

Discovery - Learning - Engagement

Spring 2009 Newsletter

***Center for Gerontology named Collaborating Centre by the
International Association for Gerontology and Geriatrics***



The Center for Gerontology has been named a “Collaborating Centre” by the International Association for Gerontology and Geriatrics, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This means our Center meets the IAGG criteria for excellence, including being a university-level research center; being multidisciplinary; offering a gerontology training program; providing evidence of research productivity through peer-reviewed publications; and providing evidence of sustainability in the form of having a multi-year budget, professional support staff, and multiple research affiliates. The many accomplishments of our Faculty Affiliates and

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology students have contributed to the Center being able to receive this prestigious international recognition!

In the News

After two years as interim director, **Karen A. Roberto** has been named Director of the Institute for Society, Culture and Environment. The Institute is tasked with strengthening the university’s competitive position for securing external funding in support of research and scholarship in the social sciences, humanities, and arts. Dr. Roberto will continue to serve as the director of the Center for Gerontology. For more information see <http://www.isce.vt.edu/>.

Events

Fall 2008 Forum:

Bill Kallio was the speaker at the Center’s Fall Forum. Kallio is the state director for AARP Virginia. His talk, “Divided We Fail: Fixing the Health Care and Financial Security Crises in this County,” outlined AARP’s non-partisan political action campaign, Divided We Fail. Kallio spoke of the need to end bipartisan bickering over issues that affect the health and well being of families, businesses, and governments. The event was sponsored by AARP Virginia and the Blacksburg chapter of AARP. For more information on current Divided We Fail initiatives visit: dividedwefail.org.



Spring 2009 Forum:

During his presentation entitled, “Critical Standpoints in Long Term Care,” **Tim Diamond** advocated for a grassroots “nursing home manifesto” where residents and future residents are active agents in creating engaging living spaces.



L-R: Marya McPherson, Bradford Wiles, Brandy McCann, Karen A. Roberto, Tim Diamond, Neil King, and Liz Dennis

Dr. Diamond, a sociologist, has most recently been Visiting Chair in Gerontology at St. Thomas University in New Brunswick and Visiting Scholar in the School of Disability Studies at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada. His book, “Making Gray Gold: Narratives of Nursing Home Care,” received book of the year awards from the American Sociological Association’s Gerontology Section and the American Humanist Association. The Center and the Department of Sociology co-hosted Dr Diamond’s visit to Virginia Tech.

13th Annual Center for Gerontology Graduate Certificate and Awards Celebration:

This year’s Keynote Speaker was **Melissa Hardy**, Director of the Gerontology Center at Penn State. Her talk, “How Women Age: Family, Work, Health, and the Challenges We Face,” chronicled demographic changes and patterns in women’s labor force participation and retirement in the past century.

Additionally, Dr. Hardy showed how family and aging policies disproportionately, and negatively, affect old women who typically live longer and experience chronic illnesses at higher rates than old men. She called for policy changes that take into account the experiences of real families wherein both members of a married couple must work outside the home to maintain a middle class lifestyle. Her talk was co-sponsored by Women and Leadership in Philanthropy and the Women and Minority Artists and Scholars Lecture Series.



L-R: Karen A. Roberto, Melissa Hardy, and Rosemary Blieszner

Featured Center Projects

Broken Trust: Elders, Family, and Finances



Elder financial abuse costs older Americans more than \$2.6 billion per year and is most often perpetrated by family members and caregivers, according to a new report prepared by the Center for Gerontology and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse in conjunction with the MetLife Mature Market Institute. The report, *Broken Trust: Elders, Family, and Finances*, addresses the prevalence of abuse and specific topics such as fraud (telemarketers, significant others, professionals), repair scams, identity theft, and abuse of powers of attorney or guardianship. To order or download copies of the report and tips sheets for preventing financial abuse visit:

www.maturemarketinstitute.com.

Intimate Partner Violence in Rural Aging Women: Promoting Community Knowledge

The Center continues its work with the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley on their collaborative NIH funded grant, "Intimate Partner Violence in Rural Aging Women: Promoting Community Knowledge." This spring, staff concluded a comprehensive review of literature to gain insight into the public perception of intimate partner violence (IPV) and how professionals and communities are responding to this silent and growing problem. Based on the literature, we develop informational brochures for professional groups including law enforcement, social services, and faith-based communities. Additionally, we hope to raise awareness of IPV among the general public with a brochure specifically targeting older women who are victims of IPV. The Women's Resource Center is conducting 10 face-to-face interviews with older women who have been victims of IPV and are living in the New River Valley (NRV). Similarly, the Center is organizing 8 focus groups to be held over the next 6 months with area service professionals. Findings from both activities will be used to develop a community response model for the NRV that will facilitate communication among agencies, professionals, and victims to ensure their safety and help them rebuild their lives without violence.

Featured Board Member

Cathy Thompson, M.A., Futures Board Chair

Professional Position: Director of Older Adult Services at Family Service of Roanoke Valley (FSRV)

Cathy Thompson earned a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology while completing her master's degree in counselor education at Virginia Tech. She has been at Family Service since 1997. Thompson began working at FSRV as a student and was hired part-time after she completed her degree. She was named director in 1999. Under Thompson's direction, Older Adult Services was chosen by the Alliance for Children & Families as one of the top 10 programs in the United States. Her agency offers mental health counseling; a homecare program providing assistance with ADLS and IADLS for homebound/frail adults; a guardianship program (both public and private) for over 90 individuals; a Personal Affairs Management Program that provides financial services for 100 individuals currently; case management services in two area senior apartment buildings; and elder mediation services. On a personal note, Thompson and her husband are proud grandparents of a 2-year-old grandson and are expecting another grandchild in late October. No doubt reflecting the feelings of many grandparents, she says, "It is my most important and cherished job of all!!!!"

