheets, which were published as independent supplements, since they would be too lengthy to include as a single article in an issue of the **QUARTERLY**. Each focused on a special interest topic or issue vitally relevant to criminal justice professionals. For example, Special Fact Sheet # 2 was entitled "Community Corrections Of Place."

Contained within the following pages of this special tribute issue you will also discover other areas where this leader in New Jersey criminal justice left signposts that he has passed this way.

~ Steve Troyanovich

George Yefchak was here!



**George Yefchak**  
A good man

#### Contributors to this special memorial edition:

Sergeant Annie Baker  
Community Solutions Inc.  
CCCPNJ  
Jim Gondles  
Jim Hemm  
Gary Hilton  
Kevin J. Kavanaugh  
Kintock  
Dan Lombardo  
Kevin McHugh  
Dr. John M. Paitakes  
Bruce Stout  
Steve Troyanovich  
Lenny Ward  
David M. Wolfsgruber

#### Editor's Note:

As a special memorial feature, **The President's Column**, from the Winter, 1998 issue of **THE NEW JERSEY CORRECTIONS QUARTERLY** is presented in its entirety on page 2. It showcases George's commitment to the concept of "we can always do better, we can always do more"---and this topic had a profound impact on George's own beliefs relevant to criminal justice theory. I can still vividly remember George's excitement as he shared this new concept of delinquency prevention with me.

--- Steve Troyanovich

A special thanks goes out to Dr. Matthew Sheridan for all of his assistance with putting this newsletter together!



# The President's Column



Dear NJ-ACA Colleagues:

I recently had the opportunity to hear three individuals speak about delinquency prevention. One was a politician, one was a mental health professional, and one was the president of the American Correctional Association. Although their occupations were different, they presented a similar message regarding preventing juveniles from becoming involved in criminal activity. Their message challenged my traditional view of delinquency prevention that has been formed from over twenty-five years of working in the criminal justice system.

I, as many of you may, always thought of delinquency prevention programs as targeting teenagers and occasionally some younger children. The programs operated after school or as part of the school system. They could be voluntary or court ordered depending on the delinquent act or service needed. After school counseling or tutoring was the typical type of service offered. These were the juveniles who we were trying to keep out of the system or juvenile institutions. They had to become involved in the juvenile justice system, in order to receive services.

These speakers challenged my conventional view by asserting that true prevention occurs in the years of birth to three years of age. This is a significant change in thought. Instead of waiting for delinquent acts to occur or for the child to become "at risk", prevention begins at birth. As I stated before, this certainly challenges the accepted way of dealing with delinquency. Only through listening to these speakers did I begin to realize the significance of what they were saying. These were not three individuals with a new spin on prevention seeking to hit the lecture circuit and attract some attention. Rather, they were offering a sensible and practical approach to delinquency, childcare and the relationship between them.

If research indicates that the first three years of life are critical for the growth of the brain and subsequent brain activity, it makes sense to provide the care and services necessary for the development of the child. Proper stimulation and activities for children in this age bracket results in increased brain activity and the potential for growth. These ideas are the result of research in the areas of early childhood development not delinquency prevention.

Perhaps our efforts in delinquency prevention have been misguided; we have been too late in our prevention. After allowing a child to develop without the needed stimulation and care, we wonder why our efforts at "rehabilitating" juveniles have not enjoyed greater success. Maybe it is a case of too little, too late.

Based on this research, a delinquency prevention program would involve neo-natal care, parenting classes, and possibly a visiting nurse to ensure the child is developing and thriving as expected. This is a far cry from reporting to probation officer or a counseling program mandated by the family court. But if we are interested in preventing delinquency, this is an approach well-worth trying. How can we lose if we help children grow and prosper?

I feel unusual advocating for better childcare to prevent delinquency. Having been the superintendent of a training school, a detention center, and residential group center, I would have never thought of stepping outside of the traditional criminal justice model of prevention. But, this seems to be a logical step to take. Let us improve the first years of our children's lives as the first step to deterring delinquency.

What do we have to lose?

As always, I invite your comments to our voice message center at 609 -393-7282.

*Sincerely,  
George Yefchak  
President*

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE NEW JERSEY CHAPTER OF  
THE AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION

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“... We are now  
in an era for  
providing  
treatment to  
individuals in the  
system. This is an  
opportunity that  
we cannot let  
pass...”

