

## Courtyard Conversations S2E5 “Women’s History Month” - Dr. Jandel Crutchfield Transcript

00:00:08:21 - 00:00:33:17

**Jaelon:**

Hello and welcome to Courtyard Conversations. I'm your host, Jaelon Jackson and in this episode, we are thrilled to have Dr. Jandel Crutchfield.

**Jandel:**

Whoop Whoop!

**Jaelon:**

Yep, yep! She's an Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work. And drawing from her extensive experience in clinical social work, Dr. Crutchfield focuses on addressing racial disparities in education.

00:00:33:19 - 00:00:53:10

**Jaelon:**

How are you today?

**Jandel:**

I'm doing great. I had to take a little pause when you said Associate Professor of Social Work, so I just got tenure in September, so it's still cool hearing people say, Associate Professor, we're still getting used to that. So I'm doing great.

**Jaelon:**

Okay. Okay. How was how was your day so far?

**Jandel:**

It's been good.

00:00:53:11 - 00:01:10:18

**Jandel:**

I had my introduction to social work class this morning and that is one of my favorite courses to teach because it's convincing everybody how awesome social work is. So it's just singing the praises of social work. So that is very easy, but a lot of fun as well. So I've been having a good day.

**Jandel:**

Okay. Okay. Intro to Social Work?

00:01:10:19 - 00:01:28:08

**Jandel:**

Yes.

**Jaelon**

I took I took that one time.

**Jandel:**

And you didn't become a social worker? Well, you didn't have a great enough professor, that's what it is. So, that's my goal. I have some engineering students and there's some sociology

students and some folks that are not majoring in social work. So that's one of my goals, is to have them convert over to our profession.

00:01:28:09 - 00:01:47:20

**Jandel:**

At the end of the semester. We'll see if it works.

**Jaelon:**

Well, what made you start social work?

**Jandel:**

So, I got to have a great experience during a work study that I did in my undergraduate at Washington University in Saint Louis. I got to be an assistant to a kindergarten teacher, Ms. Young. She and I are still in touch with each other.

00:01:47:22 - 00:02:08:22

**Jandel:**

And so I helped in her classroom with cute little five-year-olds. And so I always noticed that there were kids that would come to her class and kind of put their heads down, not necessarily seem as alert as the other kids or as involved, maybe looking a little unkempt or something like that. And so I always thought, you know, they don't seem like they're having a great day.

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**Jandel:**

So what can a teacher do about that? And so I found out quickly that teachers have lots of other things to do and so I was like, well, who is the person that would do that? And I found out that it would be a social worker. And so from that point on, I was sold on social work because it's the people who help to level the playing field, help people to be able to show up as their best version of themselves.

00:02:30:01 - 00:03:03:07

**Jandel:**

So, that's my story.

**Jaelon:**

Okay. Okay. And Ms. Young, essentially, she was a part of your journey to start social work?

**Jandel:**

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So, she won awards as a kindergarten teacher in Saint Louis, very innovative. And so, she actually came to my wedding years later. So just a very caring, great example of looking after kids more than just their academics, but again, not being able to necessarily take care of all the needs that they had outside of the classroom.

00:03:03:09 - 00:03:32:15

**Jaelon:**

Okay. So, there are, you know, a lot of women in social work. Um, a lot a lot. Are there any women in social work, um, who influenced you?

**Jandel:**

Yes. So as part of the introduction to Social Work course, we talk about a lot of pioneering women in social work. And one of the women that we talk about is Ida Barnett Wells, and she's a bit of an idol.

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**Jandel:**

If you can be a fangirl of a social worker. I'm a fangirl of Ida B. Wells because she was just bad, bad, bad meeting good, right? This is 80's slang. She was just bad. So she was born to parents who were enslaved in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and they died of a pandemic. And so she's 14 and having to raise her younger siblings.

00:03:58:22 - 00:04:33:17

**Jandel:**

And so at 16, she becomes a teacher and goes on to become an anti-lynching pioneer around the world. And while doing that, there's a price put on her head because she's, you know, calling out people for lynching in the South. And so she has to leave the South and goes to Chicago. So while she's there in Chicago, she decides that she wants to set up settlement houses to be able to help the African-American community there meet their needs, get some education, to be able to advance their plight in life.

00:04:33:17 - 00:04:57:16

**Jandel:**

And so that is a piece of the settlement house movement that we get to celebrate and call Ida B. Wells one of our social workers. So she's probably my idol in social work, but there are lots of other women, I think, also that are pioneers in social work.

**Jaelon:**

Okay. So how do you see the significance of recognizing and celebrating women's contributions in social work?

00:04:57:18 - 00:05:24:01

**Jandel:**

So women are the founders of social work. So, our profession literally is here because of, I think, women's insight in their ability to take a step back and look at multiple needs in multiple perspectives of what's happening in society. The voice of women social workers has pushed U.S. society. I think European society to be a more just society.

