

Applied Mathematics and Statistics
Special Department Seminar:
The Carolyn & Edward Wenk Lecture in Technology
and
Public Policy

The Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics of the Whiting School of Engineering at The Johns Hopkins University is proud to host the Carolyn and Edward Wenk Lecture for this year.

Stephen Fienberg, the Maurice Falk University Professor of Statistics and Social Science at Carnegie Mellon University will speak on

**Making Forensic Science More Scientific: Statistics and the Evaluation
of Forensic Evidence**

Please join us

Thursday, November 6, 2008 at 4:00 PM

Room: CSEB B17

Refreshments will be served after the seminar.

Abstract: Forensic science is under increasing attack, especially in the U.S. This is the consequence of the confluence of a number of elements including (a) continued revelations of wrongful convictions linked to faulty forensic evidence, (b) the resounding success of DNA and other genetic evidence in a forensic context, and (c) the “CSI Effect”—the expectation of infallible high tech forensic tools that are part of the popular weekly crime show, Crime Scene Investigation. In this talk I will describe a potpourri of forensic tools (e.g., the polygraph, eyewitness testimony, traditional fingerprinting, and new computer forensic tools), legal cases in which they arise, some assessments of their accuracy especially in reports from the National Research Council. In particular, I focus on the role statistics plays in their evaluation and legal credibility.

About Stephen Fienberg:

Stephen E. Fienberg is Maurice Falk University Professor of Statistics and Social Science at Carnegie Mellon University, in the Department of Statistics and the Machine Learning Department in the School of Computer Science. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in statistics, and has served on the faculties of the University of Chicago, University of Minnesota, Carnegie Mellon, and York University in Toronto, where he was Academic Vice President. He is an member of the National Academy of Sciences where he chaired its Committee to Review the Scientific Evidence on the Polygraph earlier this decade, and organized the Sackler Colloquium on Forensic Science in 2005. He is also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Royal Society of Canada. He has authored numerous papers and books on the aspects of statistics and the law, was the founding chair of the American Statistical Association's Committee on Law and Justice Statistics, and has served as one of the organizers of the triennial Symposium on Forensic Statistics. He has also served as co-chair of the American Judicature Society's Commission on Forensic Science and Public Policy, along with former Attorney General Janet Reno and former FBI and CIA Director William Webster.