Pets and Healthy Aging: More Than a Walk in the Park

The image of Sully, a yellow Labrador service animal, lying in front of the casket of former President George H.W. Bush will be a lasting memory for many Americans.

As research is still emerging on the benefits and challenges of animal companions in the older adult population, GSA has been working with partners to stimulate scholarship and report evidence-based information on this topic. One result is a comprehensive new online brochure titled “The Role of Pets in Human Healthy Active Aging.”

Everyone interested in aging can benefit by reading this document,” said Ian McDonough, PhD, of the University of Alabama, who served as peer reviewer. “Older adults can learn about the benefits of taking care of a pet — such as exercise that will be sustained over time, unlike diets or going to the gym. Gerontologists and geriatricians can learn about strong, consistent evidence that pet ownership is associated with less depression and stress.”

The brochure is available on the GSA website at www.geron.org/hai, and is the product of a multiyear alliance with WALTHAM/Mars Petcare to examine HAI among older adults and increase knowledge of animal-assisted interventions.

“The interaction with the pet provides companionship for older individuals, but equally important are the relationships that individuals experience by virtue of pet ownership,” said GSA CEO James Appleby, BSPharm, MPH. “With American society experiencing a demographic transformation as the population ages, the development of sound policies that enable older individuals to live longer, healthier lives and to fully participate in society is more critical than ever.”

To qualify for the internship, applicants must be a current gerontology or aging studies-related student enrolled at an accredited institution of
From the CEO

The State of Our Field Is Strong
By James Appleby, BSPharm, MPH • jappleby@geron.org

Gerontological science is alive and well. The GSA Annual Scientific Meeting was back in full force this year after taking a hiatus in 2017 when GSA hosted the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics World Congress in San Francisco.

In fact, we broke an attendance record for the Annual Scientific Meeting with nearly 4,400 attendees in Boston in November. More than 700 participants came from outside the U.S., representing 37 different countries. A famous saying is that “all politics is local.” That may be, but the strong participation of researchers from around the world demonstrates that “all science is international” and GSA is the home for this scholarship in the aging field.

The center spread of this month’s Gerontology News gives a nice recap of the Boston meeting. Next month we’ll begin accepting abstracts for the 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting in Austin, Texas, taking place November 13 to 17. (Note that starting this year, we will hold the meeting slightly earlier in November, so participants won’t need to rush home to prepare for Thanksgiving as has been the case in the past.)

Two years ago this month, I used this column to address the uncertainty many people were feeling about how aging-related programs and research funding would fare under the new presidential administration. Then, as now, I said that we would be stronger working together, and that we still had the ability to make a difference in the world around us through the advancement of gerontological science.

The capacity of GSA members to improve the lives of people as they age has only strengthened over the past two years. Interest in the sharing of research at our meeting is stronger than ever and journal editors are reporting record numbers of submissions to GSA’s peer-reviewed journals.

Looking ahead, aging research is receiving robust funding at the National Institute on Aging. For FY 2019, the agency received a full-year appropriation of $3.08 billion, an increase of $509 million over the FY 2018 level. Most percentiled, general allocation applications are being paid to the 15th percentile. Most percentiled Alzheimer’s and related dementias applications are being paid to the 28th percentile. And early-stage investigators and new investigators applications have a more generous funding line helping to bring the next generation of researchers into the field.

GSA is also continuing its support for the next generation of researchers through its support of the Butler-Williams Scholars Program, which the NIA convenes every summer to provide opportunities for junior faculty and researchers new to our field to gain insight about aging research. Emerging scholars should check the NIA website for application details about the 2019 program as the application deadline is usually in March.

The Society continues to support members of GSA’s Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO) through our Dissertation Writing Group program. The program remains strong after its first full year, and we’ve just kicked off our winter cohort to support those going through the process of completing their dissertation. The next application period (for the summer cohort) will be announced this spring.

And as you read on the front page, GSA has created a new opportunity for ESPO members to spend a summer in Washington, DC, at GSA’s headquarters through the Greg O’Neill Student Policy Internship. Greg’s passion for policy made him a friend to many emerging scholars and veteran gerontologists alike. We’re excited about helping launch the careers of people who will be able to carry Greg’s legacy forward.

I also look forward to working together with all GSA members in the new year as we continue our commitment to advancing innovation in aging.

James

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In Memoriam

Victor Marshall, PhD, FGSA, passed away on August 18 at age 74. He was a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and former director of the university’s Institute on Aging. His research focused on structural changes in the nature of work and their consequences for workers over the life course. He held a number of executive positions in the field of aging, including vice president of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Executive Committee of the International Association on Gerontology, leadership positions with GSA, and service to American Sociological Association. He was editor of the Canadian Journal on Aging and served on numerous editorial boards. Marshall also received many awards for his contributions to building the field of gerontology, including the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Medals and GSA’s Distinguished Mentorship in Gerontology Award.

