

Discovery - Learning - Engagement

Spring 2010 Newsletter

Pathways to Longevity

Adam Davey, Ph.D., associate professor in the College of Health Promotion at Temple University in Philadelphia, was the keynote speaker at the 14th Annual Center for Gerontology Graduate Certificate and Recognition Ceremony. His talk was titled, "If You Should Survive to 105: Population-based Perspectives on Very Long Lives." Dr. Davey is involved in several research projects, including the Georgia Centenarian Study, which he discussed. He noted that centenarians, people who are 100 years old or more, are a rare group of elders and generally can be divided into 3 types of people: survivors, delayers, and escapers.



L-R: Rosemary Blieszner, Adam Davey,
and Karen A. Roberto

Survivors are those who have experienced disease earlier in life, but survive it; delayers are typically those who do not deal with health problems until they are well into old age; and escapers simply do not have major health problems. Clearly, Dr. Davey emphasized, there is not one simple pathway to longevity. He humorously listed 5 tips for living long: (1) Choose your parents carefully, (2) Avoid disease, (3) Restrict your caloric intake, (4) Stay young at heart, and (5) Be seriously lucky!!

In the News

In March, 2010 Center director, Dr. Karen A. Roberto, was a visiting lecturer at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. She presented research findings at an open forum of faculty, students, and community members on "Family Perceptions of Mild Cognitive Impairment: Individual Changes and Relationship Challenges."

Dr. Roberto was one of two US scholars invited to speak at the 4th International Social & Applied Gerontology Symposium held in Antalya, Turkey, April 28-30. Her presentation was entitled, "Changes and Challenges in Families Affected by Mild Cognitive Impairment." While in Turkey, she also gave an invited plenary lecture on interactions in families affected by mild cognitive impairment at the 2nd Turkey International Symposium on Long Life in Natzilli on May 3.



L-R: Dr. Karen A. Roberto, Dr. Dena
Shenk, UNC-Charlotte, Dr. Ismail
Tufan, and Dr. Ikuko Murakami,
Akdeniz Univeristy

In April, Dr. Nancy Brossoie, Senior Research Associate at the Center, presented findings from the Center's current NIH-NICHHD funded project focusing on rural community responses to intimate partner violence (IPV) among older women, at the annual meeting of the Southern Gerontological Society in Richmond, VA. She reported on a rural faith-based community's readiness to respond to older women striving for a healthier life without violence. Focus group and interviewer data were collected from July through January in southwest Virginia with local clergy, parish nurses, and older adult ministers. Readiness was assessed on awareness of IPV, understanding of current community response strategies, recognition of roles and missions of other responding professions, and willingness to collaborate to prevent and reduce incidences of IPV. Responses indicated that faith-based community members are willing to join community response efforts but may be hindered by limited awareness of aging issues, IPV, and community services. As a result of this work, Dr. Brossoie is collaborating with the local area agency on aging and the local elder justice coalition to develop a program to raise awareness and engage the faith-based community in addressing the hidden and secretive problem of IPV in later life. To review Dr. Brossoie's poster go to:

http://www.gerontology.vt.edu/docs/IPV_SGS_2010.pdf

Congratulations to Ryan Cook, graduate research assistant at the Center, who received his Master's degree in Counselor Education this spring! We wish Ryan much success and happiness in his new career.

Also, congratulations to the Center's research associate Marya McPherson, and her family as they welcomed a baby boy, Yonas Kaegan, into the world in January!

Spring 2010 Research Forum

This year's Spring Research Forum featured Wendy Welch, Ph.D., who spoke about the tradition of storytelling among elders in Appalachia. Her talk, "Listen Sonny": A Humorous Yet Insightful Look at Enabling Elders as Community Storytellers," elicited audience participation and helped the audience understand the challenges and opportunities of working with community storytellers. Dr. Welch is a community organizer at the Healthy Appalachia Institute at UVA-Wise. For more information:

<http://www.scottishsongandstory.co.uk>



Featured Research Projects

This past winter, Dr. Nancy Brossoie and graduate research assistant Ryan Cook began conducting client satisfaction surveys with participants enrolled in the Virginia Department for the Aging's nursing home diversion pilot program, funded by the federal Administration on Aging. Three local area agencies on aging are participating in the pilot and providing services to 55 older Virginians. The Community Living Program (CLP), launched in Virginia during 2009, provides traditional services (i.e., personal care, homemaker, and adult day services) and non-traditional support (i.e., monetary support for monthly food and rent costs) and can be directed by the consumer or local area agency on aging staff. The CLP is designed to meet the needs of older adults who meet nursing home eligibility criteria and have incomes and assets above Medicaid eligibility guidelines. By participating in the program, participants are able to remain living in their homes and communities and thus delay depleting their resources by premature entry into long-term care facilities. Results of the survey will be used to help refine and develop Virginia's program for the expanded pilot program that will be launched in October 2010.

