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Meet Our Staff

The Institute on Aging at the University of Virginia is a university wide collaborative initiative responsible for stimulating interest in, and disseminating information about activities and research related to aging at the university and within the surrounding community. The Institute on Aging is directed by Dr. Timothy Salthouse, Brown-Forman Professor of Psychology. Lora Hamp, J.D., M.S., has recently assumed the position of Director of Development for the Institute. Sara Watson, Director of Programs & Operations, oversees all aspects of the Institute on Aging, including future Institute plans and collaborations with other organizations. As Communications & Events Coordinator, Anne Snoddy manages the details for each Institute on Aging event.

Dr. Salthouse and Sara Watson have been with the Institute since its inception in January 2004, and both Anne Snoddy and Lora Hamp joined our staff in the fall of 2004.

Prize-Winning Aging Expert to Speak on May 9, 2006

Dr. Robert Butler, co-founder and CEO of the International Longevity Center, founding Director of the National Institute on Aging, Pulitzer Prize winner, and recipient of the Heinz Award for the Human Condition, will give a talk titled "Do Health and Longevity Create Wealth?" at 3:00 p.m. at the Omni Hotel in Charlottesville. Dr. Butler was a principal investigator of one of the first interdisciplinary, comprehensive, longitudinal studies of healthy community-residing older persons, conducted at the National Institute of Mental Health. Their work found that much of what is attributed to old age is in fact a function of disease, social-economic adversity and even personality. This work also set the stage for the later concepts of "productive aging" and "successful aging."

Fall Aging 101 Series Held

The Institute on Aging completed another successful Aging 101 community lecture series this past fall. All lectures were held at the Senior Center in Charlottesville and each drew an audience of about 75. On November 2, Drs. Scott Bender and Dan Cox, experts in driving assessment, discussed information about changes in driving ability related to aging. On November 16, Drs. David Geldmacher and Carol Manning discussed factors associated with the prevalence of, and recent progress in treatments for, Alzheimer's Dementia. The two lectures and the group question and answer session were followed by a catered reception provided by Whole Foods Market during which speakers answered the individual questions of audience members. The Institute on Aging will sponsor its tenth and eleventh Aging 101 lectures this spring (see page 6).

Community Forum Deemed Huge Success

On Thursday, December 8, 2005, the Institute on Aging and the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) presented a forum showcasing the community based research initiative created by the two organizations. The forum was held at the University of Virginia School of Law in Caplin Pavilion from 8:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m., and drew an audience of 80 people including faculty, students, and local community members.

Dr. Gene Block, Vice President and Provost, gave the introductory remarks, which were followed by presentations by Dr. Paul Freedman, Department of Politics, Gordon Walker, CEO of JABA, and Sally Thomas, Chairperson of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. These presentations were followed by the discussion of research projects sponsored by the community based research initiative. Richard Bonnie, Professor in the School of Law, presented the results of his project, "How Does Voting Occur in Long Term Care?" This was followed by a presentation on the "Prevention of Elder Mistreatment in Our Community" by Drs. Jonathan Evans and James Roche, both of the School of Medicine, Sue Dwoskin, of the Albemarle County Department of Social Services, and Claire Curry, of the Advocacy Clinic for the Elderly. The final presentation was given by David Phillips and William Morrish, Professors in the School of Architecture, on the results of their study, "Mapping the Urban Environment of Aging." The forum concluded with a panel question and answer session with many of the speakers participating.

2006 Pilot Research Projects Awarded

One of the primary goals of the University of Virginia Institute on Aging is to stimulate research related to issues of aging, and to encourage the formation of collaborative teams to pursue innovative approaches to topics relevant to later life. Over the past two years, the Institute on Aging has awarded funds to ten exciting research projects. We are pleased to announce funds have been awarded to four more projects in 2006. They are: Dr. Edward Berger, Department of Civil Engineering, and Dr. Brett Blackman, Department of Biomedical Engineering, "Mapping Lipid Rafts and Caveolae Plasma Membrane Domains in Endothelial Cells to Investigate Aging in the Cardiovascular System," Dr. Melissa Burns-Cusato, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, "Genetic Control of Age-Associated Anxiety," Dr. Jason Chroma, Department of Chemistry, and Dr. John Chirgwin, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics and Internal Medicine, "Small Molecule Inhibitors of Osteoclast Differentiation as Novel Anti-Osteoporosis Therapeutics," and Dr. Kim Innes and Dr. Ann Gill Taylor, of the Center for the Study of Complementary and Alternative Therapies, "The Effects of Yoga on Insulin Sensitivity and Related Indices of Metabolic and Psychological Status in Older Adults with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus." More information about these projects and previous projects awarded can be found on our website:

