



ETHICS CORNER

CPA's Contribution to Ethics in Psychology: A Tale of Two Awardsⁱ

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When the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) was founded 75 years ago, there were no codes of ethics for psychologists anywhere in the world. In fact, in the psychology literature, there was almost no attention at all to the ethical responsibilities of psychology practitioners, researchers, or teachers. This picture changed dramatically, however, after World War II, partly due to the atrocities or other highly questionable activities engaged in by the members of some professions and scientific disciplines during the war. These events served as a wake-up call to all disciplines and professions regarding the importance of articulating and promoting the ethical principles, values, guidelines, and standards that members were expected to honour. The American Psychological Association (APA) started the process for psychology by forming a committee in 1948 to develop a code of ethics for their members. A final version of this code was available in the late 1950s, and was either adopted by or served as a model for the development of codes in many other countries.ⁱⁱ

In 1959, Canada was one of the countries that adopted the APA code. It was not until 1986 that Canada struck out on its own, adopting its own made-in-Canada code. Based on a framework different than the APA framework, the CPA code emphasized the importance of ideals over rules, as well as the importance of ethical decision making. It captured the attention of the global psychology community, and both the code and its underlying philosophy have had a significant influence on international ethics dialogue and the development of ethics codes, templates and guidelines in other parts of the world.ⁱⁱⁱ In July 2013, this influence was highlighted in the conferring of two international awards to CPA members.

On 9 July 2013, Dr. Jean Pettifor was awarded the *Wilhelm Wundt-William James Award for Exceptional Contributions to Trans-Atlantic Psychology*, given annually to a European or North American psychologist who has made distinguished contributions to the science and profession of psychology and to the promotion of effective cooperation between Europe and North America. The award is co-sponsored by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations and the American Psychological Foundation, and was presented to Dr. Pettifor

during the opening ceremonies of the biennial meeting of the European Congress of Psychology in Stockholm, Sweden. She was the first woman and the first Canadian to receive the award. The selection committee noted how Dr. Pettifor is recognized as an outstanding leader and visionary in the field of psychology and how she is highly respected for her integrated view of global social justice, ethics and leadership, as well as for the wisdom that she has provided for psychology ethics in the era of globalization. In her award address, *Connecting Politics with Virtue, Ethics, and Human Rights*, Dr Pettifor spoke to the influence of political agendas on how ideals are interpreted, and reminded those gathered to "nourish the aspirational."

Less than a week later, on 15 July 2013, the *Interamerican Psychology Award* was presented to Dr. Janel Gauthier at the opening ceremony of the Interamerican Congress of Psychology in Brasilia, Brazil. This international award is the most prestigious award of the Interamerican Society of Psychology (SIP) and recognizes outstanding contributions to the development of psychology as a science or as a profession in the Americas. Presented every second year, Dr. Gauthier was the fourth Canadian to receive the award since its inception in 1976. He was chosen in recognition of the impact that his fruitful professional career has had on the world of psychology as well as on ISP, including his role in the development of the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*, which was adopted by the SIP Board of Directors in December 2008. In his presentation at the Congress, Dr. Gauthier addressed the links between ethics and human rights, how politics can play a positive or detrimental role, and the inherent conflict between endorsing universal standards and guidelines and protecting culture-specific identities and differences.

In the past 75 years, ethics in psychology has come a long way, and the Canadian Psychological Association has played a significant role. Please join us in congratulating Drs. Pettifor and Gauthier, both of whom are former CPA Presidents and current members of the CPA Committee on Ethics, for the special awards they have received in recognition of their major contributions to this journey.

For a complete list of references, please go to www.cpa.ca/psynopsis