00:05:24:01 - 00:05:48:20

**Jandel:**

And I think by advocating for their own rights as women, but also the rights of others. And so women's contribution to social work is foundational. I think we continue to shape the profession and trying to make it better. So without us, there probably would not be a social work profession.

**Jaelon:**

That's true. That's absolutely true. And I know that comes with, you know, a lot of challenges and triumphs as well.

00:05:48:22 - 00:06:31:10

**Jaelon:**

Um, can you tell us about any of those that you've had as a woman in social work?

**Jandel:**

Me as a woman in social work? And so so, you know, I think again, my research area focuses on racial disparities in education and like education, social work has had some of that bifurcation of black versus white, versus Hispanic and other racial ethnicities. And so one of the, I think, most prominent interactions between my idol Ida B. Wells and Jane Adams, who's also known as the grandmother of social work, one of those founders, it's told or it's said in history that they had a meeting together as women trying to gain women's suffrage.

00:06:31:10 - 00:06:51:23

**Jandel:**

The right to vote. And Ida B. Wells' comment to Jane Adams, both social workers was to say, you know what, you're doing a great job for the cause of women. You're just not doing a great job for the cause of all women because you're not including black women in this suffrage movement. And so I think that that division has been there.

00:06:51:23 - 00:07:22:15

**Jandel:**

And so I think we've tried to get more iterations where we're closer and closer to where all women and all women's voices are able to shape the profession of social work. And I think that along the way, people have, I think, increasingly accepted all women's voices in social work. And so I think that's been a challenge. And so through research, through teaching, through representation in the academy and the profession in the field, I think that there's an increase in women's voices.

00:07:22:15 - 00:07:49:13

**Jandel:**

But I think that there's always room for improvement.

**Jaelon:**

That makes sense, that makes sense there's always, the biggest room in the house is room for improvement.

**Jandel:**

That's a good one. Ima ask my kids that one.

**Jaelon:**

So can you tell us a little bit about your research? You mentioned that it's about racial disparities in education. Uh, can you tell us a little bit about that and some of your findings as well?

00:07:49:19 - 00:08:13:12

**Jandel:**

Yeah, absolutely. So part of what I do in researching racial disparities in education is I think that social workers should have a voice and educational research. So a lot of the approach I have is broader than social work and just what are the educational needs for people, what is school, what are the school climates like and schools that contribute to racial disparities?

00:08:13:12 - 00:08:34:13

**Jandel:**

And so when we say disparities, it's in outcomes, so if the majority of your minority students are performing worse on a test or have lower grades or they graduate at a lower rate than their white or Asian counterparts, that's the racial disparity. And so the question is why is that? And so a lot of the research talks about the climate right?

00:08:34:13 - 00:08:56:10

**Jandel:**

When students feel like they have a sense of belonging on campus, when they have an important connection with an adult on campus, they're more likely to do well in school if they're participating in an extracurricular activity. And so where that comes into social work is that I was a school social worker who served in schools, tried to make sure that kids had those connections and that they were able to overcome challenges.

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**Jandel:**

And so a lot of my research is looking at best practices for school social workers to address racial disparities because school, social workers have lots of stuff to think about. Teachers want them to do certain things in class, leaders wanting to do other things. And so it's important to keep in mind that one of the roles we have is to address racial disparities in schools.

00:09:17:17 - 00:09:38:09

**Jandel:**

And so how do we do that? Do we go to school board meetings and talk about policy? Do we help to make the environment one that's more inviting and more accepting of all the students in the school? And do we work with parents to be able to figure out how to advocate for themselves in talking about belonging? And so there's lots of different strategies.

00:09:38:09 - 00:10:07:06

**Jandel:**

And so my research is about why that's important and our obligation to do that as school social workers. And so right now, currently we're doing a national study that focuses on what school social workers have learned about race is when somebody is not doing something, there's a reason. And so some of that can be that people weren't taught to do these things in class, like in school social work, classes like I teach, perhaps teachers haven't been teaching, Hey, this is how you address race.

00:10:07:11 - 00:10:33:11

**Jandel:**

Maybe they're teaching. Hey, here's how you help a kid who's dealing with anxiety or here's how you help a kid who's feeling depressed. But they haven't explicitly said when there's an issue of racism on your campus or when there are these differences in racial outcomes who suspended versus who is not suspended for the same issue, how do you, as a school social worker, stand up to have a voice or help your clients and their families have voices so a lot of it is exploration.

00:10:33:11 - 00:11:12:17

**Jandel:**

Because of the specialization of School of Social Work hasn't always tackle this issue. But as I said before, in the room for improvement, that's something that I'm trying to contribute through my research.

