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Featured Plenary Speakers

Dr. Rocco Casagrande is the managing director of Gryphon Scientific, LLC where his focus is bringing rigorous scientific analysis to problems of homeland defense. He has led weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat and risk assessments and biodefense system evaluations for the Department of Homeland Security; technology assessment for the FBI and Multistate Partnership for Security in Agriculture; modeling for the Department of Health and Human Services and technical guidance for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and non-profit research institutes (like Georgetown University, MIT and the Institute for Defense Analysis). Dr. Casagrande formerly served as the UNMOVIC biological weapons inspector in Iraq. He has published several articles on his novel research in molecular biology, cell biology, genetics and biochemistry and he holds three patents on inventions in the field of drug discovery.

Thomas E. Drabek is currently an Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Denver, where he was also a faculty member and department chair for several years. Earlier this year, the second edition of his latest book The Human Side of Disaster (2013) was released. He has authored or co-authored over 100 book chapters and journal articles and 28 other books. He served as the co-editor of the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters (1986-1990) and was elected President of the International Sociological Association’s Research Committee on Disasters (1990-1994). He additionally has prepared four Instructor Guides for the Emergency Management Institute, FEMA. Drabek is the third recipient of The E.L. Quarantelli Award for Contributions to Social Science Disaster Theory by the International Research Committee on Disasters, he received the first Dr. B. Wayne Blanchard Award for Academic Excellence in Emergency Management Higher Education and he was awarded a John Evans Professorship.

Brian Fagan specializes in communicating archaeology and the past. A former Guggenheim Fellow, he is regarded as one of the world’s leading archaeological and historical writers. He was Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, from 1967 to 2004, when he became Emeritus. His many books include three volumes for the National Geographic Society, including the bestselling Adventure of Archaeology. Other leading sellers include many books on ancient climate change and human societies: Floods, Famines, and Emperors (on El Niño), The Little Ice Age, The Long Summer, Elixir: A History of Water and Humankind and a New York Times Bestseller—The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations. Coming out in June, 2013 is his latest book, The Attacking Ocean: The Past, Present, and Future of Rising Sea Levels.

Eric Klinenberg is one of America’s leading voices—a social scientist whose work examines cities, culture, media, and politics. Klinenberg is a Professor of Sociology, Public Policy, and Media, Culture and Communications at New York University. He is the author of three acclaimed books: Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago; Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America’s Media; and Going Solo: He has also contributed to The New York Times Magazine, Fortune, Time Magazine, Rolling Stone, The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian and the radio program This American Life.

Dennis S. Mileti, Ph.D. is professor emeritus at the University of Colorado, Boulder where he served as Director of the Natural Hazards Center from 1994-2003. His book Disasters by Design summated knowledge in all fields of science and engineering regarding natural hazards and disasters, and made recommendations for shifts in national policies and programs. Mileti provided oversight to the U.S. Army Corps’ investigation of why the levees failed during Hurricane Katrina and ensured societal impacts for which he was awarded the U.S. Army’s Civilian Medal of Honor. He also designed NIST’s congressional study of evacuation of the World Trade Center towers on 9/11. He has chaired the Committee on Disasters in the National Research Council of the National Academies and the Board of Visitors to FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute. Mileti is now working with colleagues at different universities on a DHS-sponsored project to comprehensively test public warning messages for communication over mobile devices.