Aging Committee Turns 50; GSA Ponders Future Legislation

When the U.S Senate Special Committee on Aging observed its 50th anniversary on December 14, 2011, GSA stood as its most prominent partner by hosting a reception and releasing a commemorative issue of the Public Policy & Aging Report (PPAR).

GSA President Nancy Whitelaw, PhD, welcomed approximately 200 people to the event in the historic Kennedy Caucus Room on Capitol Hill, including current and former members of Congress, congressional staffs, GSA members, federal employees, and non-profit leaders representing over 25 national organizations.

For five decades, the committee has served as a focal point in Congress for discussion and debate on matters relating to older Americans. The special edition of PPAR, “America’s Opportunity: The Potential of an Aging Society,” both celebrates the committee’s past accomplishments and forecasts what developments lie ahead. With support from the Archstone Foundation, the SCAN Foundation, the Retirement Research Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on an Aging Society, the new publication features five articles by non-partisan experts who analyze various futures that older Americans and the committee will face in the coming years. See the Policy News section on pages four and five for a more in-depth analysis.

“The articles in the issue also look to the future — and demonstrate that by planning now, we will successfully meet the challenges and opportunities facing us,” Whitelaw said. “The role of the aging committee is critical to carrying out this mission by stimulating policy discussions at the federal level and continuing to provide research and leadership to Congress.”

GSA’s reception followed a forum convened by the committee, “Aging in America: Future Challenges, Promise and Potential,” which

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GSA Takes Center Stage at Chinese Meeting

An invited GSA delegation delivered a keynote address and several other presentations at the recent 10th Annual Conference of the Chinese Geriatric Society (CGS), which took place from November 11 to 13, 2011, in Guangzhou, China. Over 500 geriatric professionals were in attendance.

GSA’s participation resulted from a dialog between CGS President-Elect Xiao-Ying Li, PhD, and GSA Controller and Director of Asian Relations and Development Jilan Chen. Chen oversees GSA’s China Initiative, which seeks to foster the development of strong linkages and collaboration between gerontologists in the U.S. and China. As a result of the initiative, the number of GSA members in

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Beyond Boston: GSA Keeps Member Research in Public’s Eye

By James Appleby, RPh, MPH
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Happy New Year! And thank you for helping GSA break its Annual Scientific Meeting attendance record in Boston! Over 4,000 people joined us for the five-day event in November, which featured approximately 500 scientific sessions. Turn to pages 10 and 11 of this issue for a brief recap of the excitement.

The knowledge gained from the meeting’s presentations will continue to be valuable to those who attended, but GSA is also working to ensure this research reaches an even broader audience.

For example, we issued 55 press passes to reporters covering the meeting, which was another record high for GSA. Stories from the Boston sessions still are appearing in news outlets worldwide. Please visit our website at www.geron.org/mediacoverage to see a continuously updated list. Many of these pieces were produced by the participants in the MetLife Foundation Fellows Journalists in Aging Fellows Program, which GSA runs jointly with New America Media thanks to a generous grant from the MetLife Foundation. The program allows reporters to participate in our meeting, interact with experts in the field of aging, and gather material for long-term story projects. The popularity of this fellowship demonstrates that GSA is increasingly seen as a valued source of information on aging — which translates to increased coverage of aging issues in the mainstream media.

Interest in GSA’s work also is increasing elsewhere in the private sector. Our Aging Means Business forum at the Annual Scientific Meeting experienced record attendance this year, too, welcoming 170 participants. And GSA’s Corporate Advisory Panel, which started in 2011, continues to grow. Right now we’re exploring potential partners who can work with us to develop training modules for professionals who interact with older people. The target audience could include attorneys, pharmacists, retail store personnel, or any number of other professions outside the aging arena. This potential project is just the latest in a series of efforts that GSA is undertaking to cultivate public awareness of gerontology.

In several 2010 issues of Gerontology News, we reported that GSA was teaming up with public television to help them reach the senior demographic. This initiative, Next Avenue, is now nearing its April launch date. In addition to featuring programming, innovative social media, and community-based events, Next Avenue will offer a vast online resource center — located at nextavenue.org — that adults age 50 and older can visit for information on numerous topics. GSA was heavily involved in the development of this web component — by helping to identify the best research and resources around health, finances, work and careers, caregiving, volunteerism, leisure, and learning.

We can expect more great things from this heightened public exposure to the realities of our aging society. Certainly, one of the consequences will be an increased interest in the career opportunities related to gerontology. GSA again can help members meet this demand through its annual Careers in Aging Week organized at colleges and universities nationwide — informal gatherings, panel discussions, film screenings, poster sessions, job fairs, etc. — Careers in Aging Week exists to promote awareness of professions that study or serve the aging population.

