— Reaching the Mind, Touching the Spirit —

THE HELENA T. DEVEREUX BIOGRAPHY
A Devereux Myth

For those unfamiliar with its history, the origins of The Devereux Foundation may inspire visions of Main Line Philadelphia Estates, sprawling manicured grounds with elegant stone mansions where families of privilege sent children with special needs for long-term care or rehabilitation. Some take for granted that Devereux’s founder, Helena Trafford Devereux, came from a privileged background herself, that perhaps a charitable interest spurred her to use an inheritance to help these children with special educational and developmental needs.

This image of Helena T. Devereux and the Foundation she created could not be farther from the truth.
— Afternoon tea promoted social skills and self-confidence —
THE Devereux FAMILY

According to chronicler Clifford Scott, Helena Devereux’s father Arthur was an extraordinarily ambitious gentleman who made and lost several fortunes over a colorful lifetime of esoteric endeavor.

Born in England, in 1824, he was a direct descendant of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, whom history tells us was linked romantically with Queen Elizabeth I. The romance ended abruptly when the Earl was beheaded in response to the recommendation by the Queen, whose ardor evidently had cooled. This legend inspired Verdi’s opera “Roberto Devereux.”

As a third son, Arthur Devereux did not inherit the family title, which at the time would have been “Earl of Hereford.”

He attended the University of London, where he studied horticulture. Upon the completion of his studies, he was sent to India and reportedly made his first fortune with the East India Company. The Civil War broke out in the United States during his stay in India. In response to an abiding dislike of slavery, Devereux migrated to America, joined the Union army and fought at the battle of Gettysburg.

After the Civil War ended, Devereux came under the employ of Wells Fargo Bank, where he became a top executive in the newly formed Pony Express. It is said that under his leadership, the Pony Express doubled its service in a period of four or five years. Becoming restless with that particular success, Devereux moved to Australia and started his own Pony Express-type operation, again reaping significant financial benefits from the venture.

Perhaps after realizing that his age informed the appropriate time for marriage, Arthur returned to London where he met and married Betsy Blyton of North London. Following a brief stay in England, where Devereux lost the majority of his fortune on the horses, the couple migrated to America where Arthur took up landscape architecture.

He became involved in developing many of the large estates being built at that time, including the present Manor Estate belonging to The Devereux Foundation. He was the first to import native rhododendron from the Pocono Mountains, many of which still flourish.

AS A THIRD SON, ARTHUR DEVEREUX DID NOT INHERIT THE FAMILY TITLE...

Being a person who was flush with the entrepreneurial spirit, Arthur Devereux next attempted to start a railroad in Florida that would provide service all the way to Key West. Once again, he lost all of his capital in the venture.

Arthur Devereux was already well into middle age by the time his daughter Helena was born on February 2nd of 1885, soon after which, the family, now including Helena’s brother, Robert, settled into a small home in South Philadelphia.
Miss Devereux, The Schoolteacher

Helena did not grow up as a member of Philadelphia high society. The luxury of an easy path in which family money and connections could guarantee long-term comfort was not a privilege afforded to Helena Devereux. Young Helena Devereux was to become, like many young American women of her generation, a schoolteacher.

After graduating from the Philadelphia Normal School where she received basic training in education, Helena Devereux, in 1906, obtained her first position as a teacher in the Philadelphia public schools. With her meager income, Helena helped to financially support her family, even assisting brother Robert with the expenses of his medical education.

As a young elementary teacher at the George Washington School in South Philadelphia, then an under-privileged area of the city, Miss Devereux almost immediately became interested in the children in her classroom who experienced difficulty in learning through traditional methods. During her time at the George Washington School, Helena Devereux began her lifelong journey of providing individuals with special needs the opportunity to be just that—special individuals.

The public school system had no means, at the time, of providing individualized programs for children with needs outside of the umbrella of simple elementary education. Rather than helping these students find a path that would enable their growth, such children were repeatedly held back, ostracized by their peers, and written off as hopeless, or sent to mental institutions.

Helena Devereux showed unique patience and attention to the special children that she encountered as members of her regular elementary school classes in the Philadelphia public school system. Several such children, who had been held back and failed in other classes, began to thrive under Miss Devereux’s care and innovative teaching methods. Miss Devereux began devising ways and means to teach each child on an individualized basis, with materials, designed by her, appropriate to each of their functional levels.