Dr. Toni Calasanti, Center affiliate from the Department of Sociology, has been analyzing files from the Hannan Archives, a collection of Depression-era historical documents from the Luella Hannan Memorial Foundation that has served aging people in Detroit since its inception in 1925. Generally these documents relate to case histories of individuals who received Hannan funds to help cover housing and living expenses from 1927-1933 (when the majority of clients were funded). Dr. Calasanti has co-edited a book (with Ruth Ray; currently under review) about these archives, and was one of four Hannan Archives researchers to present papers at the 2009 meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. Initial analyses of these archives have appeared as a special issue of *Journal of Aging, Humanities, and the Arts* (2008, Vol. 2). Ruth Ray, Professor of English at Wayne State University, has played major role in making the archives accessible for scholars' use and in obtaining funding for researchers.



Featured Futures Board Member: Dr. Kye Kim



Dr. Kye Kim, who is originally from South Korea, moved to the US after earning his M.D. degree at Yonsei University in Seoul and serving three years of military duty. He completed his residency in psychiatry at SUNY at Buffalo in 1985 after which he completed his fellowship in geriatric psychiatry at the University of South Florida under Dr. Eric Pfeiffer, one of the first geriatric psychiatrists in the United States. At the Buffalo Veteran's Association Medical Center and SUNY Buffalo, Dr. Kim established a geriatric psychiatry unit to address clinical issues related to age-specific mental disorders and

offered consultative services to major long-term care facilities in Western New York. As the only formally trained geriatric psychiatrist in the region at that time, he gave geriatric psychiatric lectures and seminars to medical students, psychiatry residents, and geriatric medicine fellows.

In 1998, Dr. Kim joined the Salem VA Medical Center and UVA to direct the geriatric program at SVAMC. He restructured the existing geriatric programs based on a medical model without losing an interdisciplinary perspective. As a result, his Dementia Unit and Memory Disorders Clinic are exemplary programs in the VA's Mid-Atlantic region, and the Dementia Unit was cited by the U.S. Congress as a model program in 2002. Most recently, he expanded his geriatric teaching to Virginia Tech's Department of Human Development and Center for Gerontology, and has offered a Clinical Practicum to graduate students since 2004. He became a member of Center's Futures Board in 2005 and was appointed as faculty affiliate in the department of Human Development in 2008. In 2007, he was promoted to professor of psychiatry at University of Virginia for his achievements in teaching and clinical research. In 2009 he was appointed as founding professor in psychiatry at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. He served as a member of the Medical Student Admission Committee and participated in selecting the charter class.

On a personal note, he and his wife of 31 years, Moon, are in charge of a senior group called Prime Timers at a local church. He also leads a Bible study group at a senior housing project in Roanoke. He has two adult children, Jerry and Eric. Jerry is a 2008 graduate of Virginia Tech and is currently interning at a Public Relations firms in Seoul, South Korea. Eric graduated from UVA in 2009 and works for a lab at the UVA Medical Center, with plans of going to medical school in the near future. Dr. Kim says he believes caring for old folks is far more than a profession, and he is especially committed to serving older veterans who sacrificed their youth for this country and South Korea.

Feature Alumni: Dr. Pamela B. Teaster

Pamela B. Teaster is Professor, Director of the Graduate Center for Gerontology, Chairperson of the Department of Gerontology, and Associate Dean for Research in the College of Public Health at the University of Kentucky (UK). She received her doctorate degree in Public Administration and Public Affairs with a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology from Virginia Tech in 1997. Dr. Teaster began her academic career as assistant professor and Extension specialist in Gerontology at Virginia Tech before moving to UK in 2002.

Dr. Teaster just published her first book, *Public Guardianship After 25 Years: In the Best Interests of Incapacitated People?* (2010; Praeger). An active researcher, scholar, and collaborator, Dr. Teaster is the author of over 75 peer-reviewed articles, reports, books, and book chapters. Her current projects include:



Elder Maltreatment Surveillance Pilot Project (Centers for Disease Control); Calculating the Costs of Elder Mistreatment and Evidence-Based Practices for Elder Abuse (Administration on Aging); An Update on Financial Abuse Report - Broken Trust (Metlife Mature Market Institute); Collaboratively Combating Elder Abuse in Kentucky (UK Commonwealth Collaboratives Fund); Linkages Between Poverty and Elder Mistreatment in a Rural Kentucky Community (KY Center for Poverty Research), A Prevalence Study of Elder Abuse in Kentucky Nursing Homes and Nursing Home Staff Perceptions of Elder Abuse in KY (private donors), and A Multi-site Assessment of Court-focused Elder Abuse Initiatives (The National Institute of Justice). Dr. Teaster is the Immediate Past President of the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the President of the KY Guardianship Association. She recently served on the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Social Security and Representative

Payees, the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging, and the Center for Guardianship Certification. She is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America, a recipient of the Rosalie Wolf Award for Research on Elder Abuse (National Association of Adult Protective Services), and a recipient of the Outstanding Affiliate Member Award (Kentucky Guardianship Association).

