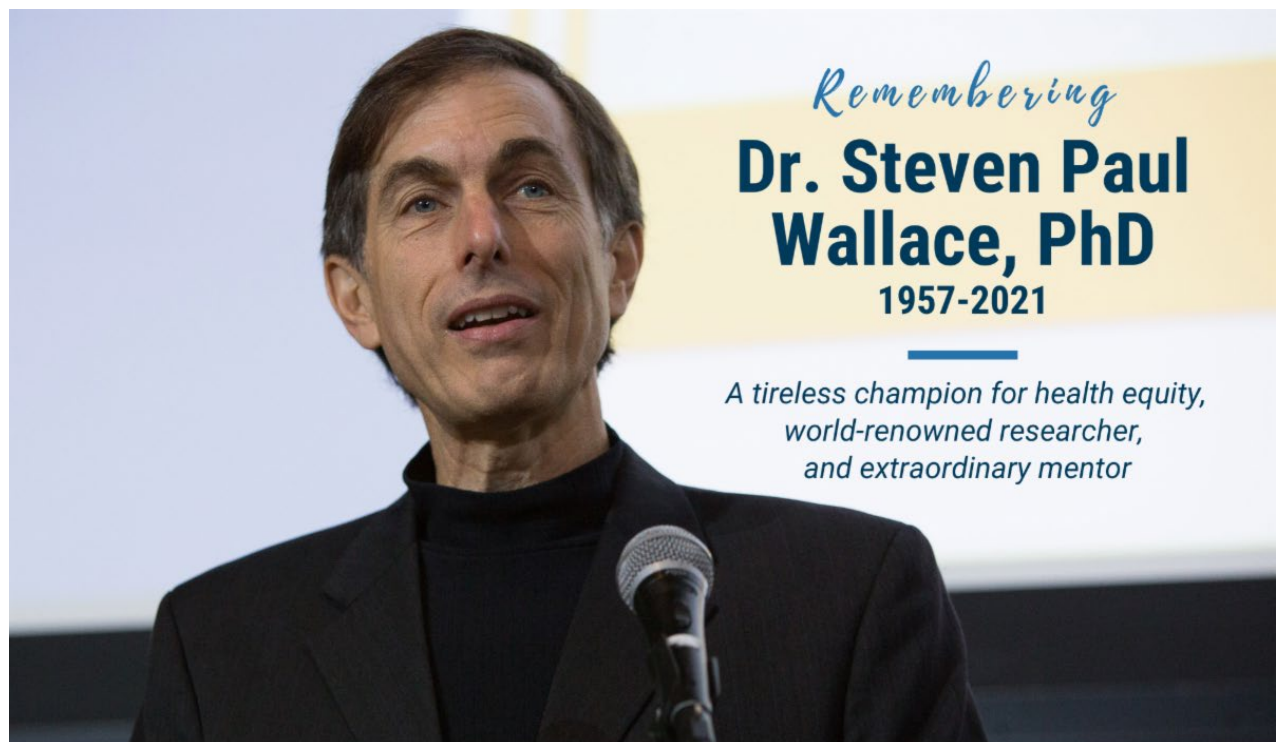


April 5, 2021

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research mourns the loss of our beloved Associate Center Director Steven P. Wallace, PhD



Dear friends,

It is with immeasurable sadness that we announce that our beloved Associate Center Director Steven P. Wallace, PhD, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, March 30. Dr. Wallace served as associate director since 1996 and was essential to building the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (CHPR) into the successful policy research center it has been for more than two decades.

Dr. Wallace was an internationally-renowned scholar on health, health disparities, and health policy of older adults, immigrants, and communities of color including Latinx, American Indian and Alaska Natives, African Americans, and Asian Americans.

He was a brilliant researcher, a tireless champion for health equity, and a committed and passionate educator and mentor to countless students, researchers, and colleagues who will carry on his legacy. Above all, Steve Wallace was a devoted husband, father, and brother who cherished his wonderful family: his wife Trudy, son Brian, and sister Lisa.

Dr. Wallace's wide-ranging contributions to public and community health span over 40 years, including 25 years at the UCLA CHPR, where he led the Health Disparities Program and trailblazing research on health issues among immigrants, older adults, and marginalized groups.