Members in the News

- Mercedes Bern-Klug, PhD, MSW, FGSA, was quoted in a November 20 Wall Street Journal article about retirement. She spoke about how death, divorce and/or disability can upset retirement plans and how people adapt to a new retirement reality.
- Rozalyn M. Anderson, PhD, FGSA, was interviewed on the November 25 edition of “NBC Nightly News” related to her research on calorie restriction diets. She spoke about studies in monkey populations where calorie restriction resulted in extended lifespans and a delay in the onset of diseases.
- Morgan Levine, PhD, was quoted in an article posted to the CNN website on November 30 titled “You have two ages, chronological and biological. Here’s why it matters.” She spoke about factors that can contribute to an individual’s biological age.

New Books by Members

- The Politics of a Majority-Minority Nation: Aging, Diversity, and Immigration,” by Jacqueline L. Angel, PhD, FGSA, and Juan Fernando Torres-Gil, PhD, FGSA. Published by Springer Publishing Company, 2018.
- “Advanced Practice Nursing in the Care of Older Adults, Second Edition,” by Laurie Kennedy-Malone, PhD, GNP-BC, FAANP, FGSA, FAGHE; Lori Martin-Plank, PhD, MS, MSN; and Evelyn Groenke Duffy, DNP. Published by F.A. Davis, 2019.

Colleague Connection

This month’s $25 amazon.com gift certificate winner: Brian D. Carpenter, PhD, FGSA
The recipient, who became eligible after referring new member Kathleen Lamb was randomly selected using randomizer.org. For more details on the Colleague Connection promotion visit www.geron.org/connection.

Member Spotlight

GSA’s website features monthly Q&A sessions with distinguished members. The current spotlight shines on: Darlingtina Atakere, MS
Visit www.geron.org/membership to ask questions and read previous interviews. Connection promotion visit www.geron.org/connection.

Bass Takes New American University Position
Scott A. Bass, PhD, FGSA, has returned to the American University (AU) faculty as a professor in the School of Public Affairs after a decade of service as the university provost. In recognition of his service, the AU Board of Trustees has named him provost emeritus. In addition, an anonymous donor has come forward and, for Bass’ “longstanding commitment and support for academic excellence,” has named the American University undergraduate award for academic excellence in his honor – the Scott A. Bass Undergraduate Research Award. Bass was the 2011 recipient of GSA’s Donald P. Kent Award.

Bradley Appointed Dean at UMBC
Dana Bradley, PhD, FGSA, FAGHE, is now the dean of the Erickson School for Aging Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). She was formerly the director of the Center for Gerontology at Western Kentucky University. As dean, Bradley will lead existing and new projects and initiatives that position the Erickson School as a national model for promoting developmental, strength-based models of service and care for older adults through its integrative curricula, research collaborations, thought leadership, and community engagement.

GSA Connect Corner

- Carol J. Regan, MPH: As we push for more “age-friendly” health systems, a new article in the Rhode Island Medical Journal (December 2018) examines the translatable success of the Center for Consumer Engagement’s Geriatrics Provider Collaboration program (funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation) which paired geriatrics experts with Rhode Island consumer advocates to promote person-centered care for the state’s Integrated Care Initiative — its demonstration for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees. The authors found that this partnership was successful in incorporating geriatrics principles of care into the demonstration’s policy framework and contract provisions.
- Patricia C. Heyn, PhD, FGSA, FACCRTM: “According to an article in euronews [11/30/18], the National Congress of the Italian Society of Gerontology and Geriatrics [SIGG] in Rome has decided that citizens will now be considered ‘elderly’ after 75. ‘A 65-year-old today has the physical and cognitive capacity of a 40 to 45-year-old 30 years ago, and a 75-year-old has that of a 55-year-old in 1980,’ said Niccolo Marchionni, a professor of gerontology at the University of Florence, according to Italian news agency ANSA.
GSA Considers Member Input on Public Policy Priorities

As the 116th Congress begins, so does the legislative process with introductions of bills, hearings, committee mark-ups, floor debates and votes, and much more. We will have new opportunities to testify, provide data and research, and share program and policy innovations all with the intent of improving the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers.

This got me thinking about what we do at GSA in support of public policy and GSA member involvement. Many of you know Patricia “Trish” D’Antonio, who is GSA’s vice president for professional affairs and leads public policy efforts, in part by representing GSA at numerous professional organization meetings and in coalitions, committees, and workgroups in the field of aging. These include Friends of NIA, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, National Alliance for Caregiving, Coalition for Clinical Trials, and many more.

GSA has also established itself as a convener of multi-stakeholder collaborations in the fields of health and aging, like the Eldercare Workforce Alliance and the National Adult Vaccination Program.

GSA also engages with Congress with advocacy letters and through communications from coalitions, meetings with key Hill staff, sponsorship of briefings, and through GSA member engagement. GSA does some of its policy work through its National Academy on an Aging Society, which is a non-partisan public policy institute. The Academy shares unbiased research findings, practice reports, and member research with policymakers, the press, the public, and other stakeholders, often through briefings and the thematic journal Public Policy & Aging Report.

For more information, go to the GSA Policy Center at www.geron.org to see our policy actions, advocacy tool kit, and publications. GSA has an active Public Policy Committee that serves in an advisory role to the Council and staff.

