

## **Silencing Science: How UofL is replacing award winning science with disinformation**

By John Hans Gilderbloom, formerly of the University of Louisville, Urban and Public Affairs, and Neighborhood Associates Corporation

As a professor at the University of Louisville (UofL), my research team conducted studies that showed how to cut the number of COVID-19 cases in the city in half, double children's learning proficiency scores in schools with poor performance, extend life expectancy by 12 years, and reduce the number of abandoned homes. Moreover, our research shows that a reduction in 75,000 pounds of pollution in Western Louisville would cut rates of asthma, high blood pressure, COPD, and diabetes by half or more. How do we do this? Reduce the amount of air pollution in Louisville. You would think that everyone from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), governor's office, and mayor's office would take notice and want to know how to make our city thrive again. But they did not. Instead, they stick to the same tired playbook of ignoring how pollution is killing destroying the lives and neighborhood of Western Louisville.

Using leaked EPA data and data-driven science, my research studies showed that poisonous air kills people, places, and the planet. But before the EPA, the mayor, or the CDC would act, they consulted with big polluters who denied the claims, and UofL's environmental research center posted more than a hundred positive press releases about the environment while failing to post any contrary opinions. Silence on climate change is complicity with the steady destruction of the earth.

How do we combat this? First, we must fight the disinformation campaign of the greedy polluters. This is the same gang that 60 years ago attacked Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*,

for warning people about the dangers of chemicals being sprayed on lawns and farmland (several UofL chemical companies funded the attacks on Carson). More recently, Jeffrey Wigand, often referred to as the “man who knew too much,” was subjected to attacks following his disclosure on 60 Minutes that tobacco companies intentionally increased nicotine levels to heighten addiction and that the industry misled the public about the dangers of smoking.

I am facing a similar situation, having been told that people in the pollution industry are attempting to assassinate my character and thwart my research. Who is winning the war for cleaner air? Did the University of Louisville (UofL) destroy \$3.5 million dollars’ worth of federal, state, and local research and replace it with a pollution industry-funded center? In an age of climate crisis, how can UofL turn its back on the people who are suffering so much from toxic pollution? Rather than conducting real science, UofL is enabling the polluters by disseminating misinformation and removing a university website that provided information to the public about the consequences of deadly toxic pollution (i.e., shortened life spans for thousands of residents of polluted neighborhoods, more than half of students in these neighborhoods unable to read or do math at proficient levels, high COVID-19 rates, thousands of abandoned homes, and a per capita release of greenhouse gases that is among the highest of any place in the U.S.). Air pollution regulation is designed to protect people, but in Louisville, the lack of meaningful regulation is designed to protect the profits of polluters.

What happened to the legislatively approved Kentucky Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development? It was shut down and its website was removed! Tenured professors who research pollution were not given a role in the university’s corporate-funded pollution research center. Under the new leadership of the corporate-funded Envirome/Center for Healthy Air, Water, and Soil, hundreds of copies of Sustain Journal were shredded at the UofL School of

Medicine. The award-winning Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods was also shut down by UofL. The professors running these centers and institutes told the truth and were robbed of their academic freedom. When it comes to our greatest challenge of this century, climate change, our taxpayer funded university's mission (to discover, analyze, disseminate, and preserve data) is being violated. Academic freedom and free speech are being taken away from professors.

Louisville's biggest scandal is the billion-dollar pollution industry that has a chokehold on local institutions, silences research about the dangers of pollution, and promotes "solutions" that won't solve the problem of premature death, COVID-19, loss of fair share of home equity, or negative effects on the learning abilities of children. The accomplices are the power elite that have infiltrated UofL and demanded that centers and institutes that challenge polluters be closed and replaced by a pro-pollution institute that stifles academic freedom and makes federally funded research inaccessible to the public. The role of the university is not to destroy research but to preserve it and give people the right to know. What the university leaders allowed to happen to the pollution research institutes violates the mandates of the federal government to make this research available to the public. This is not Russia, where I did a presentation about the environmental crisis at a university. President Putin ordered the removal of a video of my presentation from YouTube, Telegram, and other social media platforms.

