

2009 Hall of Fame Inductee

Myrna Balk

Class of 1957

The daughter of two Russian immigrants, Myrna Balk is an international social worker and artist who infuses her social worker's sense of justice on social atrocities into her artistic expressions and gallery shows.

After graduating from University City High School in 1957, Balk dual-majored in sociology and fine arts at the State University of Iowa, later receiving her Master in Social Administration from Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She was the co-founder of the Iowa City Congress on Racial Equality in 1963.

In the mid-1960s, Balk designed and developed a group treatment program for adolescents for the Juvenile Court system in St. Louis, then moved to Boston State

Hospital's Adolescent Unit. In the 1970s, she began her private practice that continued until 2003 while working as an inner city social work supervisor at Roxbury Children's Services in Boston. She initiated and directed a post-traumatic program for Russian immigrants. While working as the program director in the social work department at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, she expanded the clinical program for pre-abortion counseling. In 1996, she developed the art program at Cambridge's Creative Expression Group that used poetry, music and drawing directed towards the personal growth of psychiatrically ill young adults.

In 1995, Balk presented at her first International United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, China, regarding social work intervention with Domestic violence in a hospital emergency room. From there, she continued her international seminars.

Balk has developed programs using the arts to aid the personal growth of young adults. She has her own artistic style that expresses her concerns for social atrocities that continue to fester and grow throughout the world and has been shown across the globe.



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