



## **TAKING UP SPACE**

**How Eating Well & Exercising Regularly  
Changed My Life**

by  
Pattie Thomas, Ph.D.  
with Carl Wilkerson, M.B.A.  
foreword by Paul Campos,  
author of *The Obesity Myth*

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### **Expanded Biography for Pattie Thomas, Ph.D.**



Pattie Thomas describes herself as a reluctant warrior in “the war on obesity.” She envisions herself not as a svelte former fattie like the countless commercials offered in the media, but as a *Sumo* ready to knock down those who wage war on fat and fat people.

The *Sumo warrior*, she suggests, is a perfect symbol for fat people in the so-called “war on obesity” because Sumos are front-line warriors who traditionally used their girth to open up space for others to win their battles. If the world can accept fat people as they are, then *all* people would be acceptable, and diversity would be celebrated.

Her sociological memoir, *Taking Up Space*, is about being fat and the physical, emotional and economic costs of trying to pass for thin in a culture and society that wages war on fat people.

Making her own life a case study, using her doctorate in medical sociology, Thomas, with her co-author and husband Carl Wilkerson, outlines how stigma limit and shape the life chances of *all* people. Together Thomas and Wilkerson demonstrate how the “war on obesity” can be won, not by losing weight, but by simply giving up the battle with the bulge and instead learning how to carry one’s weight well.

Thomas is a reluctant warrior, however. She wrote her memoir because “being fat” is a central fact in her life—or so it is from the point of view of others. Thomas would rather be remembered as a writer, poet, artist, photographer, filmmaker, sociologist, traveler and entrepreneur. By confronting those who would sum up her life by her size, she has found the time and creativity to develop all those passions. She hopes that she has demonstrated how a sociologically examined life can lead to personal growth.