
Charles L. Brewer Award for Distinguished Teaching of Psychology

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) Charles L. Brewer Award for Distinguished Teaching of Psychology recognizes an outstanding career contribution to the teaching of psychology. The 2014 recipient of the Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award is Mary E. Kite.

Dorothy W. Cantor, president of the APF, will present the APF Charles L. Brewer Award for Distinguished Teaching of Psychology at the 122nd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association on August 8, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. Members of the 2014 APF Board of Trustees are Dorothy W. Cantor, president; Charles L. Brewer, vice president/secretary; Gerald Koocher, treasurer; Elisabeth R. Straus, executive vice president/executive director; Norman Anderson; David H. Barlow; Camilla Benbow; Connie Chan; Anthony Jackson; Terence Keane; Ronald F. Levant; Richard McCarty; Aurelio Pri- fitera; Sandra Shullman; Archie L. Turner; Melba J. T. Vasquez; and Louise Douce, APA Board of Directors liaison.

Mary E. Kite

Citation

“Mary Kite has provided an essential and persuasive vision for all teachers of psychology, and her collective contributions are among the most influential of a generation. Her commitment to teaching is reflected in her contributions to the science of psychology, excellence in teaching, and exemplary service to the discipline. As a scholar, Kite has conducted groundbreaking work in gender-associated stereotyping that is internationally recognized, and this work fuels her passion for teaching about social justice. Together with her students, she strives to inform public understanding of prejudice. Kite has viewed her leadership roles as opportunities to advocate for the many students and colleagues she has mentored throughout her career.”

Biography

Growing up in Clinton, Indiana, in the 1960s, Mary Kite never imagined she would become a college professor with a passion for the psychology of women, as things were very different for girls and women then. She did always want to be just like her mother. Doris Snowberry Kite was a homemaker and mother of eight; she was also smart as a whip, a community leader, a survivor of adversity, a storyteller, and a role model for her youngest child. Mary’s father, Conrad Kite, was a professional photographer who was

unabashedly proud of his family and who saw his role as patriarch and provider. His early death, closely preceded by the passing of both her grandmothers, forever changed the trajectory of Kite’s life. Her mother remarried, and the three children still at home moved with her to a farm in rural Vermillion County, Indiana. In 1975, Kite moved with her mother and stepfather to rural Parke County, Indiana, and in 1977, she graduated from Rockville High School.

Looking back, there were clear markers to predict Kite’s career path—for example, she loved reading. Family lore includes stories of Kite driving her grandmother to distraction with requests that she read to her. One of Kite’s earliest thrills was being able to cross the “busy street” alone to visit the local library, where she regularly carried home stacks of books. Her father took great pleasure in her puzzle-solving skills, and some of her fondest memories are of him buying her new jigsaw puzzles to solve. Her mother, a natural teacher, was also Kite’s 4-H leader, and the skills Kite gained from her 10-year membership in this organization became the basis for her academic career and future leadership roles.

Kite’s connection to 4-H led her to choose Purdue University, Indiana’s land grant college, for her undergraduate studies. She credits Eloise Warren for offering the encouragement and support she needed as a first-generation college student to navigate the unfamiliar territory of higher education. She reconsidered her plans to become a Spanish teacher after taking introductory psychology and, like many psychology majors at the time, she aspired to become a practitioner, just like the main character on *The Bob Newhart Show*. Two events changed her mind. One was a summer internship at Ramapo Anchorage Camp, where Kite learned that the reality of mental illness was quite different than she expected; the other was taking Saul Kassin’s class, where she fell in love with social psychology. Although psychology women faculty were relatively few at the time, Kite was fortunate to work in Elizabeth Capaldi’s rat lab and seriously considered pursuing a graduate degree in learning. She was equally drawn to social psychology, however, and her undergraduate research experiences with Kay Deaux and Richard Heslin tipped the balance to social psychology. After spending a year studying with Janet Spence at the University of Texas, Kite returned to Purdue to complete her master’s and doctoral degrees, working with Kay Deaux and Alice Eagly. She can scarcely believe how fortunate she was to study with these influential women, and she owes a great debt to them. As an undergraduate, she began her groundbreaking work on the then seldom-studied topic of anti-gay prejudice, and she has been amazed to see the social changes surrounding this topic since that time.



Mary E. Kite

In 1987, Kite moved two hours East to join the Psychological Science faculty at Ball State University, and that department has been her home ever since. The university's focus on the teacher-scholar model fit with her goals of achieving excellence in classroom teaching and scholarship. She was mentored by the only other female faculty member in her department, Deborah Balogh; together, they set a course to explore women's academic experience, and together they established the Task Force on the Status of Women in their academic college. Balogh's mentorship continued as Kite moved into administration, serving as associate dean and then acting dean of the Graduate School. Kite's interest in women in academia led to her service on APA's Task Force on the Status of Women, and she was the lead author on that group's 2001 report.

At Ball State, Kite began her successful collaboration with Bernard Whitley, resulting in their widely cited meta-analyses on sex differences in attitudes toward homosexuality and on attitudes toward older adults. They also have co-authored two textbooks, *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination* and *Principles of Research in Behavioral Science*. When Patricia Keith-Spiegel joined the faculty, Kite was introduced to the wonderful community of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP). Her first contribution was as chair of the Task Force on Multicultural Education; she later served as STP secretary, president, and council member, among other roles. While serving as STP's president, Kite chaired the APA Presidential Task Force on Diversity Education Resources. Her life has been enriched by the talented and dedicated group of scholars whose friendship and support have been an integral part of her career, including Charles Brewer, Bill Addison, Ruth

Ault, Barney Beins, Victor Benassi, Bill Buskist, Rita Curl-Langager, Dana Dunn, Regan Gurung, Diane Halpern, Jane Halonen, Bill Hill, Neil Lutsky, Ginny Mathie, Margaret Matlin, Chandra Mehrotha, Jeff Mio, Tom Pusateri, Randy Smith, Jeff Stowell, and Elizabeth Swenson. Of special note are Maureen McCarthy and Kristelle Miller, who believed Kite's work was deserving of this award and devoted considerable time and energy to her nomination. Also influential are Kite's Midwestern Psychological Association colleagues and friends, including Elaine Blakemore, Phil Finney, Steve Nida, Bernard Dugoni, and Bob Weis, and her many Ball State colleagues and friends, most notably Linh Littleford, Linda Martin, Rebecca Pierce, Kristin Ritchey, Stephanie Simon-Dack, and Juli Thorson.

Kite's life has been immeasurably enriched by her husband of 25 years, Sam Blanchard, and their son Nathaniel, a recent graduate of Hanover College and now a computer science doctoral student at Notre Dame. Sam's and Nathan's senses of humor and unique outlooks have provided balance and perspective to her life. She is grateful to have the love and support of her brothers John, Michael, Leonard, and Mark Kite.

Each semester, Kite reminds her students that we can never see the ripple effects of our words and actions, and she is certain that the many undergraduate and graduate students she has taught are unaware of their importance to her and her career. In those students, she sees how far we have come in advancing the rights of those from underrepresented groups, and teaching them is an honor and a privilege.

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