



Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Science of Trauma Psychology

This award recognizes distinguished contributions to scientific research. It may be given in recognition of a particular discovery or for a sustained body of research and scholarship.

The 2014 Award goes to Dr. Fran Norris.

After spending many years as a Professor of Psychology at Georgia State University, Dr. Norris completed her career as a Research Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School where she was affiliated with the Executive Division of the National Center for PTSD. Having recently retired, she and her husband of 38 years will soon be moving back to her hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

The science of trauma psychology has been greatly enriched by her innovative and scholarly approach to the complex challenges of the epidemiology of post-traumatic stress when applied to disasters, cross-cultural studies, and the systemic issues in providing disaster mental health services.

She has published over 150 articles and chapters and has been the recipient of numerous NIMH grants.

Fran Norris tends to be involved in the critical studies of some of the most important traumatic events in the United States. She was lead investigator, for example, on lessons learned from mental health systems' responses to the Oklahoma City bombing and 9-11 attacks on New York, and later, in collaboration with administrators at SAMHSA, she designed and implemented a cross-site evaluation of 17 federally funded state-level mental health programs after Hurricane Katrina. Her beat is exclusively trauma, stress, disaster, and uncertainty. Yet, she goes about her work with a calm sense of confidence. She sorts through the horror, sadness, and distress to find the active ingredients in human survival and thriving. In doing so she has raised the bar for all of us, methodologically and philosophically.

Over the last many years, Fran Norris has served as a research methodology pioneer. She has contributed to the science of trauma psychology through the power of her data. She has also shaped the field's philosophy about what needs attention and how best to go about it. In so doing she has influence our national attention toward trauma, mitigation, and the human factors that enable us all to feel safe.

Roxanne Silver has noted in her nomination letter:

The field of trauma psychology is fortunate and privileged that Dr. Norris has dedicated the past 30 years to our field – indeed, long before the formation of our division. Many researchers – both young and older -- have come to rely on Dr. Norris for continuous scholarly advice, experience, and wisdom. Dr. Norris's scholarship will undoubtedly continue to influence and define our field for many years to come.

The Committee could not agree more. Congratulations Dr. Norris.

Charles R. Figley, PhD, Chair, 2014 Division 56 Awards Committee

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