We also hope we can count on your research to drive another successful Annual Scientific Meeting in San Diego this year. We are accepting abstracts until March 15. Visit www.geron.org/abstracts to submit yours now!

Sincerely,

James
In Memoriam

Robert H. Binstock, PhD, who served as GSA president in 1976, passed away on November 22, 2011. He was a winner of GSA’s Donald P. Kent Award, M. Powell Lawton Award, and Brookdale Prize Award. At the time of his death, he was a professor of aging, health, and society at Case Western Reserve University. He held primary tenured appointments in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Medicine and in the School of Nursing, with secondary appointments as a professor in the Departments of Bioethics, Medicine, Political Science, and Sociology. Binstock previously served as the director of a White House Task Force on Older Americans and as chairman and member of a number of advisory panels to the U.S. government, state and local governments, and foundations. He frequently testified before the U.S. Congress. Binstock’s studies made a significant impact on policies regarding aging. For example, his substantial body of research on the Older Americans Act directly improved the targeting of services to economically and socially disadvantaged older persons, and developed the basic concept for today’s Aging and Disability Resource Centers. Binstock’s publication record includes over 300 articles, books, book chapters, and monographs. Among his 26 authored or edited books are “Aging Nation: The Economics and Politics of Growing Older in America” (co-authored with James Schulz, PhD) and seven editions of the “Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences” (most of them co-edited with Linda George, PhD).

Members in the News

• An article in the September 27 edition of the Winston-Salem Journal reported on a study by Jeff Williamson, MD, which found that an aggressive strategy for reducing blood-sugar levels for diabetics did not provide cognitive protection or benefit compared with standard treatment.
• On November 22, Eileen Sullivan-Marx, PhD, was a featured guest on NPR’s “Radio Times” program. She spoke about aging.

Member Spotlight

GSA’s website features monthly Q&A sessions with distinguished members. The current spotlight shines on: Catherine Hennessy, DrPH
Visit www.geron.org/Membership/member-spotlight to ask questions and read previous interviews.

Colleague Connection

This month’s $25 amazon.com gift certificate winner:
George Demiris, PhD
The recipient, who became eligible after referring new member Thai Le, was randomly selected using randomizer.org.
For more details on the Colleague Connection promotion, which includes a chance to win free lodging at the annual meeting, visit www.geron.org/connection.

Supiano Named To Foundation’s National Board
GSA Fellow Kathie Supiano, MS, LCSW, FT, was announced as a national board member of the Open to Hope Foundation on the nationally syndicated radio program “Open to Hope Show.” This foundation is a comprehensive internet based grief community with many articles, radio shows, you tube videos, and contributors. It is committed to providing hope and resources to grieving individuals after a loss. Supiano is an assistant professor in the University of Utah College of Nursing, where she is also the director of Caring Connections: A Hope and Comfort in Grief Program. She has been a practicing clinical social worker and psychotherapist for over 30 years.

Hooker Named Oregon Center’s Inaugural Director
GSA Fellow Karen Hooker, PhD, was named the inaugural Jo Anne Leonard Endowed Director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research at Oregon State University. Hooker is a former recipient of GSA’s Richard Kalish Innovative Publication Award Kalish Award, and is currently treasurer/secretary of GSA’s Behavioral and Social Sciences Section. Her research focuses on how personality and motivation processes drive healthy aging. Hooker is currently principal investigator on the first National Science Foundation Integrative Graduate Education Research and Training Program in aging.

Inouye Elected to the Institute of Medicine
Sharon K. Inouye, MD, MPH, has been elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), which is an honor in the fields of health and medicine. The IOM is one of four distinguished organizations that make up the National Academy of Sciences, and it recognizes individuals who have established outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service. Inouye is an expert in aging and geriatric medicine, clinical research methods and research training. She is a faculty member in the Division of Gerontology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, director of the Aging Brain Center in the Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife, and a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Brown Appointed UAB’s Director of Geriatric Medicine
GSA Fellow Cynthia J. Brown, MD, MSPH, has been appointed director of the Geriatric Medicine Section in the Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She joined UAB in 2003 and assumed roles as the UAB University Hospital geriatric program manager, an investigator in the Birmingham/Atlanta Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC), and GRECC medical director for the Fall Prevention and Mobility Clinic.