Policy Survey

In 2018, GSA’s Public Policy Committee, in conjunction with GSA staff, developed a survey to identify the policy issues of greatest interest to the GSA membership. We also wanted to know the extent of member involvement in policy and advocacy activities. The survey was fielded via GSA’s online networking community, GSA Connect, as well as through direct communications from section chairs and committee section representatives. About five percent of GSA’s membership completed the survey (226 responses).

As 2018 Public Policy Committee Chair Lynn Friss Feinberg stated, “The goal of the survey was twofold: to get a perspective on the policy issues of importance to GSA members, and to better understand the level of GSA member engagement in policy and advocacy activities.”

GSA members have broad interests when it comes to policy — from ageism to geroscience to livable communities. When asked “What are the top policy issues GSA should monitor and report to the membership? Please select up to five choices,” all 20 issue area choices were of interest to some of the respondents, reflecting the diversity of our GSA membership.

The top five policy issues were: healthy aging/chronic disease management (55 percent), Medicare and Medicaid (40 percent), research funding (38 percent), long-term services and supports (37 percent), and livable communities (34 percent). Other policy issues viewed as top areas by 25 to 33 percent of respondents are: Social Security (31 percent), family caregiving (30 percent), and Alzheimer’s disease and dementia (29 percent). About 1 in 4 (24 percent) noted ageism as a top policy issue.

When asked to prioritize the same issues on a scale of “most important” to “of lesser importance,” healthy aging/chronic disease management was ranked by the most respondents as “most important” overall, followed by Medicare and Medicaid.

It was impressive to learn the variety of ways in which GSA members are active in policy and advocacy state-wide, locally, and nationally. Two-thirds of survey respondents (65 percent) reported a range of advocacy actions from writing letters to elected officials to running for public office. GSA members are playing critical roles across the country and in DC sharing research, data and program analysis, and policy innovations.

Now more than ever, we realize how essential it is to have policy tied to facts and science. I see first-hand the value that GSA members add to the discussion when they contribute to the policy making process.

Feinberg added, “With the beginning of the 116th Congress, there is opportunity to engage members of Congress and their new staff in GSA advocacy and educational efforts.”

As policy advisor, I look forward to collecting further information from GSA members on their policy priorities and related activities.

Policy Session in Boston

At the Annual Scientific Meeting, a lively discussion ensued during the session “Public Policy Priority Discussion.” The goals of the session were to provide GSA members with information obtained through the survey, provide an opportunity to hear what some of our leaders were thinking about top policy issues, and converse with members about their views on public policy priorities. We began with a representative from each GSA section outlining the policy issues that they believed are important to the section.

Christine Mueller, of the Health Sciences Section, specified legislation of interest including the BOLD Act and the RAISE Family Caregivers Act, as well as support for the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program and the long-term care workforce. She also highlighted end-of-life and palliative care, health disparities, and care coordination as topics of interest. In terms of advocacy, Mueller mentioned the American Academy of Nursing’s campaign, “A Nurse on Every Board.” This refers to the intergenerational or lifespan
approach to aging where the voices of gerontologists and geriatrics experts are important in civic and political discourse on matters related to all ages of the population.

Behavioral and Social Sciences Section Chair Merril Silverstein pointed out that loneliness and social isolation are critical issues that affect the health and quality of life of all ages. Older immigrants present myriad challenges. End of life care continues to be inadequately addressed. In the broader sense, he spoke of the phenomenon that in the absence of federal policy, states step into the void which can produce interesting and innovative solutions. Ideally state solutions should be examined and if they are effective or promising, they should be replicated and improved, and there are roles for GSA members in this process.

Bob Harootyan, chair of the Social Research, Policy, and Practice Section, talked about the interconnectedness of many issues; for example, how poverty and income inequality contribute to health risk and financial risk resulting in cumulative disadvantage over the lifecycle. He also described how research has uncovered the devastating effects of social isolation requiring policies to be developed to address it. Caregiving is another area where much is known but policies are in short supply, and GSA members have been leading the way in policy development at both the state and federal levels.

Biological Sciences Section Chair Matt Kaberlein identified important questions about the fundamental differences between youth and old age. What does it mean if we live longer? How will delaying the diseases of aging impact the economy and life insurance, for example? More food for thought: What are the implications of declaring aging itself to be a disease? As research advances knowledge and understanding of the biology of aging, underlying assumptions need to be continuously examined for their ramifications on policy change.

An open discussion followed, and ideas that emerged during the session were plentiful. They included: webinars on how to be more policy-savvy, requesting that each poster at the meeting include a policy statement; educating GSA members about the value of providing policy makers with a one-page summary when sharing research papers and findings; the need for a revitalized Title IV of the Older Americans Act; and emphasizing the importance of committees with jurisdiction in developing innovative ideas for their ramifications on policy change.

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Recent GSA Policy Actions

GSA signed on to a letter from the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations to support the bipartisan Ensuring Medicaid Provides Opportunities for Widespread Equity, Resources, and Care (EMPOWER Care) Act (S. 2227/H.R. 5306), which would extend and improve the Money Follows the Person rebalancing demonstration program.