--- The President's  
Column  
Spring, 2001



George Yefchak was President of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Correctional Association for a period of 12 years, prior to his death in 2007. His tenure as Chapter President represents a period of time equal to 50% of the years that the state chapter has been in existence.

Under George's leadership, the chapter experienced great strides in both the size of its active membership and the scope and scale of professional development initiatives. George established an organizational culture where the chapter was seen as a “Big Tent”, under which all elements of the adult and juvenile correctional community; secure confinement, academia, parole/probation, organized labor, community based, and private sector could come together and share a common sense of mission and professional integrity. George believed that professional development and training was a vital, never-ending, career long process. Under George's leadership, the New Jersey Chapter conducted a full schedule of professional development programs throughout the year, including the very successful two-day conference in Atlantic City. This traditional fall event in Atlantic City was highly acclaimed and regularly attracted nationally prominent speakers and presenters. A number of other State Chapters have used the New Jersey experience as a model and would regularly seek out George's guidance and counsel.

At the ACA national level, George was established as a **prominent and wise voice**. George was often solicited to serve on important national issue committees and study groups. How better to memorialize and pay tribute to George's professional legacy, than to rename the organization's Quarterly Publication in his honor. This current publication is the initial edition of the *George Yefchak NJACA Corrections Quarterly*.

I am certain the publication will continue to provide a profound source of professional and intellectual dialogue. This is clearly the way George would want it!

As we look ahead as an organization, it is the intention of the Board of Directors to maintain the goals and objectives so well codified during the Yefchak era. Clearly, evolving political/fiscal realities will require modification and new partnering as we pursue our core mission. Vital to this task is the strong support and input from our membership as a whole. We need your recommendations and, when in order, your constructive criticism.

I look forward to meeting and speaking with each of you throughout the course of our various chapter endeavors.

Gary Hilton

*NJ-ACA  
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# HEY! HAS ANYONE SEEN MR. YEFCHAK???



**By: Steve Troyanovich**

I have many recollections of George, given our long association and years working together in the New Jersey criminal justice system. We were perhaps most closely linked in our efforts to publish the *NJACA Corrections Quarterly*.



At some point, George talked me into becoming the editor, and eventually the publisher, of the *Quarterly* while I was the Education Director at Southern State Correctional Facility. We developed this project as a new “hands on” activity for the Graphic Arts program, providing inmate students with an opportunity to master new skills, etc.

Additionally, I had some of the inmate paraprofessionals assigned to me assist with initial layout and design, as well as help out in other areas of production. This was done, in part, to provide George and I with a way to gauge the number of articles still needed before an issue was finalized.

This strategy led to several very unique and unintended consequences. The first was rather comical as we discovered that the most prominent “missing” article delaying publication was the *President’s Column* that George was supposed to write. (Although actually never verbalized by George, I soon got the impression that he would rather have undergone a root canal than do this column!) Of course, I “helped out” by constantly reminding George that as the President of the NJACA, he was the “voice” of the organization—and the “voice” needed to be heard (i.e., “*just write the damn column.*”)

Such a reminder only produced more promises to speedily do his column, but the completed column was not forthcoming. At this point, I instructed my paraprofessionals to start thinking of creative ways we could use to remind George about completing his column in a timely manner.

The most creative suggestion was that if George did not complete the *President’s Column*— and this was the only

thing holding up going to press—that on the page where the column should have appeared, we inserted the drawing of a milk carton with George’s picture on it (at that time, most milk cartons had pictures of missing persons on them) with the caption: *Has anyone seen the President’s Column???*

One of the paraprofessionals actually did the complete graphics for this—George loved it!!!

The other thing that happened was what made George so very special and unique. As this project progressed, George would visit Southern State whenever he was in the area so that we could go over either planning the next issue of the *Quarterly*, troubleshooting, or working on other programming.

This resulted in frequent contact with the paraprofessionals, who all very quickly bonded with George. A visit from George became a very special occasion for them. They would frequently ask me: “When is Mr. Yefchak coming to visit?” or “Have you heard from Mr. Yefchak?”

