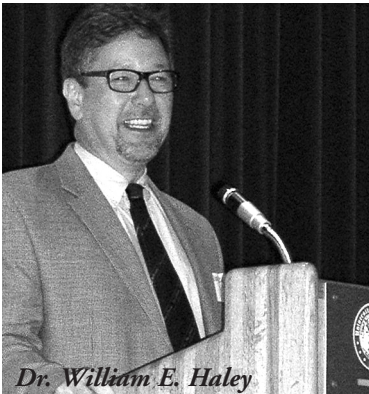


# gerontology

connections

SPRING 2004



*Dr. William E. Haley*

## Annual Fall Breakfast

In October, the Center for Gerontological Studies hosted its Annual Fall Breakfast. Featured speakers included Dr. William E. Haley, professor and director of the School of Aging at University of South Florida, and Dr. Michael Marsiske of UF's Department of Clinical and Health Psychology. Dr. Haley gave an overview on the program at South Florida and Dr. Marsiske gave an update on his T32 National Institute on Aging grant and the pre-doctoral research training program. Over fifty faculty and students attended the breakfast and had the opportunity to meet these distinguished guests and engage in discussions on research, education and service in aging in the state of Florida. The next breakfast is scheduled for October 2004. For more information call (352) 392-2116.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES



*Patricia Kricos*

Thank you for your interest in our gerontology programs and news. Through its various programs, the Center for Gerontological Studies ensures that today's students will be prepared to meet society's needs in the coming decades for professionals and citizens who can inform public policy regarding the needs of one of this country's most valuable resources: its older adults.

Recent developments that we are particularly proud of include the new distance-learning Graduate Level Certificate in Geriatric Care Management, in partnership with the Division of Continuing Education and the National Academy of Certified Care Managers. The certificate is designed to enhance the ability of health and social service professionals across the United States to manage the care of elders in a variety of settings, including the home.

The certificate is also designed to enhance the ability of recent graduates in health related fields to manage the comprehensive care of our aging population. Additionally in the past year, we have a new and energetic chapter of Sigma Phi Omega, the National Honorary and Professional Society for Gerontology, the

number of aging courses that are offered and the number of students enrolled in the gerontology minor keep growing, and the Center has joined in a mutually beneficial partnership with the Institute for Learning in Retirement.

Because the Center serves all students and faculty, regardless of department, college, or major, gifts to the Center for Gerontological Studies impact a broad cross-section of the University's population and the community at large. Your generosity helps students, faculty, and the community by funding annual lectures and symposia on aging; by enriching the collections of aging-related books, journals, videos, and online resources; by supporting research activities and other student activities, such as travel to gerontology conventions, gerontology promotional efforts, and community activities.

Even a small donation can make a difference, so please think about supporting our important mission by writing a check to *The Center for Gerontological Studies*, Account Number 000075.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support of the Center.

## Grant Boosts Leighton Cluff Award

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded a \$50,000 grant to the University of Florida Foundation to be used by the Center for Gerontological Studies in support of the Leighton E. Cluff student research program.

Created to increase student interest in aging studies, the Leighton E. Cluff Award for Aging Research honors the best research papers written about older adults and the aging process. Students from all fields of study submit their papers each year to the center, which are reviewed by a faculty committee. A \$1,200 prize is given for the best paper in the graduate and professional

category and \$600 is given for the best undergraduate writer.

The award was established through a donation from Leighton E. Cluff, professor emeritus in the UF College of Medicine. Cluff is the retired president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest foundation devoted to improving the health and health care of all Americans. The new grant will boost the fund established by Cluff in 2000.

"The Center for Gerontological Studies has as one of its primary missions the preparation of students who will be able to address the special challenges associated

with a graying America," says Patricia Kricos, director of the center. "The generous gift provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to supplement the Cluff Award ensures that today's university students will be encouraged to prepare to meet the future needs of older Americans."

Past recipients of the award have included Katherine White, Sharon Phaneuf, Cindy Hamilton, Arielle Borovsky, Amanda Floetke, Amie Dirks, Samantha Lewis, and Courtney Wise.

—BUFFY LOCKETTE

# A Lifetime of Memories



Why do we vividly remember particular moments, days and events, while others are forgotten? How are our memories strung together to make a meaningful “life story?” What functions do our memories serve? Does that change as we age?

