

The Swartz Foundation

# 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SWARTZ FOUNDATION MIND/BRAIN LECTURE

## PROBING THE MYSTERIES OF THE MIND

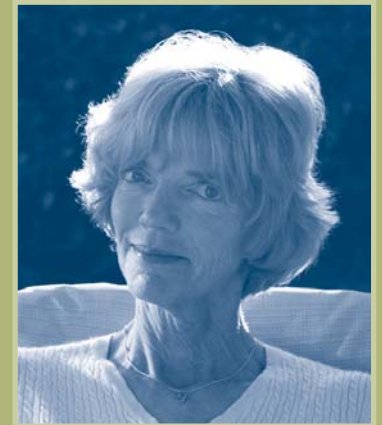
# DECISIONS, RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE BRAIN

**Patricia Smith Churchland, B. Phil.**

Professor, Department of Philosophy

University of California at San Diego

Author of *Brain-Wise: Studies in Neurophilosophy*



**Monday, March 10, 2008**

**4:30 pm**

Staller Center for the Arts, Main Stage

Stony Brook University

As scientists understand the role of genes in the neuronal wiring and chemistry of the brain, we are confronted with questions about choice and responsibility. Do people have free choice or are decisions influenced or predetermined by our brains' wiring? In the courts and in general daily life, we assume that some decisions are freely made and that people should be held accountable for those decisions. On the other hand, we see the range of allowable excuses from responsibility broadening as we understand the role of neuropathologies in deviant behavior. These developments take place against the public policy debate concerning the right balance between considerations of public safety, justice, fairness, and individual freedom. Patricia Churchland will address these questions from the perspective of neurophilosophy, including the theological and metaphysical contention that *free* choice is *uncaused* choice, and the idea that scientific considerations can yield the best working basis for assigning responsibility.

**Dr. Patricia Churchland** is a researcher in neurophilosophy—the interface between traditional philosophy questions concerning consciousness, knowledge, meaning, and free will and developments in neuroscience. She and her colleague-husband, Paul Churchland, joined the University of California at San Diego in 1984. She is also an adjunct professor at the Salk Institute.

**The Swartz Foundation** sponsors the Mind/Brain Lecture Series in cooperation with the University. For more information about the Foundation, please visit [www.theswartzfoundation.org](http://www.theswartzfoundation.org). To learn more about Patricia Churchland, please visit [www.stonybrook.edu/sb/mind](http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/mind)

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