



# **Wisdom, Justice and Charity: Canadian Social Welfare through the Life of Jane B. Wisdom, 1884-1975 (Studies in Gender and History)**

*Suzanne Morton*

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One of Canada's first social workers, Jane B. Wisdom had an active career in social welfare that spanned almost the first half of the twentieth century. Competent, thoughtful, and trusted, she had a knack for being in important places at pivotal moments. Wisdom's transnational career took her from Saint John to Montreal, New York City, Halifax, and Glace Bay, as well as into almost every field of social work. Her story offers a remarkable opportunity to uncover what life was like for front-line social workers in the profession's early years.

In *Wisdom, Justice, and Charity*, historian Suzanne Morton uses Wisdom's professional life to explore how the welfare state was built from the ground up by thousands of pragmatic and action-oriented social workers. Wisdom's career illustrates the impact of professionalization, gender, and changing notions of the state – not just on those in the emergent profession of social work but also on those in need. Her life and career stand as a potent allegory for the limits and possibilities of individual action.

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