Gratitude, Reflection at the 2023 APS Awards Ceremony

July 06, 2023

Photo above: “You don’t get to this stage without a lot of people,” said Eduardo Salas (Rice University) on receiving the APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award.

In a room packed with their students, family members, and colleagues, some of the most accomplished and most promising psychological scientists in the world briefly paused during the 2023 APS Annual Convention to reflect and—enjoying a rare slice of limelight—to celebrate their important contributions to the field. The 2023 APS Awards Ceremony, held May 27 in Washington, D.C., honored the newest recipients of the APS Lifetime Achievement Awards (APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award, APS William James Fellow Award, and APS Mentor Award) as well as recipients of the APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Early Career Contributions.

The 2023 APS Awards Program recognized 19 individuals in all. Fifteen were present at the May 27 event, including the 10 Lifetime Achievement Awardees whose remarks are excerpted below.

Watch the full video of the 2023 APS Awards Ceremony. Learn more about the APS Awards Program.
Gene Brody (APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award)

“We began our work in 1987, at that time when Black children and families in the rural Southeast were invisible in psychological, medical, and prevention sciences. We’re proud of our work. But a research project and a research program are not about one person. So today I’ve invited six professional staff from the Center of Family Research who made this award possible. They have recruited 5,000 children and families, developing trusting relationships with them. Many of these children and families are still part of our longitudinal research program 28 years later.”

Eduardo Salas (APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award)

“You don’t get to this stage without the help of a lot of people. I’d like to thank all my colleagues at Rice for their support: My former students, my current students, and colleagues along the 40 years that have been doing this kind of work. And finally I’d like to thank my wife of 44 years. I’ve been in the field 40 years, and we’ve been married 44. Do the math—she deserves this award as much as I do.”
Sandra Graham and Janet Helms received the APS James S. Jackson Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Sandra Graham** (APS James S. Jackson Lifetime Achievement Award for Transformative Scholarship)

“I want to take a moment to acknowledge all my wonderful students over the years, the past 10 years in particular, which have been devoted to our research on the psychosocial benefits and challenges of school racial ethnic diversity. My current and former students have been with me every step of the way in the shared experience of doing diversity research in schools. And we want to make the argument that attending diverse schools benefits all children in this world we live in, where kids must learn to accept and embrace their peers who are different from them. What other problem is more salient in the world today?”

**Janet Helms** (APS James S. Jackson Lifetime Achievement Award for Transformative Scholarship)

“In some religions, there is a belief that if you say a person’s name, the person lives forever. Maybe it is also true that if you acknowledge a person’s good deeds, they too live forever. By honoring me and hopefully future psychologists, Dr. Jackson’s life enrolled as a transformative research mentor will live forever through the APS James S. Jackson Lifetime Achievement Award for Transformative Scholarship. Thank you, APS, for allowing me to call out his name and for honoring me in this way.”
Kent Berridge (APS William James Fellow Award)

“I want to thank my fantastic colleagues and students who over the years have contributed to our work. That led to the conclusion that systems of liking and wanting are separate in the brain, and that even when you like and want that same thing, there’s two things going on. It led to a kind of understanding of why an addicted individual could come to intensely want to take a drug, even if they no longer need it and are not in withdrawal or distress, and even if they don’t particularly like the drug anymore.”

Angelica Friederici (APS William James Fellow Award)

“I’ve always asked myself, ‘How is language processed in the brain, and how is it acquired?’ I started my journey very early at MIT, and there I met Merrill Garrett and Noam Chomsky, and I learned how to turn theoretical concepts into experimental paradigms. Coming back to Europe, I’m most thankful to the Max Planck Society, which supported me through my career and gave me the amazing opportunity to build up an entirely new Max Planck Institute in the former East Germany after the wall broke down. This truly was a collaborative enterprise together with a lot of other people. Without their enthusiasm and their engagement for science, probably I wouldn’t be standing here.”

Mahzarin Banaji (APS Mentor Award)

“There are mentors in all corners of every workplace. But we know that the mentoring relationship that exists in the PhD program is, in fact, sui generis. It is the quintessential mentoring model, one that all others are derived from. We, student and teacher, are drawn together because we have committed ourselves to a life of the mind. To my students who are present and not present: I want to say I have lived for those moments when our eyes catch in each other’s that glimpse of recognition of what we have come upon, when we jointly then turn to the data and then back to each other, thrilled that we are the first to have seen something original together.”

Stephen Hinshaw (APS Mentor Award)

“Mentoring is more than finding who’s on your doctoral dissertation committee or advice about growth mixture modeling. It’s the forming of a relationship. It’s the forming of a collaboration between a more experienced and a less experienced person. But the communication and the knowledge circulate both ways. Why does mentoring matter? Because all of us are on a series of journeys—and without the playbooks, manuals, or self-help guides that Amazon touts as valid. For me, mentoring has been essential.”
Nora Newcomb (APS Mentor Award)

“Mentoring is sort of like a business, but it’s not a business. It’s sort of like family, but it’s not a family. It’s really about living together, the life of the mind. It’s about sharing inner thoughts, pushing the frontiers of science. That’s really, really hard, and sharing that passion is incredibly precious. It doesn’t always happen. It can happen within your lab. It can happen with people you meet who aren’t in your lab. Janet’s comment about saying their name really touched me very deeply, too. I think it’s really important to recognize people who are gone from whom you have learned.”

Robert Sellers (APS Mentor Award)

“I have been blessed throughout my life to have had an unbelievable number of mentors, individuals who went out of their way to help me in some way to move forward with my journey. First and foremost were my parents. Even though they’re no longer with me, they’re always with me. My father, early on, whenever one of his kids would get an award or something, he would stand back and he’d say, yes, you come from good fertilizer. And that is true. And there are literally so many other folks, some of whom are in the room today.”

Watch the full video of the 2023 APS Awards Ceremony. Learn more about the APS Awards Program.