They saw and respected the same qualities in George that I did:

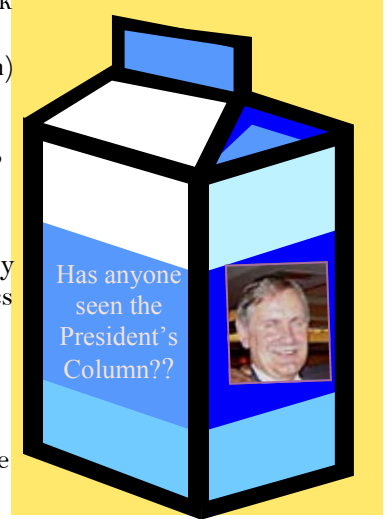
**his ability to make people feel at ease and special;**

**his non-judgmental character;**

**his curiosity to explore and try different things;**

**his willingness to always try to help;**

**and his profound belief that there was fundamental good in everyone.**



# A GENTLE GIANT

By: Bruce Stout



I remember the first time I met George Yefchak – I'm not sure of the exact date, but it was the late 1980s and it was at

Skillman. I don't know if I understood then what a remarkable place Skillman became because of George, but I certainly came to appreciate his remarkable capacity to create great programs, as he had done there. I do know that you can get a "feel" for a facility just by walking around and observing how residents interact with staff and each other. Skillman felt "right" and walking the grounds with George, you could tell that he was respected by residents and staff alike. That young adolescent facility was so focused on education. It had, I believe, the only certified educational program in the state at that time.

I think I next worked with George as a Board member for the New Jersey Chapter of ACA.

George was a *dynamo* on that Board – one of the "doers." It is impossible for me to think of an ACA conference that George didn't have a hand in. What was remarkable was that George knew who was doing cutting edge work throughout the country and he seemed to have a magical ability to attract them to ACA's conferences. He got people thinking about what they could do

to improve services. He was always challenging us to go further.

Having staffed Governor Whitman's juvenile justice reform initiative, I was asked to recommend candidates for the Governor's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee. I immediately thought of George. George, and the other tremendous folks that were part of his 1996 JJDP class, went on to achieve some



significant accomplishments in their roles overseeing the federal juvenile justice monies brought into New Jersey. Their first accomplishment was actually getting New Jersey back into compliance with the JJDP Act, which got the feds to release New Jersey funds. George and the others then went on to use those funds to seed some of the only evidence-based "Blueprint" programs that New Jersey has had. And throughout, George continued his work in organizing conferences that brought the best and the brightest to New Jersey.

When I became Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission I created an ombudsman position

to help ensure that the adolescents in the Commission's custody were being appropriately cared for. George was the first ombudsman at the JJC and he set the bar high. George was my eyes and ears. He had an *uncanny ability* to make kids feel comfortable and willing to open up to him. He also had a skillful eye at identifying programmatic issues and knowing what to do to fix them.

After working with George in various professional capacities, I developed an *abiding respect for his professional judgment and abilities*. For me, he was one of those few people that we encounter in our professional lives who is just plain reading from the same song sheet. I always enjoyed talking with him, as we often did while he endured those long commutes to Paterson or Bridgeton for Kintock. George was also a neighbor and his work in our community paralleled his professional accomplishments. A member of our school board and planning board – someone who helped start a farmer's market in town. I had great respect for him as a man and I was grateful to be able to call him a friend.

**I will miss George tremendously, but I'm thankful that he was a part of my life.**



"friend"

**“Regardless, without conversation and reflection, we cannot grow.”**

President’s Message, Fall 1998

George was my role model and I have spent my entire career trying to emulate him.

~ Kevin Kavanaugh

He was, as in a phrase not used too often, "a good man".....

- Lenny Ward

**"mild mannered"**

The members of the Coalition of Community Corrections Providers of New Jersey (CCCPNJ) wish to express their sincerest sympathy to Mrs. Yefchak. George Yefchak was **highly respected** by all who knew him and his passing is a tremendous loss to the corrections profession.

Does the public have the right to expect us to participate in training and to continue to improve our skills? The public is paying for highly trained criminal justice professionals. Should it not be our mission to give this to the public?"

\*\*\*The President’s Column, Summer 1999

**"non-judgmental"**

## George Thomas Yefchak, 58, of Delaware Township died Monday, Aug. 7, at Doylestown (Pa.) Hospital.



DELAWARE \* George Thomas Yefchak, 58, of Delaware Township died Monday, Aug. 7, at Doylestown (Pa.) Hospital.

Born in Somerville and raised in Bound Brook, Mr. Yefchak lived in Skillman.

George Yefchak was a *corrections' professional with the State of New Jersey for 36 years*, beginning in 1971 when he served as a senior parole officer at the New Jersey Department of Corrections. He also served as the superintendent of the McCorkle Training School for Boys and Girls in Skillman. He joined the New Jersey State Parole Board in 1993 as a hearing officer. In 2000, he became the Ombudsman of the Juvenile Justice Commission and returned to the New Jersey State Parole Board as the Deputy Executive Director, from which he retired in 2002. Since July 2002, he has worked with the Kintock Group in Wayne, Pa., where he was serving as a senior director.