The school took note, and within two years, her work with slow-learning children was administratively recognized, and referral to her classes became an official school procedure. Miss Devereux took in students from all different classrooms in the school who were failing in ordinary education settings. But these settings, “the norm” of the day, were less than ideal for the intensity of attention such children required.

It is particularly significant that Miss Devereux, in 1906 to 1908, began using an individual approach to the teaching of the mentally retarded, at a time when a “slowed-down” curriculum plus repetition, or custodial care, were the generally accepted mainstream alternatives. Her methods were groundbreaking, they pre-dated by years many of the more advanced practices in the field of special education that are in place today.
Women in Education,

Breaking the Barriers: In Her Own Words

“My early wish and expectation was to remain attached as a worker to the public schools of Philadelphia. But I soon learned that while women could hold positions on the lower rungs of the ladder in educational activities, they were not permitted to advance to the higher positions of superintendents of districts. Therefore, the vision of establishing just a very small school which would permit complete freedom to continue my personal education along lines of value to the work to which my head, heart, and hands had become dedicated since 1908, dominated my mind and ambitions.”

Helena Devereux
Developmentally disabled girls class, Manor School 1920
FORGING A PATH FOR THOSE WITHOUT ONE

As is true of the Devereux clients of today, Miss Devereux believed that each child in her care came complete with his or her own set of innate abilities, distinctive potential, and unique needs. She made it her purpose to aid them in the discovery that each one could be a contributing and valued member of their community and of a larger society.

Her interest in a further understanding of the children in her classroom led Miss Devereux to seek information about them from other professionals. In 1908 she was a member, at the Vineland Training School, of one of Dr. H. Goddard’s earliest study groups in the use of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Test. Miss Devereux, from 1908 to 1910, began to further her studies, taking graduate work in education and psychology at Temple University and later, the University of Pennsylvania.

It was in 1909 that Helena Devereux published the first and only professional paper of her career in The Psychological Clinic entitled “Report of A Year’s Work On Defectives In A Public School.” The article was a report on Miss Devereux’s first year of teaching a class in the Philadelphia Public School System for special needs children. In her closing statement, Miss Devereux offers a powerful entreaty to the educational and psychological community, citing the need for great change in the treatment and education of students like those in her experimental classroom:

“This class has in one year been a blessing to thirty-three children, children who, though never doomed by nature to spend their lives in an institution, would surely have drifted to one, which in some cases might easily have been a prison, had not some interest been taken in them. This class was begun amid many difficulties, there being no public funds provided for the necessary materials. Then too, the work was marred by my inexperience… May my last word be a plea for more classes in our city, properly equipped, where the three-fold motto shall be interest, persistency and encouragement to aid in making useful men and women out of the ‘least of God’s little ones.’”

In 1912, because of her demonstrated interest in and success with the mentally retarded, Miss Devereux was offered, by the Philadelphia Board of Education, a position as the first Director of Special Education in the Philadelphia School

She made it her purpose to aid them in the discovery that each one could be a contributing and equal member of their community…

System, at a salary of $5,000 per year, which, for the time, was a considerable amount.

Miss Devereux, or “Miss D” as she quickly became known, was convinced, however, that it was not only the manipulation of the educational setting of these children that would enable them to thrive and grow, but rather a careful re-structuring of their whole lives, integrating lessons and individualized programs into their daily routines, from dressing to eating to social activities.

Encouraging conformity to contemporary social norms was not a means of assimilation or encouragement of the masking of each child’s disability and its accompanying pain and difficulty. Giving each child a lesson in manners, proper dress, and patterns of speech, and encouraging participation in various recreational activities of the day became instruments for Miss Devereux in enabling each child to feel that their challenges were merely a part of their individuality—what made each one human.

Helena Devereux believed that disabilities need not cause feelings of difference and isolation but instead had the power to create strength of character, bringing each child closer instead of farther away from a sense of belonging to the larger humanity to which each child longed to be a part.

