



March 24, 2021

Awards Committee
Gerontological Society of America

RE: Nomination of Professor Richard Schulz for the Distinguished Career Contribution to Gerontology Award of the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division of the Gerontological Society of America

Dear Members of the Awards Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to nominate Dr. Richard Schulz for the Distinguished Career Contribution to Gerontology Award of the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division of the Gerontological Society of America. Richard is currently Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry, Emeritus and Director Emeritus, University Center for Social and Urban Research at the University of Pittsburgh. His vitae is appended to this letter.

The breadth and depth of Richard's contributions to Gerontology are immense. He is arguably one of the most eminent scholars alive today to develop and apply social and behavioral theories and methods to issues of health and aging and family caregiving. His work has advanced theoretical gerontology and psychology, enhanced our understanding of life course development, advanced behavioral intervention research, and has improved the lives of older persons and their families by affecting changes in public policy. He also served as a role model to many others in the field for his intellectual contributions, scholarship and work ethic. Details regarding his contributions to the field of and impact on the field of Gerontology and his impact on the field enumerated below.

Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

Dr. Schulz's dissertation, "The Effects of Control and Predictability on the Institutionalized Aged", published in JPSP in 1976 is a landmark contribution, and is one of the most highly cited publications in gerontology and social psychology. It marks the beginning of his contributions to theoretical and applied work on control, which culminated in several major theoretical and empirical articles co-authored by him and his long-time collaborator, Jutta Heckhausen (e.g., "A life-course theory of control" in 1995 and "A motivational theory of lifespan development" in 2009, both published in *Psychological Review*,). The core theoretical idea of this work is that challenges individuals face as they develop from infants to adolescents, to adults, and into older adults are challenges of selecting, adapting, and pursuing developmental and personal goals that are consistent with changing life-course opportunities. Successful life course development requires a motivational self-regulatory system that can anticipate emergent opportunities for goal pursuit, activates behavioral and motivational strategies of goal engagement, and disengages from goals that have become futile and/or too costly, replacing them with more feasible and timely goals. He was one of the early pioneers to take social psychological theory and methods and apply them to aging. This work had a profound impact on the research community, stimulating many other studies on issues of control, autonomy and aging, and ultimately contributing to the development of legislation in the U.S. regarding the treatment of older persons in institutional settings.

His second line of research focuses on the effects of late life illness and disability on patients and their family members. He is the nation's preeminent researcher on the effects of chronic stress exposure associated with family caregiving. This has advanced our understanding of the relationship between psychiatric and physical morbidity and chronic stress exposure, how families and patients cope with chronic illness, disability, and end of life, and has shed new light on the effects of bereavement. The more than 100 published papers that have emerged from this line of research have had profound impact on other researchers and on health policy in the U.S. This has in part been achieved because Dr. Schulz is one of only a small handful of social scientists who have been able to publish their work in the most prestigious medical journals in the world (*JAMA*, 1999, 2001, 2004; *NEJM*, 2003, 2016; *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 1999; *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2006). For example, in 1999 he published in *JAMA* an epidemiologic study showing that being a stressed caregiver is an independent risk factor for mortality. Described in *Newsweek* (May 31, 2004 issue) as "landmark research" this article is now one of the most highly cited publications in the caregiving literature, and it has helped establish family caregiving as a major public health issue facing the nation. His work on bereavement in a caregiving context has challenged classic views of the effects of bereavement by showing that being a stressed caregiver prior to death paradoxically protects the individual from additional negative effects after the death, in contrast to persons who are not involved in caregiving prior to death (e.g., *JAMA*, 2001; *NEJM*, 2004). His continual publications in this area has also spurred a great deal of interest in this topic among others in the field and also influenced caregiver intervention approaches. He has also spearheaded work in the role of patient suffering and caregiver compassion in the caregiving experience (e.g., *Gerontologist*, 2007, 2010, 2015; *J. of Gerontology*, 2010). More recently, he has examined the intersection of technology and caregiving (e.g., *Gerontologist*, 2015, 2016, 2018). Overall, Richard's work in caregiving has shaped the research agenda in this domain and helped to stimulate the research of many investigators. One of the testaments to his influence in this field was his role as chair of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's consensus study on "Families Caring for an Aging America."

