

## **2013 Kennedy Achievement Award Winner – John Tarnai, of the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC)**

John Tarnai, former director of the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) has been named the 2013 recipient of the John M. Kennedy Achievement Award given by the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations (AASRO) for his service and leadership in academic survey research.

Tarnai was director of SESRC from 1996 until his death in 2012. He was a strong supporter of and contributor to the science of sample surveys and was an expert and innovator in the practical aspects of conducting survey research. Under his leadership, SESRC became an established, well-funded survey organization that has consistently been awarded \$2–\$3 million of survey contracts annually.

As director of SESRC, a founding member of AASRO, and AASRO president, Tarnai was known for his generosity in providing both formal and informal assistance and mentoring to others in the field. Many of his colleagues sought and benefited from his consultation and advice. John Kennedy, former director of the Indiana University Center for Survey for Research, said, “For the 25 years I directed the survey center at Indiana University, I consulted with John on both technical and personnel matters. John was always insightful and helpful beyond what could be expected of a colleague.”

Perhaps Tarnai’s most lasting contribution to the survey research field came from his dedication to the development of new survey researchers. Rita Koontz, who worked with Tarnai for 31 years at SESRC, said, “John always saw the best in each of us and brought out potential we didn’t see in ourselves. He unfailingly supported each person to grow and learn as much as they could.”

Academic survey research from the students and staff at SESRC to the international survey community benefited from John Tarnai’s contribution to survey methods. It is for these reasons that AASRO created the John Tarnai Memorial Scholarship, which will provide funding to outstanding early-career researchers working in academic survey organizations to attend a survey research conference. It is also for these reasons that AASRO is honored to award John Tarnai the John M. Kennedy Achievement Award.