Fick Appointed Journal Editor
GSA Fellow Donna Fick, PhD, RN, FAAN, has been named the editor of the Journal of Gerontological Nursing, which publishes articles on gerontological nursing practice across the continuum of care. Fick is a professor of nursing and of psychiatry and is the co-director of the Hartford Center for Geriatric Nursing Excellence at Penn State University. Her research focuses on medications in older adults, as well as delirium and dementia.
The Senate Special Committee on Aging: Getting Ready for Act II

The Senate Special Committee on Aging has just reached the milestone of its 50th birthday, with thunderous applause coming from this aging advocate. (And not just because I once worked on the committee or because I count some of its most illustrious staffers as friends.) The aging committee shares the stage with other notable quinquaegenarians: President Barack Obama, the Peace Corps, Barbie, USAID, and George Clooney. While Americans were building bomb shelters, the average income was $5,315, and a gallon of gas cost just 27 cents, the Special Committee on Aging had its opening night here Washington, DC.

To say that the aging committee fundamentally changed our country’s approach to aging and treatment of the elderly is not hyperbole. As I observed in my column several months ago, the Senate Special Committee on Aging has been able to accomplish a great deal by cultivating a bipartisan work ethic, with diligent investigations, and by closely listening to and responding to its constituency. This committee has been able to use the expertise and commitment of the aging researchers, advocates, and program staff working in organizations and institutions across the country. The vast aging network, preeminent institutions like GSA, the National Institute on Aging, geriatric education centers, AARP, the Alzheimer’s Association, the National Council on Aging, and the American Society on Aging have all benefitted from and contributed to the aging committee's success.

At the celebration on the Hill hosted by GSA in honor of the aging committee, a number of toasts and speeches were made about the successes the committee has enjoyed. These accolades were well-deserved, especially in light of the current situation of congressional gridlock, suspicion, and partisanship. I would like to take a moment, during this intermission, to muse on how Act II (the next 50 years) might unfold.

A SWAT Team for Elders

In preparation for this column, I turned to the latest edition of the Public Policy and Aging Report, released at the GSA reception. This edition is devoted to the committee’s “past accomplishments and future challenges.” I find the report to be compelling and thought-provoking.

For a fascinating overview of the Senate Special Committee on Aging’s past, look no further than GSA’s own Robert Hudson, PhD, editor of the Public Policy and Aging Report. (His succinct description of the committee being “a SWAT team for elders” is right on target.) Hudson points out that back in the 1950s and early 60s, “getting aging on the agenda was a tall order.” But in less than a decade, the fledgling committee had exposed the problems faced by older Americans, published annually the definitive compendium on aging policy, “Developments in Aging,” and pressured for the passage of Medicare, the Older Americans Act, Medicaid, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. All of this was accomplished by a committee that has no legislative or budgetary authority.

Since the early heyday of the aging committee, the accomplishments have been maybe less than marquee material, but certainly as important and profound. While exposing nursing home abuses, protecting Social Security through thoughtful reforms, adding prescription drug coverage to Medicare, and fighting elder abuse, the aging committee has continued to provide leadership, oversight, and advocacy for our nation’s elders. In doing so, the committee has continued to ensure that older adults are part of any discussion about the well-being and welfare of our society.

My take-away is that the aging committee needs to reinvigorate that SWAT team approach. They can do that by continuing to work closely with those in the research field doing cutting edge work. They can do it by attacking the misinformation and wrong-headed policies promoted by those who do not have the best interest of older adults in mind.

The Public Policy and Aging Report features four additional articles by gerontology researchers that discuss areas of concern for the future. These issues may not be able to be addressed specifically by the aging committee, but they certainly are critical to aging policy.

John W. Rowe, MD, of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on an Aging Society points out that as our population becomes weighted toward advanced age, we should adjust our societal attitudes about the “older generation.” Rowe makes a convincing case about why we must work to dispel the myths about older adults (e.g., that aging is all about Social Security and Medicare, that older adults are concerned only about themselves, etc.). He does an excellent job of enumerating ways we can adapt
to our aging society ("demography is not destiny") such as
"adopt[ing] a life-course perspective," re-orienting the health care
system to be "geriatrically sophisticated," and by not focusing on a
certain cohort, such as the baby boomers. The MacArthur
Foundation Research Network has developed a set of priorities for
policy analysis which includes society cohesion, productivity, family,
health care, and human capital development.

As we learn to look at aging in different and constructive ways, it
is clear that we need to do more to shape the message and do a
better job of winning the perception war.

