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## James J. Heckman

Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics  
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James J. Heckman is the Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics and Public Policy and Director of the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago. He has devoted his professional life to understanding the origins of major social and economic questions related to inequality, social mobility, discrimination, and the formation of skills and regulation in labor markets, as well as to devising and applying economically interpretable empirical strategies for understanding and addressing these questions. While his research is rooted in economics, he actively collaborates across disciplines to examine all aspects of major problems. His recent interdisciplinary research on human development and skill formation over the life cycle draws on economics, psychology, genetics, epidemiology, neuroscience, and law to examine the origins of inequality, the determinants of social mobility, and the links among stages of the life cycle, starting in the womb. This work has influenced both the scholarly literature and public policy. His pioneering research on the outcomes of people who obtain the GED certificate received national attention. His findings, which found great deficiencies in the alleged value of the degree, spurred debates across the country on the merits of obtaining the certificate. He established the positive impact of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and related legislation in promoting the economic and social status of African Americans.

His ongoing research analyzing the impact of early childhood programs continues to influence policymakers around the country. Professor Heckman's work on the return on investment in high-quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children was cited in President Biden's 2021 American Families Plan.

Heckman has a B.A. (1965) in Mathematics from Colorado College and an M.A. (1968) and Ph.D. (1971) in Economics from Princeton University. He has been at the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago since 1973. He was one of the founders of the Harris School of Public Policy, where he also has an appointment. Since 1991, he has been a research fellow at the American Bar Foundation. In 2010, he cofounded the Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group, a global network of over 525 scholars working on aspects of measuring and addressing problems of inequality and economic opportunity. In May 2014, he launched the Center for the Economics of Human Development at the University of Chicago, which he directs.

In 2000, Heckman won the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on the microeconomics of diversity and heterogeneity and for establishing a sound causal basis for public policy evaluation. He has received numerous other awards for his work, including the John Bates Clark Medal of the American Economic Association in 1983, the Jacob Mincer Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2005 from the Society of Labor Economics, the 2005 and 2007 Dennis Aigner Award for Applied Econometrics from the *Journal of Econometrics*, the Ulysses Medal from the University College Dublin in 2006, the 2007 Theodore W. Schultz Award from the American Agricultural Economics Association, the Gold Medal of the President of the Italian Republic, awarded by the International Scientific Committee of the Pio Manzú Centre in 2008, the Distinguished Contributions to Public Policy for Children Award from the Society for Research in Child Development in 2009, the Frisch Medal from the Econometric Society in 2014 for the most outstanding paper in applied economics published in *Econometrica* in the previous five years, and the 2016 Dan David Prize. He was named a Distinguished Fellow of the American Economic Association in 2017, and was the 2019 recipient of the Chinese Government Friendship Award.

Heckman is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, USA; a member of the American Philosophical Society; a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; the American Association for the Advancement of Science; the Econometric Society; the Society of Labor Economics; the American Statistical Association; the International Statistical Institute; and the National Academy of Education. He has received numerous honorary degrees, and is a foreign member of several scholarly bodies. He is a co-editor of the *Journal of Political Economy*. He has published over 350 articles and 9 books. His most recent book is *The Myth of Achievement Tests: The GED and the Role of Character in American Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).

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