

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATION



THE WAYNE F.  
PLACEK  
AWARDS  
A 10-YEAR  
RETROSPECTIVE



*...To encourage scientific research, which will increase the general public's understanding of homosexuality and alleviate the stress that gay men and lesbians experience in this and future civilizations.*



## THE APF WAYNE F. PLACEK AWARDS: A 10-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

For the past decade, the American Psychological Foundation's Wayne F. Placek Awards have enabled social scientists to study sexual orientation, a field that traditionally has seen little financial support.

Today, thanks to these grants, a growing body of empirical research is enhancing the general public's understanding of homosexuality and helping to alleviate the stress that gay men and lesbians experience.

The awards are funded from a bequest that Wayne F. Placek gave to Dr. Evelyn Hooker, a pioneering psychologist whose 1950s research laid the foundation for the view that homosexuality is not a form of psychopathology. Mr. Placek was part of the group of gay men from which Dr. Hooker selected to participate in her studies. He was so impressed by her work that he bequeathed his estate to her. After considerable research, Dr. Hooker, in consultation with other eminent psychologists, entrusted the bequest to APF.

Two types of Placek Awards are administered annually to doctoral-level investigators: Large Grants, which offer as much as \$50,000 to researchers and Small Grants, awarded since 1999, which provide up to \$5,000. Sometimes investigators applying for the Large Grant are awarded Investigator Development Awards to develop their work.

APF encourages grant proposals for studies that address prejudice, discrimination, and violence based on sexual orientation; explore family and workplace issues relevant to lesbians and gay men; and study subgroups of the lesbian and gay population that have historically been underrepresented in scientific research, especially racial and ethnic minorities.

In 2005, the Placek Fund will have generated more than \$1 million in research funding, including institutional matching funds.

This retrospective highlights the research grantees have conducted so far and the new directions their work is taking the field. Information on the selection process for these awards is featured at the end of this program.

DR. BADGETT



1995

## ECONOMIC LIFE

DR. ASH



One of the first Placek grantees, **Dr. M.V. Lee Badgett**, examined the economic lives of lesbians and gay men. She received a second grant in 2002 with colleague **Dr. Michael Ash** to explore health-insurance coverage for same sex couples. Both researchers are economists at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Dr. Badgett's 1995 Placek-funded research documented a clearer picture of lesbians' and gay men's financial lives. She found—contrary to common belief—that gay men were not more affluent than their heterosexual counterparts. “In fact, they earned less when all other factors were held constant,” notes Dr. Badgett. She also concluded that lesbians may earn slightly more than heterosexual women, “but that is likely because they work more,” she says.

The research led to her 2001 book *Money, Myth and Change: Economic Lives of Lesbians and Gay Men* (University of Chicago Press).

Her 2002 Placek grant with Dr. Ash allowed them to study disparities in health-insurance coverage between same-sex and different-sex couples. They found a substantial gap in coverage for same-sex couples compared with demographically similar, married different-sex couples.

“Lack of health-insurance coverage is a well-documented stressor that can diminish emotional, financial, and physical well-being,” says Dr. Ash. “Much of this gap would be closed with widespread adoption of domestic partnership benefits or the inclusion of benefits for same-sex partners in the context of same-sex marriage.”

The cost of extending these benefits is “very small relative to the total cost of benefits,” Dr. Ash estimates.

Their research has been cited repeatedly in recent debates over same-sex marriage, and Badgett has testified as an expert witness on the topic.

In additional research funded by the Placek award, Badgett and Ash are examining the consequences of limited availability of benefits for domestic partners for the labor-market attachment of people in same-sex couples. They are also analyzing corporate policies that contribute to creating gay-friendly workplaces.

1995

## TELEVISION'S INTERPRETATIONS

Male sociology professor **Dr. Joshua P. Gamson** used his Placek funds to support research for his award-winning book *Freaks Talk Back: Tabloid Talk Shows and Sexual Nonconformity* (University of Chicago Press).

His work, he says, “shed some light, I hope, on how heterosexual attitudes towards lesbians, gay men, bisexual, and transgendered people are processed by particular television forms—amplified, criticized, and so on.” It also explored how the legitimacy of some subgroups—such as gender-conforming gay men and

lesbians—is often increased at the expense of other subgroups—such as transgendered and bisexual people, gender-nonconforming gay men and lesbians.

“The book allowed me to delve deeply into questions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender visibility through television forms, which has remained an area of interest for me,” says Gamson. It was honored for its insights by the Society for Cinema Studies and the American Sociological Association, and was named a “Favorite 25 Books of 1998” by *The Village Voice*.

Since *Freaks* was published, Gamson has written various articles on gays, lesbians, and media, including a chapter in the *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.