Under the direction of Dr. Susan Bluck, research in the Life Story Lab, is conducted with men and women of all ages to address questions of what humans use autobiographical memory for, and how that changes across the lifespan. The research is grounded in a common phenomenon: people’s tendency to think about their own past and to share stories with others. In the lab, interviewers ask people to produce personal memory narratives, that is, to share pieces of their life story. In addition to quantitative measures, these memory narratives are then qualitatively coded. The broad goal of this program of research is to

determine the role that autobiographical memory plays in:

- Constructing and maintaining a sense of identity
- Initiating and maintaining relationships
- Directing future goals and plans

Dr. Bluck has a joint appointment as an assistant professor in the Center for Gerontological Studies and the Department of Psychology. In addition to her work in the Life Story Lab, she teaches undergraduate courses in Gerontology and a graduate seminar in Psychology, Autobiographical Memory Across the Lifespan. For more information, go to [www.aging.ufl.edu/lifestorylab](http://www.aging.ufl.edu/lifestorylab)

—SUSAN BLUCK, PHD

PHOTO BY: RANDY BATTISTA/MEDIA IMAGE



## Introducing PETER COLLINGS

We would like to welcome our new assistant professor in aging, Dr. Peter Collings, who is jointly appointed between Gerontology and Anthropology. Collings earned his PhD from Pennsylvania State University, home of the “Nittany Lions,” and his dissertation was on the perceptions of aging, the life course, and culture change among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic. His current research examines hunting and food sharing among Inuit, specifically the social network of food sharing between younger and older Inuit. In the fall, Collings taught two graduate seminars —Culture and Aging and Language and Culture. We are pleased that he has joined us here at the University of Florida and look forward to working with him and learning more about his dynamic research projects.

## Research Spotlight

*Faculty in the Center for Gerontological Studies are working on a variety of exciting research projects in the field of aging. Here is a sampling of our faculty’s recent research endeavors:*

### PATRICIA B. KRICOS

Dr. Kricos’ research efforts focus on older adults with hearing loss. Her two current avenues of research with elders include the effects of clear speech training on lip reading and adjustment to hearing loss and hearing

aids by older adults. She is currently exploring the relevance of the Transtheoretical Stages-of-Change Model for helping older adults cope with hearing loss.



### ROBIN L. WEST

Dr. West’s research looks at information processing in aging and how pre-existing beliefs about memory may affect these processes. Her research goal is to maximize memory performance for older adults through strategy training, increased positive beliefs, reduced anxiety, and goal setting. In collaboration with William Perlstein, a professor of clinical psychology, she is examining the brain correlates of anxiety and information processing using f-MRI technology.

Keep your classmates up to date! Please use this form for address changes and/or to tell us what you are up to. Alumni updates can be sent via post to the address above or emailed to [info@geron.ufl.edu](mailto:info@geron.ufl.edu)



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**Date Graduated:**

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**Present Activities:**

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$\Sigma\Phi\Omega-\Delta I$

## Sigma Phi Omega Chapter Opened at UF

The University of Florida has recently established a chapter of the national academic honor and professional society in gerontology, Sigma Phi Omega ( $\Sigma\Phi\Omega$ ). The national objectives of  $\Sigma\Phi\Omega$  are to promote scholarship, professionalism, friendship, services to older persons, and recognition of exemplary achievement in gerontology/aging studies and related fields.  $\Sigma\Phi\Omega$  is striving to build a national network of professionals whose leadership and service will help shape the future of gerontology.

The objectives for our local chapter, Delta Iota, are as follows:

- To promote awareness of the field of gerontology and age-related issues.
- To spread our own knowledge and experience in gerontology across diverse disciplines.
- To network within our organization and within our community.
- To provide a platform to practice our presentations and receive feedback from peers.
- To provide service to the community within the realm of gerontology.
- To enhance our knowledge and experience in gerontology as it relates to our individual fields.

During its inaugural year in 2003-2004, the Delta Iota ( $\Delta I$ ) chapter has participated in various educational and public service events including People Awareness Week, Careers in Aging Week, and the annual Association for Gerontology in Higher Education convention. The chapter has also established a campus-wide campaign promoting awareness of aging and gerontological issues at the UF by educat-

ing students in the classroom and at organization meetings. Last year,  $\Delta I$  sponsored its first ever Teacher of the Year in Aging Studies awards program. Dr. Robert M. Beland, from the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, was our first recipient.

The current officers of  $\Delta I$  are:

President: **Brooke N. Schoeffler**

Vice President: **Jillian Gordon**

Treasurer: **Erin Emery**

Executive at Large: **Courtney Wise**

Faculty Advisor: **Dr. Patricia B. Kricos**

For more information on how you can get involved or support Delta Iota, contact *Brooke N. Schoeffler* at [brookus@ufl.edu](mailto:brookus@ufl.edu)