GSA signed on to a letter with from the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations to House Congressional members expressing strong support for reestablishing the House Select Committee on Aging (HSCoA). While lacking legislative authority, the HSCoA would support and reinforce the work of committees with jurisdiction. It also could more fully explore a range of issues and innovations that cross jurisdictional lines, while holding field hearings, engaging communities, and promoting understanding and dialogue. The HSCoA would also complement the strong bipartisan work of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, which has effectively promoted member understanding on a range of issues, including the concerns of grandparents raising grandchildren, fraud and abuse of seniors, the effects of opioids on older Americans and their families, and the costs associated with isolation and loneliness. From 1974 to 1992, the HSCoA analyzed, highlighted, and informed the work of committees with jurisdiction in developing innovative ideas and helping to generate effective solutions.

GSA supported a chair’s letter from the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations to urge Congress to extend vital financial protections for married spouses when their loved one requires long-term services and supports available through Medicaid home and community-based services. These protections were set to expire at the end of 2018. Medicaid’s spousal impoverishment protections make it possible for an individual who needs a nursing home level of care to qualify for Medicaid while allowing their spouse to retain a modest amount of income and resources.

GSA supported letters from both the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations and Adult Vaccine Access Coalition urging the Department of Homeland Security to withdraw the notice of proposed rulemaking on the criteria to expand the definition of “public charge,” as published in the Federal Register on October 10, 2018. For many years the public charge test has been used to identify people who may depend on government benefits as their main source of financial support. If the government determines that someone is likely to become a public charge, that person can be refused permission to enter the U.S. and refused a green card. The stricter evaluations and broader criteria will create a personal and moral hazard for older adults who are looking to age with their families around them. Additionally, there is potential to affect the lives of thousands of older adults and caregivers who rely on home health care. One in four home health aides is an immigrant.
Continued from page 1 – GSA Establishes Policy Internship in O’Neill’s Memory

Children Raised by Grandparents Increase During Opioid Crisis

A newly updated report from Generations United, “Raising the Children of the Opioid Epidemic: Solutions and Support for Grandfamilies,” highlights the sharp increase in drug overdose death rates among adults of childbearing age, with increases of 29 percent among 25- to 34-year-olds and 24 percent among 35- to 44-year-olds — leaving grandparents and other kin to raise children. Overall foster care systems are relying more on grandparents and other relatives to care for children when their parents cannot. The percentage of children in foster care with relatives has increased from 24 percent in 2008 to 32 percent in 2016. Yet, grandfamilies are often not given access to the same supports and services that traditional unrelated foster families receive. Recently enacted legislation, like the Supporting Grandfamilies Raising Grandchildren Act and the Family First Prevention Services Act, show promise to help provide needed supports and services to these families. The report is available at www.gu.org.

American Community Survey Releases New Data for All Communities Nationwide

The U.S. Census Bureau has announced the release of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates, which features more than 40 social, economic, housing and demographic topics, including homeownership rates and costs, health insurance, and educational attainment. The ACS five-year data release produces statistics for all of the nation’s 3,142 counties. It is the only full data set available for the 2,316 counties with populations too small to produce a complete set of single-year ACS estimates. Some highlights from the report include that, when comparing the 2013-2017 period to the 2008-2012 period, median household income increased in 16.6 percent of all counties (521 counties), while poverty declined in 14 percent of all counties (441 counties). Alternatively, when comparing the same time periods, median household income declined in 222 counties (7.1 percent) and poverty rates increased in 264 counties (8.4 percent). Visit data.census.gov and check out the latest release notes and FAQs to learn more about the full set of data and features available on this preview platform. For official ACS statistics, access American FactFinder at factfinder.census.gov.

Two Recent Webinars Added to GSA Archive

The following webinar programs from Fall 2018 are now available for viewing at www.geron.org/webinar:

• “Moving From Linear to Reciprocal: Conceptualizing Productive Engagement Using System Dynamics”: In this webinar, the authors of an Innovation in Aging article, “Conceptualizing Productive Engagement in a System Dynamics Framework,” describe the background that led to system dynamics scholars and gerontologists coming together to think differently about the topic of productive engagement in later life. The findings from this unique, qualitative effort suggest that there are modifiable conditions to increase the utilization of human capital in productive activities, advancing theory and helping to refine the productive aging research agenda. This activity also served as an educational and professional development tool for both teaching and research. In this webinar, Laura P. Sands, PhD, FGSA, Nancy Morrow-Howell, MSW, PhD, FGSA and Cal Halvorsen, MSW, PhD, reviewed the rationale for the project, the methods used to create the system dynamics model, the model itself, and implications of this work.

• “Translating Basic Research on the Aging Family to Caregiving Intervention”: The concept of translational research has emerged in recent years as a model for bridging the gap between science and service. This webinar is presented by Megan Gilligan, PhD, Laura P. Sands, PhD, FGSA, and Steven M. Albert, PhD, FGSA, and provides examples of the translational research process, demonstrating how a body of basic research can be mined for insights that can guide intervention. A focus on within-family differences in older parent–adult child relationships suggested how existing caregiving interventions could be adapted or fine-tuned to take advantage of empirical insights regarding family complexity.
I step into my role as GSA's ESPO chair for 2019 with a sense of enormous gratitude to our society and its members. I am a true GSA story.