In 2004, Gamson and **Verta Taylor, Ph.D.**, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, were awarded a Small Placek Grant. Working with Leila Rupp, Ph.D., of the Center for Research on Women and Social Justice, the researchers conducted focus groups with audiences of drag performances at a bar in Key West, FL. The grant enabled them to investigate audience interpretations of drag performances as an aspect of gay politics.

The Placek award laid the foundation for several subsequent grants and to the publication of the 2003 book by Dr. Taylor and Dr. Rupp, *Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret* (University of Chicago Press), as well as more than a dozen articles and chapters.



Dr. GAMSON



Dr. TAYLOR



1996

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION AT WORK

**T**hough lesbians, gay men and bisexuals make up between 4 and 17 percent of the work force, scant research has been conducted on their work experiences.

**Dr. Belle Rose Ragins**, professor of organizations and strategic management at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, sought to change that with her Placek grant.

Her investigations gleaned a wealth of insights that were published in prestigious journals and book chapters and aired on National Public Radio. Her research found, for example, that workplace discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual employees is widespread, but that employees were less likely to encounter discrimination in organizations that had written policies forbidding discrimination and those governed by protective legislation.

She also found that discrimination had an overwhelming negative effect on work and career attitudes, career outcomes and intentions to remain in the organization, and was related to the decision to disclose a gay identity at work. This research was published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and honored with two Dorothy Harlow Best Paper Awards from the Gender and Diversity in Management Division of the Academy of Management in 2000 and 2001.

In APF-funded research she conducted on race and gender published in *Group & Organization Management*, Dr. Ragins also found that gay employees of color were less likely than whites to disclose their sexual orientation and that employees in racially balanced work teams reported less heterosexism than those in primarily white or non-white teams.

1996

## STRESS AND HEALTH



Dr. DiPlacido

**D**r. **Joanne DiPlacido** conducted an anonymous 32-page mail survey from a racially and economically diverse sample of 400 lesbian and bisexual women to glean better insights into the links between stress and health among these women.

The survey included measures of personality characteristics and social support in order to look at any possible stress buffers. So far, her results have shown that internal stressors—such as general self-concealment and self-concealment about one’s sexual orientation, as well as internalized sexual prejudice—were significantly related to both psychological and physical well-being.

“The more these women concealed aspects of themselves or experienced internalized sexual prejudice, the more physical and psychological symptoms they reported,” explains Dr. DiPlacido, associate professor of psychology at Central Connecticut State University.

She found a stronger relationship between these internal stressors and well-being than the relationship between the number of life events and daily hassles due to one’s sexual orientation and well-being.

Dr. DiPlacido is now beginning to look at the possible moderating and mediating variables in this study. “Not everyone in this study who experienced stress became depressed or reported physical health problems,” she notes. “I’m interested in which factors help to buffer this stress or perhaps make the stress worse, and what specific mechanisms can help to explain the relationship that I have found among self-concealment, internalized sexual prejudice and physical/psychological symptoms.”



1997

## PREDICTORS OF PARTNER ABUSE

**D**r. **Kim Bartholomew** studied attachment, childhood socialization, and partner abuse in a randomly selected sample of gay men who live in the West End of Vancouver, in British Columbia, Canada. Her results suggest that the nature and predictors of partner abuse in gay relationships are remarkably similar to those previously identified for abuse in heterosexual relationships: parental violence in childhood, insecure attachment and relationship dysfunction.

“This project has informed our subsequent work on the dyadic context of partner abuse, and has laid the foundation for a study of gay men’s experiences of coming out to parents,” says Dr. Bartholomew, a professor of psychology at Simon Fraser University.

The project has led to several publications. Among them are two papers—one in 2002 in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, another in press at the *Journal of Family Violence*—that focus on violence in same-sex relationships and on secondary questions, including the impact of age-discrepant childhood sexual experiences.

In addition, Dr. Bartholomew has shared her survey data with epidemiologists studying HIV prevention and treatment.

1997

## RUNNING FOR OFFICE

In a study of voters' responses to gay and lesbian political candidates, **Dr. Ewa Golebiowska** and **Dr. Cynthia J. Thomsen** found that gay men candidates are politically damaged when they are evaluated through the prism of their group's stereotype, whereas lesbian candidates benefit.

"We have interpreted this difference with reference to a 'good-politician' prototype on which voters rely on evaluating political candidates," explains Dr. Golebiowska, a professor of political science at Wayne State University. "Good politicians' are expected to be masculine, unlike stereotypical gay men, but similar to stereotypical lesbian women."

Their findings also suggest that gays and lesbians who run for office need not worry about the "best time" to disclose their homosexuality as long as they are willing to acknowledge it. On the other hand, when candidates choose not to reveal their homosexuality, they may suffer politically—particularly among respondents who disapprove of homosexuality—when their opponents allege they are gay or lesbian early in their political careers.