A related article by Axel Boersch-Supan, PhD, Gabriel Heller,
and Anette Reil-Held looks to the European response to the aging
of its population. In a fascinating analysis of "several dimensions of
intergenerational cohesion — for example, family relations, non-
family ties, values, and political preferences," they find that "the
horrible vision of intergenerational warfare" has not come to pass in
Europe. On the contrary, they found wide variations of financial
transfers moving between generations among regions in Europe and
even within countries themselves. They conclude "[I]f Old Europe
holds a lesson for the United States, it is that no signs of
gerontocracy exist even in regions as old today as the United States
will be in 2030."

Shirley Franklin and Jane Hickie make a compelling case for
improvements in our nation’s housing policies for elders and those
with disabilities. They cite "the study on aging in place
commissioned by Clarity and the EAR Foundation [that] found
that old people fear dependence and placement in a nursing home
more than they fear death itself." They advocate a major,
sustained, cohesive movement to provide policies for aging in
place. They state that a vision statement for aging in place would
include the following:

- American homes will be accessible.
- American communities will connect residents to needed
  services and community life.
- Older families will have the financial resources needed to
  manage the challenges of normal aging.

This goes to the heart of what we need to do as a society to
ensure that we adapt to our aging population. The concepts of
safe, walkable communities with access to grocery stores, medical
establishments, and work and learning opportunities is a worthy
goal — and not just for our oldest citizens. Who wouldn’t want
to live in a community that promoted such quality of life?
Northern European countries have been doing this for decades —
why can’t we?

The remaining article in the Public Policy and Aging Report
discusses a key issue in our work to adapt to an aging society: "The
Growing Importance of Older Workers" by Richard W. Johnson,
PhD. A confluence of factors is making older workers an increasing
proportion of the U.S. workforce. These factors include Social
Security incentives to postpone retirement, less generous employee
benefit plans, longer life spans with the ability and desire to work,
financial need, and a smaller cohort of younger population. Johnson
points out an interesting trend that works in favor of older workers:

“Between 1971 and 2006, for example, the share of jobs
requiring workers to engage in moderate or strenuous physical
activities fell from 56.5 to 46.0 percent, and the share requiring
flexibility or dexterity fell from 36.1 to 26.1 percent. Over the same
period, however, the share requiring moderate or substantial
cognitive ability increased from 61.6 to 69.3 percent. It seems likely
that these trends will continue, suggesting that fewer older workers
will be forced out of their jobs because they cannot handle the
physical demands. However, employment options for workers
(including those who are older) with limited education may
become more scarce.”

Aging Committee: Act II

Clearly there are many critical issues that the Senate Special
Committee on Aging will need to address in its next 50 years. The
issues suggested in the Public Policy and Aging Report include a
re-definition of the life course using such terms as the social compact,
adaptation, productivity, and quality of intergenerational relations.
Major changes are required concerning workplace adaptations,
housing and community improvements, disability issues, and the
costs of health care and housing. I would also add coordination of
care, long-term care, and advanced care (end-of-life care) to the
discussion about health care issues, since we have failed to tackle
them head-on to date.

How will the aging committee deal with the price tag on health
care in the current climate of budget cuts and deficits? How will the
committee deal with intergenerational relations given an economy
that strains relations and contributes to partisanship? How will the
committee address attitudes about aging given our very racially,
ethnically, and socio-economically diverse society? How will the
committee deal with the safety nets of Social Security, Medicare,
and Medicaid given the gridlock and lack of meaningful
communication among congressional leaders? How will funds be
found to address, finally, elder abuse and exploitation? Will
members of the Senate Special Committee on Aging be able to
persuade their colleagues to rise above partisanship and distrust to
take on these critical issues?

In the past, certainly, the hallmark of the aging committee was
collaboration, bipartisanship, and devotion to the needs of the
nation’s vulnerable elderly. That approach stood the committee in
good stead for 50 years. More than ever, we need the committee to
be a model for putting the nation’s needs before partisan one-
upmanship. The committee needs to use all of the research findings,
philosophical underpinnings, and policy expertise at its disposal to
ensure that we can meet the challenges of the next fifty years. I
think that we, as researchers, experts, and policy advocates, need to
speak with a steady voice to Congress on behalf of older adults and
remain a valued resource to the Senate Special Committee on
Aging. That is our role.
ESPO Is About Its Business

In the final column prepared by the 2011 ESPO officers, we want to give GSA members a glimpse of accomplishments of the organization and those who are making an impact in the field of gerontology and geriatrics. Therefore, this month we are providing a recap of the accomplishments ESPO has achieved as a whole and also highlighting members’ individual achievements. We are very proud of our organization and are excited to share with you what makes us “about our business!”

