

- On February 15, 2006, 18-year-old Jennifer Ann Crecente, a senior in high school, accompanied her ex-boyfriend to check out a car he wanted to buy. Unfortunately, he had made up that story to get Jen into the woods where he had hidden the shotgun that he would use to shoot her in the back of the head. Her body was found two days later. (See Chapter 7, “Primary and Secondary Victims of Homicide,” for more details about Jen’s murder based on interviews with her father, Drew.) (Crecente, 2020)
- From 2004 to 2018, Rachel W. was sexually harassed by a member of her congregation. Victimized over a period of 14 years when she was in her 50s and 60s, Rachel wants those studying victimology to know that sexual harassment can happen at any age and that it can be prolonged and not just a one-time occurrence. (Interview with the author, 2020)
- Six-year-old Danny vanished on December 1, 1992. A year later, Jeffrey Rinek, an FBI agent specializing in missing children, was assigned to Danny’s cold case (defined as an unsolved crime that occurred at least a year before). It took until 1998 for Rinek to find Danny’s remains. For various technical reasons, no one could be charged in the case but finding Danny’s remains enabled his sister (Danny’s mother had already passed away) to have a memorial service for her brother which was attended by Rinek, his wife, and their sons, among others. (Rinek and Strong, 2018; Rinek Interviews with the author, 2021.)



Jennifer Ann Crecente at age 16 on a trip in 2004 to Hawaii for an APA (American Psychological Association) conference. Photo credit: Dr. Elizabeth L. Richeson, Jen’s grandmother

These three real-life examples are just a few of the types of cases and victims that are included in this new textbook on victimology, *Essentials of Victimology*. What is victimology? It will be defined again in the first chapter, but for those who are reading this Preface, it is the scientific study of victims, especially victims of crime, including the victim-offender relationship and the aftermath of the victims’ experiences such as how crime impacts the victim physically, emotionally, legally, and financially. Victimology also addresses the interactions of crime victims with the criminal justice system, if they decide to report the crime.

Victimology has become a popular undergraduate course for anyone pursuing a career in criminology, criminal justice, forensic psychology, victimology, and such related professions

as law enforcement, law, corrections, rehabilitation counseling, social work, and victim advocacy. It is also being taught at the graduate level in master's programs in criminal justice, criminology, victim services, and forensic psychology; as part of police academy training; and in some law schools. Crime victim advocacy training at rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and counseling centers offering help to a wider range of victims also look to victimology for a greater understanding of those who are victimized as well as those who respond to victims including police, medical personnel, crime victim advocates, lawyers, and prosecutors.

*Essentials of Victimology* is a new textbook for anyone seeking to gain a fundamental understanding of victimology.

The victimology courses I teach are almost always closed out because the course is so popular. What might account for that popularity? A frequent comment from my students is, "All my other courses focus on the criminal. I wanted to learn more about the victim."

*Essentials of Victimology* will provide you with an awareness of the evolution of the discipline of victimology, as well as an understanding of the early and current victimology theories, and a discussion of such key concepts as *victim blame*, *victim precipitation*, *repeat victimization*, the *just world hypothesis*, and *system blaming*, among others. (All these terms are defined in Chapter 3, "The Discipline of Victimology: Founders, Theories, and Controversies.")

The question, "Who are the victims?" is a pervasive theme in the study of victimology and all its related issues. By reading this textbook, you will acquire a deeper insight as to *who the victims are* of all the major violent, property, and economic crimes such as murder, rape and sexual abuse, robbery, burglary, larceny/theft, child abuse, dating violence, school violence, workplace violence, hate crimes, terrorism, stalking, domestic violence, elder abuse, cybercrime, white-collar crime, and even some rarely addressed victim issues such as animal cruelty and natural disasters.

*Essentials of Victimology* is based on the research, teaching, writing, and victim advocacy that this author has been participating in for more than four decades and, since August 2014, at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a senior college in The City University of New York. Every semester since Fall 2015, including most winter and summer breaks over the last few years, this author has taught "Victimology" at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and, in Spring 2021, at Iona College as well.