Dr. Golebiowska and Dr. Thomsen, a research associate at the Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault at Northern Illinois University, have presented the findings of their research at professional conferences and shared them with the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, a political action committee working to elect gay and lesbian candidates to national office. The research was also reported in the journal *American Politics Research* in 2001.



Dr. GOLEBIOWSKA



Dr. THOMSEN



1998

## HATE CRIME LAW AND ENFORCEMENT

**D**r. Donald P. Haider-Markel, an associate professor of political science at the University of Kansas, has received two Large Placek Grants. With the first, awarded in 1998, Haider-Markel explored hate-crime law and the enforcement of those laws.

His research involved collecting data from the largest 250 American cities, including information from surveys of anti-violence activists, police chiefs, and district attorneys. From this work he concluded that law enforcement and interest groups are making significant efforts in pursuing hate crimes, but those efforts are hampered by a lack of community support, a dearth of law enforcement procedures, and, in some cases, resistance from law enforcement officials.

His results can be used by anti-violence groups and law enforcement officials to point out shortcomings in existing hate-crime laws, their implementation, and their enforcement. “If hate crimes decrease through greater law enforcement activity, gays and lesbians should have less stress and fear over the prospect of becoming hate-crime victims,” Dr. Haider-Markel explains.

The work has informed several publications, including *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation* with Raymond A. Smith (ABC-CLIO Publishers) and the chapter “Gay Rights” in the forthcoming *Governing America: The Politics of a Divided Democracy* (Oxford University Press).

This research also laid the groundwork for Dr. Haider-Markel’s second Placek grant, awarded in 2003 and titled *Who gets a seat at the table? The role of candidate sexual orientation*. He has completed the bulk of his data collection for this project, which includes interviewing gay and lesbian candidates and gathering data on state legislative races, candidates and district demographics. So far, he has concluded that candidate sexual orientation does play a role.

“Lesbian and gay candidates face significant hurdles in running for office and tend to raise less money, face negative campaigns about their sexual orientation, and receive less voter support,” he reports.

Because the basis for his study is to understand whether voters discriminate against openly LGBT candidates for public office, his results could enhance the understanding of the implications of discriminatory attitudes and behavior towards these Americans. “This knowledge can be used to better understand LGBT political power and the potential for LGBT interests to be represented in the political process,” he says.

And his findings could provide useful information to candidates about ways to counteract bias in the electorate

1999

## THE METH-ABUSE HEALTH CRISIS



Dr. Halkitis

**T**hrough his Placek-funded research, **Dr. Perry N. Halkitis** brought attention to the methamphetamine abuse epidemic in the gay and bisexual community—research that is now the basis for a \$2.5 million grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

“The funding allowed me to be among the first to document this health crisis on the East Coast of the United States and to establish me as a leader in this particular domain,” says Dr. Halkitis, a chair and professor of applied psychology at New York University.

His work in the area has been cited extensively and covered in national media, including CNN. It has also led to training programs throughout the United States on methamphetamine abuse in the gay and bisexual male community.

Dr. Halkitis is now in the final year of his five-year NIDA grant, a large-scale study investigating club drug use and men’s health. This project seeks to understand the relationship between the use of these drugs and unsafe sexual behaviors among gay and bisexual men. The project includes both qualitative and quantitative assessments. Participants are followed longitudinally for one year. He also has a methamphetamine abuse treatment efficacy trial grant under review.

“The work we did with this Placek Award has been very important in helping to bring national and international attention to the meth-abuse problem in the gay and bisexual community and to inspire other research and grassroots efforts to address the matter,” Dr. Halkitis says.



1999

## 'HETEROSEXIST HASSLES'

**D**r. **Janet K. Swim** studied the daily experiences that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals have with so-called “heterosexist hassles”—the mundane comments or behaviors that reflect or communicate hostile, denigrating, or stigmatizing attitudes and beliefs about gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals.

Using a daily diary methodology, her study compared differences between the impact of heterosexist and non-heterosexist hassles on appraisals, coping responses, and psychological well-being. The study participants reported examples of heterosexism about three times a week, including jokes and hostile comments. They also experienced hostile behaviors or exclusion, bad service and the fear of being “outed.”

Interestingly, she found that for heterosexist incidents, “the more out participants were, the less likely they were to engage in problem-focused behavior, such as confronting, and the more likely they were to engage in emotion-focused responding, such as psychologically distancing from events,” says Swim, assistant professor of psychology at Pennsylvania State University.

She also concluded that experiencing heterosexism is not related to self-esteem and that such events increased participants’ psychological distress, defined as anger and anxiety.

The Placek-funded research helped to “focus my attention on the different ways that people can confront discrimination,” says Swim.

2000



Dr. Creed

## GAY AND LESBIAN MINISTERS

Through qualitative interviews, **Dr. Douglas Creed** is exploring how gay and lesbian ministers—largely marginalized and even demonized by their denominations—can emerge as agents of change within their organizations.