**Jaelon:**

Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. That's that's actually pretty cool because we actually talked about that last week with one of our Courtyard Conversations episodes and how like a lot of the time, like it's changing now, but a lot of the time you never really check on a kid like and you just end up suspending the kid, Getting the kid in trouble.

00:11:12:19 - 00:11:38:07

**Jaelon:**

But you don't know why they're acting the way they're acting.

**Jandel:**

And so that's definitely a role for school social workers and again, it could people, you know, kids have issues and they have things going on at home. They have things going on internally. Maybe there's a developmental disability or delay or there's conflict, but it could just be that the environment is not a great environment like we all want to work in an environment that accepts us and where we feel like we belong.

00:11:38:07 - 00:11:53:22

**Jandel:**

We want to be in a family that we feel like accepts us and like where we belong. On a campus. As a university, we want to feel like we belong. And so it's no different in public schools.

**Jaelon:**

Yep, that's true. I feel I feel accepted here. Yes.

00:11:53:22 - 00:12:30:10

**Jaelon:**

Why is it crucial for, um, social workers, um, especially women, to engage at the policy level?

**Jandel:**

Oh, so policy leads and guides practice. And so some of the disparities that we're talking about for women in the profession, for in terms of my research, children in schools are essentially

based on policy. So one example of that is how often children are referred to special education classes or are referred to over referred to discipline or expulsion.

00:12:30:12 - 00:12:55:18

**Jandel:**

Right. The policy sometimes has teachers have to identify people in certain ways. And so to have our voices make an impact, we have to analyze the policy, right? Why is this making more women have to deal with this issue? Why is it making more black women have to deal with this issue more Hispanic women? A lot of times people are following policies and that's what the impact is.

00:12:55:18 - 00:13:18:18

**Jandel:**

It's not necessarily the people themselves. Mm hmm. And so in our profession, for example, we have accreditation standards here at UTA. We have just gone through the reaccreditation process. And so there are policies that teach us and guide us in how we instruct our students. And so part of making our profession better is engaging on what those policies should say.

00:13:18:21 - 00:13:40:02

**Jandel:**

Mm hmm. What should social workers be focused on? What should the voice of women be in social work? And so if we're not engaging at that very high level policy making, then we won't be impacting what our students are learning. We won't be impacting what social workers are out there doing. And we definitely wouldn't be impacting what our clients are experiencing.

00:13:40:02 - 00:14:14:13

**Jandel:**

So we have to be at the table helping to make policy because it guides behavior, it guides teaching and learning, and it guides practice.

**Jaelon:**

Okay. So how has dialog played a role in creating a supportive community in social work?

**Jandel:**

I think social workers like dialog. We like to talk when we have our clients talk, but I think we historically are pretty effective at bringing the right people to the table.

00:14:14:15 - 00:14:35:22

**Jandel:**

Not always, but we try to get the right voices in the room. There are so many different boards, there's so many different commissions, there's so many different subcommittees of all of these different areas. You know, now we have the grand challenges of social work, right, where all of these different networking groups around the country that care about our specific issues.

00:14:35:22 - 00:15:02:10

**Jandel:**

The 13 grand challenges meet to talk about, well, how can we influence our practice around homelessness, around ending racism, around ending poverty, around youth health and mental health? And so I think we are doing a great job talking to each other, talking to stakeholders, talking to people in the field. And so that is one of the cool concepts with social work is this concept of evidence-based practice.

00:15:02:12 - 00:15:20:07

**Jandel:**

So not just, hey, the professors at the university who do the research say we need to do this. So that's right. But taking that into account, but also what are people out in the field seeing? So so those two things are married together well, and so I think that that's an example of how dialog has played a role.

00:15:20:09 - 00:15:39:09

**Jandel:**

And so I think we need to increasingly make sure we have the right voices that aren't often heard, right. So not just people with high levels of education, making sure more of our clients are also involved in those conversations. How is what we're doing as social workers impacting you and your daily lives? We need to be hearing more from them.

00:15:39:11 - 00:16:04:12

**Jandel:**

So I think we have a good pattern set for dialog. We just need to make sure we continue to expand on that.

**Jaelon:**

Yes, ma'am. I like how you you know, expand on how social work, how much social work actually means, because there's a lot of people that don't know what social work is...

**Jandel:**

Or they think they know. They don't know.

**Jaelon:**

You know, a lot of people just have the idea like, oh, yes, social work is CPS.

00:16:04:14 - 00:16:25:18

**Jaelon:**

Yes, social work. Oh, you want to take my kids away. But that's that's not the only thing. Right. Like, there's social work in literally every aspect of almost anything.

**Jandel:**

Yeah. And social workers, I think, also lead. And so women in particular, you have throughout history, you have people it's so interesting. You have people that are historical figures, right?