## WHAT ESSENTIALS OF VICTIMOLOGY COVERS

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The first six chapters of *Essentials of Victimology* cover the basics that a student of victimology needs to know, including definitions of major crimes experienced by the victims discussed in this textbook (Chapter 1), an anthropological and historical view of how the rights of crime victims have evolved over time (Chapter 2), the founders, theories, and controversies behind victimology, such as *victim blame* and *victim precipitation* (Chapter 3), and why and how we measure crime and victimization (Chapter 4).

In Chapter 5, there is a discussion of victims and their interactions with the criminal justice system, namely the police, the courts, and corrections, including prisons. You will also read about related issues, such as the need for the criminal justice system to avoid inflicting on victims what has been referred to as the "second injury," a concept popularized by

former police officer and psychiatrist Dr. Martin Symonds, who specialized in crime victims. (Symonds, 1980).

In Chapter 6, the discussion focuses on medical, psychological, and financial help for victims, including ER examinations, crisis intervention, trauma therapy, PTSD, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR). Also discussed in Chapter 6 is the option of civil suits that victims could consider pursuing since technically that is outside of the criminal justice system.

From Chapter 7 through Chapter 15, major violent, property, and white-collar or economic crimes are explored in separate chapters beginning with the primary (direct) and secondary (family members and friends) victims of homicide (Chapter 7); followed by property crime victims including robbery, burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, graffiti, vandalism, and arson (Chapter 8); and cybercrime, white-collar crime, and economic crime victims (Chapter 9).

The next two chapters focus on child and teen victims, addressing issues such as abuse, neglect, and family violence affecting children and teen under age 12 (Chapter 10) and teen and college victims (Chapter 11) including dating violence and school violence.

Chapter 12 covers victims of sexual violence including rape, sexual abuse, assault, and harassment and Chapter 13 deals with assault, domestic violence, stalking, and elder abuse.

Victims of the criminal justice system including inmates who have been hurt or even extorted during imprisonment, those who have been falsely arrested, and challenges faced by the families of the incarcerated, are explored in Chapter 14.

Chapter 15 looks at various special victim populations including victims of workplace crime, terrorism, and human trafficking; people with intellectual, physical, and mental disabilities and disorders; and substance abuse victims. Also discussed in this chapter are victims of hate crimes related to race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, including victims because they are members of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) community. The chapter concludes with a discussion of animal cruelty and wildlife crime victims, natural disaster victims, and cruise ship victims. In addressing those situations, the focus is on the victim of a crime rather than a more general examination of those issues.

Finally, Chapter 16 provides information about more than 60 careers that are directly or indirectly related to victimology, victims, and the media, as well as considerations about the future of the field.

## TYPICAL QUESTIONS THAT *ESSENTIALS OF VICTIMOLOGY* WILL ANSWER

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Some of the myriad of questions this textbook will answer (in addition to “Who are the victims?”) include:

- What are the rights of a crime victim?
- Is it possible to be concerned about the rights of victims without diminishing the rights of the offender?
- What are the earliest theories of victimization that relied on victim typologies?
- What are the next victimization theories, the so-called “opportunity” theories?
- What about alternatives to incarceration, like restorative justice? Does the victim have to agree to participate in it?

- Who is the typical victim of each type of major violent or property crime? In terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, location (rural, suburban, urban), and socioeconomic factors, who is most likely to be a victim of each particular crime?
- What is white-collar crime and who are its most common victims?
- What are the reasons behind reporting or non-reporting to the police for different types of crime victimization?
- What is *victim blame* and why is it so harmful to victims?
- What is a clearance rate and why do clearance rates matter?
- What is the likelihood, even if a victim reports the crime, that the case will go to trial rather than be resolved through plea bargaining?
- What is the distinction between crime prevention and crime victimization reduction? How can we accomplish either or both?
- In addition to becoming a victimologist or crime victim advocate, what other careers will benefit from the study of victimology?