With these principles in mind, Miss Devereux turned down the Board of Education’s offer, deciding instead to begin working with children on a private basis. These innovative principles that Miss Devereux so strongly stood behind were rarely in accord with the generally accepted tenets of special education at the time. They were rather uniquely her own, based on her intimate knowledge of the retarded children she so patiently had come to know, and her intuition and great sensitivity to their needs.
AN EXPERIMENT IN EDUCATION: IN HER OWN WORDS

“Please go back with me to a day in 1911, in my classroom at the George Washington School, Fifth and Washington Avenue, in South Philadelphia. The principal ushered in a lady, whose name is forgotten, but who spent the morning watching me and my twenty-six boys and girls, in what I used to call my five-ring circus.

Some months later the lady, a well-known journalist, I learned, had an article in a national magazine on ‘The First Class of Special Education in an Elementary School in Philadelphia.’

Some weeks or months later, I received a letter from a Mrs. Simpson, of Glen Falls, South Carolina, describing her son Robert’s educational problems. After much correspondence, giving me the promise of two hundred dollars, it was decided that Robert would spend July and August in my home.
On the basis of that substantial new source of income, I found and promptly rented a house with six bedrooms at Piermont [now Avalon], on the New Jersey coast for $160.00 for two months. Naturally, I felt that if one such piece of good fortune could result from a magazine article I had not found time to read, other acceptable results would surely come.

The first call from a pediatrician, who wisely read magazines, resulted in arrangements for Freddie, 8 years old, to come from New York City, as Little Brother to Robert, for the summer.

Before the public school closed in June, the list of children who would spend the summer at Piermont numbered eight.

The summer of 1911 was only a trial run, but it was arranged that three of the summer students should stay with me thru the winter. Then came selecting a larger city home, and in January 1912, a little school of private students was launched, with two assistants teaching during my absence in the public schools and, to my great comfort, Addie to cook and help with the housework. Addie stood by for seven years, or one year after the so very small school was transferred May 1, 1918 to the rented building in Devon, now known as Devereux Stone.

What happened between the receipt of the letter from a stranger, Mrs. Simpson of South Carolina, to make today possible? I shall leave that question for each to answer as he or she wishes.

That the organization continued to exist and develop, despite two world wars, a major depression, and the almost continuous roller coaster of general economic national conditions, seems to indicate a future destiny for it.

I know that the strangers among you can understand why, today, gratitude to many persons is my chief emotion and will be for all the years left to me to remember and to enjoy.

Please try to realize that I consider myself the most fortunate person anyone can be. To be able to sit on the sidelines and watch the steady growth in professional services Devereux renders each child... is an enviable position of undeserved good fortune...”

“EVERY PIONEER, WHETHER FOUNDING AN ORGANIZATION OR A NEW VILLAGE, IS AN AMATEUR IN VARIOUS FIELDS. AS TIME GOES ON EACH AREA OF WORK IS TAKEN OVER BY A SPECIALIST IN THAT PARTICULAR LINE. SO, FOR THE PAST DECADE, MY CHIEF ENERGIES HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO THE TASK OF PERSUADING THE EXPERTS TO COME AND ‘STAY’ WITH DEVEREUX.”

Helena Devereux, November 2, 1937 resignation address to Board of Trustees

Robert, Miss Devereux’s first private student

Memo from Helena Devereux to Friends of Devereux, November 1, 1962, read by Dr. J. Clifford Scott at commemorative dinner on November 3, 1962.
MISS DEVEREUX THE PIONEER:
Becoming An Amateur Specialist

In 1912, after declining the Philadelphia School System's offer of the Directorship in Special Education, Helena Devereux, under the guidance of a physician, Dr. Theodore Weisenberg, brought three of her summer students into her home to live during the school year. While overseeing the daily routines of her full-time charges, Miss Devereux continued to teach her special education classes in the Philadelphia Public Schools, and began to further her studies with courses at Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1914, Miss Devereux was transferred to the training department of the Philadelphia Normal School where she was to instruct post-graduate students enrolled in the nation's first in-service course in special education methods. Seeking to expand the limited scope of special education studies, Miss Devereux brought to light the benefits of speech therapy and handicrafts for special-needs students for those post-grad students fortunate enough to study with her. During this time, Helena Devereux studied with a psychiatrist one hour daily for several years and began an in-depth study of psychoanalysis. Unable to combine her search for relevant courses with a course of study in any one specific field (i.e. psychology, education, sociology, etc.) that would lead to a degree, she resigned her ambition for the latter goal and set out to acquire the needed technical background informally.