According to the UofL Center for Healthy Air, Water and Soil, pollution in Louisville is getting better by just a small fraction. This does not translate into the air being great. It doesn't mean that the air is still not highly dangerous. Moreover, the Center's claims that planting trees improves health outcomes and is not backed up with hard data. In Louisville's 160 neighborhoods, there is no correlation between neighborhood tree density and improved health

outcome. There is no correlation between the severity of air pollution and the percentage of neighborhood tree canopy. And for good measure, in 144 mid-sized cities there is no correlation between trees and lifespan or other urban ailments. In fact, the direction is going just the opposite. Of interest in this study is zero correlation between tree canopy and cancer. The Center promotes a false narrative that the air is getting cleaner and perhaps not as dangerous now, but the air is highly toxic, according to industry disclosure forms that document the release of dangerous pollution. Scientists have not been given equal protection to defend their research. The university silenced the scientists who bring attention to the harm caused by unregulated polluters.

The UofL Urban and Public Affairs (UPA) Program, which I helped build, did extensive research on how [deadly pollution](#) in Louisville [shortens lives](#), [destroys neighborhoods](#), and makes many parts of the earth uninhabitable. The program's scholarship and community service were recognized by The New York Times, Martin Luther King III, President Nelson Mandela, Congress, Harvard University President Derek Bok, and President Bill Clinton. UofL's urban policy program soared to number 16 in U.S. News and World Report rankings—the only department to ever reach this ranking in 1999. These are some of the UPA program's findings published in professional journals:

- Louisville has some of the worst and [deadliest](#) pollution in the United States;
- The poor die five years sooner in Louisville than in California because of pollution;<sup>1</sup>
- The lifespan of West Louisville residents is [10 to 12 years shorter](#) than the lifespan of East Louisville residents;

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<sup>1</sup> "The Missing link of Air Pollution: A Closer Look at the Association Between Place and Life Expectancy in 146 Mid-Sized Cities." John Hans Gilderbloom, William Riggs, Chad Frederick, Gregory Squires, and Karrie International Journal of Strategic Energy and Environmental Planning.V4.4 July 2022

- COVID-19 is directly correlated with high levels of four EPA measures of pollution, with Louisville ranked as having the highest death rates among mid-size cities<sup>2</sup>;
- Less than 50% of schoolchildren living near chemical factories [can read or do math](#) at proficiency levels;
- The toxic release of chemicals is 12 times higher in West Louisville compared to East Louisville<sup>3</sup>;
- Asthma, heart disease, and lung disease are up to [three times higher](#) in these polluted areas;
- Local foundations have not funded research to counter the propaganda of corporate polluters; and
- An accident or sabotage of a storage tank could cause the loss of thousands of lives in West Louisville, just as it did in rural Bhopal, India when thousands of people died due to an industrial accident at the Union Carbide plant. It is estimated that 8,000 people in Bhopal died within two weeks.

This research countered the pollution industry's claim that chemical pollution is nothing to worry about in Louisville. Ted Smith, the Director of the UofL Center for Healthy Air, Water and Soil, refuses to post his colleagues' peer reviewed publications on the Center's website. Greg Fischer, the former Mayor of Louisville and former President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, noted that the [Health Equity Report](#) stated that pollution was not the cause of shortened lives. The mayor's office claimed that the most dangerous environmental toxin was smoking, but it accounted for only 6% of the cause of shortened lives. Efforts to generate debate and discussion and to allow research that counters the propaganda have not been encouraged at

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<sup>2</sup> Wesley Meares, John Hans Gilderbloom, Gregory Squires, Antwan Jones "Pollution and the Pandemic: Explaining the Differences in COVID-19 Rates Across 146 U.S. Communities. International Journal of Strategic Energy and Environmental Planning V.4.2: March 2021

<sup>3</sup> "Put a Mask on Pollution: Connect the Dots Between COVID-19 and Unhealthy Air." By John Hans Gilderbloom and Gregory Squires, Social Policy, 2022.

UofL. The university, which is supposed to be a marketplace of ideas, has thwarted the attempts of researchers to bring awareness to the harmful effects of pollution in Louisville.