Dr. Creed finds that many gay and lesbian ministers experience an intense anger with God that emerges in the context of internalized homophobia combined with confusion over feeling “called.” In time, this anger often collides with a feeling of personal connection with and affirmation from God, in some cases stemming from dramatic experiences of epiphany. Many may conclude that something is wrong with church teachings.

“This triggers a reassessment of those teachings, a reframing of what constitutes ministry in light of that reassessment, and the search for ways of fostering more inclusive communities of faith,” says Dr. Creed, associate professor of management at the University of Rhode Island.

When re-examining church teachings, most develop their own theologies of inclusion: “They believe the church is not living up to its own calling since the gospel purports to be all embracing,” explains Dr. Creed.

An article based on this research appeared in the September 2003 issue of the *Journal of Management Studies*. Dr. Creed is also preparing results for other publications.



2000

## SUBTLE FORMS OF PREJUDICE

**D**r. Nilanjana Dasgupta has received two Placek Awards to study the same topic: subtle forms of prejudice against gay men and lesbians.

With a 2000 Placek Grant, Dr. Dasgupta, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, conducted a study in which participants completed a computer task to measure their unconscious or implicit attitudes toward gay men. Another part of the study looked at participants' nonverbal behaviors—such as eye contact, body language, and length of conversation—when interacting with people they perceived to be gay or heterosexual.

Dr. Dasgupta found that both male and female participants showed unconscious preference for heterosexuals and bias against gay men on the rapid computer task. Among the women, these unconscious thoughts did not produce subtle discriminatory behavior toward the allegedly gay person. Men, however, were different: The more unconscious bias male participants exhibited on the computer task, the more subtle bias they showed through their nonverbal body language.

“Interestingly, participants’ conscious attitudes didn’t predict these subtle behaviors,” Dr. Dasgupta found. “Only unconscious attitudes did.”

In a follow-up study, she discovered that women reacted less because they tended to endorse less traditional beliefs about gender roles and distinctions between women and men, whereas men varied greatly in the degree to which they endorsed traditional beliefs about gender. “Nontraditional” men behaved like the women participants.

Building on that work, she explored how to change such subtle prejudice with her 2002 Placek Grant. In her next study, she showed participants photos and biographies of famous and admired individuals who were openly gay. She also measured whether participants had gay friends, families and co-workers. She then she asked participants to “vote” on referendums that addressed gay and lesbian civil rights, such as civil unions, marriage and employment discrimination.

She found that participants with more unconscious biases were less supportive of lesbian and gay civil rights policies. But those attitudes changed when participants were shown the photos of famous gay people. “Reminding people of lesbians and gays they are familiar with makes them more conscious of an issue and more likely to support them,” found Dr. Dasgupta. The photos of famous people had the greatest effect for participants who knew no gays or lesbians personally.

“The point is that media exposure of gays and lesbians has an impact on unconscious bias in people’s attitudes and behavior,” Dr. Dasgupta says.

2000

## RELATIONAL VALUES



Dr. ROSTOSKY

**D**r. **Sharon Scales Rostosky** conducted a qualitative study of relational values in same-sex couples. This study, in turn, led to a research program to “create and disseminate basic knowledge about same-sex relationships that will foster psychoeducational training, service delivery, and social policies to support the psychosocial health and well-being of sexual minorities and their families,” says Dr. Rostosky.

For example, analysis of the couples’ conversations revealed that couples perceive disclosure of the relationship and efforts to communicate with each other as important investments of commitment. In addition, couples consider the legal and social constraints of being in a same-sex relationship as a “cost” that shapes their commitment to each other.

In 2004, Dr. Rostosky received a Small Placek Grant with Dr. Ellen Riggle, a professor of political science at the University of Kentucky, to collect additional qualitative data on interracial same-sex couples. Findings from this study, which are being presented at APA’s 2005 Annual Convention in Washington, DC, highlight couples’ strategies for coping with experiences of discrimination. Results from their program of research on same-sex couples can be found in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*; *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*; *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*; *Journal of Homosexuality*; *Family Process*; *Journal of Personal and Social Relationships*; and *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*.



2000

## ADOLESCENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**D**r. **Stephen T. Russell** made history with his Placek Large Grant by conducting the first national-level survey to include information about adolescent sexual orientation.

The study, known as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, or the Add Health Study, documented important health risks among same-sex attracted youth in the United States, including substance use and abuse, victimization, depression, and suicidality.

The work “addressed many of the methodological limitations of past studies and thus set to rest much of the critique of the evidence that suggested that gay youth are a group at risk,” says Russell, associate professor of family studies and human development at the University of Arizona.

Since then, Russell has been investigating the ways family, school, faith, peers and other contexts of adolescents’ lives put gay youth at risk—or protect them from risk.