<http://www.virginia.edu/aginginstitute/research.html>

Community Funding Recipients Announced

The University of Virginia Institute on Aging and the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA) are pleased to award a second cycle of funding for student assistance with collaborative, community-based research in the field of aging. In January, student stipends in amounts up to \$5,000 were awarded to the following projects: "A Population-Based Study of Elder Mistreatment: Epidemiology, Associated Factors, and Trends over Time," Dr. Jonathan Evans, School of Medicine, Section of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine, "Strength, Balance and Function in the Elderly Following a Functional Balance Training Program Compared to a Traditional Community-Based Exercise Program," Dr. Christopher Ingersoll, Department of Human Services, and "Financial Abuse of the Elderly," Dr. Shelly Jackson, Department of Psychiatric Medicine. This initiative promotes one prong of the Institute's mission to enrich the lives of elders by acting as a catalyst and coordinator for aging-related research. Additionally, the community-based research program serves in part as a pathway for implementation of the JABA 2020 Community Plan on Aging (see <http://www.jabacares.org/plansummary.pdf>). More information about these projects and previous projects awarded can be found on our website:

<http://www.virginia.edu/aginginstitute/research.html>

Join Us in Our Important Mission

The University of Virginia Institute on Aging was established to enrich the lives of those who are old today and those who will be old tomorrow by acting as a catalyst and coordinator for interdisciplinary research, education, and service programs in the field of aging. As the Institute pursues this mission, resources and financial support are limited, and thus private donations are essential. Gifts to the Institute are needed to maintain existing programs and to address more fully those issues related to the aging population. To learn more about how you can support the Institute on Aging in its important mission, contact Lora Hamp, Director of Development, at (434) 243-5695 or lhamp@virginia.edu.

Interview with Director, Timothy Salthouse *Conducted by Lora Hamp*

The Institute is fortunate to operate under the direction of Timothy Salthouse, Ph.D., the Brown–Forman Professor of Psychology and one of the world’s leading authorities on the effects of aging on memory and other mental processes. He is a fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Society and the Gerontological Society of America. Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Salthouse has published 8 books and over 150 chapters and journal articles. His research has been supported by the National Institute on Aging since 1978, and has included a Research Career Development Award and two MERIT Awards. Dr. Salthouse was recently recognized as the author of one of the 10 most-cited articles in the field of Psychology and Psychiatry during the period of 1995 through 2005. In my recent interview with Dr. Salthouse, he sheds light on his research and vision for the Institute.

Dr. Salthouse, in your view, what is the importance of having an Institute on Aging at UVa?

One major goal of the Institute is to try to make aging research and aging-related activities more integrated across the different units within the University. The Institute is also important in serving as a clearinghouse and stimulant for aging-related research. Equally significant is the Institute’s goal of developing more courses to train future generations and inform them about aging.

More broadly, why does the community beyond UVa need the Institute?

Demographics are obvious in indicating that in the next 30 to 40 years, society will have gone from 1 in 8 people who are over the age of 65 to 1 in 5 over the age of 65. Clearly, this has implications for all aspects of society, and the Institute can play a key role in addressing how to deal with the challenges presented by this large segment of the population.

On a more personal note, how did you become involved in the field of aging and tell us about your current research?

Right after I got my Ph.D., I did a post-doctoral research fellowship on the relationship of aging and cognition, and I became interested in what happens as we get older: what are limitations on certain abilities like memory, how early these effects occur, and what might be responsible for them.

I’m currently conducting a longitudinal study, in which we follow the same people over time, trying to find out whether the changes they experience over time are related to different characteristics, such as lifestyle, personality, and attitudes towards life. I’m also conducting a project that is designed to investigate basic aspects of cognition. People who participate not only learn about their cognitive abilities, but they are also paid \$120 for their participation. (See page 6 for more information about how to participate.)

What is your vision for the Institute?

I would like to see the field of aging being recognized as a major strength at UVa, one that would be manifested not only by many different research groups studying aspects of aging, but also by a strong aging curriculum with possibly a certificate or minor degree program in gerontology. As University resources are limited, funding from private sources will be needed to sustain the operation and to expand in the new directions necessary to achieve our goals. Society is going to consist of a large proportion of older adults very soon, and so we must be prepared to understand the needs and the issues of that segment of the population.

Funding Announcements

Ageing Research Dissertation Awards to Increase Diversity (R36)

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) announces the availability of dissertation awards (R36) in all areas of research within the Institute's mandate to increase the diversity of the research workforce on aging. These awards are available to qualified predoctoral students in accredited research doctoral programs in the United States.

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-06-117.html>

2006 Glenn/AFAR Breakthroughs in Gerontology Awards

Sponsored by The Glenn Foundation for Medical Research, in collaboration with the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR), the "Breakthroughs in Gerontology" (BIG) initiative provides timely support to a small number of pilot research programs that may be of relatively high risk but which offer significant promise of yielding transforming discoveries in the fundamental biology of aging.

