



2009 HES Distinguished Alumnus Award

Ronny Bell, Ph.D. consistently exemplifies UNCG's motto of "service." His work is dedicated to improving the quality of medical services in underserved populations and improving minority peoples' access to quality medical care. Dr. Bell earned his Bachelor's degree in public health nutrition from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1985. He came to the UNCG School of Human Environmental Sciences to earn his masters degree in 1993 and his doctorate in 1998, both in nutrition.

Dr. Bell is a registered member of the Lumbee tribe. His doctoral research explored how a community-based nutrition education program might lower dietary cancer risks in adult Lumbee Indian women in Robeson County, North Carolina. Since then, he has dedicated much of his work to researching disparities in health in African American, American Indian, and Hispanic populations.

In 2007 he was named Director of the Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health, which was established to address racial and ethnic disparities in health status, health care quality and quality of life. Dr. Bell also serves as a tenured professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Prevention at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. He has been involved in the National Cancer Institute's Native American Cervical Cancer Prevention Project, Piedmont Alliance for Cancer Research, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's HEARTQUEST, and the National Institute on Aging Rural Nutrition and Health Program.

In 2009 Dr. Bell was named to the North Carolina American Indian Health Board, a part of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs. This board is being assembled with the intent of becoming a state-recognized, authoritative source on Indian health and to serve as a strong advocate for North Carolina Indian communities.

Ronny Bell's combined characteristics of intelligence, dedication, compassion, and leadership make him a deserving recipient of the School of Human Environmental Sciences Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2009.