00:16:25:19 - 00:16:59:07

**Jandel:**

And we know them as really dynamic, pioneering women in politics. For example, you have Shirley Chisholm and you have Dorothy Height, women who, you know, ran for president or



met with presidents. And you or you just know about them through history. They're dynamic black women in civil rights, but they also were social workers. And so I think of social work in that way is that we are leaders and lots of other areas in the world and in the field.

00:16:59:09 - 00:17:17:19

**Jandel:**

And we also happen to espouse social work values and principles. And so that's the level of impact I think that women in social work have, is that people see that we're doing great things and then they notice, Oh yeah, you're a social worker too. Karen Bass, the mayor of L.A. is a social worker. You know, one of the largest cities in our country.

00:17:17:19 - 00:17:45:18

**Jandel:**

And so I think there's nowhere that women can't be, women social workers in terms of leadership, policymaking, governing and then social work practice and research as well.

**Jaelon:**

Mm hmm. Okay. So what what advice would you have for any young woman who wants to join social work?

**Jandel:**

That's a good question. So my natural response would be like, do it. Yes!

00:17:45:19 - 00:18:18:12

**Jandel:**

Go! I don't really ask young women to think about the values of social work as they are considering joining the profession. In a society where women are often told to value certain things about themselves or other women. It is a profession that's respects their ability to make their own choices, to respect them, to be able to enjoy the benefits of social justice, integrity, service.

00:18:18:16 - 00:18:45:04

**Jandel:**

And so making sure that you have the right understanding of what the profession values, I think is important. Things like equity for women, anti-racism, diversity, all of these things, making sure you take a look at those things because it's a commitment to be a social worker, you have to lend your voice on behalf of your clients, on behalf of other people and society beyond yourself.

00:18:45:06 - 00:19:08:17

**Jandel:**

And so if you look at those values and ethics and you think that they align with how you also see the world, then I think social work is a profession where you can make a great impact on a small circle of people all the way, you know, to globally. And so I think there's lots of opportunity. Diversity in social work, lots of ways that you can touch the world.

00:19:08:17 - 00:19:18:04

**Jandel:**

And so I invite any women to check out our social work values and to join us.

00:19:18:06 - 00:19:45:16

**Jaelon:**

And that's that's actually pretty cool. Just like being a voice as a whole. And I think that's, you know, more than, you know, just women. I think, you know, everybody should aspire to have a voice.

**Jandel:**

I agree.

**Jaelon:**

Because it is becoming a real rare thing to, you know, try to be a voice in the community and just try to stand for a change.

00:19:45:17 - 00:20:09:17

**Jaelon:**

I do see it a lot here, though, and I'm, I'm glad to see it here.

**Jandel:**

Yeah, I think I think there are lots of opportunities built into our curriculum. I think some of the policy courses ask our students to look at policy and analyze them, potentially even write letters about ways that social work views certain issues.

00:20:09:17 - 00:20:43:12

**Jandel:**

Our national associations often give us guidance and they make statements about things happening around the world. And so that's one of the things I love about social work and that we know women are plugged in to all aspects of society. And so we ask that our profession also plugs in and not put our heads in the sand and say we don't really care about what's going on around us, but we try to lend our voices to the experiences of people globally and what's happening and not just stay in our little boxes in classrooms and we try to make that connection.

00:20:43:14 - 00:21:16:06

**Jaelon:**

Okay, So are there any takeaways that you want our audience to leave with after watching this podcast?

**Jandel:**

Think of social work broadly, think of social workers impacting every aspect of your life, whether that's your health, your education, your civil rights, how you experience aging, death, and dying, overcoming addiction. Social workers can be there for you, or we can also be your advocates.

00:21:16:08 - 00:21:43:14

**Jandel:**

We also want to empower you to be able to advocate for yourself. And so I think there's nowhere that a woman in social work cannot be. And I think the world can be run by social workers that might be a little bit biased, but I think with social work values and ethics and perspectives at a lot of the tables where some of our global decisions are being made, the world would be a lot better place.

00:21:43:14 - 00:22:15:09

**Jandel:**

And I mean that sincerely.

**Jaelon:**

Okay. Well, Dr. Crutchfield, it's been great to have you on Courtyard Conversations. Thank you for joining me today, along with our amazing communications team in the background, making all of this possible.

**Jandel:**

Yes, Mav up! UTA Communications - let's go.

**Jaelon:**

And for those watching our show, if you want to learn more about social work and what social workers do, please go to our website and follow us on our social media pages.

00:22:15:11 - 00:22:31:03

**Jaelon:**

And please be sure to give this video a thumbs up. Subscribe to our channel and turn on those post notifications for more content down the road. As always, please be safe. Stay empowered and stay inspired. Until next time, my name is Jaelon Jackson - Signing off...

**Jandel:**

Love it!