How deadly are these toxins? One accident, one angry employee, or one terrorist attack could wipe out thousands of lives in West Louisville with a chemical leak or explosion. In 1984, perhaps the world's worst chemical accident occurred in Bhopal, India. As many as 2,259 people died immediately after the release of dangerous gases at the Union Carbide industrial plant, and an additional 1,532 people died shortly after the release. There were 574,366 injured victims, and another 3,900 people suffered from severe respiratory system problems. The highly toxic gas that was released, methyl isocyanate, is used as a pesticide, and it is not clear whether the cause of the leak was sabotage or company negligence. In Louisville, the risk is great. Given the relative density of West Louisville, roughly 60,000 residents could die instantly, according to former officials from the Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environmental Cabinet, the recently closed Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development, and Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods.

Heavy pollution not only affects health and housing in industrial neighborhoods, it also affects the Earth's atmosphere, making Louisville one of the highest emitters of greenhouse gases per capita. High levels of industrial pollution explain why Kentucky has a disproportionate number of man-made disasters. For example, in their [article](#) in the Courier Journal, environmental writer James Bruggers and his colleague Phil McKenna estimate that just one chemical plant out of the 45 in Louisville emits enough dangerous greenhouse gases to equal the pollution of 671,000 cars.

The Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development demonstrated how cancerous agents could be eliminated by nearly 95% through the introduction of

environmental protections. The findings were based on one chemical factory out of the 45 in Louisville; imagine the progress that could be made if all 45 factories were regulated. If companies in Rubbertown, liquor distilleries, and coal burning plants in Louisville were brought into appropriate compliance, West Louisville, with its historic housing, would have a renaissance of higher housing values, less housing abandonment, extended lifespan, and better student performance in math and reading.

Environmental scientists have predicted disastrous tornadoes, heat waves, and flooding in Kentucky. Climate change is resulting in more death, destruction, and devastation than ever before. Kentucky is [paying a big price](#) by letting polluters with no significant regulation have their way. But which side is UofL on? The fight for clean air, water, and soil was lost when UofL received a \$5 million dollar grant from pollution-friendly industries that wanted to silence environmental science. This led to troubling occurrences: faculty lacking a record of peer-reviewed publications in environmental or medical science received academic appointments and/or tenure; UofL removed university websites that included federally, state, and locally funded research on pollution; coordinated attacks were launched on UofL faculty who challenge the pollution industry; and shady real estate deals took place that involved buying or leasing classrooms in unsafe and unhealthy neighborhoods, which caused students to complain and revolt. Police have reported that UofL faculty members are getting death threats because of their research. Academic freedom, which is the foundation for science, is in jeopardy at UofL.

On June 21, 2018, the Board of Trustees voted to close the legislatively approved Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center, Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development, and Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods. A university should be a stronghold of fearless truth and the last place to fall victim to donations with strings attached.

It's not only a federal crime to destroy funded research but also a crime against humanity. It's playing games with lives for profit. There is literally a "sacrifice zone" in West Louisville. Thousands of lives have been lost in West Louisville because of the greed and selfishness of polluting industries. City officials only cite studies that are not critical of pollution, claiming that the air quality is getting better. We need independently funded research with no strings attached that will save lives and the planet.

Silencing scientific discovery is a grievous injustice to all. These special interests want to control the mayor's office and air pollution control district and even shut down federally and state funded programs that challenge the disinformation of the polluters. The university should not be an enabler of wealthy corporate polluters who want to silence science; it needs to honor and respect data-driven science that is rigorous, conventional, even handed, and peer reviewed. West Louisville's three major polluters (coal fired plants, chemical factories, and liquor distilleries) should not dictate what research should be on the UofL website. These companies have pushed a false narrative that masks the truth and is now embraced by the mayor, Air Pollution Control District, and industry supported propaganda arms. And now, at a time when the whole planet is threatened by pollution, they control the only UofL website that disseminates scientific information on the climate crisis. It's a debate between science and nonsense.

Science will trump the science fiction being promoted by the polluters, the mayor's office, the Chamber of Commerce, and Leadership Louisville. Air pollution is not getting better, it is cutting short thousands of lives in West Louisville and negatively affecting housing equity and children's educational achievement. Many of these polluters have a record of "going after" individuals who challenge the pollution industry. Rachel Carson, author of the book *Silent Spring*, which documented the environmental harm caused by using pesticides, suffered a

coordinated smear campaign that attacked her gender and academic credentials. Companies in Louisville were behind this national campaign. Similarly, the movie *The Insider* tells the true story of a whistleblower in Louisville who was attacked for revealing that the tobacco industry was aware that cigarettes are addictive and harmful. A smear campaign was launched against him.