He believes his Placek-funded research has “contributed to a shift in the general public’s understanding of gay youth...from skepticism that this group even exists and is at risk, to acceptance that this is a group of young people that may face unique challenges.”

In the last five years, he says, “We have seen a growing acknowledgement that the key systems in the lives of youth—schools, family, and faith—need to give serious consideration to the health and well-being of this group of young people.”

2001

## STRESS AND IDENTITY



Dr. MEYER

In a review of the research, **Dr. Ilan H. Meyer**, concluded that lesbians, gay men and bisexuals have a higher prevalence of mental health disorders than heterosexuals. He posits that the increased prevalence is triggered by the stress lesbians, gay men and bisexuals feel as a result of stigma, prejudice and discrimination.

“The constant presence of harassment I found was surprising,” says Dr. Meyer, associate professor at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. “It’s not only violence, but also minor events of mistreatment and harassment in everyday interactions in stores, on subways, and on the streets.”

He discovered higher levels of stress among groups of ethnic and racial minority lesbian, gay men, and bisexuals, indicating escalating levels of stress with additional minority statuses. For example, white gay men felt stress due to stigma, but lesbians more so and black lesbians the most. “The accumulation of stigma had an additive effect,” Dr. Meyer found.

His Placek-funded research has led to a 2003 article in *Psychological Bulletin* and to an R01 grant at the National Institute of Mental Health to study how individuals manage their different minority identities and the role of resilience and social support in coping with such stress.

DR. SEROVICH



2001

## INTIMATE VIOLENCE

DR. MCKENRY



**D**r. Julianne Serovich and Dr. Patrick McKenry of The Ohio State University explored intimate violence among gay men and lesbian couples. Their findings indicate that violence was more often predicted by a partner’s psychological or individual factors than by social, familial or community causes.

“The predictors generally were more descriptive of gay male than lesbian violence,” says Dr. Serovich.

They also found that alcohol and stress were particularly salient variables in predicting lesbian partner violence. The theoretical model for the study—disempowerment—was supported by both the qualitative and quantitative data.

The first set of analyses of the study has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Family Violence*. A second manuscript titled “Perpetration of gay and lesbian partner violence: a disempowerment perspective,” is in preparation.

In 2003, Dr. McKenry and Dr. Serovich wrote an R01 proposal to the National Institute of Mental Health, asking for a \$1.9 million grant to expand this line of research. Unfortunately, while the grant reviews were quite encouraging, due to Dr. McKenry’s failing health, a resubmission of this proposal was not possible. Dr. McKenry died in October, 2004.

2002

## DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANSGENDER PEOPLE



Dr. Currah

**D**r. Paisley A. Currah, executive director of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, is examining prejudice and discrimination against transgender people in the courts.

Dr. Currah has collected briefs filed in more than 100 cases involving transgender litigants, including cases on marriage and custody rights and discrimination in employment and public accommodations. He is now categorizing and recording the demographic, legal, and thematic variables of the briefs to determine, among other things, which narrations of transgender identity and practices work, which don't, and how these decisions have changed over time.

"Analyzing the effectiveness of particular kinds of explanations of transgender people helps transgender-rights advocates frame their arguments in the most effective way," explains Dr. Currah.

Although his research is not yet complete, initial results indicate that, in some cases, narratives of gender that rely on the DSM-IV category of Gender Identity Disorder to describe people whose gender identity is not traditionally associated with their birth gender are more likely to be more compelling to judges than narratives of gender that do not rely on such "expert" discourses.

The bulk of the research will be presented in a forthcoming book titled *Not the United States of Gender: Identity in the Civil Rights Claims of Sexual Minorities*. In addition, Dr. Currah co-edited, with Richard Juang and Shannon Minter, *Transgender Rights: History, Politics, and Law*, also forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press.

DR. LEWIS



2002

## HOMOSEXUALITY AND STRESS

DR. DERLEGA



**D**r. **Robin J. Lewis** and **Dr. Valerian J. Derlega**, both of Old Dominion University, were awarded a Small Placek Grant in 1999 that led to a Large Grant in 2002. The 1999 study examined the stress that lesbians and gay men feel as related to their sexual orientation. They found that gay men and lesbians who reported more severe life stress and more severe gay-related stress also reported more depressive symptoms.

This work laid the groundwork for the team's Large Placek Award, which examined an expressive writing intervention for lesbians. Drs. Lewis and Derlega found that writing about traumatic events related to their sexual orientation reduced self-reported confusion and perceived stress over a two-month period among lesbians who were less open about their sexual orientation.

"This approach also offers a promising, cost-effective method to assist closeted lesbians in coping with stressors related to their sexual orientation," says Dr. Lewis.

