

THE AP-LS TEACHING, TRAINING, AND CAREERS (TTC) COMMITTEE RECOGNIZES DR. ANGELA EVANS AND DR. ASHLEY BATASTINI THROUGH THE OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND MENTORING IN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW AWARDS

Each year, AP-LS and the TTC Committee recognize excellence in teaching and mentorship in the field demonstrated by two of our members. One member is recognized through the Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring Award, and another member is recognized through the Early Career Teaching and Mentoring Award. This year, these awards are specific to members who have taught and mentored trainees at the doctoral and post-doctoral level. Both winners were announced at the March 2023 meeting of the American Psychology-Law Society in Philadelphia, PA, and were awarded \$500 and a plaque recognizing their achievements.

Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring Award

This year's winner of the *Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring Award* is **Dr. Angela Evans**, Professor and Associate Chair of Psychology at Brock University in Ontario, Canada. As part of her application, Dr. Evans expressed the following regarding her teaching and mentoring: "I believe that my dedication to fostering and building independent scholars who are motivated to not only conduct research at the intersection of Psychology and Law but ensure their results make an impact in the field supports our field in making an impact and improving the lives of child witnesses and victims involved in the legal system." She continues, "Mentoring junior scientists is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. My mentorship philosophy revolves around spending regular time with my students; creating a collaborative environment where students are supported while building independence." In this environment, Dr. Evans focuses on supporting and developing her students' and mentees' skills in critical thinking, independence and confidence, and collaboration and teamwork—whether in the classroom or research lab, or through community partnerships and knowledge mobilization.

Dr. Evans' previous and current mentees had much to say in support of her teaching and mentoring strategies. According to current doctoral student Victoria Dykstra, "Dr. Evans demonstrates devotion to and excellence in her role as a mentor. Throughout my time working with her, she has gone above and beyond to ensure I have every opportunity to develop my skills and expertise to further pursue a research-intensive career. She is invested in her students' success and doing whatever she can to ensure it. I firmly believe that she has provided me with invaluable training and that she is an excellent choice to receive this award to acknowledge her commitment and excellence in mentorship." Dr. Breanne Wylie is a former mentee of Dr. Evans and current Postdoctoral Research Associate at the USC Gould School of Law, who described how Dr. Evans "tailors her supervision to students' individual needs and goals, ensuring each student is prepared with skills necessary for their academic or non-academic pursuits" and "also provides opportunities for team building in her lab... Through these opportunities Angela has successfully fostered a culture in her laboratory built on respect, encouragement, and collegiality." She particularly notes Dr. Evans' involvement with the Canadian Child Interviewing Research Team (CCIRT), a national collaborative project that works with community partners to co-develop practices for obtaining detailed and accurate reports from child witnesses that Dr.

Evans co-founded and serves as Research Team Lead, and which serves as an engine of research training and community-science collaborations for Dr. Evans' trainees. The lasting effect of Dr. Evans' mentorship is demonstrated by Dr. Alison O'Connor, a former mentee of Dr. Evans who is now an Assistant Professor at Mount Allison University: "Through her mentorship, she has found the perfect balance between giving her students the independence to develop their own skills while also providing a comfortable space to discuss any challenges that arise throughout this experience. She sets high yet attainable goals for her students and provides support and access to resources to achieve these goals... Genuine mentorship is incredibly time-consuming, and I admire the commitment that Dr. Evans makes to each one of her graduate students. She regularly goes above and beyond what is expected of her because of her true passion for mentorship and desire to see her students grow and succeed."

Early Career Teaching and Mentoring Award

This year's winner of the *Early Career Teaching and Mentoring Award* is **Dr. Ashley Batastini**, Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology at the University of Memphis in Memphis, TN. In her application materials, Dr. Batastini shared that, "Without a doubt, the most rewarding part of my job is the ability to closely mentor and advise students with mutual professional interests and values. It is a main reason I chose a career in academia. I was fortunate to have incredible mentors at every stage of my academic career, beginning as a first-generation undergraduate. By seeing more talent in me than I saw in myself, they proved how impactful a true advocate can be. I credit them for the psychologist I am today. Not everyone is so lucky. Therefore, while I take pride in and thoroughly enjoy my role as a mentor, I also feel a sense of obligation to pay forward what was so graciously given to me." She continues by describing how, "In developing my identity as an educator, I find I can best energize students/trainees by modeling enthusiasm, modernizing the learning environment, promoting a collaborative workspace, and encouraging students to reassess what they think they already know."

Many admirable characteristics of Dr. Batastini's approach to teaching and mentorship were also shared by her prior mentors, colleagues, and mentees. According to her longtime collaborator Dr. Michael Vitacco, "Ashley works hard with and for her students. She has developed a collaborative atmosphere, with high expectations. Those expectations have been evident in the amount of productivity in her students. These expectations are also part of a warm and accepting environment. Ashley is the type of professor that students clamor to work with. Ashley is a kind person who generates acceptance. She also has a great respect for diversity, and this shows in her dealings with all people she encounters. I have a tremendous amount of respect for Ashley, and much of that respect centers on the way she treats her students." These qualities were also shared and expanded upon by Dr. Batastini's current and former mentees, who shared the following: "Ashley *wholeheartedly* believes that she is training the rising generation of psychologists and mental health therapists. One student said she 'never lost sight of the individual and the overall goal of teaching the next generation of psychologists.' Another added that she 'puts her students' learning and growth as researchers, clinicians, and professionals above all else.' This is evident in her passion for mentorship and teaching, as well as the attitudes and perspectives she instills in students. She treats all of her relationships with

students—from single-semester research assistants to her own graduate-level mentees—as opportunities for mentorship.” According to Ashley Jones, a doctoral student currently working with Dr. Batastini, “Her authentic nature allows her bold personality to shine through. Working alongside a professional woman who is both passionate about her career and nurturing of her students' personal and professional well- beings was transformative for me. I did not know how important it was for me to have female professional role models until I watched Ashley trailblaze on her own.” Dr. Batastini’s own mentor and continued collaborator Dr. Robert Morgan summarizes her outstanding qualities as, “I will simply state that Ashley is liked and respected by her colleagues, respected as a rising star, and she is committed to her career and that of her students in psychology-law. I can think of no better way to recognize her talents and contributions than to award her this Early Career Award in Teaching and Mentoring.”

Looking ahead

Next year’s *Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring in the Field of Psychology and Law* awards will recognize two teachers/mentors from a program or department that is undergraduate-only or MA-terminus. Applications will be due December 15, 2023, and will be announced in the AP-LS Newsletter this Fall. Anyone interested in submitting for these awards can find more information at <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-41/awards/teaching> or by emailing ttc@ap-ls.org.