I first joined GSA as a graduate student at University of Colorado Boulder. During my PhD I tried to model age-related physical function declines in animals that translated directly to humans. I hit a roadblock, and my mentor suggested I reach out to an expert from a different institution for advice.

That outside investigator was Dr. Christy Carter, who offered me the feedback I needed to make progress. She also thought the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting would be the perfect venue to initiate discussion about how we, as a field, should evaluate physical function across model organisms so that our results are meaningful for interventions in human aging. She offered me the opportunity to serve as symposium co-chair; I was intimidated, but with excellent mentoring at Boulder and guidance from Dr. Carter, we successfully led our scientific symposium in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 2013.

As an unexpected benefit, an editor of one of the Society’s journals was in the audience, and thought our symposium would make a compelling review. I worked closely with the symposium presenters to craft an in-depth review on age-related declines in mobility across in monkeys, mice, rats, and humans. This work was accepted for publication, and is a scientific gem I am tremendously proud of, due in no small part to the GSA-ESPO network that sparked its creation.

I built wonderful relationships with ESPO representatives during my first GSA meeting. Biological Sciences is a small section with a family feel. Similar to family events, everyone seemed to have a job to do.

It wasn’t long before I was collecting speaker surveys, checking on speakers, serving as fill-in time keeper, and was soon nominated to represent ESPO in the Biological Sciences Section (2014 to 2016). This role was pivotal: through service, GSA became my meeting, and I was invested in its outcome. My defined service role changed my sense of self and purpose within the larger GSA society, and helped me define my commitment to the field of aging.

After graduation, I started a postdoctoral fellowship at University of Colorado to gain a crucial, but temporary, training experience. At the 2014 GSA Annual Scientific Meeting in Washington, DC, I talked openly about my job search and training with the people in my network within Biological and Health Sciences Sections. My GSA network was crucial to making introductions and navigating career pathways.

By the end of the meeting I met several leaders of aging centers across the U.S., and scheduled a couple interviews. In another stroke of luck, I was (re-)introduced to Dr. Stephen Kritchevsky, who currently leads the aging center at Wake Forest. We arranged a series of informal meetings with Wake Forest faculty members at the annual meeting, which then led to a formal interview, a postdoctoral position, and now a tenure-track position at Wake Forest!

These foundational experiences led to my nomination to run for chair of ESPO. My involvement in GSA is at the nexus of many of the professional growth opportunities I have been granted in my early career. My debt of gratitude to GSA and ESPO led me to be a champion for our student and early career members.

I owe it to the next student, resident, fellow, post-doc, and emerging professional to have the opportunities I was granted. My first-hand experience demonstrates the rewards given to those persons who do not sit on the sidelines, but are provided a chance to get on the field.

My goal is to be a steward to our Society. We have the opportunity to see our GSA governance transition to a modern structure to the benefit of our ESPO members. We will work together for continued growth and greater support for the emerging scholars, professionals, and early career or transitional members within GSA. This includes continued support for programs for our ESPO members, including the Dissertation Writing Group, ESPO webinars, social networking through the ESPO Community on GSA Connect, and special events at the Annual Scientific Meetings.

We will also strive to improve support for our transitional members: I know the uncertainties of our early careers, but I also know that my intimate involvement in GSA was a key to overcoming the numerous threats during that tenuous transitional window.

To further GSA's mission, we have been given the incredible opportunity to further an alliance between GSA, ESPO and with the National Institute on Aging (NIA) career development and training programs such as the Butler-Williams Scholars Program. As a Butler-Williams alumna and NIA career development awardee, I can attest to the shared mission and goals.

With increased engagement of ESPO and transitional members, together we can help emerging scholars in the field of aging to become independent professionals capable of creating meaningful change in our treatment and care of aging and the aged.
Record Attendance
Nearly 4,400 people made their way to Boston, Massachusetts, for the 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting — a new record for GSA. Among them, 713 people came from a total of 37 countries outside the U.S. The program featured approximately 450 sessions during the five-day event at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, Sheraton Boston Hotel, and Marriott Boston Copley Place. The meeting’s theme was “The Purposes of Longer Lives.”

Unique Events
The keynote address for the President’s Opening Plenary Session was delivered by author, historian, filmmaker, and gerontologist Thomas R. Cole, PhD, FGSA, currently the McGovern Chair in Medical Humanities and director of the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. His talk was titled “Numbering Our Days: What Does It Mean to Grow Old?” In talking about the purposes of longer lives, he said, “I don’t believe longevity itself is the answer. There are many possibilities, right? Compassion, engagement in the future, acceptance of the one and only life you have, gratitude, commitment to a life beyond you — many, many things.”

