



## Stephen W. Raudenbush Presents the Fifth Annual AERA *Brown* Lecture in Education Research

Inaugurated in 2004 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court and now in its fifth year, the AERA *Brown* Lecture in Education Research took place on October 23 in Washington, D.C. More than 450 people from federal agencies, national organizations, scientific and scholarly associations, academe, and Capitol Hill came to hear the invited lecture by Stephen W. Raudenbush: "The *Brown* Legacy and the O'Connor Challenge: Transforming Schools in the Images of Children's Potential."

Raudenbush, Lewis-Sebring Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, is nationally known for his comprehensive research on social inequality and urban issues. Drawing on his considerable scholarship, he focused the 2008 *Brown* Lecture on the continuing achievement gap between White students and Black students and the ways in which persistent inequality can be overcome.

The Lecture and the reception that followed took place in the amphitheater of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. AERA President Lorraine M. McDonnell, Professor of Public Policy at the University of California, Santa Barbara, introduced the session and presided, noting the significance of sustained scholarship for addressing issues of equity and equality in education. In her role as Chair of the 2008 *Brown* Selection Committee, Kris Gutierrez, Professor of Social Research Methodology at the University of California, Los Angeles, introduced Raudenbush as the 2008 Lecturer and emphasized how his personal history led to pathbreaking substantive and methodological contributions that have shaped research and influenced education policy.

The Howard University Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Fred Irby III,

played selections that capture in musical interpretation the essential need for equality in society.

Raudenbush stated in opening remarks that "... all children deserve an equal chance to learn, to work, to contribute, to prosper. The problem of inequality today is so enduring that we often forget how much change can happen in a single lifetime."

To illustrate the dramatic progress possible in one generation, Raudenbush introduced his father-in-law, Lemar Pippings, who persisted against odds to achieve an education for himself and his descendants. In his tribute, Raudenbush honored a man whose belief in the value of



Stephen W. Raudenbush, University of Chicago, delivered the 2008 *Brown* Lecture at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C.

education led him to struggle for a high school diploma in rural Louisiana, to educate his own children, and eventually, at the



With enthusiastic applause, the audience welcomes Raudenbush to lecture on issues of equity and education in the nation's schools.

age of 58, to earn a bachelor's degree from Boston University. In recognition of his achievement, Raudenbush dedicated the 2008 *Brown* Lecture to Mr. Pipings.

Continuing his Lecture, Raudenbush charted research results that demonstrated considerable progress toward narrowing the achievement gap in the 1970s until that progress halted in the 1990s. Referencing *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decision in which Justice Sandra Day O'Connor expressed the hope that in 25 years affirmative action would no longer be needed, Raudenbush looked ahead to that date—2028—and expressed a conviction that school improvement by itself can play a powerful role in overcoming educational consequences of racial inequality.

The task of engaging children in ambitious intellectual work, however, begins with innovative ways of thinking about best school practice and use of the best available education research to make connections between developmental science, instructional practice, and school organization. Raudenbush hypothesized that, despite a multiplicity of causes of inequality, school reform—based on powerful classroom instruction and rigorous research on teaching—can get the nation back on track to eliminate the achievement gap and to help achieve the promise of *Brown*.

In addition to Gutierrez, who served as Chair, the 2008 *Brown* Lecture Selection Committee included Hugo Garcia, Stephen Hancock, Felice J. Levine, Lorraine M. McDonnell, William F. Tate, and George L. Wimberly.

This year, 15 organizations generously joined with AERA as Friends of the *Brown* Lecture: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Institutes for Research, American Statistical Association, Educational Testing Service, George Mason University College of Education and Human Development, George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Howard University Graduate School, National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, SAGE Publications, Temple University, University of Chicago, University of Delaware School of Education, University



Raudenbush with (left to right) Kris Gutierrez, Chair of the 2008 *Brown* Selection Committee; Felice J. Levine, AERA Executive Director; and Lorraine M. McDonnell, AERA President.



Guests greet Raudenbush following the 2008 *Brown* Lecture. From left to right, Diane and Sol Pelavin, American Institutes for Research; Raudenbush; Linda Loubert, Morgan State University; and Robert Stonehill, Learning Point Associates.

of Maryland College of Education, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, and University of Virginia Curry School of Education.

The 2008 *Brown* Lecture, along with those of preceding years, appears as a web-

cast on the AERA website ([www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)) and will be published in *Educational Researcher* in 2009.

*The 2009 Brown Lecture in Education Research will be held on October 22 in Washington, D.C.*