—Outgoing Secretary Candace Brown, MAG, MEd

ESPO had a very successful year. ESPO continues to strive towards improving the management of the organization, communication with ESPO leaders, and the transition of its leadership. This year, the ESPO Executive Committee worked on increasing the awareness of the organization as a whole, the purpose of ESPO, and opportunities to become actively involved in both ESPO and GSA with the Ask Me About ESPO campaign. In an effort to reflect a more accurate description of the ESPO technology chair position, a name change to communications chair was approved in the bylaws by the membership on the spring election ballot.

It was brought to our attention that many emerging scholars were unaware that they were a part of ESPO and knew little about how to get involved. Under the leadership of Chair Natalie Leland, PhD, ESPO worked to increase the visibility of the organization and provide information to emerging scholars via email, postcards, and various successful conference activities. Awareness of ESPO has increased this year via ESPO’s social media sites, including increased ESPO Facebook membership and participation. Additionally, the Ask Me About ESPO campaign was a tremendous success at the annual meeting in Boston.

The incoming Executive Committee will continue to build upon last year's momentum. There are so many invaluable opportunities that result from being an ESPO member, and the way to maximize such opportunities is by getting involved. As we embark upon 2012, we hope to start a campaign that will increase involvement, create webinars that will serve as a mentoring opportunity, organize part 2 of the ESPO Career Development Symposium, strengthen the involvement of the ESPO members who sit on GSA committees and task forces, and increase the number of poster and paper award submissions. As we work to increase enthusiasm about ESPO, remember that you are an ESPO member and this is YOUR organization! (Slogan adapted from GSA Membership Committee.)

—Past Chair Natalie Leland, PhD; Chair Chivon Mingo, PhD; and Past Communications Chair Julie Brown, MS

2011 Honors and Awards

Moon Choi, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, has successfully completed a geriatric training initiative on Building an Aging-Mobility Network, funded by the Virginia Center on Aging. This initiative built a network of policy makers, researchers, non-profit organizations, and health care providers to improve local capacity for responding to the mobility and transportation needs of the aging population.

Amy Eisenstein, PhD, was awarded the Willard W. Patty Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at Indiana University. The alumni award is presented annually to graduates who have demonstrated outstanding personal and professional achievement.

The Grantmakers in Aging Fellows Program provides graduate and post-doctoral students an opportunity to learn about challenges and opportunities in our aging society during their annual conference. This year’s program attendees were: Moon Choi, PhD; Patrick John Doyle, MA; Susan M. Hannum, MA; Chih-ling Liou, MS; Tara McMullen, MPH; Shannon O’Connor, MA; Kathleen Ruben, MS; and Kimberly van Vulpen, LCSW-C.

Terrie Vann-Selected, MSN, was selected to participate in the 2011 National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging Grants Technical Assistance Workshop for Minority and Emerging Scientists and Students Seeking Careers in Aging Research in Boston, MA, held prior to the GSA meeting.

2011 Published Writings

Noah J. Webster, PhD, examined the relationship between Medicare enrollee knowledge of health insurance and sociodemographic factors, health status, and the use of health services in his article, “Medicare Knowledge and Health Service Utilization among Older Adults”, published in Research in the Sociology of Health Care.

Ernest Gonzales, MSSW, authored two publications focused on civic engagement in later life. One of these articles, “Volunteer Transitions Among Older Adults: The Role of Human, Social, and Cultural Capital in Later Life,” was published by the Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences, and focused on the individual factors that predict volunteering among older adults.

Nancy Kusmaul, LMSW co-authored a piece in Journal of Gerontontological Social Work titled, “The Living-Dying Interval in Nursing Home-Based End-of-Life Care: Family Caregivers’ Experiences.” The research involved interviews with family members of people who had died in a nursing home to understand the trajectory of their experiences.

Jessica Allen co-authored a chapter, “Advance Care Planning and End-Of-Life Decision Making,” in the Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics. The piece described the context in which older adults experience illnesses and reviewed what is known about health-related decision-making processes, the role of family members in decision-making, and how health care providers and care settings exert influence on these decisions.
new resources

CMS Produces Guide to Address Common Questions About Seasonal Flu Vaccines
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has created a guide that addresses commonly asked questions about the influenza and pneumococcal vaccines to Medicare and Medicaid patients. It also includes questions and answers that are specifically relevant to this year’s influenza immunization season, including provider billing and costs of the vaccines. The “CMS 2011–2012 Immunizers’ Question & Answer Guide to Medicare Part B & Medicaid Coverage of Seasonal Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccinations Guide” can be downloaded for free at www.cms.gov/Immunizations/Downloads/20112012ImmunizersGuide.pdf.

