

## #486 Special Event

5/25/2009

5:00 p.m. - 5:50 p.m.

West 301 CD

### Presidential Address

Chair: William L. Heward (Ohio State University)

### Why Are We Not Acting to Save Lives? RAYMOND G. MILTENBERGER (University of South Florida)



**Dr. Ray Miltenberger** received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Western Michigan University in 1985 after completing a pre-doctoral internship at the Kennedy Institute at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Currently, he is the director of the Master's Program in Applied Behavior Analysis at the University of South Florida. Dr. Miltenberger serves on the Executive Councils of ABAI and FABA and is a member of the board of directors of SABA. He is on the editorial boards of JABA, Behavioral Interventions, and Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions and serves as an associate editor for Behavior Analysis in Practice and Education and Treatment of Children. Dr. Miltenberger's research

focuses on teaching safety skills to children and individuals with mental retardation, analysis and treatment of repetitive behavior disorders, and functional assessment and treatment of problem behaviors. He has published over 175 journal articles and chapters, has co-edited a text on analysis and treatment of tics and repetitive behavior disorders, and has written a behavior modification textbook, now in its fourth edition. Dr. Miltenberger has received a number of awards for his teaching and research including the 2008 APA Division 25 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Applied Behavioral Research.

**Abstract:** Applied behavior analysis has a rich history of helping people change a wide range of socially significant behaviors. In spite of ABA's great success in changing behaviors to better people's lives, some life-or-death behaviors have not received as much attention from behavior analysts. Let's face it, many people regularly fail to engage in safe behaviors and instead, willingly engage in unsafe behaviors that can (and often do) end up killing them. Changing these behaviors has the potential not only to better people's lives but to save lives. If behavior analysts did a better job of saving lives, recognition of behavior analysis and its contributions to society would likely grow. In this address I will discuss what I believe to be important target behaviors for behavior analysts to address in future research and practice with the likely impact of saving lives. I will review some of my own work in safety skills training as an exemplar of this research and discuss important issues that need to be addressed in future research and dissemination efforts.