There was a robust array of other quality programming unique to this meeting. GSA launched its Momentum Discussion series on trending topics in aging, and the new Inside Innovative Technologies series featured cutting-edge research and the startups putting these technologies in action to improve peoples’ lives as they age.

The popular Policy Series returned, which this year welcomed Assistant Secretary for Aging Lance Robertson, head of the U.S. Administration for Community Living.

The photographs on the right give more details about these and other events.
Get with the Trend
Revisit the social media conversations on Twitter using #GSA18, and tag yourself in photos on GSA’s Facebook page at facebook.com/geronsociety. On GSA Connect, attendees are invited to share their presentations in the 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting community’s documents library at connect.geron.org.

GSA in the News
GSA issued press passes to more than 50 reporters in Boston, including representatives from The Boston Globe, Next Avenue, Kaiser Health News, Kiplinger’s Retirement Report, Politico, La Opinion, and several NPR affiliates.

Among these press attendees were a record 20 new and 16 continuing participants in the Journalists in Aging Fellows Program, which GSA organized for the ninth consecutive year — with support from AARP, The Silver Century Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, The Retirement Research Foundation, and The John A. Hartford Foundation. Half of the participants in the program represented media outlets that serve minority audiences.

Visit www.geron.org/coverage for links to news articles that resulted from sessions at the meeting. This page will be updated continuously as participants in the Journalists in Aging Fellows Program submit their stories in early 2019.

Looking Ahead
The call for abstracts for the 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting — taking place from November 13 to 17 in Austin, Texas — will open on February 1. The theme for this conference will be “Strength in Age: Harnessing the Power of Networks.” All abstract submissions must be received by March 15.
The following awards were announced during GSA’s 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. The Society salutes the outstanding researchers below for their contributions to gerontology and thanks the selection committees for their time and efforts in choosing the recipients.

### Society-Wide

**Senior Service America, Inc., Award for Research Related to Disadvantaged Older Adults – Senior Level**  
G. Adriana Perez, PhD, FGSA  
University of Pennsylvania  
“Physical Activity and Sleep in Older Latinos with Mild Cognitive Impairment: Proof of Concept Results”

**Senior Service America, Inc., Award for Research Related to Disadvantaged Older Adults – Junior Level**  
Kathy Lee, PhD  
University of Texas at Arlington  
“Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment: Health Benefits of Volunteering”

### Behavioral and Social Sciences Section

**Student Research Award – Dissertation**  
Jasmine M. Analelel, PhD  
National Institutes of Health  
“Life Course Psychosocial Resources and Cognitive Aging”

**Student Research Award – Pre-Dissertation**  
Peiyi Lu, MSW  
Iowa State University  
“Retirement, Pensions, and Depression Among Older Adults in China, England, Mexico, and the U.S.”

### Biological Sciences Section

**Austin Bloch Post-Doctoral Fellow Award**  
Courtney Carroll, PhD  
Barshop Institute at UT Health San Antonio  
“Elucidating the Role of Small Heat Shock Protein 25 in Protein Aggregation”

**George Sacher Student Award**  
Anna Carolina Zaia Rodrigues  
Wake Forest University  
“Age-Dependent Sympathetic Denervation Leads to Sarcopenia”

### Health Sciences Section

**Person-in-Training Award**  
Deborah Mack, MPH  
University of Massachusetts Medical School  
“Less is More: Potential Overscreening for Breast Cancer in U.S. Nursing Homes”

**Research Award**  
Clark DuMontier, MD  
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School  
“The Association of Function, Mood, and Loneliness with Survival in Older Adults With Blood Cancers”
Outstanding Student Poster Award
Yi Wang, MSW
Washington University in St. Louis
“Correlates and Health Outcomes of Long-Term Volunteering: Evidence from 16 Years of the Health and Retirement Study”

Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization

Interdisciplinary Paper Award
Eleanor Rivera, PhD, RN
University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing
“Illness Representation and Self-Care Ability in Patients with Chronic Disease”

Poster Award
Leah Abrams, MPH
University of Michigan School of Public Health
“Depression Trajectories in Older Adults: Differences by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Education, and Cohort”

Poster Award
Eleanor Rivera, PhD, RN
University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing
“Illness Representation and Self-Care Ability in Patients with Chronic Disease”

Poster Award
Kelly Rentscher, PhD
University of California, Los Angeles
“Chronic Stress Exposure and Daily Stress Appraisals Relate to Biological Aging Marker p16INK4a”

Poster Award
Christina Cantu, BAAS
University of North Texas
“Religious Commitment Mediates Hospice Nurses’ Social Political Ideology and Attitudes Towards Active Euthanasia”

Poster Award
Kathy Lee, PhD
University of Texas at Arlington
“Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment: Health Benefits of Volunteering”

Douglas Holmes Emerging Scholar Paper Award
Jasmine Travers, MS, PhD
University of Pennsylvania
“Long-Term Services and Supports Use”

Minority Issues in Gerontology Committee Student Poster Award
Shyuan Ching Tan, MS
Pennsylvania State University
“Self-Rated Health Among Older Blacks and Performance on Cognitive Tests”

For information on GSA’s awards, visit www.geron.org/membership/awards.
GSA and the Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN) are collaborating in a new partnership with the goal of sharing education and training tools with their respective members to enhance the care of older adults.