Electronic Journal Offers Free Food Safety News
EdNet is an electronic journal of food safety news from federal government agencies. It provides educators, consumer advocates, government officials, and industry representatives with a quick monthly summary of news about food safety programs and activities. To subscribe to EdNet and to read the latest issue, go to www.foodsafety.gov/news/educators/index.html.

AARP Document Identifies Housing Indicators
A new AARP report, “State Housing Profiles: Housing Conditions and Affordability for the Older Population,” examines key housing indicators for older adults in every state and the District of Columbia. The data show that conditions have deteriorated significantly for older households during the last decade. The percentage of men age 50+ living alone has increased, while the percentage of women age 50+ living alone has declined. The full report can be downloaded from assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/AARP_Housing2011_Full.pdf.

New Survey Examines Family Caregivers’ Fears
The National Family Caregivers Association and Forest Laboratories, Inc., have released a new report that identifies the fears among family caregivers. Their recent survey revealed that the first fear is of their care-recipients’ health, followed by the loss of communication due to Alzheimer’s disease. The decline in communication was also found to be a major source of stress. To read more about the survey, methodology, and results, visit www.nfcaares.org/press_room/detail.cfm?num=165.

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featured several GSA members and authors from the PPAR issue. The speakers included National Institute on Aging Director Richard J. Hodes, MD; U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee, JD; PPAR Editor Robert Hudson, PhD; GE Healthcare Chief Technology Officer Michael Harsh; National Coalition on Health Care President and CEO John Rother, JD; LeadingAge Center for Applied Research Executive Director Robyn Stone, PhD; Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Henry Aaron, PhD; MacArthur Foundation Research Network on an Aging Society Chair John W. Rowe, MD; and Stanford University Center on Longevity Director Laura Carstensen, PhD.

In addition to the PPAR, GSA created a credit card-style USB drive that contained articles from the PPAR alongside selected aging-related resources such as information on and links to government agencies, research-based organizations, and data sources on older Americans. The USB drives were distributed at the reception and beyond to a wide audience of congressional committee staffers, aging organizations, media, and other thought leaders. These materials serve to initiate dialogue among Hill offices and the broader legislative community about how the aging population will impact policies in the next 15 years.

The reception also saw the premiere of a dynamic video featuring Carstensen — produced by GSA to accompany the USB contents — that highlights broad issues connected to the future of aging. This video, the new PPAR, and a transcript of the forum are available at www.geron.org/opportunity.

For the reception, GSA engaged 20 co-sponsors from among the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, including the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Volunteers of America, AFSCME Retirees, the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, AARP, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, the Alliance for Aging Research, Senior Service America Inc., LeadingAge, the National Council on Aging, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc., the National Senior Corps Association, the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, Lutheran Services in America, the Older Women’s League, and Easter Seals.

Two hundred people gathered in the Kennedy Caucus Room to celebrate the anniversary.

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Volunteers of America, AFSCME Retirees, the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, AARP, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, the Alliance for Aging Research, Senior Service America Inc., LeadingAge, the National Council on Aging, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc., the National Senior Corps Association, the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, Lutheran Services in America, the Older Women’s League, and Easter Seals.
enables the Society to strengthen its commitment to fulfilling the needs of its members in the years ahead. The GSA Innovation Fund allows us to:

DEVELOP
funding to educate the public on the significance of research

EXPAND
the pipeline of the next generation of students

BUILD
programs to facilitate international collaboration

DONATE TO THE GSA INNOVATION FUND FOR 2012
Make your tax-deductible donation today at www.geron.org/giveback.

Look what the GSA Innovation Fund has already supported:

TAKE ACTION WEEK
GSA provided members with the tools to be successful advocates as they visited congressional offices to urge support for aging-related legislative issues.

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX
This webinar taught GSA Annual Scientific Meeting participants strategic approaches to developing a poster session, tactics for ensuring optimum engagement and discussion, and tips on where to get additional help.

CAREERS IN AGING WEEK
Schools around the country were able to generate greater awareness and visibility for the wide-ranging career opportunities in aging and aging research.

LEARN WHAT’S HAPPENING WITH NIA GRANTS AND FUNDING
This webinar gave GSA members a direct line to NIA Director Richard J. Hodes, MD, as he discussed federal budget constraints, their impact on NIA, strategies his agency is employing to address them, and a look toward the future.