Another aspect of the study gleaned an additional insight: Lesbians who strongly felt social constraints—difficulty talking with others about their sexual orientation and who had an expectation of prejudice and discrimination—experienced the most intrusive thoughts, internalized homophobia, and physical symptoms.

Publications that have emanated from the work include a report in the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* and an article under review at the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.

2003

## ADOLESCENTS' ATTITUDES

**D**r. **Stacy S. Horn** and her co-investigator **Dr. Larry Nucci** are in the data collection and analysis portion of their project, which is aimed at understanding adolescents' beliefs and attitudes about same-sex sexuality and adolescents' impressions of how gay, lesbian, and gender non-conforming students are treated in school. Horn is an assistant professor and Nucci is professor of educational psychology at the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

To date, they have collected data from 1,000 urban and suburban high school students. Preliminary findings suggest that "students' understanding of the fair and just treatment of persons is different than and separate from their beliefs about the 'wrongness' of homosexuality," says Horn. As a result, schools can focus on promoting fair and just treatment of all people without "impinging on an individual's or family's rights to particular religious or cultural beliefs," she says.

Their findings have been used by trainers who conduct staff development work to reduce antigay harassment in schools. In addition, Illinois policy-makers and the office of U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-Illinois) have requested information from the study to inform their work around these issues. Horn and Nucci hope that once their papers are published, the effort will expand to a national audience.

An extensive pilot study conducted as a precursor to the Placek-funded project has resulted in several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.



Dr. Horn



Dr. Nucci



DR. MORADI

2003

## STIGMA AND MENTAL HEALTH

**D**r. **Bonnie Moradi** is conducting longitudinal research to examine how the mental health of lesbian and gay persons is affected by such stressors as experiences of prejudice, expectation of stigmatization, concealment of sexual orientation, and internalized homophobia.

Her goal is to increase the understanding of the link between lesbian and gay persons' experiences of prejudice and mental health.

"The study's findings have clear implications for institutional and individual level interventions and policies," says Dr. Moradi, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Florida.

For example, she notes, by examining the potential mental health costs of prejudice and stigmatization, the study's findings can shape and support policies, laws, and public education programs that reduce prejudice and discrimination. Similarly, by examining the link between internalized homophobia and mental health, her findings could serve as the basis for working to reduce internalized homophobia in therapy and psychoeducational programs with lesbian and gay persons.

She says she hopes her continued work in the area will help "direct limited resources toward the most fruitful points for education, prevention, and intervention programs that serve the needs of lesbian and gay persons."

2004



Dr. ROISMAN

## ROMANTIC PARTNERSHIPS

**D**r. **Glenn I. Roisman** is just beginning to collect data from gay and lesbian couples on their romantic partnerships for his Placek-supported research, which focuses on the legacy of childhood experiences as reflected in adolescent and adult relationships.

Dr. Roisman, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, is interviewing couples in four-hour laboratory sessions and asking them to complete questionnaires about themselves, their partners, and their relationships. He's inquiring about their early experiences with caregivers and with coming out to loved ones and peers. In addition, he is observing and physiologically monitoring couples while they talk about areas of agreement and disagreement in their relationships.

Through this work, Dr. Roisman hopes to "more fully characterize individual and dyadic differences in gay and lesbian relationships that may emerge from adults' representations of their childhood experiences with primary caregivers," he says.

He will also examine the role that coming-out and other unique experiences that lesbians and gay men face may affect the course of their adult relationships. He hopes the research will more adequately characterize the differences and similarities in the ways heterosexual and same-sex partners draw on childhood experiences to build successful adult relationships.



2004

## SAME SEX MARRIAGE

**D**r. **Joe Rollins** is using his Placek Grant to study one of the year’s most controversial topics—same-sex marriage in the United States.

Dr. Rollins, an associate professor of political science at Queens College at The City University of New York (CUNY), is tracking and examining legislative and judicial texts, and will develop statistical models using political, geographic, and social context variables to predict which arguments concerning same-sex marriage succeed.

Though his work is still in its early stages, he has already seen a theme emerge: In an attempt to guard against same-sex marriages, courts are instead limiting the definition of marriage. “In many cases, the law is sabotaging what it’s trying to keep whole by saying that the state encourages marriage because heterosexuals reproduce inadvertently,” he notes. “Gay and lesbian couples are then denied marriage rights because when we reproduce, we do it intentionally and thus need no state support.”

Dr. Rollins, who also serves as a board member of CUNY’s Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, says he hopes his research will enable him to “unpack” what American society thinks marriage is. “I want to explore the relationship between the legal substance of marriage and its symbolism,” he explains.

His first publication on the topic will appear as a review essay in the June 2005 issue of *Law & Society Review*.