She enlisted the cooperation of the University of Pennsylvania and other colleges and graduate schools in the Philadelphia area. Miss Devereux set up her own schedule of studies, supplementing what they had to offer in the fields of psychology, speech therapy, and similar disciplines. She underwent apprenticeship training in such fields as occupational therapy, woodwork and handicrafts, and other practical and concrete activities through which the disturbed and retarded find emotional release—and which therefore might offer some clue to the enigma confronting her. At the same time, she arranged to “read” medicine with a group of Philadelphia physicians; not with any thought of entering practice, but because she and they were both cognizant of some interaction between the body, mind, and emotions. She went on to “read” endocrinology; psychiatry; and finally, under psychiatric mentors, the then-nascent body of experience called psychoanalysis.

SEEKING TO EXPAND THE LIMITED SCOPE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDIES, MISS DEVEREUX BROUGHT THE BENEFITS OF SPEECH THERAPY AND HANDICRAFTS

In 1917, Helena Devereux devoted six months to study full time at the University of Pennsylvania. Miss Devereux, however, waived a formal degree program,
choosing only to take a myriad of multi-disciplinary courses that she felt would strengthen her understanding of the various components of education, sociology, and psychology that were, in her mind, necessary for the true success of special education.

From 1912 to 1918, Miss Devereux opened her home to various children whom she believed would most benefit from a residential therapy program. Each child became a member of her family, each one comprising a key part of a family unit where they were not treated as incompetent or different, but rather given responsibilities and constantly taught to achieve a sense of independence and purpose for themselves. From this experiment in education, begun in the summer of 1912, it became clear to Miss Devereux and her supporters that a residential setting in which each child could become a “family member,” offered optimal hope for the long-term well-being of the mentally retarded child and to some groups of the emotionally disturbed. Such a setting of home-based care, also offering rehabilitative therapy and individual-based educational methods simply did not exist.

While she remained on in her post in the Training Department of the Philadelphia Normal School, Miss Devereux became increasingly aware that the time would come when she must define herself, choosing between her personal convictions and the hope of mainstream professional survival. A post-college, graduate degree was becoming a necessity for teaching beyond the high school level. Many of these degree-holders, however, including psychologists, educators, and clergy members, still endorsed the notion of corporal punishment, as well as a concept of adult Divine Right, as the basis of corrective education.

From the viewpoint of these old school, mostly male, policy-makers, Helena Devereux’s ideas were little more than “whimsies and fanciful theories.” One critic went so far as to brand her “a starry-eyed female, who has neither a husband nor a graduate degree; and who thus flouts the qualifications demanded by both Nature’s law and her academic betters for the role to which she has presumed.”

As early as 1906, when Helena Devereux started teaching, she formed the belief that learning was not merely an intellectual process, but involved the total personality. She felt this to be equally true of retarded and emotionally disturbed children as of children with normal intelligence. This was, obviously, a concept far in advance of her time.

During these years of double duty with the Philadelphia Normal School and her own private work, Miss Devereux was strengthening her conviction to leave the school system and go into private work. She devoted herself to the task of bringing to reality her dream of creating a full-time residential program for these exceptional children she had come to know and care for so well.
Miss Devereux’s friends and supporters, not to mention her detractors, assured her that although what she proposed was humane and clinically promising, her undertaking of the task of creating a school based on such new and scientifically unproven educational methods was quite literally, they believed, impossible. Miss D met this inevitable crisis before it erupted. She believed that her choices must involve what is “proper”— a term she used to denote what she felt within herself to be right. These choices must also be affirmative and positive, in terms of the welfare of as large a majority as possible, wholly based on the premise that faith— as contrasted with “reality”— is the only adequate basis for determining any course of action. Miss Devereux’s idea of this word, “faith,” held a meaning beyond its everyday, conversational usage. Faith was defined as the sense of possession of something that has not yet “arrived”; as though one were drawing in advance against a legacy confirmed by the courts but not yet received from the executors. It is through this understanding of “faith” that Helena Devereux was courageously able to ignore the prospects of her own professional and personal stability in order to pursue the dream of a better life for the children whose struggles and courage became her entire life.