His interest in immigration started at an early age, listening to his grandfather's stories about coming to the U.S. through Ellis Island, and his father's memories of growing up in the immigrant neighborhood of Boyle Heights. But it was an undergraduate summer internship in 1977 at a community health center where most of the patients were recent immigrants from Mexico that sparked his interest in an academic approach to the study of immigration and evolved into a storied career.

Dr. Wallace was the principal investigator of the RIGHTS (Research on Immigrant Health and State policy) Study, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). The RIGHTS Study aims to understand the experiences of exclusion that Asian and Latin American Californians have encountered in the areas of health care, social services, employment, education, and law enforcement; how the state's policies and programs have shaped these experiences; and how such experiences influence people's ability to seek the health care they need. In late 2020, the NIH awarded additional funding to Dr. Wallace and his colleagues to study the multilevel influences on access to health care for Latinx youth.

He pioneered new approaches to elder economic security through the California Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index, a tool that measures the actual cost of basic necessities for older adults, which was adopted into law (Assembly Bill 138) and was

used by the World Health Organization in its 2020 Decade of Healthy Ageing report and will be used in California's Master Plan on Aging.

Committed to fostering an academic research community that is reflective of the diversity of the U.S., Dr. Wallace served as the director of the Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) National Coordinating Center, supporting the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and its RCMAR grantees in increasing the diversity of the workforce on aging research.

A nationally lauded researcher, Dr. Wallace's work has been supported through more than 100 grants from federal agencies and private foundations, including the NIH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Resources and Services Administration, the California Endowment, and many others. Through this support, he led teams that developed innovative, community-based methods to increase the use of clinical preventive services among older adults of color in Los Angeles; enhanced community organization capacity to advocate for better air quality in their neighborhoods; and established resources for Los Angeles neighborhoods to increase smoke-free rental housing.

He authored more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals such as the American Journal of Public Health, Journal of Gerontology, and Social Science and Medicine; more than 30 book chapters; and dozens of timely policy briefs and reports that have been used by advocates and legislators as evidence for key decisions. Most recently, in February 2021 he co-authored an [editorial in the American Journal of Public Health](#), which outlined priorities for the new presidential administration in taking an equity-focused approach to immigration reform, as well as making the call to action for researchers and advocates to work together with the goal of improving immigrant health and policies.

Dr. Wallace's work has appeared in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, National Public Radio, and dozens of other outlets for which he served as a sought-after and trusted media resource. He testified at state legislative hearings and in other forums, and his research has informed state laws.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Wallace received various fellowships and awards, including a Fulbright fellowship to research and lecture in Chile where he studied the impact of public policies on health equity for the elderly, and awards from the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Gerontological Society of America, California Council on Geriatrics and Gerontology, Health Initiative of the Americas, among many others. In 2018, he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the APHA Aging & Public Health Section.

Though his accomplishments are numerous, his influence as a profound mentor and educator is unmatched. A professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at

the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, department chair from 2011–2017, and vice chair from 2005–2010, Dr. Wallace has mentored hundreds of students who have gone on to successful careers as researchers in immigrant health, older adult health, and health disparities. For many people, including several of our leading UCLA CHPR researchers, when they look at the PhD or MPH at the end of their names, they'll always remember Dr. Steve Wallace's impact on their lives.

Over the last few days, many of his students, colleagues, and mentees have shared their stories of Steve Wallace — how he lifted them up and created space for them to thrive on their own strengths, his commitment to creating opportunities for women of color and other marginalized communities, his kindness and compassion, his beautiful soul, his smile and laugh that filled a room, his boundless generosity of spirit. While each story is unique, they all share a common thread: Steve Wallace's impact is forever.

In lieu of flowers, Dr. Wallace's family invites contributions to **The Steve Wallace Fellowship Fund at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health**, which we hope will continue his deep commitment to mentoring first-generation students to become leaders in advancing public health policy. Contributions may be made securely [online](#).

Gifts may also be sent by check, made payable to “The UCLA Foundation” with the “Steve Wallace Fellowship Fund #16030” noted in the memo line and mailed to The UCLA Foundation, P.O. Box 7145, Pasadena, CA 91109-7145.

As a Center, we are committed to continuing Steve Wallace's legacy. And while his passing leaves a tremendous hole in our hearts, his work will continue through the many students he's mentored, the colleagues he's inspired, and the advancements in research that bear his name.

Sincerely,

Ninez A. Ponce, PhD, MPP
Director, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research