*A long-time advocate for children*, he was the Acting Chair of the Governor's New Jersey Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee and had been a member of the committee since 1995. George was very active in the city of Paterson and served as superintendent of Paterson Boys Community Center for four years. George was also active in several professional organizations, including the American Correctional Association, where he

was both a member and president of the ACA board and served as president for 12 years of that organization's New Jersey chapter. He was a member of the Middle Atlantic States Correctional Association, the Parole Advisory Board for the state of New Jersey and the American Probation and Parole Association. He was a 1967 graduate of Bound Brook High School. He received his undergraduate degree from Kutztown State College and received master's degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Kean University of New Jersey.

George was also *very involved with his community*, where he was a member of the Delaware Township Planning Board, the Delaware Township Recycling Committee and President of the Delaware Township Board of Education.

Surviving are his wife of 34 years, Maureen Farrell Yefchak; his sister, Sharon Yefchak of Belle Mead, N.J.; his sisters-in-law Rosemary Conneway of Tampa, Fla., Kathy Weinroth and her husband, Richard, of Hopewell Township and Jeanette Corwin of St. Petersburg, Fla.; his brother-in-law and his wife, Matthew and Mary Farrell of St. Petersburg; his nieces and nephews, Dennis Conneway, Kellie Wilson, Colleen Conneway, Michael Conneway, Matthew Farrell, Allison Farrell, Lyndsay Farrell, Kimberly Snyder and Charles Scott Jr.; and nine grandnieces and grandnephews.



"respected"

## Eulogy for George Yefchak

September 1, 2007  
St. John the Evangelist Church  
Lambertville New Jersey

**By: Kevin McHugh**

I feel honored to have been asked by Maureen to say a few words about my good friend, George. I first met George about 10 years ago at the Department of Corrections. We worked together through some very challenging times and later we both moved on to the Juvenile Justice Commission and then to the State Parole Board.

Along the way we discovered that we shared many of the same values, principles and vision in our work and I think, because of that, we became very good friends. We were, however, very different kinds of people. I was Type A, always in "high gear" impatient and excitable. Nothing ever happened fast enough for me. In contrast, George was always calm, mild mannered, soft spoken and very methodical. He was a true gentleman.



Over time I learned that his mild exterior belied a passion for his work and a powerful commitment to see things through and get things done. When George made up his mind about something it was hard to change. George had an incredible bank of knowledge and experience to draw on and everywhere he worked he became "Mr. Fix It". Invariably, whenever there was a problem or a crisis, it was George that everyone turned to. He had an amazing ability to analyze and identify problems and sort things out. Over the years, whenever I had a problem or a new idea I would call George and say "Can I run something by you?" He always said "Sure" and patiently listened to my latest diatribe. He was my reality check and I always valued his opinion. He possessed such great qualities ...patience, compassion and knowledge..... Great people skills



George loved music, particularly jazz and blues. He knew that I played the guitar and every so often he would call me with an extra ticket to a concert. It would always be a great guitar player or guitar band, artists that he knew I would like. I remember George taking me to see Pat Metheny, Johnny Lang, and the Allman Brothers to name a few....

Sometimes I think George was trying to tell me, in a nice way, "You see

*(Continued on page 9)*

**Eulogy** *(Continued from page 8)*

Kevin...that's what a guitar is supposed to sound like...." Anyway ...there were a few years when I was sick and I didn't go out too often. But George would persist and get me to go. I know that he was trying to keep me going....trying to help.....I never regretted going because it always turned out to be a great time.

George had a long and distinguished professional career and served in so many capacities..... Parole officer, superintendent, hearing officer, teacher, ombudsman, administrator, program director, President (NJACA), school board member, community volunteer....and I'm sure that I missed a few others. In all of these endeavors he gave his best. George couldn't do it any other way.

But I believe that the true measure of a man's life is not in the titles or degrees he accumulated or the money he earned but...more... it is measured by the number of people he influenced and the lives he helped to change for the better. George touched so many lives in a positive way during his lifetime ...from the clients that he supervised and counseled, the students that he taught, the staff and co-workers that he mentored, the membership he lead, the public officials and leaders that he influenced, the causes that he championed and the countless individuals to whom he served as a role model. George was a remarkable man who led an exemplary life and he has left behind a legacy of good works that few can equal.

