

Ernest W. Burgess Award Presented to Murray A. Straus



Dr. Murray A. Straus was presented the 1977 Ernest W. Burgess Award at the National Council on Family Relations' annual meeting in San Diego. The award, which includes a check for \$500, is given by the Council for "continuous and meritorious contributions to theory and research in the family field." The Council bestows the award annually in recognition of the pioneering contributions of Ernest W. Burgess to the study of the family. Its purpose is "to stimulate and improve the quality of marriage and family research in America."

Dr. Straus has been Professor of Sociology at the University of New Hampshire since 1968. His academic career began at the University of Wisconsin (B.A., 1948; M.S. 1949; Ph.D., 1956) and has led him around the world, starting with the University of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) from 1949-1952; Washington State University, 1954-1957; University of Wisconsin, 1957-1959; Cornell University, 1959-1961; and University of Minnesota, 1961-1968, where he founded the Family Social Science Department and held a joint appointment as Professor of Sociology. Professor Straus also served as a visiting professor or has done research in Puerto Rico, India, Mexico, and England.

One of Dr. Straus's main interests is cross-national comparative research on the family. This research began in the early 1950's and continued through the 1960's with a pioneering series of laboratory experimental studies of communication, power, and problem-

solving of families in Minneapolis, San Juan, and Bombay. The SIMFAM technique for the observation and measurement of family behavior was developed for that research and has since been used by other researchers. Also evolving out of that research was the book (coedited with other Minnesota sociologists) on *Family Problem Solving* (1971).

Straus did his Ph.D. work with William Sewell, whose research on measuring family socioeconomic status was the inspiration for Straus's life-long interest in measurement techniques, especially with regard to families. While at Washington State University he published a bulletin on *Direct, Indirect, and Disguised Measurement* (1957), and later a series of articles and books on measurement, including a chapter entitled, "Measuring Families," in Christensen's *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (1964); a compendium on *Family Measurement Techniques* (1969, revised edition coauthored with Bruce Brown, 1978); and a forthcoming book on *Indexing and Scaling for the Social Sciences With SPSS*.

Although Straus is best known for his research, he is a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher of both graduate and undergraduate students. His *Sociological Analysis* (1968) and *Family Analysis* (1969) grew out of 10 years work developing a laboratory problems approach to teaching introductory sociology courses. In 1973 he founded the journal *Teaching Sociology* and served as its editor until 1976.

Dr. Straus's recent research on physical violence in families started when he was chairperson of the Research and Theory Section for the 1970 NCFR annual meeting and had difficulty finding papers which fit the program theme of "Violence And The Family." To round out the program, he wrote one himself. Since then his research has focused more and more on explaining what he calls "the paradox of family violence"—the fact that the family is both the most violent and the most loving of all civilian institutions. Realizing the importance of understanding the role of violence in the family, Straus encour-

aged others to consider this formerly neglected aspect of the family. He suggested the publication of a special issue of *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, and courses and seminars on family violence. He coedited *Violence in the Family* (with Suzanne K. Steinmetz, 1974), and *The Social Causes of Husband-Wife Violence* (with Gerald T.

Hotaling, 1978). He sponsored theses on family violence, and a program of postdoctoral fellowships for research training on family violence (1977-1982). Together with Richard Gelles and Suzanne Steinmetz, Dr. Straus is studying violence in a nationally representative sample of 2,143 families. A book on this study, *Violence in the American Family*, is about to be published.