



In Memoriam: Paul Cascarano

by Mary G. Graham

In August 2007, Paul Cascarano—a pioneer in translating criminal justice research into practice—died. He was 76 years old. Here are just some accomplishments of his 30-year career at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which culminated in his position as assistant director of the agency.

In 1968, when Paul Cascarano joined the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice—predecessor to NIJ—he became part of a small team that launched one of the Nation’s first programs of criminal justice research.

Cascarano spearheaded NIJ’s early work in identifying model criminal justice programs, documenting them in easy-to-read manuals that were widely disseminated, and providing training to policymakers, local officials, and managers. One dissemination method he used was the regional training workshop: in 1976, for example, Cascarano—drawing

on NIJ research about the difficulties often experienced by rape victims after reporting crimes—helped develop training for police, prosecutors, emergency room doctors, and citizens’ groups. These sessions often represented the first time that such diverse groups of professionals sat down at the same table.

He also spearheaded the effort to make the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) the premier information clearinghouse it has become. When he assumed responsibility for NCJRS, its database included 7,000 documents. Today, the collection includes more than 190,000 publications, reports, articles, and audiovisual products from around the United States and the world.

“The Institute owes Paul a great debt,” said Gerald Caplan, director of NIJ from 1973 to 1977. “He was creative and farsighted, and his work as head

Left photo: Paul Cascarano. Right photo: The Partnership Against Violence Network receives the “Hammer Award” (from left to right) Jamie Gorelick, Paul Cascarano, and Vice President Al Gore.

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Believing that NIJ should offer criminal justice professionals the kind of annual research review that many other fields use, Cascarano commissioned Norval Morris and Michael Tonry in 1977 to create *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*. Over the years, NIJ supported 25 volumes in the series, which quickly became—and remains today—one of the most frequently cited journals in the criminal justice community.

Beyond his efforts to maximize NIJ’s dissemination of best practices through publications like *Research in Briefs* and the *NIJ Journal*, Cascarano used innovative ways to reach wider audiences. “Paul’s creativity played a critical role in NIJ’s growth and development,” said Laurie Robinson, former Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs. “He made a large contribution.”

Under his leadership, *Crime File*—a series of 32 videotaped discussions on crime control among frontline professionals and scholars, moderated by James Q. Wilson—was broadcast on public television stations. Between 1985 and 1994, 54,000 of these videos were distributed and viewed in scores of classrooms and other lecture and discussion sessions.

During this period, drug problems were escalating in the Nation’s cities. An NIJ-supported pilot project in the Pretrial Services Agency in Washington, D.C., used urinalysis for drug testing arrestees to give judges important information in their decisions regarding pretrial release and conditions to impose if an arrestee were released pending trial. Cascarano explored the expansion of this project, working with researchers to develop the Drug Use Forecasting program. By the 1990s, this became the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring program, which was carried out in 40 U.S. communities.

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NIJ Director, 1973–1977

With the 1994 Crime Act came an increased focus on combating violent crime. Cascarano was involved in evaluating new approaches in community policing, drug courts, and corrections. At the same time, NIJ continued its push for new technologies to disseminate criminal justice innovations. One such initiative that benefited from Cascarano’s leadership was the Partnership Against Violence Network (PAVNET), an online consortium through which Federal agencies could share their research findings. PAVNET earned NIJ an award from the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (see photograph on p. 30).

Cascarano’s death prompted tributes from many former NIJ colleagues, including Jeremy Travis, director of the Institute from 1994 to 2000. Travis described Cascarano as “a visionary who believed deeply in the value of research as a tool to help practitioners deal with real problems He left an impressive legacy.”

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About the Author

Mary Graham is a freelance writer with more than 30 years of experience in criminal justice writing. She retired as communications director at the National Institute of Justice in 1999.