**THE CHALLENGES OF INNOVATION & THE POWER OF SYMPATHY, SINCERITY, AND SERVICE:**

*In Her Own Words*

“She [Miss Pollock, one of Devereux’s first teachers] was very doubtful of forming a school which was still...a dream. She said ‘What do you do when you have no equipment and say you have no money, how can you expect to build a school?’

Promptly, my reply was ‘I do not expect to build it. But I have firm faith in several concepts. First, I think spirit is creative and can be a tool to build on. Next, I think every child has a life force struggling toward self-realization despite any handicap of body or mind, and given the right surroundings will grow, some a long distance and some a short. I believe that sympathy, sincerity, and service can be made to bear fruit in the lives of the children and will bring brick and mortar for our use as necessary. I believe that, and we shall find some friends who will believe in the same way.’”

Helena Devereux, from her personal journals

A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him or her.

David Brinkley
The Devereux Schools Are Born

On January 1st, 1918, Miss Devereux made a trip to Devon, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia, to see a house that was available for rent. After an hour of inspection, Helena Devereux made the decision to rent the house at a cost of $100.00 per month, thus beginning the incarnation of the Devereux Schools. Miss Devereux had only $94.00 in savings—all of which she put down towards the first month’s rent. The remaining $6.00 was borrowed from a friend, and it was agreed upon that Miss Devereux and her students would take up residence in the house on May 1st, 1918, in the property, then known as “Acerwood,” named after the shady maple trees that thrived on its grounds. Though this first building came to be known as “Devereux Stone,” Miss Devereux’s first residential program was called “Acerwood Tutoring School.”

After resigning from the Philadelphia Normal School at the end of the school year, Miss Devereux moved into the Acerwood property in the late spring of 1918, bringing along the group of students currently in her care, now numbering 12, as well as her elderly parents, who had become dependent on her in daily living.

During the first year of the Devereux School’s existence, its founder worked twenty-hour days. She took on everything, from psychological testing to the laundry. Aside from overwork, however, everything was going according to plan, and in 1919, Miss Devereux purchased Acerwood as well as the neighboring “Gables” estate from their common owner with 100% mortgages. Now the boys and girls were able to be housed separately, and Miss Devereux used a former chicken coop on the grounds, which she painted herself, as her first schoolhouse. Over the course of these two years, enrollment doubled at the school, allowing her to hire two experienced teachers—Laura M. Pollock and Mary W. North. In 1920, Miss Devereux added another building to her school community, purchasing the Manor in Berwyn to house the younger of the developmentally disabled children in her care.

As the Devereux School’s student population expanded, a great majority of its success as an organization lay in Helena Devereux’s ability to attract to her cause colleagues from a variety of fields and personal backgrounds. Miss Devereux proved uniquely and powerfully able to imbue each with her philosophy, ideals, and discernment of the common goal of recognizing the uniqueness of each child and that child’s right to develop to his or her own potential, whatever that may be.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF Devereux AND ITS Founder

By the end of June, 1920, 22 children out of her then 30 students had improved significantly and were prepared to return to their homes, resulting in the school almost having to close its doors.

To raise money, Miss Devereux rented out the Stone building during the summer to military veteran psychiatric patients, and let out what was known as the Gables building as a boarding house. All of the remaining students were moved to the Manor building, under the sparsest of living conditions. By the end of a rather rough summer, enrollment had reached sufficient numbers to allow Helena Devereux to restore Stone and Gables to their originally intended purposes.

The Hall building in Berwyn was purchased in 1922 to permit separation of groups into younger and older boys and girls, based on each child's abilities. This same year saw the official change of the schools' name to Devereux Schools.
“Miss D’s personality and attitude were contagious and seemed to inspire high achievement…”
In 1924, Helena Devereux married James Fentress, the widower of a friend. Fentress was a business executive, based out of Winnetka, Illinois. James and Helena Fentress led a very private life during the course of their twenty one years of marriage, often spending weekends in Illinois. James Fentress was an avid supporter of the Devereux Schools and of his wife’s fierce independence. The Devereux Schools were incorporated under a private charter in 1927, with Helena Devereux holding the stock as founder.

