

# American Academy of Health Behavior 2007 Research Laureate, Bruce Simons-Morton

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**This presentation was the introduction of Bruce Simons-Morton the 2007 American Academy of Health Behavior Research Laureate**

**ate presented in Savannah, GA, March 25-28, 2007 by Herbert H. Severson.**

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It has become a tradition for the winner of this award from the previous year to have the honor of introducing the new recipient of the award, and in that role it is my pleasure today to introduce Bruce Simons-Morton as the 2007 recipient of the Research Laureate Award from the American Academy of Health Behavior. Bruce Simons-Morton has a long history of significant contributions to the science of health behavior, and today we will hear from him as he recites some of the significant milestones in his illustrious career.

Bruce was born in Colorado, one of 3 boys in his family. He lived in the small farm town of Windsor until age 10 when his family moved to Los Angeles. As a young man he was an outstanding athlete in high school who starred in both basketball and baseball and gained honors for his performance.

During his time in Los Angeles he was a batboy for the Los Angeles Dodgers from 1961 to 1964, and a picture of him in this role appeared in *Sports Illustrated*. He attended the University of California at Santa Barbara for his undergraduate degree in political science. He was president of his fraternity while at Santa Barbara, so his social life was very active at this time.

In 1968, after graduating from college, he joined the Navy and graduated from Aviation Officer Training School with distinction. He was stationed at the Naval Air Station on North Island, which is Coronado Island in San Diego, Calif. He went to graduate school in San Diego and earned an MA in health science and safety from San Diego State University in 1973.

Bruce then moved to Greeley, Colo, where he enrolled at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) for his doctorate in health education, which he received in 1976. I might add on a personal note that I was a professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Northern Colorado at the same time that Bruce was at UNC, but our paths did not cross.

He became an assistant professor in health education at Temple University in 1975 and remained there until 1980. He then started his Masters of Public Health program at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and graduated with an MPH in 1981. He was also able to complete a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins in 1983. During this time he met and married Denise, who is with us today. They have collaborated on several projects over the years, and she is a branch chief at the National Institute of Heart, Lung and Blood.

In 1983 Bruce moved to Texas to take a position as an associate professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Tex.

In 1989 he became an associate professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Texas in Houston. It was

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during this time in Texas that their 2 children, Lauren and Don, were born. In 1992 Bruce took a position with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in the Division of Epidemiology, Statistics and Prevention in 1991. He became the chief of the Prevention Branch of NICHD in 1998 and has maintained this esteemed position since that time.

I might add that while at NICHD he has also been an associate faculty member at both the George Washington University since 1994 and the University of Maryland since 1996.

Bruce has an impressive record of achievement in health education and health promotion. He has been an investigator on 38 funded grants and has published more than 100 scientific articles, 3 books, and 20 book chapters. He has been a national leader in studies of teen driving risks and intervention studies to reduce the risk of motor vehicle accidents by novice drivers. Bruce is currently conducting innovative studies of teen drivers which include installing electronic instruments in the cars of novice teen drivers to monitor driving performance. I am sure many parents here would like to have access to this monitor-

ing to check on their young drivers in their family.

In addition to overseeing programmatic research and administrative responsibilities at NICHD, he has been an active leader in professional organizations. Bruce is a fellow of the AAHB and the current president of the American Academy of Health Behavior, and he formerly served as the chair of the Public Health Division of the American Public Health Association and vice president of the Society for Public Health Education.

In addition to all of his accomplishments in his profession, Bruce has the time and skill to be a nationally ranked squash player in his age-group and is the president of the National Capital Squash Rackets Association.

Today Bruce will review with you some of his research and the development of his programmatic research agenda. I know you will be as impressed as I am with his body of work. We are thankful that in addition to his many other responsibilities he has been a leader of our organization. It is with joy and respect that I introduce to you today, Dr Bruce Simons-Morton as the 2007 recipient of the Research Laureate Award from the American Academy of Health Behavior.