The mission of higher education is to discover, analyze, distribute, and preserve knowledge without fear. We challenge junk science that blames the victim and rewards the selfish, rich, and greedy. Recently, the United Nations and United States government warned that we only have eight years before the entire planet is at risk from climate change—a catastrophic reckoning is ahead of us.

We need more unbiased, data-driven research on the deadly impact of pollution on learning, health, housing, and the planet. We need to know more, not less. I think we need a campus wide teach-in that demands more unbiased scientific research and challenges the propaganda that protects polluters. Unlike Flint, Michigan, where the brown water was visible in a glass, the pollution in Louisville is largely invisible—only the smokestacks can be seen. Our task as researchers is to make pollution visible to the average person. Is UofL now for sale to the highest bidder? If so, we have lost sight of the purpose of the university: the fearless pursuit, dissemination, and preservation of truth.

As a whistleblower, the polluters have attempted to silence my voice with the following actions:

1. Louisville Police Department notified me and University of Louisville officials that they uncovered a serious threat to have me killed in September 2012. The police warned me not to return to my home because a man was found outside with a gun.

- The police parked patrol cars in front of my house and installed armed policemen in the lobby of the building where I worked on campus to protect me from possible gun violence.
2. On May 11, 2014, I attended a “Festival of Faiths” program in downtown Louisville featuring Julian Agyeman. In a video of his presentation, starting at 1 hour and 32 minutes, my comments challenging the talking points of Louisville officials and the private foundation run by Christy Brown were recorded. In my remarks, I criticized three top Metro Louisville officials who were participating in the panel discussion for not doing anything to address pollution: Ted Smith from the Department of Economic Growth, Theresa Zawacki from the Office of Redevelopment Strategies for Louisville, and Jeana Dunlap from Louisville Department of Housing and Community Development. After destroying their argument that pollution is not harmful, I was told I was not welcome and asked to leave. [\(58\) Dr. Julian Agyeman: Just Sustainabilities \(FULL PROGRAM\) - YouTube](#)
  3. My opinion piece published in the New York Times on April 18, 2016, and in other periodicals set off alarms with pollution-friendly industries who contacted the President’s office demanding that they silence me. I was immediately offered a book contract, and local and national EPA officials were in contact with me. Also, the EPA Center for Creative Land Recycling invited me to Oakland to discuss my research, and we collaborated on a conference in Louisville with local EPA officials on recycling land.
  4. My publications in an array of prestigious newspapers and academic journals along with the documentary film Rubbertown on Amazon led to the effort to silence me.

- The 2016 film, *Rubbertown*, featured me discussing my research on how pollution in West Louisville caused harm to school children and adults. The pollution apologists were upset because the award-winning documentary only featured me as an expert. It was screened before UofL administration and EPA officials. They took no action.
5. This was followed by an incident in which an angry, volatile businessman who was aligned with the pollution industry stormed into President Ramsey's office and demanded that I be fired from UofL. He threatened that if President Ramsey did not fire me, he would be replaced. After this incident, President Ramsey, the Vice President of Research, and the University Counsel informed me that this person was "gunning for me" and I should be careful. President Ramsey stood for academic freedom and refused to fire me. He was a big supporter of my research and my goal of making Louisville a better place to live. A year later, President Ramsey was gone, due to a pro-pollution board of trustees who believed the disinformation campaign of polluters. Before he left UofL, he angered the polluters by having my picture posted on the wall of greats along University Avenue.
  6. In the Fall of 2017, I was given a reprimand for being critical of Uof L's radical left scholarship, which adopted the language of black nationalist Stokely Carmichael and Anne Braden. I was actively creating partnerships to renovate or build hundreds of new homeownership opportunities, opposed racial integration of neighborhoods, and called for greater environmental justice. By turning theory into action, we revitalized struggling neighborhoods, making them healthier, safer, and thriving. My op-ed pieces were frequently published in the *Courier Journal*, along with some making the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and books (*Invisible City*