George loved music.

George loved his work.

George loved his wife, Maureen.

George was a good and loyal friend.

**He will be deeply missed.**



**“The marking of time has always served as a way for us to review our history and look to the future.”**

---The President's Column, Millennium Issue, 2000

## GEORGE YEFCHAK: FRIEND, MENTOR AND VALUED COLLEAGUE

By: David M. Wolfsgruber



There are many occasions in one's life where the saying "Things happen for a reason" is extremely difficult to comprehend. The sudden and untimely passing of George Yefchak at 58 years young is one of those occasions.

George has positively impacted so many lives with his combination of *quiet leadership, calming influence, and willingness to teach life's lessons to those eager to learn.* From my initial meeting with George, I was struck by his interest in developing my professional career and, over the course of 15 years, sharing many of his personal experiences that have made a lifelong impact upon me both personally and professionally.

Since his initial election as President of the NJ Chapter of the American Correctional Association in 1994 and subsequent re-election to an unprecedented six terms, George's quiet, strong leadership lifted NJACA to heights never before seen or imagined. Each October, the annual conferences focused, as George always ensured, on

the career development of corrections professionals, with an emphasis on the development of front-line staff. Through his many professional relationships and affiliations, George was able to secure a wide spectrum of membership ranging from correction officers, law enforcement officers, community-based program providers, front-line staff, and mid- and upper-level management of all law and justice agencies within the state of NJ. He also had an excellent relationship with the National ACA and was able to secure prominent members of the law and justice community from across the country to conduct seminars and workshops at the annual conference as well as various forums throughout the year. In sum, under George's tireless leadership, I had the privilege of personally witnessing NJACA achieve many of its goals and objectives in helping to ensure the tenets of fairness and professionalism in the administration of justice were maintained.

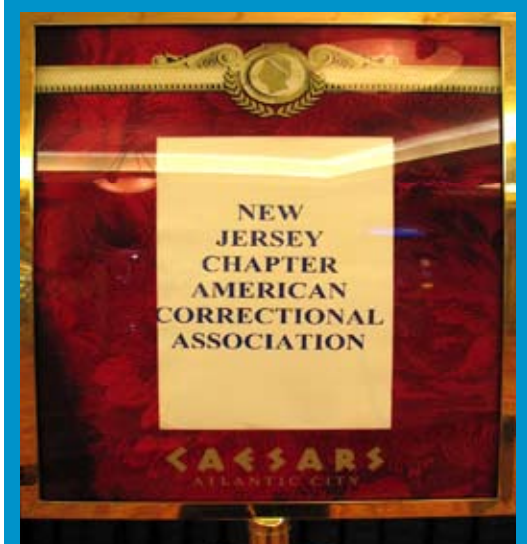
*Goodbye, my friend. Your immense contributions to the field of law and justice will never be forgotten.*

"Expectations are high that we in criminal justice can make a difference. It is up to us to show them that we, as criminal justice professionals, can produce successful results and that their confidence is not misplaced. The accountability rests with us."

--- The President's Column, Spring 2001

*"encouraging"*

# NJACA Conference Memories



“How much will you spend to improve your skills? Can you bear some inconvenience for a day or two to gain new skills? Will you listen to a new topic to broaden your knowledge base?”

--- The President's Column, Summer, 1999



"role model"



"wise"



"positive"



"music lover"



“George touched so many lives in a positive way during his lifetime ... the staff and co-workers that he mentored, the membership he lead... the causes that he championed and the countless individuals to whom he served as a role model.”

*-Kevin McHugh*



*"methodical"*



*"fair"*



*"soft-spoken"*



# “It can be a rewarding experience, volunteering with others in your profession.”

- President’s Message, Spring/Summer 2006

*He got people thinking about what they could do to improve services. He was always challenging us to go further.*

*~ Bruce Stout*



*“undaunted”*

*“honest”*

## A Man with a "Whisper's Pitch"

By: Sergeant Annie Baker

I started my career with the Department of Corrections about 18 years ago at Skillman/Lloyd McCorkle. I was hired as a teaching assistant. Shortly after I started, I was introduced to the Superintendent, Mr. George Yefchak. I was intimidated by his large presence, but his voice was so soft it was almost unbelievable that a person of his stature spoke with a whisper's pitch. To me, that made him even more intimidating. I often thought to myself, if this man snaps, I don't want to be around to see it. In the 4 years that I worked with Mr. Yefchak, he never snapped, thank God, and his voice remained as a whisper.

