Professor Emerita Bonnie Strickland received the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in Psychology in the Public Interest from the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA’s Gold Medal Awards “recognize distinguished and enduring records of accomplishment” in psychology.

A former president of the APA, Strickland has spent over five decades as a
psychologist. Earning her PhD from The Ohio State University in 1962, Strickland continued on to Emory University, where (at age 27) she served as a faculty member in the psychology department and dean of women.

Moving to UMass Amherst in 1973, Strickland researched gender health disparities, completing a book on the prevalence of depression in women. She served as chair of the psychology department, assistant to the chancellor, and remains a professor emerita, still teaching and playing tennis on campus. Strickland teaches an Honors Front Page seminar for incoming first-year students and an Honors Thesis Seminar on psychological practice for UMass seniors.

Strickland’s research career focused on underserved communities and unpopular topics in psychology, such as the development of black children, social activists and LGBTQ persons, and “legitimized” academic research in marginalized fields of psychological study.

Strickland and her research continue to serve the public interest by offering solutions for social problems, epitomizing “unusual initiative and dedication” to meeting the needs of the community, and advancing social justice in the study and practice of psychology.

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