## INTRODUCING YOU TO THIS TEXTBOOK

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Publishing a new textbook on victimology does not take away from the many excellent victimology textbooks already available (Karmen, 2020; Doerner and Lab, 2021; Daigle, 2018; Burgess, 2019; Daigle and Muftic, 2020; Fisher, Reyns, and Sloan III, 2016; Wallace and Roberson, 2018; Turvey, 2014; and Clevenger, et al., 2018). So why another one? Some of the reasons are delineated below. For starters, *Essentials of Victimology* takes a more multi-disciplined approach than most other textbooks. In addition to sociology, criminology, and victimology, this textbook looks to anthropology, history, law, psychology, psychiatry, social work, medicine, nursing, and communication studies for insights and answers. For example, in Chapter 2, you will discover a discussion about the way victims and their families and communities have dealt with violent or property crimes in two cultures: the Comanches of North America and the Inuit (previously known as the Eskimos) of the Arctic.

In Chapter 6, when addressing the medical and psychological aftermath of victimization, this author studied the research or interviewed practitioners from psychology, psychiatry, forensic psychology, medicine, and social work, as well as sociology and criminology. You will learn about psychological research into how to conduct a better or cognitive victim interview. (Fisher and Geiselman, 2010)

Certain topics receive more extensive treatment in this textbook than in others. For example, in Chapter 10 on child victims, there is a more in-depth discussion about sibling sexual abuse, a type of child and teenage sexual abuse that is rarely or minimally addressed in other textbooks even though researchers, such as David Finkelhor, estimate that sibling sexual abuse is *five times* more common than father-daughter (parent-child) incest. (Finkelhor, 1980).

In this textbook, child victims have their own chapter (Chapters 10), as do teens and college victims (Chapter 11).

Chapter 14, on victims *of* the criminal justice system, is a unique chapter in a victimology textbook that includes a discussion of victims of police brutality, prisoners who are victims, those who have been falsely accused, as well as the too often overlooked plight of the families of the incarcerated.

In Chapter 15, special situations, like hate crimes, and animal cruelty, wildlife crime, and natural disaster victims, are highlighted.

According to peer reviewers, one of the many strengths of *Essentials of Victimology* is the inclusion of numerous first-person interviews with crime victims or experts. Rather than just paraphrasing what victims, or those working with victims, have to say, you will read verbatim quotes from those interviews. Although verbatim quotes may sometimes only be just a line or two, other times, quotes are shared in a more extensive way, especially in the Profiles included in a majority of chapters.

More than 125 respondents were interviewed by this author in researching this textbook. Interviewees were found by posting multiple queries between April 2020 and April 2021 requesting respondents through HARO (Help a Reporter Out), a free three-times-a-day publicity newsletter that is distributed to an estimated database of 800,000 potential readers, according to Cision, the company that owns and administers it. The decision whether an interviewee would be used anonymously or, with permission, for attribution was made on a case-by-case basis. (You will know if an interviewee is named or anonymous by the name associated with that interview. Complete names indicate attribution. Pseudonyms are indicated by a first name and last initial, such as Christine R.)

Additional interviewees were found through the social media site LinkedIn.com, as well as by following up on press releases sent by publicists whose clients had just published a book, released a study, or announced a new website or program related to crime or victimization. I also followed up on my own internet and print publication research, e-mailing victims or, in the case of homicide, their family members. On May 10, 2020, through Survey Monkey Audience, this author purchased a survey panel that enabled contact with 225 male and female respondents from throughout the United States to complete a 10-question survey developed about crime victimization. Key questions included whether respondents had been the victim of a crime and if they had, if that crime had been reported to the police.

Whether named or anonymous, all the quotes from interviews included as examples in this textbook are true even if some of the identifying details had to be changed to conceal and protect the identity of those who wished to remain anonymous.

Consider that beginning on January 1, 2021, the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) replaced the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) which was how crime data had been collected and published by the FBI since 1930, for almost 100 years. The NIBRS and the other major U.S. source of crime data, the National Crime Victim Survey (NCVS), are explored in Chapter 4, “Measuring Victimization: Why and How.”

