

London delivers prestigious Harvard lecture

By Ernie Hood

NIEHS researcher Stephanie London, M.D., Dr.P.H., has shown that Thomas Wolfe was wrong — you can, in fact, go home again — as she returned Nov. 19 to her academic home at the Harvard School of Public Health to deliver the 17th annual James L. Whittenberger lecture.

London received her bachelor's, master's, doctorate, and medical degrees from Harvard. So it was entirely appropriate that [London](#), deputy chief of the NIEHS Epidemiology Branch and head of the Genetics, Environment, and Respiratory Disease Group, was selected to give the keynote [address](#)

(<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/environmental-health/upcoming-events/past-whittenberger-symposiums/17th-whittenberger-symposium-november-19-2014/>) at the symposium.

The annual event honors the memory of James L. Whittenberger, M.D., who was the founder and director of the Harvard NIEHS Center for Environmental Health, and chair of the Department of Physiology at the Harvard School of Public Health for 32 years. The symposium and lecture were named in his honor in 1983.

London's lecture, "Smoking and the Epigenome Across the Lifecourse," summarized one aspect of her group's [research](#), which revealed epigenetic processes that may underlie a connection between maternal smoking and several adverse health effects among children of smoking mothers, such as low birth weight, some childhood cancers, impaired lung function, and early respiratory illnesses.

A distinguished legacy

The roster of past Whittenberger Symposium [speakers](#) (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/environmental-health/upcoming-events/past-whittenberger-symposiums/>)

reads like a who's who of environmental health sciences, including NIEHS directors and several prominent NIEHS grantees, such as Philip Landrigan, M.D., from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (2009), Caroline Tanner, M.D., Ph.D., from the University of California, San Francisco (2012), former NIEHS Director David Schwartz, M.D., now at the University of Colorado School of Medicine (2007), and current Director of NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., who presented the [lecture](#) in 2010.

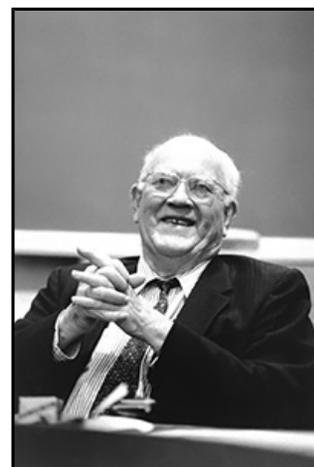
London was welcomed and introduced by Douglas Dockery, Sc.D., chair of the Department of Environmental Health at the Harvard School of Public Health, and director of the Harvard NIEHS Center for Environmental Health.

"The opportunity to give the Whittenberger Lecture was a dream come true," said London. "My years of experience and education at Harvard have shaped my whole scientific career, so it was both humbling and uplifting to return there and share some of what I've learned with my Harvard colleagues and their students."

(Ernie Hood is a contract writer with the NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison.)



London's research group focuses on genetics and the environment in relation to respiratory endpoints, including asthma, pulmonary function, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



James Whittenberger (Photo courtesy of Harvard University)

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