

2025 MAYHEW LECTURE

RECOUNTING FAMILY: ADDITIONS, SUBTRACTIONS, AND DIVISIONS



DR. BRIAN POWELL

Several decades ago, most Americans held a narrow definition of “family”—one in which same-gender couples were excluded or counted out. Few could have predicted the remarkable changes in social, cultural, legal, and political acceptance that emerged for same-gender families. These families now are counted in, but they also are a part of a much broader recount of how Americans now define families. These changes or additions, however, have come with concomitant subtractions and new forms of division. In this presentation, Brian Powell discusses these additions, subtractions, and divisions. He considers the extent to which definitions of family and, relatedly, views regarding parenthood have changed. He also identifies the new battlegrounds regarding who is included and who is left out—for example, views regarding denial of service to same-gender couples and views regarding transgender youths and adults. Marshalling two decades of survey data, he explores the social math that continues to shape public perceptions of family.

Dr. Brian Powell is the James Rudy Professor of Sociology at Indiana University. An author of *COUNTED OUT: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family* and *WHO SHOULD PAY? Higher Education, Responsibility, and the Public*, he served as president of the Sociological Research Association, vice-president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), and chair of the General Social Survey Board. He is the recipient of distinguished career awards from three ASA sections (Social Psychology, Education, and Family), the ASA Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award, and the Spencer Foundation's inaugural Mentor Award.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

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