

## **2017 Thomas Jefferson Award to Dr. Alice Ammerman**

Presented Sept 8, 2017 at Faculty Council Meeting, by Dr. Beth Mayer-Davis, Cary C. Boshamer Distinguished Professor and Chair, Department of Nutrition

I'm delighted to provide a few comments about my esteemed colleague, Alice Ammerman.

Following her Bachelor of Arts degree from Duke in Comparative Area Studies focusing on Africa with a minor in Cultural Anthropology, Alice received her doctorate in public health nutrition here at UNC Chapel Hill in 1990. Since 2006, Alice has been a Professor of Nutrition in the UNC Department of Nutrition in the Gillings School of Public Health and the School of Medicine. She has served as the Director of the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention since 2004, which is one of the premiere CDC funded Centers of this type in the country, with wide-ranging impact on delivery of prevention services in North Carolina and, through a major training initiative, in many states throughout the country.

Alice is widely recognized for the impact of her work in the areas of nutrition policy associated with childhood obesity, sustainable agriculture as it relates to improved nutrition, and social entrepreneurship as a sustainable approach to addressing public health concerns. Alice's research, teaching and service are perfectly aligned. Her work has focused on reducing health inequities, particularly, those around diet and nutrition, and she has worked with communities in some of the most vulnerable regions of North Carolina. Indeed, Dr. Ammerman is known and beloved across the state. She has created and evaluated innovations in program delivery that have included such novel components as jobs creation. Alice has demonstrated consistently that research can embody service to the community as well as teaching through mentoring of students at all levels. Alice has the capacity, in her quiet way, to focus and motivate those around her to strive for excellence, with a clear and constant focus on improving the health of the population, especially for those living in under-resourced settings. She is courageous and determined, not afraid to stand up for what is important. Whether it is taking on the "Food For All Local and Global Perspectives", UNC's academic theme for 2015-2017, or serving on Faculty Assembly, Dr. Ammerman is the kind of senior faculty member who sets a the standard for citizenship and service.

As most presenters, I read through a number of quotes attributed to Thomas Jefferson and came upon this, extracted from a communication from Jefferson to James Madison, Feb 20, 1784: "Life is of no value but as it brings gratifications. among the most valuable of these is rational society. it informs the mind, sweetens the temper, cheers our spirits, and promotes health." Surely this sentiment is exemplified by the work of Alice Ammerman throughout her efforts as she seamlessly interweaves teaching and mentoring, research, and service to her community.