The Center for Gerontology Futures Board is an advisory group representing a variety of aging-related agencies, organizations, and services across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Members provide programmatic, financial, and educational guidance and support for the Center.

Center Awards and Recognitions

Student Awards

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Recipients



L-R: Jill S. Harrison-Rexrode, PhD Candidate, Sociology; Sung-jin Lee, PhD Candidate, Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management; Matthew F. Komelski, PhD Candidate, Human Development; and Aaron C. Weintraub, PhD Candidate, Human Development (not pictured)

AARP Memorial Fund Scholarship



L-R: Karen A. Roberto; Bradford B. Wiles, PhD Candidate, Human Development; Rosemary Blieszner; and Melissa Hardy

Center for Gerontology Futures Board Scholarship

L-R: Linda Nablo, Commissioner, Virginia Department for the Aging; Brandy Renee McCann, PhD Candidate, Human Development; and Cindi Jones, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Medical Assistance Services



Peggy Lavery Gerontology Research and Professional Development Award



L-R: Karen A. Roberto; Kenneth J. Harrah, PhD Student, Health Promotion; Sung-jin Lee, PhD Candidate, Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management; and Rosemary Blieszner

S. J. Ritchey Scholarship



L-R: Jill S. Harrison-Rexrode, PhD Candidate, Sociology;
S. J. Ritchey; Elizabeth Ritchey; and Matthew F. Komelski,
PhD Candidate, Human Development

Vetra R. Mancini and Jay A. Mancini Research Prize



L-R: Brandon E. Rodgers, PhD Candidate,
Human Development; Jay A. Mancini;
and Deborah Mancini

Student Recognitions

Dr. James L. Ford, PhD '08, Human Development
2008-2009 Commendation Award for the Outstanding Dissertation in Social Sciences and
Humanities from the Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education

Jill S. Harrison-Rexrode, PhD Candidate, Sociology
2008 Elderhostel K. Patricia Cross Doctoral Research Grant

Matthew F. Komelski, PhD Candidate, Human Development
2009 Initiation into Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society

Chih-ling Liou, PhD Student, Human Development
2009 James D. Moran Memorial Endowed Scholarship
2009 3rd place, Southern Gerontological Society Student Paper competition
2009 Harold A. Schlenker Scholarship, Department of Human Development

Brandy Renee McCann, PhD Candidate, Human Development
2008 Citizen Scholar Award, Graduate School
2009 Graduate Student Assembly Research & Development Grant
2009-2010 Hettie Margaret Anthony Doctoral Fellowship, Kappa Omicron Nu

Faculty Affiliate Recognitions

Dr. Katherine R. Allen, Human Development

2008-2009 Excellence in Graduate Student Advising, College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences

2009 International Visiting Scholar at Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan

Dr. Toni M. Calasanti, Sociology

2008-2009 Excellence in Graduate Student Advising, College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences

2008-2009 Petersen Visiting Scholar in Gerontology and Family Studies, Oregon State University

2008-2009 Visiting Fellow, Centre of Gender Excellence, Linkoping University and Orebro University, Sweden

Dr. Kirby Deater-Deckard, Psychology

Fellow, Association for Psychological Science

Dr. Shannon E. Jarrott, Human Development

2008 Excellence in Graduate Student Advising, College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences

Dr. Jay A. Mancini, Human Development and Institute for Society, Culture and Environment

2008 Distinguished Alumni Research Award, Kansas State University, College of Human Ecology

Dr. Maury A. Nussbaum, Industrial and Systems Engineering

2008 Named the Hal G. Prillaman Professor Fellow of Engineering and Operations Research, College of Engineering

Dr. Joyti Savla, Human Development and Center for Gerontology

2009 Initiation into Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society

Dr. Cynthia Smith, Human Development

2008-2009 Excellence in Undergraduate Student Advising, College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences

Dr. Muzaffer Uysal, Hospitality and Tourism Management

2008 Lifetime Achievement Award in Tourism Research, Chinese Tourism Management Association, Taiwan

2009 Michael D. Olsen Career Research Achievement Award, 14th Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism



L-R: Faculty Affiliates Cynthia Smith and Megan Dolbin-MacNab, talk with Brandon Rodgers following the 2009 Graduate Certificate and Awards Celebration

Thanks for Making a Difference!

Your donation to the Center for Gerontology supports a variety of activities including student travel, special publications, scholarships, and professional development activities. As noted by Graduate Certificate and Human Development doctoral candidate Bradford Wiles, recipient of the 2009 AARP Memorial Fund Scholarship:

“The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology provides the rare opportunity to develop skills in multiple disciplines and receive formal recognition of the accomplishment. The Center for Gerontology provides a large number of grants and scholarships specifically targeting Certificate students, and this support truly assists the students in the program and their goals. As the recipient of the AARP Memorial Scholarship in honor of those lost on 4/16/07, I am very grateful and honored for the Center for Gerontology’s and AARP’s support for my research and career.”

To make your contribution visit www.givingto.vt.edu or the Center for Gerontology’s website at www.gerontology.vt.edu.

Center for Gerontology Staff

Karen A. Roberto, Ph.D., Professor & Director
Rosemary Blieszner, Ph.D., Alumni Distinguished Professor & Associate Director
Carlene Arthur, Administrative Assistant
Nancy Brossoie, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate
Marya McPherson, M.S., Research Associate
Chih-Ling Liou, Brandy Renee McCann, & Kristin Pujari, Graduate Research Assistants
Gail Evans and Michelle Kim, Project Volunteers
Stephanie Bratton and Matt Special, Undergraduate Assistants

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