I was fortunate that Mr. Yefchak and I had such a pleasant working rapport. He shared with me the fun he had on his vacation in Germany and other

small trips. I would often joke with him about being a world traveler myself (which was B.S.- I'd never been east of Lang Branch or west of Ohio) and he would find so many lies within my stories that he would just smile and cut his eye at me, which meant: "Give me a break!" If you knew Mr. Yefchak you know the look I am referring to. So when things got hectic in the front office he would find me and ask to hear about one of my many visits to Morocco or Hong King. Mr. Yefchak was a fair and honest man and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.



**"Recent events in the news have led us to examine our society and question what would cause the incident at Columbine High School or other such tragedies. The list of causes is lengthy. Is it guns, drugs, television, video games, the Internet, or something else?"**

--- The President's Column, White Paper, July 1999

## Kintock— lucky to have had George in their midst



We are all saddened by the untimely passing of our co-worker, George Yefchak, which occurred on August 27, 2007.

George had a long and distinguished career in the corrections field before coming to Kintock. He was a soft-spoken man who exuded *quiet confidence*. He worked hard, and often behind the scenes, to ensure that we produced a quality product in each program in which he was involved.

An illustration of his manner was his commitment to our Paterson DRC. George worked with incoming staff, and later, with the first group of DRC clients, while the physical plant was still undergoing significant renovations. *Undaunted* by the obstacles – physical and programmatic – George managed to initiate operations in Paterson that contributed to the continuing success of the program.

He was responsible for our delving into working with juveniles, thanks to his past association with the Juvenile Justice Commission in New Jersey. As many are aware, George served an extended stint of duty in our Bridgeton location, as well.

George was *passionate* about the need to uphold the principles and standards of solid community corrections practice. He held various positions of leadership within the American Correctional Association. He actively championed the cause of utilizing standardized, validated programs and psychometric instruments to provide effective services to adult and juvenile criminal justice clients.

We were lucky to have had George in our midst. He was well-respected, shared his formidable corrections experience readily, and had an *exemplary reputation*. George served as a role model – his reserved but dedicated demeanor, paired with his enthusiasm for and determination to provide quality services were characteristics to emulate.

## My Memories of George Yefchak

By: Kevin J. Kavanaugh

In December of 1981, I was interviewed for a position as a wilderness instructor by **George Yefchak** at Greenfields. One thing from that interview has stayed with me 26 years later. George expressed that it was very important that a staff member working in Corrections should be a role model for the inmates. George was my role model and I have spent my entire career trying to emulate him.

When I began my career in Corrections, I was very naive and I made many mistakes. George was always the *patient mentor*! I always felt that I could be honest with him and tell him that I made a mistake. He always guided me to find other solutions to the challenge that was facing me.

I remember the day that George asked me if I knew how to kayak. I said no but I always wanted to learn. I enlisted the help of my friend and former Greenfields wilderness instructor, Brad Koller to teach us. George and I spent many hours paddling the Delaware River, enjoying the natural world, and challenging our adventurous spirit.

As I became a more seasoned corrections professional, I still made mistakes but I found that I was more confident in my decision-making abilities. George recognized my development and he

encouraged me to mentor and train my co-workers in the things that I had learned. He encouraged me to join the American Correctional Association and to become a presenter at the annual chapter conference. I have always been invigorated by the conferences and seminars that George coordinated. I was always amazed by the high quality of the presenters and the timeliness of the topics that were presented.

In 1991-92, when the Skillman Training School for Boys was threatened with closure, I worked hard in support of the school. Even though the institution was not perfect, it had become a positive force on the residents it served.



George was the captain of the ship who guided it through some turbulent waters. He saw the fruits of his labor pay off with the successes of both his staff and residents alike. I was amazed by how George took the closure of Skillman and his future job assignments in stride and made lemonade out of lemons.

Whenever I think of NJACA, I will think of George and all that he had done in mentoring so many people to be better servants to humanity!

### George: the "Go to Guy"

By: Jim Gondles

From my point of view, when I thought of corrections in New Jersey, I thought of George Yefchak. To be sure, there are many great corrections professionals in New Jersey's jails, prisons, juvenile systems, probation, parole and community corrections, both public and private. But for the American Correctional Association (ACA), George was the "go to guy". George was always there, was always willing to do anything asked of him. *He was a "rock" for New Jersey and for ACA.*

But most of all, George was a caring, kind, considerate person. Quiet to a fault, you did not hear a cross word from him. His work in his profession, his community and his faith are measures for the rest of us to live by - if only we could do what George has done.