and *Promise and Betrayal: Universities and the Battle for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods*). My work called for reform within capitalism and the creation of greater business and home ownership, along with improved environmental stewardship. I started learning community organizing in high school by working with Cesar Chavez, Tom Hayden, Jane Fonda, Harvey Milk, and Martin Luther King III. Under my leadership, hundreds of cities enacted tenant protections like fair rent regulations and eviction protections. The acting Provost said he was upset by my “diction” (I asked him if I should write as an Elizabethan era writer would that meet his approval for my op-eds). Also, I was told by the dean that if I continued to advocate for greater environmental equity, there would be consequences. In a memo, the dean threatened to take away my email privileges and move my office off campus into a dangerous toxic neighborhood. It was humiliating. I fought back while the faculty, the Director of the Urban and Public Affairs Program, the Chair of the Urban and Public Affairs Program, the Dean, and the Provost agreed that I should stop raising red flags about the lack of scientific rigor and calling for socialist revolution. The reprimand if it succeeded would result in me getting fired. I was told to use a non-university email address and start packing up my office, but I countered by responding with a rebuttal from an elite dream team of scholars, including Distinguished UofL Law Professor Russell Weaver, Louisville attorney Buddy Cutler, and FIRE (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education). Using Supreme Court rulings on academic freedom and free speech, I argued for the right to use data-driven science for teaching, research, and service. I fought against shutting down public discourse at the university without having to go to the Supreme Court to win

my freedom of speech and continued advocating for science-based research and fighting against ‘woke’ thinking. In a short one sentence letter, the new President, Neeli Bendapudi, ordered the letter and the attacks on my scholarship removed from my file. The cost to win this fight for academic freedom was \$20,250 in lawyer fees, and the lawyer was not even allowed to be in the hearing room. I presented my research to a international free speech forum in Budapest. The A&S Dean was also removed from her duties.

7. It was a great victory, but it was temporary. On June 21, 2018, the new University of Louisville Envirome Center/Center for Healthy Air, Water, and Soil received a \$5 million dollar gift from Christy Brown, and a huge neon sign with her name on it was installed on top of the medical center. The Center appointed Ted Smith, who formerly worked for Christy Brown’s foundation and the mayor of Louisville, as director.
8. Another gift was made to the Center from Christy Brown for approximately \$50 million dollars.
9. In the Spring of 2016, I was invited to the West Wing of the White House to meet with Jerry Abramson, Deputy Assistant to President Obama for National Security Affairs and former mayor of Louisville. I went there to express my concerns about a potential Bhopal-like tragic accident occurring in West Louisville. I also explained that Louisville Air Pollution Control District was not taking action to reduce deadly chemical pollution. Moreover, disinformation about pollution was coming out of the local EPA and Christy Brown’s nonprofit, the Center for Healthy Air, Water, and

Soil. I was deeply concerned about an accident, sabotage, or terrorism creating a disaster in which West Louisville would be wiped out.

10. The Board of Trustees on June 21, 2017, voted to close the legislatively established Kentucky Institute for Environment and Sustainability Center and Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods. The Acting Provost contacted me and told me my website would be removed, I would be barred from being part of the Envirome Center, and I would be removed from teaching in the Sustainability program. I told her those actions violated the legal agreement that SUN would maintain a website at UofL. The message was clear: you have no future here on climate change activism.
11. This marked the end of the urban mission. Former President Donald Swain made the urban mission of UofL to equal as a flagship along with University of Kentucky. We were supposed to improve economics, health, and learning in Louisville. In 1999, the Urban and Public Affairs Program was ranked in the top 20 alongside Harvard and Berkely. The program was acclaimed. We were advising those on both sides of the aisle: Congress, the President, businessmen, Trump, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King III, and former Harvard President Derek Bok.
12. The Vice President of Research declared in a meeting that former faculty would have to apply to have a role in the Center for Healthy Air, Water, and Soil. He stated that there were too many conflicting voices on campus and now there would be one center and only one voice. Faculty would have to apply to participate in the \$5 million center. I applied, but it was predetermined that I would never have a role in the Center. They claimed that I was unqualified because I did not bring in enough grant money; however, I brought in \$3.5 million dollars in grants from DOE, EPA, HUD,

Metro Louisville, Gheens, Miller Foundation, and others. They then said I had no students working with me; however, I had 30 published articles that were co-written with students and faculty.

