

Discovery - Learning - Engagement

*Spring 2007 Newsletter*



From the Director . . .

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students at the Center for Gerontology, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank each and every one of you for your heartfelt expressions of concern and thoughtful words of reassurance as we faced the horrific events that unfolded on our campus and changed our lives forever. Although we did not lose anyone in gerontology, for which I am grateful, we mourn the loss of our colleagues and students. While it has been a very difficult time, the Virginia Tech community is strong and beginning to heal. We will prevail.

In the wake of April 16<sup>th</sup>, we contemplated carefully about whether to continue with plans for the Center's annual Graduate Certificate and Awards Celebration scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup>. As I spoke with faculty affiliates and other university colleagues, and after reflecting on the strong community spirit that has shone so brightly at our university, the answer became clear. Yes, we would move forward and celebrate our successes. In this edition of our newsletter, I take pride in sharing with you some of the brighter moments in our professional lives this year.

~Karen

### ***AARP Memorial Fund Established***

At the Spring meeting of the Center's advisory groups, Bill Kallio, State Director of AARP and Futures Board member, presented Dr. Roberto with a letter expressing AARP's condolences and support following the Virginia Tech tragedy. As noted in the letter, AARP was profoundly affected by the loss of innocent lives. In addition to the deep ties the Blacksburg Chapter has with the University, many of AARP's members, their children, and their grandchildren have a direct relationship with the Virginia Tech community. Bill announced that AARP will set up a memorial fund at the Center for Gerontology in the amount of \$1,000 for each of the 32 innocent lives that were lost on that tragic day for a total of \$32,000.

All of us at the Center were greatly moved by this generous expression of support. The funds will be put in an endowment account, which will provide for a perpetual memorial to those we have lost. The Center will use the contributions to encourage students to prepare for careers that advance the issues of aging. Persons wishing to donate to the AARP Virginia Tech Memorial Fund for Gerontology may mail contributions to the Center or email [gero@vt.edu](mailto:gero@vt.edu) for more specific fund information.

## ***Glen H. Elder, Jr. Keynote Speaker at 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Center for Gerontology Recognition Ceremony***

Glen H. Elder, Jr., Howard Odum Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, gave his keynote address to a full house at the Fralin Biotechnology Center auditorium in April.



Dr. Elder has dedicated his career to theoretical and empirical work directed toward the development of life course studies as a field of inquiry. He has paved new ground in working with longitudinal data to explore how individual lives are socially patterned over time, and about the processes by which lives are affected by changing environments, opportunities, and constraints. Dr. Elder's research addresses the influence of the Great Depression in the lives of Americans, the impact of military and wartime experiences on the life course and health of U.S. Veterans, and the effects of urban poverty as well as rural change on families. He is currently investigating sources of resilient

and vulnerable pathways through the adult years. Dr. Elder's significant contributions to the development of life course theory are viewed as "one of the most important achievements of social science in the second half of the 20th century" (Colby, 1998, p. viii).

Dr. Elder's keynote address, "World War II: A Cataclysm of Change," provided insights on the factors that differentially affected the life course trajectories of men and women who served during WW II.

As part of the Developmental Science Colloquium Series, Dr. Elder's visit was co-sponsored by the Center for Gerontology, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, College of Science, and Department of Sociology.



Nearly 100 persons attended Dr. Elder's presentation

### ***Gerontology Graduate Certificate Recipients***

***Valentina V. Lukyanova***  
***PhD, Sociology***

***Marya C. McPherson***  
***MS, Human Development***

***Titilola Obilade***  
***Human Development***

***Jane Roberts***  
***PhD, Human Development***

***Darrell K. Shomaker***  
***Commonwealth Campus Program***

***Brianne L. Winston***  
***PhD, Human Development***

*Center for Gerontology  
Scholarship Award Recipients  
Spring 2007*



Center for Gerontology Futures  
Board Scholarship  
Aaron C. Weintraub,  
Human Development, 3<sup>rd</sup> from the left ,  
with Gerontology Futures Board members



Peggy Lavery Gerontology Research  
& Professional Development Award  
Sharon Fenyk,  
Health Promotion, left,  
receives award from Karen A. Roberto



S. J. Ritchey Scholarship  
Jim Ford, Human Development, left and  
Erica Husser, Human Development, right  
with Drs. Elizabeth and S. Jewell Ritchey



Vetra R. Mancini and Jay A. Mancini  
Research Prize  
Elise Cole, Human Development, center  
with Dr. Jay and Ms. Deborah Mancini

*Other Student Awards*

Cunningham Fellow  
Graduate School  
Aaron C. Weintraub, HD

Graduate Student Association Research  
Symposium's Arts, Social Sciences, and  
Humanities Awards  
Graduate School  
Erica K. Husser, HD  
Sung-Jin Lee, AHRM