Most of all for me and for countless ACA members who knew him - he was a friend. He will be missed. We pray for Maureen and his entire family and friends.

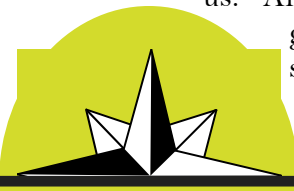
## A MAN WHO “MADE A DIFFERENCE”

By: Community Solutions Inc.

Community Solutions Inc. (CSI) has staff that have been “in the business” for years, just like George. So, who and how we first came to know George is a bit of a mystery. That is because George was the kind of guy you just got to know because he was everywhere. It didn’t matter who he worked for- he did not limit himself to just that circle of respected colleagues. Rather, he seemed to be the kind of person who felt he was part of a greater fraternity. He was interested in the good of the organizations he worked for and the good of the offices he held. But he was also interested in the good of the industry. His allegiance was to the whole, not just any one part of it. That is what made him special. It wasn’t just about him. It was about us. All of us. He welcomed all of us to the table, despite rank, or geography, or employer. He made us all feel that we had something to contribute. He was also open to change and *extremely positive.*



**“His allegiance was to the whole, not just any one part of it. That is what made him special.”**



**Almost always, when George communicated with you, he gave you something instead of asking for something. What a rare and precious thing these days!**

The NJ ACA annual Atlantic City conference was always an event to look forward to because George's main priority was that everyone had a great time. He never took credit for any of the hard work he did, instead passed on all praises to the conference planning committee both publicly and privately.

George was always totally present in his conversation with you no matter how many people were in the room. He always gave you his undivided attention. There were many times when George would pick up the phone and call us to make sure that we had important information that he thought we may need. Almost always, when George communicated with you, he gave you something instead of asking for something. What a rare and precious thing these days!

We certainly remember his work, his character and his friendship with great admiration and respect. We miss him in a way that is difficult to articulate. As we carry on in this business and go about our daily work, whether it is a meeting, a conference, a gathering of a few colleagues, it is still a bit shocking to look around and not see George there. Although it gives us pause, it makes us think of the legacy he left.

*He wanted to make a difference and he did.*

**“Strengthening communities and investing in the quality of life in our neighborhoods is a way for us to respond to crime in the community and bring justice to the community.”**

--- The President’s Column, White Paper, July 1999

# Remembered for the “simple things”

By: Dan Lombardo

George is someone I had the pleasure of knowing for a long time. My remembrances of George are simple things: his constant smile, his heart of gold, his devotion to clients, and of course, his intense love of music.

I would run into George in so many places. He worked throughout the system so I would see him at the Department of Corrections, or the Juvenile Justice Commission or even at Parole. I would also see him at virtually all American Correctional Association conferences across the country. Regardless of the venue, we almost never talked business, we always talked music. It was either the Jazz and Heritage festival in New Orleans or some group seen at the Keswick or the War Memorial or somewhere in a 200 mile radius.



If he liked the group, he was there, no matter where they were playing. Our conversations were about who what backing up who or who really sounded good, bad or mediocre. Music was one of the true loves of his life.

In his easy going ways, his sense of humor, his love of music, you knew George was a very special and unique individual. He could manage chaos, he would coach and assist others and was someone you could always really count on. To me and to so many others, we will smile when thinking of him and say "George was a real good man." George, you are missed.



## A Pleasure and Joy to Know

By: John M. Paitakes, Ph.D

I've known George for over 25 yrs. in various capacities. When I worked in Probation I interacted with George when he was Superintendent of The NJ Training School for Boys. When I was on the NJ State Parole Board, I once again had the opportunity to work with George. Later on, when I began teaching at Seton Hall University as a Professor of Criminal Justice, we hired George as an Adjunct Professor. As a former Board member of the NJ American Chapter of ACA our paths crossed again. There were several common themes and characteristics that stood out about George:

*"Professional"*

*"Dedicated"*

*"Caring",*

*"Motivated"*

*"Hard Working"*

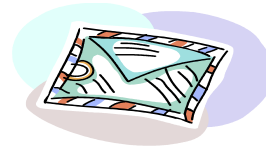
I think this best describes George from my perspective. It was a pleasure and joy to have known and worked with him.