In this textbook, you will also read quotes from memoirs, TED Talks, or original interviews with victims who might surprise you because these victims have not been anyone’s focus before. For example, Kerri Rawson shared in our phone interview and in the guest interview via Zoom that she did with three of my classes at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (Victimology, Criminology, and Penology) about her life ever since she learned that her father was a serial killer. Author of *A Serial Killer’s Daughter*, Kerri revealed how she sees herself, her brother, and her mother as crime victims. Kerri says she was unaware that her father was leading the double life of a husband, devoted father, and worker when, 16 years ago, in 2005, when Kerri was 26 years old, an FBI agent knocked on her door. Once inside, he told her that her father had just been arrested for killing eight people. (The death toll was increased to ten, partly based on information that Kerri was able to provide related to one of their neighbors who was murdered.) (Rawson, phone and Zoom interviews, 2020; Rawson, 2019)

## THE CHALLENGE OF OVERLAPPING CRIMES

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Some information discussed in one chapter may also be an issue addressed or mentioned in other chapters. Take cybercrime, for example. Although it is primarily an economic crime, including identity theft and credit card fraud it is discussed in Chapter 9 on white-collar and economic crimes, not conventional property crimes. But cyberstalking, a form of cybercrime, is mentioned in reference to stalking in Chapter 13 (“Victims of Assault, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Elder Abuse”). Because cybercrime also includes cyberbullying, it is mentioned in Chapter 10, “Child Victims.” Just be aware as you read *Essentials of Victimology* that you might find information about a particular crime and its victims in more than one chapter. These seeming repetitions are unavoidable, and intentional.

## CHAPTER STRUCTURE

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Here is what you can expect in each of the chapters that follow.

### 1. Learning Objectives

These learning objectives list what you can expect to have learned after you have read the chapter.

### 2. Core of the Chapter

You will read facts, examples, excerpts from verbatim interviews, statistics, tables, and charts related to that chapter’s content.

### 3. Profile

This is a section in many chapters; it is one or more extensive interviews that is related to the topics explored in the chapter.

### 4. Summary

At the end of each chapter, there is a summary of what you have just read, highlighting key information covered in that chapter. The summary will reinforce what you are learning and better prepare you for any quizzes or tests.

### 5. Key Terms

This is a list of the key terms that were presented and defined, in the chapter. The style is to bold face a key term the first time it is defined or where it is significant, not incidental, in a chapter. (Key terms are also defined again, in alphabetical order, in the master Glossary for the entire textbook at the end of the textbook.)

## 6. Review Questions

Every chapter has a list of questions to help you to review the chapter's essential information that you have learned. By asking, and answering, these questions you can keep yourself on track throughout the semester.

## 7. Critical Thinking Questions

You will find critical thinking questions intended to help you apply what you have learned. These questions are constructed in a way that will hopefully challenge you to think creatively and critically about what you have learned.

## 8. Activities and Exercises

At least one or more activities or exercises related to the chapter's subject matter are provided. You could carry out these activities on your own or as class work if your professor organizes one or all of these activities together. Group activities can be organized in person or online via the Breakout Room function if the videoconferencing program your professor is using offers that feature.

## 9. Resources

This section includes related associations, agencies, or organizations of note, annotated listings, with their websites.

## 10. Cited Works and Additional References

Any works that were cited in the previous chapter will be listed in alphabetical order, beginning with the last name of the author. Additional references are also included.

## 11. Videos, Films, Documentaries, or Podcasts

This last section includes any videos, films, documentaries, or podcasts related to the chapter.

## MY BACKGROUND

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Although a fine arts major in college, I was fascinated by sociology and took undergraduate courses in that field. Then, in my senior year, something happened that would lead to my personal motivation to study crime victims. My older brother, Seth Barkas, who was 23, an NYU graduate, married, the father of a five-year-old, with another son on the way, was stabbed by a teenage gang during a robbery as he was walking to his car to return home to his apartment in Forest Hills, Queens. A freelance writer, he had been attending an off-off Broadway play in Manhattan that he was assigned to write about for a major national theater newspaper. He died several days later from his injuries.