1999

## CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM

**Dr. Kelly Hazel** explored people's activism for lesbian and gay civil rights. She found that activism was significantly correlated, in a positive direction, with four variables: awareness of lesbian and gay issues, a sense of community in a lesbian or gay supportive organization, disclosure regarding lesbian or gay relationships, and social support. Dr. Hazel is an associate professor of psychology at Metropolitan State University.



Dr. HAZEL

1999

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION AT WORK

**Dr. Michele Hebl** investigated coming out at work and found that self-disclosures from gay and lesbian employees are related to more favorable job attitudes, but that these are mediated by favorable co-worker reactions. In 2004, she received an Investigator Development Award to study assessing and enhancing diversity training with regard to sexual orientation. Dr. Hebl is a professor of psychology and management at Rice University.



Dr. HEBL

1999

## MAJOR MENTAL ILLNESS

**Dr. Ronald E. Hellman** and **Dr. Lori K. Sudderth** of the South Beach Psychiatric Center, in Brooklyn, N.Y., investigated the nature of major mental illness in a sample population of lesbian, gay men, bisexual and transgender participants. The award “enabled us to carry out research on a subgroup within the LGBT population for which there is virtually no previous data,” says Dr. Hellman. “This award provided invaluable support to a project that furthers our understanding of major mental illness in LGBT individuals.”



Dr. HELLMAN



Dr. SUDDERTH

DR. HUNT



1999

## LESBIANS WITH DISABILITIES

In a qualitative study, **Dr. Brandon Hunt** and **Dr. Connie Matthews** of Pennsylvania State University determined that lesbians with physical disabilities found ways to be resilient despite often feeling bias from lesbian *and* disability groups. “They are members of both communities, but they also felt like outsiders in both communities,” says Matthews, assistant professor of counselor education and women's studies. Hunt is an associate professor of counselor education, counseling psychology, and rehabilitation services.

DR. MATTHEWS



2000

## SEXUAL AROUSAL

**Dr. J. Michael Bailey**, a psychology professor at Northwestern University, studied gender difference in sexual arousal. He found that women had a very different bisexual pattern of arousal whether they were heterosexual or homosexual. The results suggest that arousal may not be as significant in the development of a woman's sexual orientation as it is for a man's. His research was published last year in *Psychological Science*.

DR. BAILEY



2000

## YOUTH FEARS

**Dr. Lisa M. Diamond**, assistant professor of psychology and gender studies at the University of Utah, conducted a study of heterosexual and sexual-minority youth in Salt Lake City. She found that sexual-minority youth had significantly greater worries and fears about their romantic relationships and friendships than did heterosexual youth—and that these fears mediated mental health differences.

DR. DIAMOND



2000

## EXERCISE AND SPORT

**Dr. Diane L. Gill** and **Dr. Ronald G. Morrow** collected and analyzed data on the attitudes and perceived climate for lesbian, gay men, bisexual and transgender and other minorities in exercise and sport settings. Morrow is executive director of the North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; Gill is professor of exercise and sport at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



Dr. Gill



Dr. Morrow

2000

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

**Dr. William P. Norris** is professor and former chair of the sociology department at Oberlin College. He served in the Peace Corps and conducted research on the politics and organization of urban squatter settlements in Brazil for his Harvard Ph.D. With his Placek grant, Norris studied negotiating collective action among lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people in three cities.



Dr. Norris

2001

## GAY REPUBLICAN IDENTITY

**Dr. Stephen C. Wright**, a professor of psychology at Simon Fraser University, found that participants perceive a very high degree of variability among members of the Republican Party regarding such attributes as sexual prejudice and religiousness. However, they see very little group variability on attributes unrelated to their gay identity, such as patriotism and fiscal conservatism.



Dr. Wright

DR. FLOYD



2001

## FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIPS

**Dr. Kory Floyd** studied the communication of affection between fathers and adult sons as a function of the sons' sexual orientation. His results indicated that fathers exhibit the most affectionate behavior toward heterosexual sons, the least toward homosexual or bisexual sons, and a moderate amount toward sons about whom they were unsure of their sexual identity. Dr. Floyd is associate professor of human communication at Arizona State University.

DR. KOLODZIEJ



2001

## ALCOHOL AND RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT

**Dr. Monika E. Kolodziej** and **Dr. Roger D. Weiss** collaborated with colleagues at McLean Hospital and Fenway Community Health in Boston to investigate how lesbian couples with current or past alcohol problems resolve relationship conflicts. Their preliminary results based on quantitative data show that couples who have at least one partner with a history of alcohol abuse engage in a variety of adaptive conflict resolution tactics, such as negotiation. These results also suggest that couples are willing to report socially undesirable tactics such as psychological aggression and physical abuse.

DR. CARPENTER



2002

## MULTIGENERATIONAL BONDS

**Dr. Brian D. Carpenter** is conducting a multigenerational study of the relationships adult gay men and lesbians have with their families and in-laws. Although sexual orientation remains a charged issue, "emotional bonds between parents and children were similar regardless of sexual orientation," finds Dr. Carpenter, assistant professor of psychology at Washington University in St. Louis.

