Marty Mann is arguably the most dominant figure in the modern alcoholism movement in the United States. Following her own recovery from alcoholism, she organized the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism in 1944 (forerunner of today’s National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) around five “kinetic” ideas that were developed in collaboration with Dwight Anderson: 1. alcoholism is a disease, 2. the alcoholic, therefore, is a sick person, 3. the alcoholic can be helped, 4. the alcoholic is worth helping, and 5. alcoholism is our No. 4 public health problem, and our public responsibility.

Modeling her reform movement on the success of other public health organizations that had been formed to support education, research and treatment for tuberculosis, cancer and heart disease, Mann spent her life successfully reshaping national policy toward alcoholism and organizing local alcoholism educational and treatment resources throughout the United States. Part of her unique contribution as a public health pioneer was to heighten the synergy between emerging recovery mutual aid groups (Alcoholics Anonymous), post-Repeal organizations committed to the science-based management of alcohol problems (the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies and the Research Council on Problems of Alcohol) and philanthropic organizations focused on the problem of alcoholism (the Smithers Foundation). Marty Mann had obvious assets to devote to her campaign of public education and policy advocacy. She was bright, articulate, attractive, passionately committed and offered her own life to thousands of audiences as living proof of the reality and transformative power of recovery from alcoholism.

But who was the person behind this powerful persona? This is the question that Sally and David Brown eloquently answer in their biography of Marty Mann. Their biography is based on a meticulous reconstruction of Mann’s family history, hundreds of interviews with those who knew and worked with Mann and a review of the
available archival documents related to Mann’s contributions. This is a very well researched biography and an engaging story that reveals much about the evolution of attitudes toward alcoholism in America. It also provides a window into the struggles public health reformers experience as they try to balance excessive professional demands, their public personas and their sometimes quite complicated personal lives.

There are disclosures in this book that were carefully hidden when Mann was alive, such as her sexual orientation and long-term relationship with Priscilla Peck and a relapse that Mann experienced very late in her life (the latter being the real bombshell of the book), but overall this is a detailed account of how a deeply wounded woman who had experienced multiple treatment episodes finally found recovery and dreamed that she could change the world. And she did, with a skill and grace that will inspire many readers. Of the many lessons in this book, I was most struck by the potential for one person to personally touch so many and by doing so reshape history. *The Biography of Mrs. Marty Mann* should be added to the reading list of those aspiring to leadership in this field.
In their fascinating book, Sally and David Brown shed light on this influential figure in recovery history. Born in Chicago in 1905, Marty was favored with beauty, brains, charisma, phenomenal energy, and a powerful will. She could also out drink anyone in her group of social elites. When her father became penniless, she was forced into work, landed a lucrative public relations position, and a decade later was destitute because of her drinking. This is a story of one woman's indefatigable effort and indomitable spirit, compellingly told by Sally and David Brown. ...more. Get A Copy. Start your review of A Biography of Mrs Marty Mann: The First Lady of Alcoholics Anonymous. Write a review. Jan 13, 2008 Memphis Holland is currently reading it. The First Lady of Alcoholics Anonymous. By Sally Brown and David R. Brown. eBook. Trade Paperback. List price $10.99. Price may vary by retailer. Table of Contents. Marty Mann was the first woman to achieve long-term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, and she inspired thousands of others, especially women, to help themselves. The little-known life of Marty Mann rivals a Masterpiece Theatre drama. She was born into a life of wealth and privilege, sank to the lowest depths of poverty and despair, then rose to inspire thousands of others, especially women, to help themselves. The first woman to achieve long-term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, Marty Mann advocated the understanding that alcoholism is an issue of public health, not morality. A recent biography of Marty reveals that there was still another woman ahead of Marty, Mary C. Mary visited Marty when she was still at Blythewood Sanitarium in 1939. Mary would have been the A.A. woman with the longest sobriety had she not slipped in 1944. Thereafter she stayed sober until her death in the 1990s. Marty was the first woman to enter A.A. and gain long-term sobriety. But she had several slips, and thus other women were able at one time to claim longer uninterrupted sobriety. Marty grew up in Chicago, in a wealthy family. The source of much of the information on Martyâ€™s early years and marriage is â€œMrs. Marty Mann, The First Lady of Alcoholics Anonymous,â€ by Sally and David Brown. Marty Mann was the first woman to achieve long-term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, and she inspired thousands of others, especially women, to help themselves. The little-known life of Marty Mann rivals a Masterpiece Theatre drama. She was born into a life of wealth and privilege, sank to the lowest depths of poverty and despair, then rose to inspire thousands of others, especially women, to help themselves. The first woman to achieve long-term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, Marty Mann advocated the understanding that alcoholism is an issue of public health, not morality. In their fascina Margaret Marty Mann (October 15, 1904 â€“ July 22, 1980) Born in Chicago, Illinois. Marty is considered by some to be the first woman with long term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous. There were several remarkable women in the early days of AA including but not limited to: Florence R. of New York, Sylvia K. of Chicago, Ethel M. of Akron, Ohio. AA co-founder Bill Wilson was Marty's sponsor. Marty wrote the chapter "Women Suffer Too" in the second through fourth editions of the Big Book of AA. In 1944