**Citation: 2014 Grain of Sand Award to Deborah A. Stone**

Given by the Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Conference Group (APSA) to honor longstanding and meritorious contributions to interpretive studies of the political.

As a scholar and as a human being, Deborah Stone is a model of how to make a difference in the world. She's a leading constructivist theorist who is deeply involved in the practical world of policy design and implementation and manages to build bridges of understanding across these too-separate worlds. She is a prolific scholar who takes on a broad range of intellectual topics and public issues, using her wit and intellect to denaturalize taken-for-granted assumptions in politics and policy. For those tempted to dismiss interpretive and constructivist work as "theoretical" and unhelpful for practice, Deborah is the empirical evidence we need. She and her insights could hardly be more in demand among practitioners.

To illustrate, consider three of her most well known books. In *The Disabled State* (1984) Deborah analyzes the politics and practice of disability policy through a constructivist lens, showing how contested interpretations of social categories stand at the center of each. It's a truly remarkable work that uses interpretive historical analysis to show how definitions of ability and need are constructed through political conflict and function to regulate the boundary between market-based and need-based systems of provision. In the official pronouncements of the state, to be "disabled" is to be unable to work, and the status of being "disabled" is something we can determine scientifically and apolitically. *The Disabled State* explodes this myth, clarifies how constructed categories underlie all policy operations, and places struggles over interpretation at the center of efforts to explain the politics of public policy.

*Policy Paradox* (first published in 1988*,* with a third edition in 2012 and winner of the 2002 Wildavsky Award) is a path-breaking work of constructivist scholarship that challenges central pillars of graduate training in policy analysis and public affairs. Deborah frames the book in opposition to "the rationality project" – a tidy linear understanding of the policy process as a rational mode of problem-solving rooted in policy analysis and program evaluation. At the same time, she demonstrates the perils of mistakenly conceiving of the polis as a realm of action that is analogous to the market. In place of these misguided efforts to place politics in a tightly bounded role, Deborah elaborates a model of "political rationality" in which efforts to reason pervade political processes and political processes pervade efforts to reason (even in the most scientifically analytic forms). The range of the book is remarkable, and each chapter serves as the occasion for an incisive constructivist analysis that places meaning-making at the center of politics and policy. *Policy Paradox* has been so widely assigned and discussed that no exaggeration is required to say that few other books have done as much to bring the benefits of constructivist and interpretive scholarship to students and practitioners of public policy.

Deborah's most recent book is an exemplary work of publicly engaged scholarship. In *The Samaritan’s Dilemma*: *Should Government Help Your Neighbor?* (2008), she mounts a defense of altruism as a basic human trait and an attack on the dominant narratives of "economists, social scientists, conservatives, and free-market ideologues" that have fooled so many among us into believing "that greed is good…. that help is harmful [because] it undermines ambition and makes people dependent and helpless.” Drawing on the everyday experiences of Americans, she illuminates the vast chasm that separates prevailing political discourses from the moral truths we know in our bones—that we care about other people and go out of our way to help them. *The Samaritan’s Dilemma* is a sustained critique of political discourses that elevate self-interest as a moral good and urge citizens to become bystanders in the presence of suffering. It is a brilliant analysis of how social scientific concepts (e.g., moral hazard) and political arguments work together to define our beliefs about reality, cause and effect, and ethical living in the world.

Deborah Stone’s scholarship is widely recognized and rightly celebrated. She has been an inspiration to generations of academics who have heeded her call to participate in public life and place human meaning making at the center of their scholarly endeavors. Her body of work helps us all to understand the many ways we can see a world in a grain of sand.

Award committee: Lee Ann Fujii (University of Toronto), Joe Lowndes (University of Oregon), Ido Oren (University of Florida; chair), Timothy Pachirat (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Frederic C. Schaffer (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Joe Soss (University of Minnesota), Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (University of Utah), Dvora Yanow (Wageningen University) (Washington, DC, August 29)