“Most importantly, it is time to take responsibility for the treatment services that you offer. Collect the appropriate data, analyze it, and determine if it is successful. Even more importantly, if it is not successful, correct or end the program. We cannot accept the excuse of that it is the way that we always did it, or I need more staff to do this.”

--- The President’s Column, Spring 2001



# "Dear George..."



By: Jim Hemm

Dear George,

Since I didn't get to say good-bye before you very suddenly decided to leave us in a lurch, I decided that maybe I would take the opportunity in this special newsletter to say adios. I have to admit that I am not sure when I first met you, but at our age remembering where the car keys are is challenge enough. I think we were both in grammar school and holding down jobs with the offenders of the world.



So the folks working on this special edition newsletter have been bugging the crap out of me to say something about you but, quite frankly, that's not easy. I may have known you for the last 25 or 30 years but it was mostly in a kind of professional, collegial way not a blood brother, great friend sort of way. And as you well know, I have managed to find much trouble by speaking before thinking, which must be avoided in these circumstances.

What do I remember most about you in all those encounters over the years and how do I talk about it without hurting any ones feelings? I think that might be impossible, sort of like roasting someone without exaggerating some of their behaviors. It's too bad you couldn't wait to leave until after your retirement, having you as a roastee would have been great fun. And you know that all of those folks you considered to be good friends would have been the first to step up to be roasters.



In thinking about the potential roast, my thoughts turned immediately to your speed, not in the car, but rather in your physical and verbal moves. Realizing of course that one would be hard pressed to call anything you did by the name of speed. You are the only person I knew that could do slow motion without turning down the speed of the camera. Considering that some might nominate me as the poster boy for adult onset of ADHD, being around you was like being on a racing bike that suddenly ran into a stream of molasses. You actually talked slow enough that I could understand what you were saying, a very bad trait for a Jersey state bureaucrat. Nobody in New Jersey talks slowly unless they are leaving a voice message for Dr.

Sheridan. The ironic thing is all of us need to slow down a little on occasion and see what's around us. You made me do that.

*You are the only person I knew  
that could do slow motion  
without turning down the speed.*

George, now that I abused you, I'd like to also say thanks, mostly for all your efforts to make NJACA a big tent for all of us working with the offender community in New Jersey. All too often, folks in different parts of the system either don't get the opportunity or have the desire to talk to each other. You helped give us that chance. Not only for the private folks to talk to the government folks but also to sort of breed some sense that it was a good idea for everyone in state government from different departments to have an ongoing dialogue. Having worked in this business for the past 38 years, it's always mystified me that we don't have a more unified system to deal with the offender. I guess my experience in the private provider network has made me see the need to include a lot of different people in the conversation. But that may have to do with the old belief that one keeps their friends close and their enemies closer.

George, it was fun. We are going to miss you and we won't forget you.

*Jim*

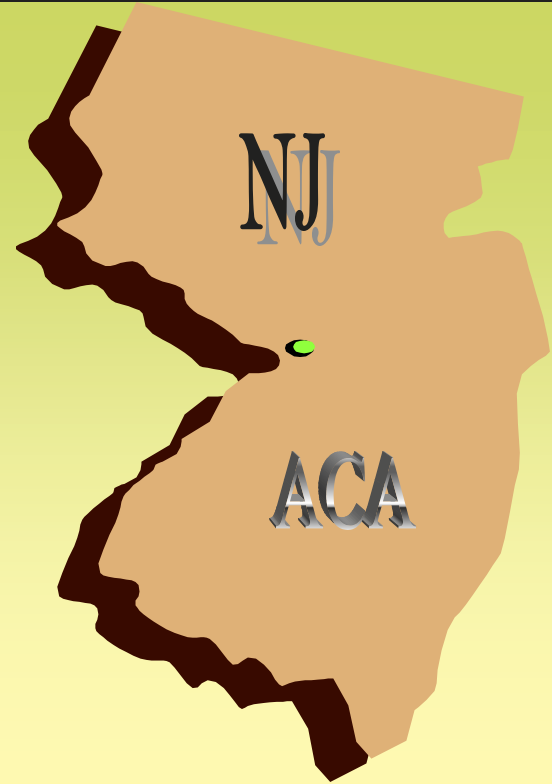
"It is not possible to take a person off the streets and have them perform the tasks we do everyday. Training and experience combine to produce a criminal justice professional."

--- The President's Column, Summer 2000

*"true gentleman"*

George Yefchak  
NJACA Corrections Quarterly

# The New Jersey Chapter of the American Correctional Association



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