

The 2012 Elliott Youth Development Lecture

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I am most pleased to introduce the 2012 *Elliott Youth Development Lecture*. The lecture is authored and presented by a leading researcher widely recognized as having made foundational contributions to our understanding of youth. In 2012, Rolf Loeber was selected as the recipient of this recognition by a group of researchers at Indiana University, where the lecture was delivered. His engaging presentation, the result of which is the article published in this issue, was entitled *Street Killings: Prediction of Homicide Offenders and Their Victims*. We extend our appreciation to Mark T. Berg, a former faculty member at Indiana University, for inviting Professor Loeber and serving as host.

The lecture is supported by a generous donation from Howard R. “Skip” Elliott, BA’77. Elliott was a double major in Forensic Studies and English and continues to be a faithful alumnus of what has become known as the Department of Criminal Justice at Indiana University. After graduating from the Department, Elliott then graduated from the state police academy, after which he joined the police department of Conrail railroad. Eventually, he joined CSX Transportation, where he currently serves as vice president of public safety and environment. CSX Transportation is one of America’s major freight railroads and a Fortune 250 Company that operates in 23 states and in cities such as Chicago, Boston, and New York City. Elliott leads CSX’s hazardous materials transportation safety efforts, its environmental protection program, its police department and its homeland security initiatives. Among his many commitments to public service is his exemplary service to National Safe Place, an organization

that links runaway and homeless youth with the help needed to be safe (see Walsh and Donaldson 2009). Elliott earned Indiana University’s Department of Criminal Justice’s first-ever Distinguished Alumni Award, for the great credit he has given the Department, Indiana University, and the field of criminal justice. It was Elliott’s dedication to serving others, and his passion for helping youth, that led to the development of this lecture series.

The Elliott Youth Development Lecture has many goals. The lecture seeks to recognize the accomplishments of a leading scholar who has made a foundational impact on our understanding of youth and social responses to them. It does so by requesting that the lecturers offer a review of their work, their sense of where the field is heading, and their thoughts on potentially fruitful research and policy directions. Publishing a written version of the lecture helps to enhance its reach and, equally importantly, attract increased attention to the multidisciplinary study of adolescence.

Professor Loeber was the ideal recipient of this honor. He currently is Distinguished University Professor of Psychiatry, and Professor of Psychology, and Epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is Director of the Life History Research Program and is the principal investigator of three longitudinal studies: the Pittsburgh Youth Study, the Developmental Trends Study, and the Pittsburgh Girls Study. Without interruption since 1983, he has been the recipient of major grants for his research from several funding agencies, including the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Institute of Justice, and a number of smaller organizations.

Professor Loeber has published widely in the fields of juvenile antisocial behavior and delinquency, substance

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use, and mental health problems. In developmental/life course criminology studies, he has published both empirical and review articles. In the empirical realm, for example, he has focused on numerous topics, including developmental pathways to serious forms of delinquency, the contribution of family processes, biological factors, and antecedents to homicide offending and victimization.

He is recorded as among the most frequently cited and prolific authors in many disciplines, and his research is truly international. He is the 74th most cited psychologists who are members of the American Psychological Association, a group that has approximately 150,000 members. Among criminologists, he currently is the 11th most cited. Overall, he is the author or co-author on almost 250 peer-reviewed papers, 12 books, and over 130 chapters. With Marc LeBlanc, he published two seminal papers on developmental/life course criminology in 1990 and 1998 when that field was still emerging. His work is international in that it comprises research in developmental/life course criminology studies in North America and Europe. With David P. Farrington, he co-chaired in the United States three study groups, one on serious and violent offenders, a second on child delinquents, and a third on the transition between juvenile offending and adult crime. Each of these study groups was then replicated in Europe with a team of scholars of the Netherlands and other parts of Europe, leading to separate book-sized publications. In the Netherlands, he held a professorship for 15 years until June 2012, when he reached the Dutch retirement age.

In addition to being so well published in multiple disciplines relating to criminology and developmental sciences, he has published widely in other scholarly areas. Notably, for example, he has published extensively in Irish colonial history, architecture, and social and economic history (6 books and 59 articles). His most recent book, *The Architecture of Ireland, 1600–2000* is in press with Yale University Press.

Professor Loeber has a number of elected memberships. For example, he is Senior Fellow, NSCR (Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement, Amsterdam, Netherlands); Institute Fellow, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England; Life Fellow, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England; Fellow, American Society of Criminology; and Fellow, American Psychological Association. He also is an elected member of the Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen (Royal Academy of Sciences) in the Netherlands, and the Royal Irish Academy in Ireland.

Professor Loeber's lecture was the second in our series (see Levesque 2011), and the resulting article breaks new ground for the journal and journals similarly devoted to the

multidisciplinary study of adolescent development. The first Elliott Lecture was presented by Piquero (2011), a noted criminologist who presented his groundbreaking work on criminal careers. That research is well represented in this journal, particularly by Piquero and his colleagues (see Goldweber et al. 2011). Professor Loeber's topic, which focuses on developmental aspects of killings, is markedly new to developmental journals centered on the multidisciplinary study of adolescence. Notably, the journal, and its peers, increasingly publish research on violence with weapons (Stoddard et al. 2011) as well as severe violence (Estrada-Martínez et al. 2011), including suicidal behaviors (Gomez et al. 2011; Jacobson et al. 2011; Verona and Javadani 2011). But, extreme violence such as killings remains rarely explored in developmental journals like ours. Given that, we could not be more pleased to have Professor Loeber present his truly cutting-edge research in this area. Since so few researchers who study homicide so actively have adopted a developmental framework and have such rich data to support it, we hope that his invited article, which addresses key developmental questions, will increase interest in this field and the many questions it raises. Even though Professor Loeber's data remains unmatched, and so few developmentalists focusing of the adolescent period can parallel his efforts, his work raises numerous theoretical, methodological, and practical issues that continue to influence the field and serves as an exemplar of well-conducted research with immense societal import.

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