

Duane Alwin Receives 2012 Matilda White Riley Distinguished Scholar Award



"It is a wonderful honor to receive the MWR Award this year, both because it is bestowed by my SALC colleagues, and because of my deep appreciation of Matilda Riley and her influence on my work. Her contributions to the study of age stratification, as well as aging, inspire us all."

Duane Alwin
Penn State University

The Matilda White Riley Distinguished Scholar Award committee selected Duane Alwin as the 2012 recipient. This award recognizes a scholar in the field of aging and the life course who has shown "exceptional achievement in research, theory, policy analysis, or who has otherwise advanced knowledge of aging and the life course." As this year's recipient, he will present the MWR lecture at the 2013 annual ASA meetings in New York.

Duane has been working within the life course framework all of his professional career, from his early work on status attainment, and the influences of family origins on later life outcomes, to his present work on the antecedents and consequences of cognitive functioning in older age. All of his professional life, he has been motivated by C. Wright Mills' challenge to sociologists to pursue the "intersection of biography and history in social structure," a perspective (otherwise referred to as the *sociological imagination*) that was articulated in Matilda Riley's work as well.

He is perhaps best known for his work on the impacts of demographic and historical processes on individual cognitive, ideological and attitudinal development over the life span. One study, which he worked on with Ron Cohen and Theodore Newcomb (*Political Attitudes Over the Life-Span: The Bennington Women After Fifty Years*, Wisconsin Press, 1991), focused on the lifelong development of attitudes and political identities within the context of both social change and development of the life course.

Duane served as SALC chair in 2007-2008, the chair of the Section on Social Psychology of ASA in 1992-93, and has been the recipient of numerous research grants, awards and special honors. He is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and a member of the Population Association of America. For most of his career he held appointments in Sociology and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, where he is currently an Emeritus Professor. For the past 10 years he has been affiliated with Penn State University as the Tracy Winfree and Ted H. McCourtney Professor of Sociology and Demography, and Director of the Center for Life Course and Longitudinal Studies.