Center Awards and Recognitions

Student Awards

The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is awarded to Commonwealth Campus students and to master's and doctoral students who complete a set of gerontology courses, a practicum, and research in conjunction with their degree requirements. Students combine their major studies and a concentration in gerontology with the goal of contributing to improving the quality of life for older adults through teaching, research, and practice in their chosen fields.

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Recipients

L-R: Sung-jin Lee, PhD, Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management; Matthew F. Komelski, PhD, Human Development; Emily Duda, Commonwealth Campus Student, Human Development; Brandy Renee McCann, Ph.D. Candidate, Human Development



AARP Memorial Fund Scholarship (\$500)

L-R: Emily Duda, Commonwealth Campus Student, Human Development, and Karen A. Roberto



Center for Gerontology Future's Board Scholarship (\$2,000)



L-R: Rosemary Blieszner;
Lauren Ermann, Ph.D. Candidate, Counselor
Education; and Karen A. Roberto

Peggy Lavery Gerontology Research and Professional Development Awards (\$500 each)



L-R: Rosemary Blieszner; Chih-ling Liou, Ph.D. Student, Human
Development; Kelly A. Munly, Ph.D. Student, Human Development;
and Karen A. Roberto

S. J. Ritchey Scholarships (\$3,000 each)

L-R: Dr. S. J. Ritchey; Brandy Renee McCann, Ph.D.
Candidate, Human Development; and Dr. Elizabeth
Ritchey (Bradford B. Wiles, Ph.D. Candidate, Human
Development also received the award but was unable
to attend the celebration)



Student Recognitions

Our Certificate students have been acclaimed in special ways:

Jill S. Harrison, Ph.D. '09, Sociology

Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Gerontology & Healthcare Research, Brown University
Honorable Mention, Outstanding Social Sciences Dissertation, VT Graduate School

Matthew F. Komelski, Ph.D., Human Development

2010 Vetra R. Mancini & Jay A. Mancini Research Prize

Sung-jin Lee, Ph.D., Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management

2009-2010 James D. Moran Memorial Scholarship, CLAHS

2010 Graduate Student Assembly Research & Development Grant

Chih-ling Liou, Ph.D. Student, Human Development

2009-2010 James D. Moran Memorial Scholarship, CLAHS

2009 Harold A. Schlenker Scholarship, Human Development

3rd Place, Student Paper Competition, Southern Gerontological Society

Faculty Affiliate Recognitions

As a university-level research center, we have 65 Faculty Affiliates representing university administration, 7 colleges, and 30 academic units across campus. This year, several of our affiliates have received important awards and recognitions. We applaud their accomplishments and are honored to have them associated with the Center.

Dr. Toni M. Calasanti, Dept. of Sociology

2009 Keynote Address: British Sociological Association's Ageing, Body, & Society Group, London

2009 Plenary Address: GEXcel Conference, Linkoping, Sweden

2010 Address: International Network on Critical Gerontology, Keele University

Dr. Julia Beamish & Dr. Rosemary Goss, Dept. of Apparel, Housing, & Resource Management

2008 Best Housing, Equipment, and Design Article Award, Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, for "Understanding Older Adults' Attitudes and Adoption of Residential Technologies"

Dr. Megan Dolbin-MacNab, Dept. of Human Development

2009-2010 Graduate Student Advising Award, CLAHS

Dr. Muzaffer Uysal, Dept. of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Designated as one of the world's top 50 tourism scholars. "A Citation Analysis of Tourism Studies" in Tourism Management was the most frequently cited article during the 1970-2007 and 1998-2007 (1,307 citation for 1970-2007)

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 Matthew Komelski who recently finished his Ph.D. in Human Development and was the first AARP awardee and a 2009 recipient of the S.J. Ritchey Scholarship:

“The Center for Gerontology has had a tremendous influence on my development as a gerontologist and scholar. The standards set by the Center insured that my training in gerontology was both intense and comprehensive. With 13 required credits of gerontology-related coursework, and a 120 hour practicum, this program has to be one of the toughest and most rewarding certificate programs on campus. The professional and financial rewards of this program cannot be overstated. My participation in the program has allowed me to meet and seek advice from many of the top names in this field. Moreover, the funding opportunities made available to me as a Gerontology Certificate student, such as the AARP Memorial Fund and the S. J. Ritchie Scholarship, supported my dissertation research and writing. I am deeply indebted to the Center for Gerontology for providing these opportunities.”

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
Ryan Cook, Matthew Cox, Laura Eubanks Gambrel, & Brandy Renee McCann,
Graduate Research Assistants
Gail Evans, Research Assistant (retired)

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