

# Award bolsters KU prof's spirit

*University of Kansas*  
By Bryan Reber *July 18, 1990 p 3*

Kansas staff writer

Ann Turnbull returned from a weekend at Hyannis Port, Mass., with a renewed energy for her work.

Turnbull, professor of special education and co-director of the Beach Center on Families and Disability at the University of Kansas, received the first Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Leadership Award for her work in the field of mental retardation.



Turnbull

The award, made in conjunction with the celebration of Rose Kennedy's 100th birthday, was presented during a reception Sunday hosted by the Kennedy family and officers of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. Other weekend activities included a reception at the late President John F. Kennedy's home.

Turnbull was one of three women honored with the award. The other recipients were from Ireland and England.

"I was reminded about the legacy that Mrs. Kennedy has given to the field of mental retardation," Turnbull said yesterday. "She has high standards of excellence and has stayed with this issue for decades.

"Being there, immersed in that legacy, really made me feel a recommitment to my efforts. She's 100 and I'm 42. She inspired me to come home and continue our work for many years to come."

Turnbull works closely with her husband, Rud. They are co-directors of the Beach Center and co-founders of Full Citizenship Inc. in Lawrence. The Beach Center is located in the Dole Human Development Center and is a joint project between the KU department of special education and the KU Bureau of Child Research.

The Beach Center was started two years ago with funding from the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research and training related to the needs of families who have a mem-

ber with a disability, Turnbull said.

Turnbull said that most families do not think research can help. She and her husband strive to conduct research that, over time, has a high probability of making a positive impact.

Turnbull said that one of the things that meant the most to her was that Eunice Shriver, one of Rose Kennedy's daughters, had asked Turnbull's husband, Rud, to write the citation.

"That was a surprise to me," Turnbull said. "It meant so much to me because our partnership has meant so much to me."

"The whole weekend was such a family celebration," Turnbull said. "It was a celebration of loyalty, longevity and striving for excellence."

Turnbull's work is filled with the same commitment to family. Her work in mental retardation research took on a personal aspect when she married Rud, who had a son, Jay, with mental retardation. The couple also has two daughters, Amy and Kate.

She said at the time Rose Kennedy first talked publicly about being the parent of a child with mental retardation, it was difficult for parents to speak about such children. The oldest of Kennedy's children, Rosemary, has mental retardation.

"Having a son with mental retardation, I was again made aware of her contributions. She made it easier for parents of my generation," Turnbull said.

Turnbull worked as a Kennedy Foundation Policy Fellow in the House of Representatives in 1987-88. She worked on the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families.

She said she learned the importance of making research relevant to policy-makers. She said effective communication and credible evidence were of utmost importance.

Turnbull said she thought the award was based primarily on her publications over the years. She is the author of 12 books and numerous articles and professional papers.