OADN, founded in 1984, OADN is the premier organization and national voice providing advocacy for associate degree nursing, continually present and active in trends and issues impacting nursing education, workforce, and healthcare policy. With over fifty percent of nurses beginning their education at the community college, associate degree nursing remains a vital entry point into the profession of nursing.

Founded in 1945, GSA is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. Its principal mission is to promote the study of aging and disseminate information to scientists, decision makers, and the general public.

“GSA believes that expanding the number of appropriately trained medical professionals, including associate degree nurses, is an important part of assuring that quality medical care is available for older adults,” said Karen Tracy, GSA’s vice president of strategic alliances and integrated communications.

Among the resources that GSA will make available to OADN are guides on communicating with older adults and improving the oral health of older adults, in addition to a toolkit for detecting cognitive impairment and diagnosing dementia as early as possible.

“Associate degree nursing education continues to be an important pathway for professionals seeking work in long term care and other care settings of critical importance to the aging population. As the life span continues to expand, and nurses care for more older adults, it is imperative that nurses entering the profession have the most up-to-date skills and resources,” said OADN CEO Donna Meyer, MSN, RN, ANEF, FAADN. “Partnering with GSA will allow OADN members to acquire the most up to date information from experts in the field to share as they educate the next generation of the nursing workforce.

Moving forward, GSA and OADN will have a presence at each other’s annual meetings, share educational materials, and create dedicated online repository of resources for the use of both organizations’ memberships.

Cornell University’s Edward R. Roybal Center and University of Florida’s Pain Research and Intervention Center of Excellence present: 

Mechanisms and Management of Later Life Pain

A Free Monthly Webinar Series

Monday, Feb. 25, 2019 | 1pm-2pm EST:
Presenter: Robert D. Kerns, PhD, Yale School of Medicine
Psychological Therapies for Pain

Monday, March 18, 2019 | 1pm-2pm EST:
Presenter: Fadel Zeidan, PhD, University of California San Diego School of Medicine
Mechanisms Supporting Mindfulness Based Pain Relief

Monday, April 29, 2019 | 1pm-2pm EST:
Presenter: Lynn Martire, MD, Penn State College of Health and Human Development
Close relationships and Chronic Pain Self-Management

Monday, May 20, 2019 | 1pm-2pm EST:
Presenter: Joseph Riley, PhD, University of Florida
Assessment of Pain Modulation in Older Adults

Monday, June 24, 2019 | 1pm-2pm, EST:
Presenter: Debra Weiner, MD, University of Pittsburgh
Chronic Low Back Pain in Older Adults: Evolution of a Research Agenda

The TRIPLL webinar series is a web-based training resource for health professionals, researchers, and others with interest (or working) in the aging field.

Please visit our website at www.tripll.org for more information or contact Jacquie Howard at jah3011@med.cornell.edu

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This newsletter reaches GSA’s 5,500 members both in print and online.

Gerontology News accepts ads for conferences and special events, fellowships, jobs, and degree programs relevant to the field of aging.

See the current rates at www.geron.org/advertising.
Series B Releases New Virtual Collections

Two virtual collections of articles have been published in the Social Sciences section of The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences. The October 2018 issue contained a virtual collection focused on qualitative and mixed methods, with an emphasis on current applications and future innovations. These articles use qualitative methods to explore topics including caregiving, medication use, and neighborhood strain, and includes an integrative essay by Cassandra Phoenix, PhD, that identifies future directions for the use of qualitative methods in gerontology research. The November 2018 issue featured a virtual collection on late-life mental health. These articles shed light on the ways that stressors over the life course including widowhood, military service, discrimination, and housing arrangements affect older adults’ mental health symptoms. Visit academic.oup.com/psychsocgerontology/pages/virtual_collection to view these and other collections in the series.

GSA Article Collections Centered Around 2018 Meeting Theme

Each of GSA’s peer-reviewed journals features a curated selection of new articles related to the 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting theme, “The Purposes of Longer Lives.” More than 40 articles were chosen from across all the titles. The meeting theme was conceived by GSA Past President David J. Ekerdt, PhD, FGSA. He has authored an editorial about the article collections for GSA’s online open access journal, Innovation in Aging. To view this collection, visit https://academic.oup.com/gsa/pages/purposes_longer_lives_collection.

Series B Planning Special Issue on Cumulative Dis/Advantage

The Social Sciences section of The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences welcomes submissions for an upcoming special issue titled “Cumulative Dis/Advantage: Innovations in Research and Theory.” This special issue builds on a recent article published by Dale Dannefer, PhD, FGSA, in which he offers a new perspective and invites new theoretical and empirical work on this influential conceptual framework. The deadline for submissions is April 1 and the anticipated publication date is July or September 2020. To access the full call for papers, visit academic.oup.com/gsa/pages/calls_for_papers.