The early 1930s were difficult years financially, for the Devereux Schools and the rest of America. At one point, Miss Devereux personally owed $250,000 because of operating deficits, but wisely continued to acquire real estate in Chester and Delaware counties to accommodate ever-expanding operations for a broader range of age groups and diagnoses. Property seizure from creditors was averted only through sacrifices from devoted staff and generous loans from Devereux parents. This marriage of commitment from Devereux staff and Devereux families continues to prove invaluable to the personal success and growth of Devereux clients today.

Helena Devereux’s control over her organization became legendary, her personal eccentricities in dealing with staff the stuff of Devereux legend. Though she is described simultaneously as “gracious,” “commanding,” “dynamic,” and “formidable,” former Devereux attorney Harold Greenwell aptly details the wonderfully infectious energy Miss D shared with those around her: “Her personality and attitude were contagious and seemed to inspire high achievement among many of those with whom she was in daily contact, both staff and clients.” Helen Simmons, a Devereux secretary for over nine years in the late 1930s and early 1940s further describes her: “She was wonderful, she was brilliant, but boy, she liked to get her way.” Subject to whims and great sensitivity to the perceived actions and attitudes of others, Miss Devereux would dismiss longtime staff members only to rehire them days or sometimes hours later, often with a raise or added responsibilities.

Reactionary to a fault, Helena Devereux was prone to micro-management at times, going so far as to reseat guests at dinner events and organize social gatherings. Former supervisor of records Fran Klepser recalls, “Every election year she invited staff to her house and proceeded to put all the Republicans in one room and all the Democrats in another. Then we would have a party.” Another Devereux staffer, Mildred Richardson adds, “She believed in formulae. There was a right and wrong way, a recipe for everything.”

These personal attributes sometimes frustrated many who brought their talents to Devereux over the years, but in the end, Miss Devereux’s powerful devotion and ability to tune in to the children and
adults in her care won the respect and undying admiration of most everyone in the Devereux world. Franklin Dale, a former Devereux administrator, sums it up:

“Miss Devereux had an almost magical effect on kids. It was incredible. She would know exactly what to ask them, and she got very natural responses. She was excellent with staff, too. She knew how to touch their pride. She would say, ‘I can tell you’re doing a fantastic job. Don’t ask me how I know, I can just see it.’ And of course the person would sort of swell up.”

In 1935 John M. Barclay was appointed the first registrar of the Devereux Schools. 1936 saw the establishment of Devereux’s formal department of psychiatry under Dr. G. Henry Katz, M.D.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania granted a non-profit charter in 1938 thus establishing The Devereux Foundation. Eight charter trustees were recognized: Helena Devereux Fentress, President; James Fentress, Vice President; William B. Loeb, Treasurer; John M. Barclay, Secretary; Edith F. Pollock; Frederick C. Aldridge, M.D.; Edward M. Westburgh, Ph.D.; J. Spencer Holm.

Helena Devereux transferred all assets and properties of Devereux Schools to the newly established Foundation in 1940. Miss Devereux received no personal compensation in this transfer, completing it with no reservation or condition of any kind. Now becoming an employee of the Foundation, Helena Devereux would serve as Director without tenure and subject to formal reappointment by the then 20-member Board of Trustees.

The Oaks building in Devon, which was later to become Miss Devereux’s home, was purchased in 1943 for high school age boys. Moving outside of the Philadelphia area, the Foundation purchased a 350-acre estate in Santa Barbara, California, opening the first branch with residential treatment for 173 students ranging in age from 7 to 35 years. In April of the very same year that saw Devereux’s expansion to the west coast, James Fentress, Helena’s husband of 21 years, passed away. Helena Devereux Fentress would never remarry.

Edward L. French, Ph.D. became a part of Devereux in 1950, appointed as Director of Psychology and Education. Seven years later, Dr. French would become the second Director of the Devereux Foundation when Miss Devereux, at the age of 73, voluntarily was to resign from the leadership position, agreeing, upon request, to continue to work in a consulting capacity.
The mid-1950s saw the beginnings of Devereux as a formal research and training organization, its continued success through innovative and groundbreaking methods, once ignored and even ridiculed by the mainstream academic establishment, now recognized as the future of special education.

In 1955, Devereux began professional training and research relations with several universities including Teachers College of Columbia University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Bryn Mawr College School of Social Work, and Jefferson Medical College. The Devereux Foundation Institute for Research and Training was inaugurated in 1957 to expand the professional training program and to conduct research into the causes and treatment of specific childhood problems for psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, social workers, and educators. In the same year, Devereux’s Institute of Clinical Training (now ICTR) was established.