His third area of research concerns the development and implementation of randomized controlled trials in the social and behavioral sciences and gerontology. To complement the longitudinal descriptive work on family caregiving, he has conducted numerous intervention studies designed to combat the negative health effects of caregiving. The most ambitious of these is the Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health (REACH) trial, a multi-site randomized 10-year controlled trial testing social and behavioral interventions for caregivers of dementia patients (*Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2006). This work has greatly advanced our understanding of the link between the process/mechanisms of caregiving and health outcomes and has also informed us about successful intervention programs for older adults and their families. The REACH intervention program is one of the few caregiver intervention programs that has been designated as "evidenced-based" and has been implemented nationally as part of the aging health and social services network. In addition, aspects of the REACH intervention have been incorporated into technology-based programs for family caregivers.

Overall, Dr. Schulz's productivity and contributions to the field are reflected by his more than 375 peer review publications, 11 published books, and more than 35 years of grant support from the NIH, as well as the NSF and other government agencies. His research and publications have had measurable national and international impact in three distinct areas: theories of life span development; the impact of late life illness and disability on family members; and social behavioral intervention

research to improve health outcomes of middle aged and older family caregivers. His work in each of these areas has simultaneously contributed to fundamental advances in the sciences as well as having far-reaching policy impact in the U.S.

His work appears in major journals in aging (e.g., *The Gerontologist*, *Journals of Gerontology*, *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*, *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, *Psychology and Aging*), psychology (e.g., *Psychological Review*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *JPSP*) and the major medical journals including *JAMA*, *NEJM*, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, and *Annals of Internal Medicine*. He has been designated a “Highly Cited Researcher” by the Institute for Scientific Information since 2003. Another testament to his prominence is that he has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors. In recognition of his contributions to research on aging, he received the Distinguished Mentorship in Gerontology Award from BSS of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), and the Kleemeier Award from GSA. In addition, he received the Paul Baltes, M. Powell Lawton Awards, and the Developmental Health Award for Research on Health in Later Life from the American Psychological Association and the Harold Yuker Ward for Research Excellence for the most highly rated paper published in *Rehabilitation Psychology*).

Mentoring

Richard has also made contributions to the field of Gerontology through his extensive and successful mentoring of students and young investigators. He has supervised numerous doctoral, post-doctoral fellows, and junior faculty, many of whom have gone on to achieve eminence in their fields. His effectiveness as a mentor is marked by both the sheer volume of students and junior faculty that he has mentored and the breadth of his mentoring across a broad array of disciplines. Thus, the reach of his influence includes many health and social science disciplines in addition to Gerontology, such as Psychology, Medicine, Nursing, Psychiatry, Sociology, and Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

Mentees of Dr. Schulz include, Gail Williamson (Professor of Psychology, U. of Georgia), Amy Justice (Associate Professor, Yale School of Medicine), Ken Langa (Associate Professor of Medicine, U. of Michigan) who was named a Beeson Scholar, the most prestigious award available to young physicians who study aging, Carsten Wrosch (Associate Professor of Psychology, Concordia University), Jamila Bookwala, the year 2000 winner of the Gerontological Society Dissertation Award (Associate Professor of Psychology, Lafayette College), Lynn Martire, the 2004 winner of the APA Division 20 Young Investigator Award (Associate Professor of Psychiatry, U. of Pittsburgh) and Joan Monin (Assistant Professor) Yale School of Public Health who was the 2015 recipient of the 2015 Early Career Award of the Society of Human Development. All of these individuals have active research careers and frequently publish in the major gerontology, psychology, and medical journals.

Individuals mentored earlier in his career include Jutta Heckhausen (Professor of Psychology, U. of California, Irvine), Max Bazerman (Professor, Harvard Business School), Ann Williams (Professor and Chair, Rehabilitation Sciences, U. of Montana); Susan Decker (Professor of Occupational Therapy, U. of Portland). Overall, Dr. Schulz’s record as a mentor is exemplary and has fostered the development of a new cadre of scientists who will make independent contributions to gerontology and behavioral intervention research. His influence is clearly reflected in their productivity and scholarship.

Service

Dr. Schulz’s has also made contributions to the field of Gerontology through service. He served

as the editor of the Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences, the premier aging and psychology journal, and has served on the editorial board of the major journals in Psychology and Gerontology. He also served as Chair of the Awards Committee of GSA and also served as a member of the Executive Committee. He is, of course, a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Divisions 20 & 38), the American Psychological Society, the Gerontological Society of America and the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research. Finally, he has served on numerous federal review panels and committees for the National Academy of Science.

In summary, we enthusiastically endorse Richard Schulz for this award. He is one of the truly preeminent scholars in the field of adult development and aging. His work has clearly advanced the field and the careers of numerous individuals and also made significant contributions to the lives of older people. We believe he exemplifies the true meaning of an award for Distinguished Contribution to Gerontology.

Sincerely,



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