The Gerontologist Welcomes Meeks as Editor-in-Chief

Suzanne Meeks, PhD, FGSA, of the University of Louisville, begins her term as the editor-in-chief of The Gerontologist this month. Meeks has served as an associate editor for the journal for several years, seeing the Practice Concepts section transform into Intervention Research. She has published an editorial where she describes her vision, outlook, and focus for the journal over the next four years. She stated, “To continue to meet TG’s aims, I will focus on three principles: teamwork, communication and openness, and emphasis on excellence in scholarship and writing about scholarship.” To read the full editorial, visit doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny155.

Article Split View Feature Enabled on All GSA Journal Articles

Article Split View, an enhanced article experience, is now available for all journals on the Oxford Academic platform. Article Split View allows users to enjoy a more focused reading experience with parallel presentation of secondary content like images, tables, and references. Journals can present an article-centric reading experience in which outward links and extra features are minimized, allowing users to access the core article content and supplementary materials in side-by-side panels. Users can easily navigate from linked references, figures, and tables in the article directly to the relevant item in the secondary tab without leaving the main body of the article. Independently scrolling panels also allow users to browse all figures and tables or references apart from the article text.

Continued from page 1 – Pets and Healthy Aging: More Than a Walk in the Park

former GSA President Barbara Resnick, PhD, RN, CRNP, FAAN, FAANP, FGSA, in the foreword to the brochure. “Walking a dog in the neighborhood, for example, often results in meeting others doing likewise and engaging in relationships or interactions with these individuals on a daily basis.”

GSA is supporting members with an interest in this field and has an interest group dedicated to HAL, chaired by Nancy Gee, PhD, Megan Mueller, PhD, and Jessica Bibbo, PhD. The group is active on GSA Connect. GSA also provided a grant in 2017 through WALTHAM to Dawn Carr, PhD, FGSA, and Natalie Sachs-Ericsson, PhD, at Florida State University for HAL research (now nearing completion) using the Health and Retirement Study.

“This area of research provides an opportunity for those wanting to assess the cognitive effects of pet ownership,” McDonough said. “Older adults have to pay attention to pets, look for changes in behavior, and watch for traffic and things on the ground while walking. This could prove to be a simple way of maintaining executive functions and exercising one’s memory.”

Like Sully, companion animals can make a world of difference for older adults. But the paybacks don’t stop there. “A pet rescued from a shelter is a really dual-benefit situation,” McDonough said. “The pet can bring meaning to the life of an older adult, and the older adult is rescuing an animal who might otherwise be put down.”

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GSA 2019
ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING
Strength in Age: Harnessing the Power of Networks

SAVE THE DATE
November 13–17, 2019 | Austin, Texas

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary scientific organization devoted to the advancement of gerontological research, learning, and practice. Through the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting, nearly 4,000 international professionals in the field of aging take part in the opportunity to learn the latest trends and developments from industry leaders, build strategic partnerships to address aging challenges, and network with peers.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS
Opens February 1, 2019 | Closes March 18, 2019

www.geron.org
NIA Grants Will Support Brain Aging Research Via Mice
The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is offering grants to support pilot studies aimed to establish molecular, anatomical, and functional cell and circuit census data from selected brain regions of young and old C57BL/6J mice. This will complement and build on current BRAIN Initiative efforts while informing a design for a comprehensive characterization of cells and circuits in the brain across the lifespan, including the generation of a comprehensive 3D brain cell reference atlas of the aging mouse brain. Letter of intent due date is February 8 and applications are due March 8. Review all details at bit.ly/2EtznjB.

NIA Aims to Focus on Standardized in Vitro Assays of Resilience at Cellular Level
The National Institute on Aging (NIA) has issued a funding opportunity announcement that encourages Small Business Technology Transfer applications for the development and commercialization of standardized in vitro assays of resilience at the cellular level. For the purposes of this announcement, resilience is defined as a dynamic property which enables cells, organs, organisms or individuals to resist or recover from the effects of a physiological or pathological stressor (i.e., physical in nature). There exists an important and presently unmet need for commercially available in vitro assays of resiliencies which can quantitatively assess cellular responses to an in vitro perturbation in an individual-specific manner; and be used across labs with reproducibility and analytic validity. The development of assays for cellular resiliencies which may be used in both laboratory animal and in human studies are also of interest from a research translation standpoint. Once developed, these standardized tests of cellular resilience could be further translated into a novel class of personalized in vitro clinical diagnostics and aid in the identification of new therapeutic targets to enhance or preserve resiliencies as we age. The letter of intent due date is February 8 and applications are due March 8. Review all details at bit.ly/2PG1ZYk.

Fund Slated to Explore Molecular Links Between Dietary Interventions, Circadian Rhythm
The National Institute on Aging has issued a funding opportunity announcement that encourages innovative experimental approaches to explore how dietary intervention entrains peripheral or central clocks to maintain tissue homeostasis, and how circadian regulation integrates with various dietary strategies to achieve optimal health benefits. The letter of intent due date is February 6 and applications are due March 6. Review all details for this announcement at bit.ly/2Le0JLa.
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December 1
Nominations Open

February 15
Nominations Deadline