

### Erikson Award

The Erik Erikson Award for Early Career Research Achievement is presented to a scholar who is no more than ten years post-Ph. D. For both the range and inspiring quality of their work, John Jost and Howard Lavine are honored as recipients of the Erikson Award for 2004.

Since Karl Marx, scholars have pondered why disadvantaged people so often support the political systems that abuse them. John Jost's System Justification Theory, introduced 1994 with Mahzarin Banaji, offers a comprehensive theory of the motivation that drives this support. The bulk of John's research over the last decade has focused on elaborating and testing this theory. A summary of System Justification Theory and the results of this work will appear in the December issue of *Political Psychology*. In 2003, John's "Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition," in *Psychological Bulletin*, provided a sweeping review of the psychological needs and motives that induce conservatism. This review has been praised and critiqued by scholars, and harangued against by a host of right-wing pundits. In 2002, John (with Arie Kruglanski) offered in *Personality and Social Psychology Review* a compelling vision for reconciling social psychology's two estranged paradigms, experimentalism and social constructionism.

Howard Lavine has reported important studies on interattitudinal consistency (as a function of expertise and ideology), the functional processes of attitudes, blind versus constructive criticism, a cognitive-motivational model of political information processing, authoritarianism and response to threat, and the cognitive evaluation of political candidates. On authoritarianism and threat, for example, Howard has shown that high authoritarians are particularly receptive to threat-based persuasive messages, whereas low authoritarians are more responsive to messages emphasizing rewards. As reported in a forthcoming *Political Psychology* paper, Howard and his colleagues found that, when not under threat, high authoritarians may be quite open minded (e.g., not differentially choosing to read articles that support rather than oppose their own opinions). But when placed under threat, high authoritarians become more likely to selectively read

information that reinforces their beliefs, whereas low authoritarians remained evenhanded. Howard has recently pioneered research on ambivalent political attitudes, attitudes with conflicting positive and negative components, and how such attitudes affect candidate evaluation and voting. He has shown that attitude ambivalence is distinct from attitude strength, partisanship, and level of information, and that it has distinct value in understanding the instability of voters' evaluations of candidates and their unpredictability in voting. At times, it characterizes up to one-third of the American electorate.

This year is just the second time that the Erikson award have been given to two recipients. However, the selection committee (Tom Nelson, Tali Mendelberg, John Duckitt, and Sam McFarland) was deeply impressed with both recipients substantial achievements in their still-young careers and concluded that that both strongly merited the award.

Submitted by Sam McFarland,  
Erikson Award Committee Chair

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2004 AWARD WINNERS

#### 2004 Knutson Award

presented to:

**Jerrold Post**

--- Richard Ned Lebow, Chair, Knutson Award Committee

#### 2004 Alexander George Award

presented to:

**James Gibson**

**Amanda Gouws**

for "*Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasions*"

---Robert Shapiro, Chair, George Award Committee

#### 2004 Sigel Award

presented to:

**James N. Druckman**

**Kjersten R. Nelson**

---Christopher Federico, Chair, Sigel Award Committee