<http://www.afar.org/GlennBIG.html>

Mischel to Speak at UVA

Dr. Walter Mischel, Professor of Psychology from Columbia University, will speak in the Harrison Institute Auditorium at 3:30 p.m. on April 7, 2006. The title of his talk is "Finding Personality in the Variability of Behavior." Professor Mischel's research interests include the structure, process and development of personality, and self regulation. Dr. Mischel received his Ph.D. from Ohio State, and is a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Borchard Foundation Center on Law & Aging Awards

The Borchard Foundation Center on Law & Aging annually awards up to 4 grants of \$20,000 each. Applications for the grant are due March 15, 2006 and selections will be made by June 1, 2006. The grant's purpose is to further scholarship about new or improved public policies, laws and/or programs that will enhance the quality of life for the elderly. Each grant recipient is required to publish an article on the subject of their research in a top flight journal.

http://www.borchardcenter.org/argp_rfp.html

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research 2006

These awards support highly qualified individuals to undertake broad studies of the most challenging policy issues in health and health care facing America. Grants of up to \$275,000 are awarded to investigators from a variety of disciplines. Applicants must be affiliated either with educational institutions or with 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations located in the United States.

Letter of Intent Deadline: March 29, 2006.

<http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=19304>

Dresser Lecture Well-Attended

On October 11, 2005, Professor Rebecca Dresser gave a lecture titled "Autonomy Is Not the Answer: Rewriting the Law on Life-Sustaining Treatment for Dementia Patients" to an audience of 75 in Caplin Pavilion at the University of Virginia School of Law. Ms. Dresser is the Daniel Noyes Kirby Professor of Law and Professor of Ethics in Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis. She teaches both medical and law students about legal and ethical issues in end-of-life care, biomedical research, genetics, assisted reproduction, and related topics.

Vaupel Speaks in Rotunda

On October 27, 2005, Dr. James Vaupel presented a lecture titled "How Long Will We Live and How Well Will We Live?" in the Dome Room of the Rotunda. Attendance reached 130, and a reception was held in the Lower West Oval Room. Dr. Vaupel is the founding director of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, and the world's foremost demographer of longevity. Dr. Vaupel's aim is to further understanding of the determinants of and limits to human life expectancy. He is a leader in the new areas of biodemography and paleodemography, and in this talk, he presented an assessment of the prospects for longer, healthier lives.

Spring Aging 101 Series Scheduled

The Institute on Aging will hold its spring Aging 101 series on two dates in February and March at the Doubletree Hotel. On February 28, Dr. Gene Block, Vice President and Provost and Professor of Biology, and Dr. Barry Condron, Professor of Biology, will discuss the neurobiological changes that occur with aging. On March 14, Dr. Eugene Barrett, Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of the Diabetes Center, and Dr. Casey Kerrigan, Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, will discuss changes in muscles and metabolism that occur with aging.

Aging 101 is a community lecture series for the general public describing University of Virginia research related to aging. These lectures will be held at the Doubletree Hotel from 3:00 until 4:30 p.m., and will be followed by a reception where the speakers will answer individual questions. There is no admission fee, but you must **RSVP** by e-mail at uvaging@virginia.edu or by phone at 243-5695 to reserve your space. Free parking is available at the Doubletree Hotel at 990 Hilton Heights Road (next to Sam's Club).

Shenk Includes UVa in Book Tour

David Shenk, author of *The Forgetting*, which was recently made into a PBS movie, will be giving a talk on April 3rd co-sponsored by the Institute on Aging and the Central & Western Virginia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Charlottesville is among ten cities across the nation included in the book tour. Mr. Shenk is a former fellow at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center at Columbia University, he has written for *Harper's*, *Wired*, *Salon*, *The New Republic*, the *Washington Post*, and *The New Yorker* and is an occasional commentator for NPR's *All Things Considered*. Please **RSVP** for this event by e-mail at uvaging@virginia.edu or by phone at 243-5695.

Aging-Related Information Requested

At the Institute on Aging, we are trying to gather information about all faculty members researching and teaching on topics related to aging at the University of Virginia. If you or someone you know at UVa is involved with issues related to aging, or has received funding, awards, etc. related to aging, please let us know so that we can recognize that person in a future newsletter.

Participate in UVa Aging Research

The Salthouse Cognitive Aging Lab is currently seeking participants for a project investigating the relations among age, memory, and other cognitive abilities in adults of different ages. Participation involves performing a variety of different activities in our laboratory on three separate sessions, and completing several questionnaires at home, for a total of about 8 hours. You will be paid for your participation. If you are at least 18 years of age and are interested in participating in the project, please call (434) 982-6320 to receive further information.