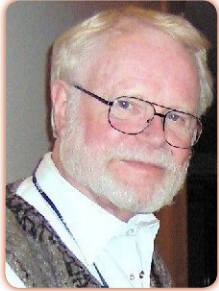


3rd International Conference on Forensic Research and Technology

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A historic perspective on forensic science

Some authors have defined forensic science as the application of scientific disciplines to the analysis of evidence. While this is true in a sense, I have taken issue with the term “application” because it implies that we are applied scientists. In other words, we merely take innovations from real scientists and apply these to practical problems. In part this is true to some degree, but it further implies that we are not scientists who have original ideas and research goals. I have often defined forensic science as the recovery and analysis of evidence for presentation in courts of law. Yes, I have received criticism that my definition is too simplistic and does not name the various kinds of forensic science. As we are all aware, there are many disparate kinds of forensic science which I prefer to call sub-disciplines such as forensic entomology, odontology, pathology, botany, etc. All of these sub-disciplines are the parts of an academic discipline called forensic science which has a unifying paradigm. This is demonstrated by reviewing the basic assumptions, ways of thinking and methodology that are commonly accepted by our scientific community. These are exciting times. Gradually over the years universities have been developing Departments of Forensic Science. We are rearing a new generation of specialists that have a basic knowledge of the breadth of the field. In short, we have specialists in different fields that can talk to each other about problems and new ideas. When you think about it, that’s what this conference is about.

Biography

Jerry Melbye completed his PhD at the University of Toronto where he taught for 35 years before transferring to Texas State University. While at Texas State, he created the world’s largest outdoor human decomposition research facility which has since become one of the most highly respected teaching facilities in the country for students and law enforcement. He is currently a Research Professor at the University of North Texas and Forensic Expert with The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

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