13. The new Chair of the UPA program said I would no longer be teaching courses on my agreed upon AWP (Annual Work Plan) in my specialization: Sustainability, Housing and Community Development or Preservation. I have been teaching these courses for up to 40 years, have written seven books on these topics, and have always had good enrollment in the courses. These courses in my areas of expertise were now being taught by adjuncts who, alarmingly, were using the talking points of the polluters—telling students that dirty air is not a problem in Louisville. The Chair informed me I would be teaching new courses that I would need to prepare: Real Estate Principles, Planning Internships, Introduction to Urban Studies, and Explore Louisville.
14. I put together an amazing and powerful course, but in the middle of the semester the Chair demanded the course be cancelled because of an environmental justice tour the students were taken on to see the problems caused by brownfields, coal powered plants, liquor distilleries, and chemical factories. He later ranked my teaching as non-proficient, stating in my evaluation that during the tour, students and faculty risked arrest for trespassing on private property owned by a chemical factory. This allegation was proven to be false. The person who led the tour was the former director of the Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development. He wrote a letter to the Chair stating that the van was parked on a public street and nobody was threatened with arrest. We appealed to the Chair and the Dean; both refused to do a retraction. It was also hinted at that when given the “model” class

- outline, they expected to me to add in alarming ‘woke’ language like demanding students use pronouns, including the suicide hotline, and adding language about not making students feel uncomfortable.
15. I received a ranking of non-proficient for teaching, even though I was the only tenured faculty member on our 11-person faculty to get the Delphi Center Favorite Teacher Award and UofL COVID-19 Hero Award.
16. In the Fall of 2022, UofL’s Urban Policy Program fell from greatness to mediocre in a survey of public policy programs, according to U.S. News and World Report. Once ranked as number 16, Urban Policy was among the top 20 programs in the country and stood head and shoulders with Harvard, UCLA, MIT, Chicago, and other elite institutions. We had great faculty and very high standards. In 2022, with UofL ranking an overall score of 167, the university’s “urban mission” was now dead. Moreover, our membership in the Urban Affairs Association, which includes 86 members, was not renewed.
17. The harassment continued and was unrelenting. The Chair was looking for any reason to chip away at my stature as one of the top living urbanists in the world. He started by putting a reprimand into my file because he said I violated online course requirements while teaching Principles of Real Estate. Apparently, he did not like the fact that I invited students to a Sunday afternoon talk on preservation and real estate. I was receiving an award from the Louisville Historic League for sustainability and preservation, and I invited students to attend the event. It was voluntary and tape recorded so students could see it online via Blackboard. He wrote a letter to students claiming they were being forced to attend my talk; however, in the attached course

outline it was clearly marked as optional. Despite my rebuttal, he said the reprimand stands.

18. Next, a vacant faculty position was advertised as my position in Housing and Sustainability because the faculty believed I would likely be gone by the Fall of 2023. I told faculty that I had no plans to leave, so they corrected the announcement and took out the language suggesting I was being replaced.

19. They cancelled a required course for the Planning degree in Community Development that I was teaching. We met the first Wednesday and students were excited about the required course that included fun walking and bus tours. The next day, the Chair or a subordinate contacted the students and told them the course was cancelled. It was upsetting because other required courses for a degree have been taught with far less students. I had spent time organizing the class and I had a signed AWP (Annual Work Plan) stating I would only teach four courses, with a fifth course bought off at the cost of \$12,250 so I could focus on my research/book that was due. The Associate Dean said I had too few students taking my class and I needed to teach more classes. I think this is harassment.

20. They removed my TA from my class in the middle of the semester with no explanation or justification, creating chaos and confusion. I was told not to contact her. They also took away my computer software (SPSS) which was used to measure statistical significance---what are the odds this association occurred by chance. Taking away my SPSS is akin to taking away a telescope from an astronomer or a stethoscope from a doctor.

21. We provided a rigorous introductory course on introducing people to urban studies.

Only two out of sixteen students gave negative reviews of the course. Louisville has many urban problems that are far worse than most other cities. I teach from a variety of viewpoints, not just ‘woke’ thinking and Marxism. The Department of Justice report cites our data-driven research, noting that chemical factories are a major contributing factor to the decline and decay of Louisville. UofL should be a marketplace of ideas and be tolerant of different viewpoints.

