

**Introduction of Jean J. Schensul, Ph.D.
Bronislaw Malinowski Award Recipient
Society for Applied Anthropology Meetings, March 26, 2010**

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I have the honor of introducing to you this year's recipient of the Bronislaw Malinowski Award of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Dr. Jean J. Schensul.

This award calls for an outstanding social scientist who "understands and serves the needs of the world's societies and who has actively pursued the goal of solving human problems using the concepts and tools of social science." Jay Schensul exemplifies these characteristics to their fullest.

Jay was born and grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada, got her undergraduate degree in anthropology from the University of Manitoba, then came to the U.S. and received her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Minnesota in 1974. She began her career in applied anthropological research by addressing issues of inner city public schools in Chicago as a part of the Institute for Juvenile Research and the Center for New Schools. In 1978, Jay moved to Hartford, Connecticut where she began her long career applying the principles of social science for social justice by contributing to the creation of two successful unique and cutting edge community-based research organizations. From her base in Hartford, Jay has charted a path that was on the leading edge of the development, promotion, and implementation of community-based, collaborative, action research.

As co-founder and Associate Director for Research of the Hispanic Health Council, a grassroots community research and advocacy organization, Jay worked for 10 years from 1978-1987 building community collaborative social science projects, which contributed to the health and developmental needs of the Puerto Rican community in Hartford. During her tenure with the Council, she was awarded 12 research grants in eight years for a total of more than \$3 million in the areas of Puerto Rican mental health, education, crisis intervention, otitis media, infant feeding, pediatric impairments, maternal and child health, child abuse, and smoking behavior. These studies provided vital data for a city and state that were slow to recognize the special needs of the Puerto Rican and Hispanic communities that were rapidly growing throughout the State of Connecticut.

Then in 1987, she left the Council to found The Institute for Community Research (or ICR), an independent non-profit whose mission is to use research in collaboration with community partners to understand issues and promote justice and equity in a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural world. ICR is founded on the cornerstone principals of collaboration and partnership, action research, the value of culture, and health promotion and prevention intervention. Jay directed ICR for the Institute's first 17 years, and remains an active, full-time Senior Scientist and Founding Director. During her 23 years at ICR, she has generated more than 47 research and training grants totaling over \$20 million and counting, primarily from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), but also from numerous other federal, state, and private foundation funders. Her efforts have been systematically shaped by her vision and commitment to advancing a research agenda based on principles of community partnership to address health and educational disparities, to increase cultural representation and expression of under-represented voices, to advance community development and well being, and to build a program of research for social justice at the local, state, national and international levels. Her own portfolio of research, training and programming has included such diverse topics as:

- 1) substance abuse among youth and young adults;
- 2) health and mental health of seniors in senior housing;
- 3) HIV/AIDS risk and prevention in youth and adults;
- 4) health of young children, including audiology, asthma, activity levels and obesity;
- 5) sexual risk and HIV prevention intervention for high-risk women and men in India and Sri Lanka;
- 6) training of community residents to conduct Participatory Action Research (PAR), with programs for urban women, youth, and neighborhood residents;
- 7) as well as arts development programs to increase cultural and artistic expression and representation, and develop unique and innovative approaches to the integration of research and art.

This reflects her interests in tackling issues of individual, group, and community health and well-being across the life span. Her work has taken her to Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Mauritius, China, Senegal and India, in addition to her long-standing dedication to addressing the concerns of her own and ICR's home community of Hartford and the state of Connecticut.

You might have seen the posters in the lobby before entering this meeting hall of the work of the Institute for Community Research. They reflect the collaborative efforts of many people at the Institute. But what you see in this history is predominantly the result of a visionary in the advancement of applying rigorous and cutting edge social science research, theory, and methodology, in partnership with and embedded within communities, to improve many aspects of the real lives and circumstances of people in those communities – the vision promoted and brought to fruition by Jay herself.

She not only had remarkable success seeking federal funding, she also worked tirelessly to shape the funding process itself on behalf of other social scientists. Through her extensive participation in the federal research peer review process, Jay has worked tirelessly to reshape that process to increase recognition of the value of social science – and particularly anthropological theories and methods – as well as the importance of community-based research models and approaches, in a system that is dominated by the medical model, psychological theory, and the so-called gold standard of the randomized controlled trial.

Jay has also been extremely active in her professional field. She was appointed or elected to several key professional boards and panels or leadership roles in the field of anthropology, including: (a) the ethics committee, Executive Board, and President of the Society for Applied Anthropology, (b) President of the Council on Anthropology and Education, (c) the AAA-SfAA Commission on Applied/Practicing Anthropology, and (d) the AAA Long Range Planning Committee.

She is the recipient of several awards for her tireless efforts and unique contributions to the advancement of community-based and action research. (a) In 1990 she was co-recipient with her husband, Stephen Schensul, of the Solon T. Kimball Award for Public and Applied Anthropology for her contribution to anthropology and policy in Hispanic communities. (b) Also, in 1996, on behalf of ICR, she received the Audrey Lorde Award for scholar/activism for the cutting edge Youth Action Research Program to train primarily urban minority youth to use the tools of social science, including qualitative and quantitative research methodology, that allowed them systematically to identify, understand, and take action to alleviate critical issues that directly impact their lives and to advocate for their own needs.

Jay has a remarkable publications record, including (a) scores of articles in peer-reviewed journals as lead author or co-author and editor or co-editor of 7 peer-reviewed journals' special issues, (b) lead author of 2 books, and (c) lead co-editor with Margaret LeCompte of the seven volume "Ethnographers' Toolkit," which has now become one of the leading texts in social science methodology both in anthropology and in other social science and public health disciplines.

Jay's tireless efforts in community action research and her dedicated passion have had a profound impact on students, mentees, collaborating partners, friends, colleagues, and the scientific community at large – and I count myself among them. Those who have passed through the doors of ICR – from community members who provide bridges between scientists and the research participants we seek to understand and serve, to trained researchers dedicated to applied and practicing careers in multiple professional disciplines, to students who seek experience in a community-based applied research setting – all are deeply affected and changed by the rich values of equity and social justice, fundamental cornerstone principles of community research for action, and commitment to honoring cultural diversity that Jay brought to shaping the research, programs, and organization of the Institute.

The tremendous breadth of Jay's interests and areas of expertise is a tribute to her dedication first, to using the tools of social science to respond to community concerns, second, to build community partnerships and community capacity to generate programs and actions they identify as important, third, to democratize science to break down barriers between and the worlds of scientific discovery, advocacy, service delivery, and other forms of practice, and fourth, to follow rigorous standards of research ethics and distributive justice in the implementation of social science in the community. To take on each one of these issues requires deep passion to build the foundation, know the literature, generate and sustain the community partnerships, and carry out a rigorous plan of research and action. In each and every one of her scores of efforts over the past 35 years, Jay has given this same level of passion. This is the hallmark of true commitment to the principles honored by the Bronislaw Malinowski Award.

I am now very pleased to present to you, Dr. Jean J. Schensul.