Seth Alan Barkas (1945-1969)  
Contributed photo.

At this funeral, I had my first experience with what I now know is referred to as *victim blame*. Even though my brother was a freelance theater critic, doing his job, reviewing a play in Manhattan on assignment, several people at the funeral asked me in an accusatory tone why he was out at night as if he was to blame for what happened to him. Although I did not act on the way that question made me feel right away, it did stay with me. It would, indeed, within a few years, shape my future career path.

My brother's murder was traumatic and a complete shock, but I did not initially do anything related to crime or crime victims. Instead, after I graduated college, I spent a year studying art therapy at Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia. My two semester-long internships included working with those diagnosed with a psychotic disorder at Philadelphia General Hospital and then interning at a city-run home in South Philadelphia where children who had been removed from an abusive household had been temporarily placed.

At the end of that year, I decided against becoming an art therapist and began working as an editorial assistant at Macmillan Publishing Company in the school division. Three years later, after working for a year at Grove Press, Inc., Scribner's published my first nonfiction book on the history of vegetarianism, *The Vegetable Passion*.

While that book was in production, I found myself drawn to trying to understand the criminal justice system and what happened to my brother five years before. I enrolled in the master's in criminal justice program at Goddard College Graduate Program. My mentor and advisor was Dr. Arthur Niederhoffer, a former police officer who was a Professor in the Department of Sociology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and author of *Behind the Shield*. My master's thesis was on "Victims of Crime and Social Change."

The year after I graduated with my masters, Scribner's published my book on crime victims, *Victims*, that I had been researching and writing for four years. A year later, it was published in the United Kingdom by Peel Press.

Even before I completed my master's degree, I began teaching college level courses. The first course, "The Roots of Violence," I taught at The New School. To conduct research for that course, I visited the morgue, went on several ride-a-longs with the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and immersed myself in the criminal justice system by interviewing crime victims, offenders, police officers, ADAs (assistant district attorneys), victim advocates, criminologists, judges, and defense attorneys as well as attending criminal proceedings, visiting prisons such as Attica Correctional Facility in New York State, and even interviewing the head of Scotland Yard in London. I also visited police departments in Paris and Amsterdam and throughout the U.S. including Boston, and shelters for domestic violence victims in London and Texas. I taught courses in criminal justice and juvenile delinquency at Temple University.

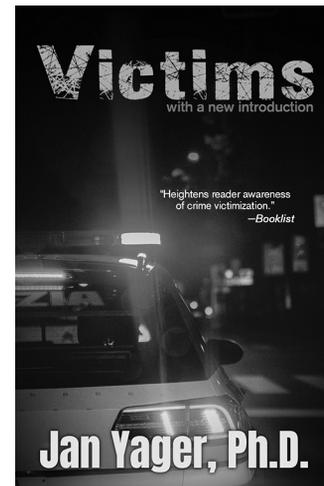
I followed up by spending the next four years obtaining my Ph.D. in sociology from The City University of New York Graduate Center. One of my three areas of expertise was deviance and crime, which I studied under deviance expert and criminologist Edward Sagarin. After graduation, I taught criminology and sociology courses fulltime for two years at the New York Institute of Technology.

I took time off from college teaching to raise my two sons but once they were older, I returned to teaching, first at the University of Connecticut, at the Stamford campus (1999-2006), and then, since 2014, in the Department of Sociology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. At John Jay, where I am an Adjunct Associate Professor, I have taught Victimology along with courses in Penology, Criminology, International Criminology, and, alternatively, other courses including Race and Ethnic Relations, Introduction to Sociology, among others. I have also taught undergraduate courses in victimology, criminology, penology, sociology, forensic health (graduate), qualitative research (graduate), and public speaking at other

colleges and universities in the Tri-State area including William Paterson University, Kean University, New York Film Academy, and Iona College.

Over the years, my practical experience has included working at a crime victim hotline, taking the 40-hour training to become a volunteer at a local rape crisis center, participating in a reentry volunteer program for women at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, developing and running a part-time crime prevention resource center in New York City for two years, that was housed at Marymount Manhattan College, and, for 1-1/2 years, being a participant observer in a support group for adult survivors of childhood and teenage sexual abuse.