22. On August 28, 2025, UofL President Kim Shatzel announced that “trees are a major health intervention” that might reduce cancer and the risk of heart attacks. She stated at a press conference that “trees are medicine”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eH1Tbk4oVw8>). She then claimed that one small study in South Louisville “is knowledge that will “change the design of cities.” The Nature Conservancy President chimed in claiming, “Trees mean healthier people.” The press conference gave high praise Christina Lee Brown, who was the brainchild. Democrat Congressman Morgan McGarvey hailed trees as a solution with Louisville’s air quality index among the worst in the nation at 89 percent. My team’s research published in my new book, *Climate Chaos*, ranks Louisville as having the second worst air among 140 midsize cities. Professor Aruni Bhatnagar, who is the lead researcher (making around \$740,000 a year) claims that tree density will reduce heart disease. Nobody mentioned pollution prevention as a proven method for improving the health of West Louisville residents---even though Professor Bhatnagar and others were aware that my forthcoming book showed that higher tree density in mid cities and in Louisville’s 160 neighborhoods is not correlated with better health

or lifespan. Yet UofL promotes this fiction because it brings in so many millions of dollars but also shuts down and destroys data-driven objective research. The NIH might think twice of wasting its money and focus on regulating pollution and not planting more trees around chemical factories.

23. In September of 2024 I was put on administrative leave by Provost Bradley and my two classes were canceled because the climate deniers were angry about me using a draft of my book in my course and about the documentary inspired by my research being developed by three-time Emmy Award winner Christopher Nolan, <http://www.climateofhopefilm.org>. They conducted a secret investigation. In January, after a heavy slander campaign against me (much like that made against Albert Gore, Rachel Carson and Jeffrey Wigand), they immediately took away my email (that I had used for 37 years), which rendered me unable to communicate with fellow residents, students, faculty, elected leaders.
24. My highly lauded book has been nominated for numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize. The 512 pages contain many of the research reports that were deleted or shredded by the administration. I am fearless about speaking up and advocating for science as a weapon to improve the ills of our urban nation. It's a miracle that I have survived several attempts to have me killed with only hearing and eyesight loss and PTSD. I will continue to fight for science that serves the people.

Silence is complicity with environmental crimes that kill thousands.

UofL is involved in the suppression and destruction of federally funded research that was supposed to be made available to the public. This environmental research needs to see the light

of day so we can extend the lifespan of people, reduce rates of COVID-19, increase the quality of life, increase housing and neighborhood equity, increase the safety of neighborhoods, and promote better health. According to the United Nations, we have eight years left to turn around the potentially catastrophic threats of climate change.

Corporate terrorism that pollutes neighborhoods in 1,000 places in the United States kills people, places, and the planet. Big corporate polluters are the source of these problems, and we cannot count on them to control the knowledge. These same folks are the ones that have tried to argue that smoking is safe or spraying weed killer on our lawns and farms is safe.

We cannot count on big polluters to come up with solutions when they are the source of these problems. These companies are using disinformation and misinformation. We need a free flow of ideas and debate at the university, not the suppression of data by corporate interests who want to control the agenda and decide which knowledge to release.

In the end, I am fighting for academic freedom. I am proud of my achievements, and I want to continue to help save lives. Too many lives have been lost unnecessarily. Corporations are refraining from establishing operations in Louisville due to concerns about the substandard quality of its air, water, and soil. The truth can be found in my book, *Climate Chaos: Killing People, Places, and the Planet*, and forthcoming film.

John I. "Hans" Gilderbloom Ph.D.  
University of Louisville Presidential Medal for Distinguished Faculty Research and Creative Activity  
American Sociological Association Lifetime Achievement Award in Urban and Community Studies (2022)  
Two Time Winner UofL Arts and Sciences Research and Creativity Award  
University of Louisville COVID-19 Hero Award 2021  
Louisville Historic League Outstanding Contribution to Preservation and Sustainability

Faculty Favorite 2020-2021 Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning  
Top 100 Urban Thinker Planetizen International Survey--number 67  
Professor of Planning, Public Administration, Sustainability, Urban Affairs. (currently)  
Formerly Professor of Economics, College of Business UofL (1999-2006)  
University of Louisville Courtesy Appointment: School of Public Health  
Director, Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods Washington D.C./Louisville, KY  
Distinguished Scientist and Fellow, Neighborhood Associates Washington D.C. 2020  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7cdD1Jgr8g>  
<http://www.chromatichomes.com>  
<http://www.sunlouisville.org>  
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