Richard J. Estes: Pioneer in International and Comparative Social Indicators Research

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Richard J. Estes was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. He is a graduate of LaSalle University (1965) with majors in literature and philosophy, the University of Pennsylvania (1967) where he earned a master's degree in social work, and the University of California at Berkeley (1973) where he earned a doctorate in social welfare. He also received a post-graduate degree in Psychiatric Social Work from the Menninger Foundation now in Texas but originally located in Topeka, Kansas (1968).

Estes' research interests are quite broad and include: *international and comparative social development; the history of well-being; global poverty; diversity-related social conflict; Islamic development trends; measures to counteract national and international terrorism; private philanthropy; social indicators; the shifting "welfare mix"; the public/private partnership in human services; vulnerable population groups, including sexually exploited children and youth; strategic and long-range planning; resource development and fundraising; and, evaluative research.* At the center of all these interests is the use of research as a method of acquiring knowledge for advancing the human condition more generally and that of individuals and collectives at "social risk" more specifically.

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Within the field of quality of life research, Prof. Estes is particularly known for his regional and worldwide studies of the changing status of the world's nations in providing for the basic social and material needs of their growing populations (Estes 1992). He established a unique *Index of Social Progress* (ISP) for use in carrying out these analyses. More than 40 years of original time-series data were collected in applying the ISP in its statistically weighted form, the WISP, to this extensive body of research (Estes 1984, 1988, 1998, 2005b). Estes' research assigns particular attention to understanding the underlying dynamics of increasing disparities between rich and poor countries (Estes 2007) as well as those that characterize the world's historically disadvantaged population groups, e.g., the poor, women and children, the aged, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, involuntary migrants, and other groups of socially excluded persons (Estes 2003, 2005a).

Estes has been widely recognized for his innovative research on quality of life. He was the recipient of two *Fulbright-Hays Senior Research Awards* (Iran, 1978 and Norway, 1979) and a *Fulbright Scholar Award* to Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea (1994). In 1992, he was elected "Social Worker of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers for his international activities. In 1996 he received the Alumni Recognition Award from the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Social Work. In 1997 he was awarded the *Distinguished Recent Contribution to Social Work Education Award* by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the *International Rhoda G. Sarnat Award* of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the "Best Article in *Social Indicators Research* Award of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS). In 2002 he was appointed *Distinguished Visiting Scholar of United College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* where he served as an External Examiner for the University's Department of Social Work until 2014. In 2005, the Global Commission of the Council on Social Work Education awarded Dr. Estes its prestigious *Partner in International Education Award*. In January, 2014 Dr. Estes was inducted into the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW). In recent years, Prof. Estes, along with his colleagues Habib Tiliouine of Algeria and M. Joseph Sirgy of Virginia Tech, has become very interested in development trends occurring in Islamic nations and has published extensively on this subject (Estes and Tiliouine 2014; Estes and Sirgy 2014; Tiliouine and Estes 2015).

Estes served as President of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) from 2004 to 2006. For his outstanding contributions to the Society, ISQOLS recognized him in 2007 with the Society's *Distinguished Quality of Life Research Award*. In 2013, ISQOLS established its first endowed lectureship in Dr. Estes' honor, the "Richard J. Estes Lecture in International and Comparative Quality of Life Research" which is delivered annually by prominent international scholars as part of the Society's international conference. Along with M. Joseph Sirgy and Alex Michalos, Dr. Estes was a founding editor of this journal in 2005. He served as the journal's Editor-in-Chief for the period 2011–2014.

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