2002

## KOREAN-AMERICAN LESBIANS

In a study of family relationships among 25 Korean-American lesbians, **Dr. Ramona Faith Oswald** uncovered three distinct patterns of how lesbians relate to their parents. “These patterns extend our knowledge beyond generalizations about ethnic-minority queer people and towards a more specific understanding of how varied conditions produce different relational outcomes,” says Dr. Oswald, an associate professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Dr. Oswald

2002

## CIVIL RIGHTS

**Dr. Nella Van Dyke**, assistant professor in the sociology department at Washington State University, began a long-term project examining the impact that the gay and lesbian rights movement has had on the media’s representations of gays and lesbians. Her preliminary findings will be presented this year.



Dr. Van Dyke

2003

## SOCIAL CONTEXT AND LESBIAN IDENTITY

With funding from both APF and the National Institute on Mental Health, **Dr. Ed de St. Aubin** explored how social context has shaped the identities of lesbians of seven different age cohorts. The study has generated a wealth of insights, including that lesbians’ family members become more accepting of their sexual orientation over time.

“Although that may not be surprising, it’s very important empirical evidence to share with women who are just coming out,” says Dr. de St. Aubin, a professor of psychology at Marquette University.



Dr. de St. Aubin

DR. FIELDS



2004

## SEX EDUCATION

**Dr. Jessica Fields** is exploring how sexuality education may help young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people achieve and maintain healthy sexual lives. Fields is an assistant professor in sociology and human sexuality studies at San Francisco State University and a research associate at the university's Center for Research on Gender and Sexuality.

DR. LAMPINEN



2004

## PHYSICAL ASSAULT

At the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, **Dr. Thomas M. Lampinen** completed the first study of the incidence and risk factors of physical assault of gay men. He found a strikingly increased risk among those men who were younger when they came out and younger at study entry. Dr. Lampinen is clinical assistant professor at the University of British Columbia and the BC Centre.

2004

## AGING BLACK GAY MEN

**Dr. Leo Wilton** is conducting a qualitative and quantitative study on aging and socio-cultural factors among black gay men and lesbians age 50 and older. "It's an area that few people have researched," notes Dr. Wilton, assistant professor of human development and Africana studies at the State University of New York-Binghamton. He expects to present his results at APA's 2005 Annual Convention.

2004

## LEGALIZED UNIONS

**Dr. Esther D. Rothblum**, a psychology professor at the University of Vermont, received a 2004 grant to conduct a three-year follow-up of civil unions. Working with **Dr. Sondra Solomon**, also of the University of Vermont, she is investigating three types of couples: same-sex couples who had civil unions in Vermont during the first year of the legislation that permitted unions, their same-sex coupled friends not in civil unions, and their heterosexual married siblings and spouses. “This will be the first study to examine the effects of being in a legalized relationship,” says Dr. Rothblum.



Dr. Rothblum



Dr. Solomon

## OTHER WINNERS

The following Placek awardees were unavailable for interviews at press time:

- Dr. Curtis D. Hardin, who studied social relationships and the maintenance of a positive gay identity.
- Dr. Jeffrey Lynn Woodyard, who conducted the study “Let us go into the house of the Lord:” Participation in African American churches among young African American men who have sex with men.

## PLACEK SCIENTIFIC REVIEW COMMITTEE

All Placek proposals are reviewed by an interdisciplinary Scientific Review Committee. The Review Committee established the criteria and the process for these awards and reviews the proposals on an annual basis. In addition to reviews from all members of the core Committee, each proposal is sent to at least one outside consultant with special expertise relevant to the proposal. Applicants are encouraged to nominate one or two potential consultant reviewers at the time they submit their proposal. The core Scientific Review Committee decides whether or not one of the consultant reviewers will be asked to review the proposal.

Each Placek proposal is evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Significance of the research question, importance of the project's objectives, originality, timeliness, focus, and relevance to the goals of the Wayne F. Placek Fund.
2. The applicant's knowledge of existing theory and previous research relevant to the research question.
3. Quality of the applicant's theoretical or conceptual framework and, if proposed, hypotheses.
4. The methodological quality of the proposed research study, including (where applicable) sampling strategies, measures, data analysis, and time frame.
5. Adequacy of the proposed sample for addressing the research question (this includes evaluation of the appropriateness of the proposed sample's gender and ethnic/racial composition).
6. Feasibility of the proposed study, given the proposed budget as well as the resources and time available to the applicant.
7. The applicant's qualifications, training, and experience relevant to completing the research successfully.
8. Adequacy of provisions for protecting the welfare of human participants, if applicable.

The Foundation would like to thank all the individuals who have served on the Scientific Review Committee over the past ten years:

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