I have continued conducting original research by interviewing crime victims, and those who help them, including adding excerpts from some of those interviews in the newer introductions, along with the updated bibliography, resource section, and statistics, to my book *Victims*, most recently updated and published by Hannacroix Creek Books, Inc. Additional victim and service provider interviews have been conducted by phone and via Zoom as recently as August 2021.



2021 version of *Victims* with a new introduction, originally published by Scribner's.

## A SPECIAL NOTE TO STUDENTS WHO ARE READING THIS TEXTBOOK

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I have written this new victimology textbook as if you are a student in my Victimology class. I have discovered from years of teaching victimology, as well as criminology, penology, and the sociology of deviance, that what students find most interesting are the original interviews with crime victims and other experts who graciously consented to be guest speakers in my courses. Some of those guest presentations, as well as additional interviews that I conducted in-person, by phone, or via Zoom, are excerpted throughout this textbook.

But students also need to learn the statistics about who are the most typical victims of a particular crime and if there are any notable trends to consider. For example, in 2019, of the 267,988 reported robberies in the United States, 509 resulted in the death of the victim or what is known as a robbery-homicide. The phrase, “Your money or your life,” may be a cliché, but it is often said by the robbers and, as that 509 number indicates, for 509 victims, for them the robbery was fatal. (FBI, *2019 Crime in the United States*, “Expanded Homicide Data Table 10”) Students also need to be aware of the classic and contemporary peer-reviewed articles related to crime victims that are pivotal to the study of victimology.

This textbook is structured for a traditional twice a week, or once a week, 16-week course over 4 months, assigning and covering a chapter a week. If your college or university follows a 14-week semester schedule, your professor can double up chapters over several weeks. Because of my experiences with in-person as well as distance or online learning, I know this textbook will work in either in-person or remote learning formats; it should also work in a hybrid one.

At the product page for this book at the publisher's website, [www.wklegaledu.com](http://www.wklegaledu.com), there are materials available in two sections: the Instructor's portion, which is password protected, and the Student section, which is not. Instructors will be advised how to make any password protected materials available to their students, such as the chapter-by-chapter Power Points unique to *Essentials of Victimology*, if they choose to do so.

Students may freely download any of the materials posted at the product page for this book archived in the Student portion of the product page. Materials will include Appendices such as The Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA) (2004) or Tips on Responding to Survivors of Homicide Victims. Students will also find additional Resources, References, and listings for Videos, Podcasts, Films, or Documentaries, organized chapter by chapter.

Please note that all these materials, unless it is a government publication and/or in the public domain, are copyright protected meaning the materials are for individual educational use only. Please do not repost, copy, publish or share these materials without written permission from the publisher.

## A SUGGESTION TO THOSE OFFERING TRAINING AT CRISIS CENTERS OR IN OTHER PROGRAMS

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*Essentials of Victimology* was written with the idea that every chapter is pivotal to the field of victimology. However, if this textbook is being used for training at a crisis center, depending upon the type of crime victim that the center focuses on, some chapters could be optional or skipped. If this textbook is being used as part of police academy training, although police officers would benefit from reading the entire book, if there is only time to cover a couple of chapters, these chapters would be recommended: Chapter 5, "Victims and the Criminal Justice System," Chapter 6, "Helping the Victim," and as many of the chapters on specific crime victims as possible, from Chapter 7, "Primary and Secondary Victims of Homicide," through Chapter 15. For a training for crime victim advocates specializing in sexual violence victims, these chapters might be most pertinent: Preface, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and especially Chapters 10, 11, and 12, "Sexual Violence."

Please visit my website, <https://www.drjanyager.com>, where you will find blogs on a range of topics and a resource section that you might want to explore.

Although personal replies cannot be guaranteed, you are welcome to write to me with suggestions, comments, or additional materials related to *Essentials of Victimology*.

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Jan Yager, Ph.D.  
Photo credit: Fred Yager

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