For Immediate Release
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Parmelee Earns GSA’s 2013 M. Powell Lawton Award

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) — the nation’s largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to the field of aging — has chosen Patricia Parmelee, PhD, of the University of Alabama as the 2013 recipient of the M. Powell Lawton Award.

This distinguished honor recognizes a significant contribution in gerontology that has led to an innovation in gerontological treatment, practice or service, prevention, amelioration of symptoms or barriers, or a public policy change that has led to some practical application that improves the lives of older persons. It is sponsored by the Madlyn and Leonard Abramson Center for Jewish Life’s Polisher Research Institute and is named in memory of M. Powell Lawton, PhD, for his outstanding contributions to applied gerontological research.

The award presentation will take place at GSA’s 66th Annual Scientific Meeting, which will be held from November 20 to 24 in New Orleans. This conference is organized to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers, educators, and practitioners who specialize in the study of the aging process. Visit www.geron.org/annualmeeting for further details.

At the University of Alabama, Parmelee is the director of the Center for Mental Health & Aging and a professor in the Department of Psychology. She is internationally known for her work on quality of life and quality of care for chronically ill older persons. Her current research interests span the interrelations of physical and mental health, with particular emphasis on associations among pain, disability and mental health among chronically ill older adults; quality of long-term care, and particularly staffing issues in residential care settings; and interventions to support family caregivers.

Parmelee’s work on the intersection of pain and depression among older adults, especially among those diagnosed with osteoarthritis, has shaped the fields of gerontology, psychology, and medicine in very significant ways. Her focus on the daily processes of pain and well-being has made unique contributions to the understanding of how chronic pain influences mental health on a day-to-day basis.

Parmelee is a GSA fellow, which represents the Society’s highest class of membership, and a fellow of the American Psychological Association. She previously held positions at the Emory University School of Medicine and the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Parmelee also has served as the vice president for outcomes management at Genesis Health Ventures, a multi-state long-term care corporation; as the associate director of research and senior research psychologist at the Philadelphia Geriatric Center; and as an associate professor of clinical epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is the nation's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. The principal mission of the Society — and its 5,400+ members — is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public. GSA’s structure also includes a policy institute, the National Academy on an Aging Society, and an educational branch, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education.