Miss Devereux was elected an Honorary Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association in 1958, the fourth woman so honored, and the first non-medical woman. Over the course of her lifetime, Helena Devereux would be recognized by many organizations for her outstanding achievements and advocacy of children with special needs. Among the honors she received: affiliate member of the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis; member of the Philadelphia Psychoanalytic Society; honorary life member of the American Association of Mental Deficiency; honorary Texas citizen, commissioned by Governor John Connally; honorary member of Delta Kappa Gamma Society, a national education fraternity; Woman of the Year Award 1962, Berwyn-Paoli-Malvern Business and Professional Woman’s Club.

1959 saw the opening of the third Devereux branch in Victoria, Texas. Three years later, in 1962, The Devereux Foundation celebrated its 50th anniversary. Helena Devereux, then 78, remained active in her guidance role, residing in California for the majority of the year. Its 50th anniversary year saw Devereux, an organization begun with $94 of capital and $6 of borrowed funds, three children, and one staff member now with assets of $8,500,000, a $5,000,000 annual operating budget, 1075 clients and 996 in staff.

The mid-60s brought further growth and expansion to the Foundation, incorporating the Clinical Biochemistry and Behavioral Research Institute in 1964, and openings in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Arizona in 1965, 1966, and 1967 respectively, with the Georgia branch opened in 1973. Two new presidents were elected,
Marshall H. Jarvis in 1970 to succeed Dr. French, and Joseph B. Ferdinand in 1975. After witnessing this unparalleled expansion and strength of leadership in her organization, now past its 60th year in existence, Helena T. Devereux died in her Devon home on November 17th of 1975 at the age of 90.

**THE DEVEREUX OF TODAY—STILL MISS D'S DEVEREUX. Continuing to Forge the Path**

With the election of Ronald P. Burd to president in 1984, there have been only four presidents in Devereux’s near-century of service. It is quite telling that an original copy of the 1938 Pennsylvania non-profit charter hangs on the wall outside of Burd’s office in Devereux’s headquarters in Villanova, PA. This charter is, in fact, one of the first things a visitor to Devereux will set eyes on upon entering the lovely stone homestead serving as Devereux’s corporate offices. This emphasis on the origins of Devereux and the inherent ideals of Helena T. Devereaux goes far deeper than a framed document on a wall. Helena Devereux believed with her entire being in the vital importance of creating a community, a family-type setting in which those with special needs deriving from behavioral, psychological, intellectual or neurological impairments could feel at home in the world. A place that not only would emphasize care, but personal growth for each client based on his or her individual potential. Devereux President Ron Burd, the Board of Trustees, and every Devereux staff member across America devote themselves daily to ensuring that today Devereux’s programs, while consistently forging new ways, remain true to the ideals so boldly set forth and put into place by Helena Devereux over ninety years ago.

The Devereux Foundation was built on generosity—generosity of heart, spirit, and resources. Without that original loan of a mere six dollars, Miss Devereux would have been unable to obtain Devereux’s first school. There is no magic behind Devereux’s ability to continue its’ founder’s mission of providing care to special-needs children and adults. We at Devereux believe today, just as Helena Devereux did when she wrote in her journal many years ago that “sympathy, sincerity, and service can be made to bear fruit in the lives of the children and will bring brick and mortar for our use as necessary. I believe that, and we shall find some friends who will believe in the same way.” It is our great honor to serve communities across America today with the help of our friends and supporters. Together, and only with the continued support of our fellow believers, will we continue to grow and forge new paths, always looking ahead to a bright future for Devereux clients and staying true to our own unshakable foundation, built from the ground up by the drive of one woman and her irrepressible dream. ✝
Continuing a legacy of excellence and innovation
“THE DEVEREUX AIM MUST ALWAYS BE TO INNOVATE AND BUILD PROGRAMS SO FORWARD-LOOKING THAT THEY WILL NEVER REACH COMPLETION – BUT WHICH WILL PERPETUALLY PIONEER IN DEVELOPING IMPROVED INSIGHTS AND SOLUTIONS.”

Helena Devereux