With your donation to the GSA Innovation Fund, you can make a positive impact on future generations.

Donate now at www.geron.org/giveback.
Continued from page 1 - GSA Takes Center Stage at Chinese Conference

China has grown over the last two years to 70 individuals at 37 institutions in 12 major cities.

“Through this trip, we not only introduced GSA to a large audience of Chinese geriatricians and gerontologists,” Chen said, “but we also created an opportunity for GSA members to explore partnerships with Chinese scholars.”

Joining Chen on the China trip were Robert Parker, MD, and Yanping Ye, MD, both faculty at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Parker delivered one of the meeting’s two keynote addresses, discussing fall prevention among older adults. His presentation was developed by GSA President-Elect Laurence Rubenstein, MD, MPH, who was unable to attend. Parker also gave a separate talk on geriatric training in the U.S. Ye spoke about comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and multi-level care for elders.

While in China, Ye said, “It is such a fruitful trip to me. I have had many connections with geriatricians in China. I am looking forward to build some collaboration programs. I would really like to continue to work with CGS through GSA.”

The CGS was founded in 1981 as a branch of the Chinese Medical Association. It consists of 11 specialized groups in different fields as well as several provincial societies. The CGS also publishes the Chinese Journal of Geriatrics, which has invited Chen to author an article about GSA and its mission based on her November presentation.

After the Guangzhou meeting ended, GSA welcomed Li to its 64th Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston. Her presentation on “Geriatrics in China: Current Status, History and Future Challenges” at the Chinese Gerontology Studies Interest Group meeting drew a large crowd. She also met with Rubenstein, President Nancy Whitelaw, PhD, Immediate Past President Donald Ingram, PhD, and Executive Director and CEO James Appleby, RPh, MPH, to discuss future collaboration among the two societies.

Annual Hartford Deadline Approaching

The Hartford Faculty Scholars Program, which GSA administers, is accepting applications for the next round of funding until February 1. The program is a component of the nationwide Geriatric Social Work Initiative. It addresses the lack of adequately trained social work practitioners to meet the social and health care needs of today and tomorrow’s rapidly increasing aging population, and fosters an intellectually stimulating, mutually supportive network of colleagues involved in research and teaching in geriatric social work. For more information, visit www.gswi.org/programs/hfs.html.

NIA Grants To Examine Disasters’ Impact on Seniors

A new funding opportunity announcement from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) encourages Small Research Grant (R03) applications from institutions or organizations that propose to conduct research in the behavioral and social sciences on the consequences of natural and man-made disasters for the health and well-being of older adults, with an ultimate goal of preventing or mitigating harmful consequences. Disasters include weather-related events, earthquakes, large-scale attacks on civilian populations, technological catastrophes or perceived catastrophes, and pandemics. The deadline for applications is September 7, 2014. For more information, visit grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-264.html.

Federal Collaboration Results in Grant To Support Older Adults’ Independence

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) are inviting applications using the R01 award mechanism for translational research that moves evidence-based research findings towards the development of new interventions, programs, policies, practices, and tools that can be used by community-based organizations to help older individuals remain healthy and independent, and living in their own homes and communities. The goal is to support translational research involving collaborations between academic research centers and community-based organizations with expertise serving the older people (such as city and state health departments, city/town leadership councils, and area agencies on aging) that will enhance our understanding of practical tools, techniques, programs and policies that communities across the nation can use to more effectively respond to needs of their aging populations. There are several cycle deadlines to apply, with the first being February 5.

Further details are available at grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-123.html.
Record Attendance

Over 4,000 people made their way to Boston for GSA’s 64th Annual Scientific Meeting, breaking the attendance record. The program featured more than 500 sessions during the five-day event at the Sheraton Boston Hotel and John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center. A total of 96 organizations occupied booths in the Exhibit Hall.

Among the most popular presentations were the Presidential Symposia, which showcased the meeting’s theme, “Lifestyle → Lifespan.” Sessions in the Public Policy Series, which ran for its fourth year, also were widely attended.

Unique Sessions

Author and explorer Dan Buettner, delivered the keynote address during the President’s Plenary Session. He spoke about what he learned from the inhabitants of Earth’s “Blue Zones,” which are regions with the longest life expectancy, disability-free life expectancy, or concentration of people over age 65.

For the third consecutive meeting, GSA organized a day-long Aging Means Business Forum at the Annual Scientific Meeting. With an emphasis on design this year, the forum sponsored a contest for students. The winning entry was a proposal for a product to relive back pain.

