

The 2006 Lorraine Wetherell SFS Alumni Society Distinguished Service Award Recipients

Christian D. Andresen, '89 B.S.

The following is an excerpt from a speech given at the 2006 SFSAS Annual Dinner:



“Thank you very much to the School of Family Studies, the Alumni Society, and to Professor Marysol Ascencio for nominating me for this recognition. I have always been proud to be a graduate of the SFS and the things I learned there gave me a solid foundation to build a rewarding career in public health. Since I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with my life when I entered UConn, my initial major was Business. When I had to choose elective courses, I usually chose SFS courses because they seemed the most interesting to me. As my studies progressed, I realized that my passion lay in issues related to SFS rather than the Business School, and I decided to transfer. I wasn’t sure exactly what I wanted to do with a degree from the SFS, but I knew that it would be something good.

I have never regretted the decision to transfer to the School of Family Studies and throughout my career have recognized the unique perspective that the School gave me. I began working at the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) approximately one year after graduation. My initial work was with individuals with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as people at risk for these diseases. Many of the issues related to HIV/AIDS such as relationships, culture, developmental stages, decision-making, family issues, psychosocial issues, etc were topics studied in SFS classes. My studies at SFS gave me a theoretical framework to deal with real life issues.

As my career at DPH progressed into chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, the things I learned at the SFS were just as important. Many of the modifiable risk factors for chronic disease are closely connected to human development and family relations. Eating patterns, health behaviors, physical activity levels, smoking, medical seeking behaviors are highly impacted by the environments we are raised in. Attention to family dynamics and culture as they relate to reducing or eliminating risk factors for chronic diseases must be considered as we explore interventions to improve health. The SFS provides a practical framework to look at the development of health behaviors and how they effect us individually and as a community over time. As my work becomes more closely involved with the medical field, I am glad that I am able to bring an SFS perspective to the table.”

Student Presentations continued from page 33.

PETROVIC

K. Petrovic, & Blank, T. O. (2005). *Influence of chronic health conditions on grandparents' experiences*. Poster presented at the 58th Annual Scientific Meeting of The Gerontological Society of America, Orlando, FL.

RUAN

Ruan, C.-C., & Anderson, S. (2005). *The Marital Therapy Evaluation Questionnaire (MTEQ) Project*. Paper presented at the 2005 Annual Family Therapy Student Research Conference, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS.

Ruan, C.-C., & Rohner, R. P. (2006). *Intimate Partner Acceptance, Parental Acceptance in Childhood, and Psychological Adjustment Among Asian Immigrants to the U.S.A.* Poster presented at the First International Congress on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection, Istanbul, Turkey.

SPEIRS

Speirs, K., & Luck, R. (2005). *Infant Arousal and Stimulation: A comparison of the Netherlands and the United States*. Poster presentation at the Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology Conference, Amsterdam, Holland.

TODARO

Todaro, J., & Anderson, S.A. (2005). *The Self of the Therapist Questionnaire: A Pilot Study*. Poster presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Annual Conference, Kansas City, MO.

VESELY

Ros., R., Vesely, C., Blom, M., Russell, B., Harkness, S., Super, C., & Moscardino, U. (2005). *Biological markers of stress and mothers' subjective experiences of mood in the postpartum period*. Paper presented in symposium on “Stimulation, Stress, and Culture.” 25th Conference of the Society of Reproductive and Infant Psychology, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Stephanie Wargo, '74 B.S.



Stephanie obtained a “Special Distinction” in Apparel Design from the School and continued her studies at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, RI. While there, she was the first to concentrate course selection on one specific discipline - Fashion Illustration and also took additional courses in Textile Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. She has been a contributing editor to various home sewing industry trade publications and editorial consultant to Hearst Publications, Book Division.

Stephanie is the author of “Soft Crafts” (Dorison House Publishing, Boston), and has been Line Producer of 30 fashion-related shows for Hearst/ABC “Daytime” cable network. Additionally, she has been the Manager of Product Development at Simplicity Pattern Company; Promotion Manager for Vogue and Butterick Patterns in New York City; Corporate Director of Marketing and Advertising for Brooks Fashion Stores in NYC; Director of Men’s Fashion Merchandising and Product Development for J. W. Robinson’s in Los Angeles; Vice President for The Broadway Department Stores, Los Angeles; and worked with Jantzen, Promostyl, USA, Frederick Atkins, and Phillips Van Heusen. Stephanie currently manages her own Custom Stationery Business.

William Lewis Cook, '79 B.A., '82 M.A., '87 Ph.D.

The following is an excerpt from a speech given at the 2006 SFSAS Annual Dinner:



“One of my first jobs was a live-in residential counselor in a treatment center for disturbed adolescents in Mississippi. After a year I moved to Alaska and started a runaway youth service in Anchorage and it was still operating 20 years later.

In 1974, *Family Connection* provided respite foster care to runaway youths, and counseling for the whole family. We had no credentials, but this was Alaska, where the crush of migration to jobs on the Alaska Pipeline had overwhelmed the social service system, and anyone who wanted to help was welcome to pitch-in. I received first rate training in family therapy from Leon Webber, a first-generation family therapist, who was the Director of the Family Institute of Alaska. During my time at *Family Connection*, I networked and trained with such pioneers and innovators as John Weakland, Duke Stanton, Fred and Bunny Duhl, Ross and Joan Speck, Robert MacGregor and Alberto Serrano.

Through this training, I became impassioned by the ideas of family systems theory. I earned a B.A. from the University of Alaska, Anchorage and realized that I would soon need more credentials if I wanted to continue working as a therapist! In my search for graduate schools, I didn’t find a single psychology program that had a focus on systems theory and/or family therapy. I applied to five schools that taught Human Development and Family Studies, including writing to Dr. Larry Lang at UConn’s CDFR program. Larry advocated for my acceptance into UConn and I received a letter that began, “Welcome to the community of scholars” and there has never been a more proud moment in my life.

The best period of my life began when I studied in CDFR. I met my lovely and talented wife Lori there, and we had two wonderful (twin) girls together. Dr. Albert Dreyer supervised my Master’s Thesis project and under his direction my confidence grew, and I started taking courses in the Psychology Department. I was particularly interested in the work of David Kenny, and in 1984, Abbie and I published the first paper that applied Dave’s Social Relations Model to family data.

After receiving my Ph.D. in 1987, I spent two years as a postdoctoral fellow in Clinical Psychology in Mike Goldstein’s UCLA Family Clinic. Goldstein had shown that negativity in family relationships predicted the onset of schizophrenia spectrum disorders. By this time, the stress-diathesis model of schizophrenia had taken hold, and no one believed any longer that family relationships caused schizophrenia. It was important to show that, while not a cause, family dynamics could be precipitant to the onset of severe psychological disturbance in vulnerable individuals.

Today I am the Associate Director of the Center for Psychiatric Research at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine. I was hired in 1995 by Dr. William McFarlane, who at the time was Chief of Psychiatry. Dr. McFarlane and I are now working on a very exciting project supported by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Robert Wood Johnson, in which we are implementing his model of therapy before the first episode of psychosis in young people at ultra-high risk of psychosis. Concurrent to this study, I have been collaborating with Dave Kenny and Debbie Kashy on a comprehensive book on the statistical analysis of interpersonal relationships (*Dyadic Data Analysis*) which will be soon be published by Guilford Press.

As I said, the best of my life began with admittance to UConn’s School of Family Studies. I am indebted to this School for the wonderful opportunities and friendships that have developed out of the experience and training I received. I am very grateful to the SFSAS for honoring my work, and, from a systems perspective, for honoring the work of the people who trained me. I feel honored, indeed.”