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Thomas H. Kean  
President

Nathaniel Mayer

East Brunswick, New Jersey 08816  
January 4, 2001

Dear Mr. Mayer,

I am sorry to miss the memorial service for Anna on January 21, 2001. I will not be in the country at that time or I certainly would have done my best to attend.

Your Anna was a visionary who helped shaped New Jersey policies on and programs for children and social services. Through my tenure as Governor, Anna's leadership of the State's Commission on Children's Services positively affected the lives of New Jersey's most vulnerable. The Commission's landmark report on New Jersey's poorest children focused the Legislature and the broader public on the critical needs before us. The fruits of Anna's proactive positions on pre-schooling, school funding, screening for lead poisoning and programs for children with special needs, to list just a few, are very evident today.

I will miss Anna and I am proud to be able to say I worked with her. Her persuasive message will long resonate and positively impact on New Jersey children.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Kean

# Native Bogalusan, recently deceased, featured in New York Times article

BOGALUSA — Dr. Anna Berenson Mayer, a Bogalusan who died recently, has been featured in a New York Times article as the "grandmother of the Head Start Program."

She was a retired professor of social work at Rutgers University. She died at her home in East Brunswick, NJ, at age 91. Born in New Orleans, she grew up in Bogalusa and graduated from Bogalusa High School as the valedictorian of her class.

She earned bachelor and master's degrees at Newcombe College and Tulane University, respectively, and earned her doctorate from the Columbia University Graduate School of Social Works in New York. Her doctoral dissertation was a massive study of the politics of the New York City Welfare System; the published study led to changes in the department.

She taught at Columbia and New York University before moving to Rutgers as an associate professor in the field of social policy.

In the early 1960's, she wrote "Day Care as a Social Instrument" for the Ford Foundation, and the work led to the estab-

lishment of the Head Start program. The first Head Start director, Dr. Julius Richmond, said Dr. Mayer's work "became a Bible for me virtually."

Dr. Mayer was active in New Jersey civic affairs, and served as a board member and officer of the New Jersey Mental Health Association. She advised several New Jersey governors' administrations on social policy, and was a strong advocate of government's responsibility for to create an efficient system that allows every child to grow up healthy.

"She was a powerful, enigmatic woman who really spoke up for the people who have no voice," said William Waldman, former New Jersey Human Services Commissioner and now executive director of the American Public Human Services Association.

She and her husband Nathan lived in East Brunswick for more than 30 years. She is survived by a son, Steven, two grandchildren, and two sisters: Ruth Forsyth of New Orleans and Florence Marx of Bogalusa.

## *Anna B. Mayer, 91, Social Policy Planner*

By ERIC PACE

Anna Berenson Mayer, a social work policy planner and retired professor of social policy at Rutgers University, died on Wednesday at a New Brunswick, N.J., hospital. She was 91 and lived in East Brunswick, N.J.

Dr. Mayer, who received a doctorate in social work from Columbia University, was chosen in 1983 to head a newly formed Governor's Committee on Children's Services Planning for New Jersey. It was to make recommendations on children's issues to Gov. Thomas H. Kean.

"We have to make sure that every child in the state has a maximum opportunity for healthy development," she said in an interview later that year. One obstacle she saw was inadequate welfare benefits for the poor, which, she said, made it "very

difficult to provide adequate counseling to families and their children" who lacked "the basic needs of food, shelter, good health care."

She made similar observations when she delivered the panel's report to the State Legislature with the governor beside her.

She was also known as one of two co-authors of a monograph, "Day Care as a Social Instrument," written for the Ford Foundation in the early 1960's. The founders of Head Start used it to help shape their program, which began in 1965.

She was born in New Orleans and taught at Columbia and New York Universities and then for a decade at the Rutgers Graduate School of Social Work.

Surviving are her husband, Nathan; a son, Steven, of Albany, Calif.; two grandchildren; and two sisters, Ruth Forsyth of New Orleans and Florence Marx of Bogalusa, La.