Graduate Student Endowed Scholarship  
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences  
Sung-Jin Lee, AHRM

Jerry Hulic Serving Spirit Fellowship Award  
Department of Human Development  
Matthew F. Komelski, HD

James D. Moran Memorial Endowed Scholarship  
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences  
Sung-Jin Lee, AHRM

Ora Goodwin Roop Scholarship  
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences  
Erica K. Husser, HD

Virginia Tech Citizen Scholar  
Graduate School  
Darrell Shomaker, Commonwealth Campus

### *Faculty Affiliate Awards & Recognitions*



Faculty Affiliates from L-R: Doris Zallen,  
Katherine Allen, Martha Ann Bell, Fred Piercy,  
Jay Mancini, Toni Calasanti, Eleanor Schlenker

**Dr. Katherine R. Allen, Human Development**  
2007 College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences Award  
for Excellence in Research and Creative Scholarship

**Dr. Martha Ann Bell, Psychology**  
Fellow of Division 7, Developmental Psychology  
American Psychological Association

**Dr. Toni Calasanti, Sociology**  
2006 Richard Kalish Innovative Publication Award, Gerontological Society of America  
2007 University Alumni Award for Excellence in Research

**Dr. Shannon E. Jarrott and Colleagues, Human Development**  
2006 University Alumni Award for Outreach Excellence

**Dr. Jay A. Mancini, Human Development**  
2006 Honor Award for Excellence, 4-H/Army Youth Development Project,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
2007 Alumni Distinguished Service Award, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

**Dr. Fred Piercy, Head, Human Development**

2007 College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences Award for Excellence in Graduate Advising  
2007 Outstanding Contributions to Marriage and Family Therapy Award,  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

**Dr. John Ryan, Chair, Sociology**

2006 Alumni Recognition Award, Sociology Department, Eberly College of Arts and Sciences,  
West Virginia University

**Dr. Doris T. Zallen, Science and Technology in Society**

2007 Outstanding Faculty Award, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

***Special Recognitions***

***Dr. Eleanor Schlenker – Thank you and Best Wishes!***



L-R: Rosemary Blieszner, Eleanor Schlenker,  
and Karen A. Roberto

Professor Eleanor Schlenker joined the Virginia Tech faculty in 1988. As one of our most supportive affiliates, Eleanor taught courses in Nutrition and Aging and Physiology and Aging for the Graduate Certificate program. She also endowed a scholarship in honor of her father which is administered through the Virginia Tech Adult Day Services program. Eleanor will be retiring from Virginia Tech at the end of this academic year. We appreciate Eleanor's many contributions to the Center for Gerontology and wish her all the best in future years.

***Jerome A. Niles – 2007 Administrative Leadership Award***

Dr. Jerry Niles, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, has been a champion of the Center for Gerontology and tireless supporter of our initiatives. In appreciation, we nominated Jerry for the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education's Administrative Leadership Award, which honors administrators who have made exceptional efforts in support of gerontology or geriatrics education. We are delighted to report that the Association selected Jerry as the recipient of the 2007 Administrative Leadership Award.

After more than 30 years of service, Jerry will be retiring from Virginia Tech at the end of this academic year. All of us who have had the opportunity to work with Jerry recognize him as a sincere and inspiring leader who has supported the Center's discovery, learning, and engagement activities, overtly and behind the scenes, to sustain the continual growth and development of gerontology at Virginia Tech. We wish him much success and happiness as he continues his life journey.



## ***Your Contribution Makes 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 Health Promotions doctoral student Sharon Fenyk, who was the 2007 Peggy Lavery Gerontology Research & Professional Development Award recipient,

“Through the support of the Center for Gerontology, I am able to pursue research that I believe will help advance health promoters’, educators’, allied healthcare professionals’, and gerontologists’ understanding of health care preferences among older adults. I am extremely grateful for the recognition and support I have received from the Center.”

To make your contribution visit [www.givingto.vt.edu](http://www.givingto.vt.edu) or the Center for Gerontology’s website at [www.gerontology.vt.edu](http://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, Project Coordinator  
Lesley Earles, Erica Husser, Marya McPherson, Brianne Winston, Graduate Research Assistants  
Gail Evans, Research Assistant (retired)  
Teresa Daniels, Kathy Prince, Undergraduate Assistants

## ***Contact Us***

Center for Gerontology  
237 Wallace Hall (0426)  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
Phone: (540) 231-7657 Fax: (540) 231-7157  
<http://www.gerontology.vt.edu>  
gero@vt.edu

*“Virginia Tech hires only U.S. citizens and those eligible to work in the U.S.”  
Virginia Tech is an Equal Opportunity/  
Affirmative Action Employer*