On Monday, November 21, GSA welcomed representatives of the National Council on Aging (NCOA) for a series of special symposia. The final event was a question-and-answer session featuring U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging Kathy Greenlee and NCOA President and CEO James Firman, which was moderated by GSA Executive Director and CEO James Appleby.

On the final day of the meeting, a group of attendees traveled to Boston’s Jamaica Plain neighborhood to perform volunteer work at an apartment complex for seniors and disabled people. This was undertaken as part of the fourth annual Gerontologists Giving Back Service Event. The photographs on the right give more details about these and many other unique events. More pictures can be viewed at www.flickr.com/photos/geronsociety.

Looking Ahead

The Call for Abstracts for the 2012 Annual Scientific Meeting — taking place from November 14 to 18 in San Diego — is now available on GSA’s website at www.geron.org/abstracts. The theme for this conference will be “Charting New Frontiers in Aging.” All abstract submissions must be received by March 15.
Keynote speaker Dan Buettner spoke about the influences on longevity that he discovered during his worldwide travels.

On Sunday Morning, several dozen conference-goers met at dawn for the second annual Fun Walk & Run, which is held in partnership with GSA Health Sciences Section to benefit the Doris Schwartz Gerontological Nursing Research Award.

Outgoing GSA President Donald Ingram handed over the reins to his successor, Nancy Whitelaw, at the GSA Business Meeting.

Participants in the Gerontologists Giving Back Service Event spent the final day of the meeting performing cleaning and maintenance work at a local residence for seniors and disabled people.

Record Media Presence
GSA issued press passes to 55 reporters in Boston, including representatives from USA Today, the Boston Globe, CNN International, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the Baltimore Sun, Mother Jones, and the AARP Bulletin.

Among these press attendees were 16 new and six returning participants in the MetLife Foundation Journalists in Aging Fellows Program, which GSA organized, for the second time, in conjunction with New America Media using funding provided by the MetLife Foundation. The 16 new fellows — chosen after a competitive application process — attended an educational pre-conference workshop on Friday, November 19, where GSA member experts shared facts and figures about the latest trends in gerontology. The fellows reported on numerous topics at the meeting and in the coming months will produce longer stories on major issues facing older people. Half of the participants in the program represented media outlets with ethnic minority audiences.

Press Briefings
The Society also partnered with some of its prominent members and other authorities on aging to conduct a series of daily press briefings at the meeting. The first briefing welcomed select speakers from the previous day’s Aging Means Business forum, allowing them to cover key issues on the forum’s agenda in an interactive format. The second briefing focused on the plight of low-income older workers. The last briefing featured representatives of the X PRIZE Foundation, who discussed the involvement of centenarians in an incentivized competition to sequence the human genome quickly, cheaply, and accurately.

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging Fernando Torres-Gil also met with reporters for an informal roundtable discussion on the work of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, aka the Super Committee.

GSA in the News
The most widely distributed story to come out of the meeting focused on a presentation by Adrienne Jackson of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Her research found that the more often married older adults engage in sexual activity, the more likely they are to report high levels of happiness.

Visit www.geron.org/press for links to news articles that resulted from sessions at the meeting. This page will be updated continuously as participants in the MetLife Foundation Journalists in Aging Fellows Program submit their stories in early 2012.
University of Nebraska Campuses Team Up for Joint Gerontology Degree
The University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law and the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Gerontology Program have collaborated to create a dual gerontology degree program, starting in fall 2012. Three different combinations of degrees will be offered: a master’s in gerontology with a law degree, a master’s in gerontology with a master’s in legal studies, and a certificate in gerontology with a law degree. There are also plans for an entrepreneurship program, where students will help entrepreneurs with legal issues involved with starting new companies.

Colorado School Plans New Academic Health Services Center
Plans are in place at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) to move forward with the construction of a $17 million, 56,000-square foot facility for the school’s mental health and wellness programs, and expand their presence in the gerontology field. The Academic Health Services Center will allow UCCS to combine its CU Aging Center, Gerontology Center, and the Beth-el College of Nursing and Health Sciences wellness programs together in one location. The CU Aging Center is a nonprofit that focuses on psychological assessments and treatment for older adults, while also providing clinical training for gerpsychology students. The Gerontology Center focuses on research and academics related to aging. A portion of the building will be purchased by Peak Vista Community Health Centers, a nonprofit that has partnered with UCCS on senior care since 2005, to house its senior health clinic. These collaborations allow UCCS students in gerontology-related fields to receive supervised on-the-job training.

Miami University Gerontology Students Start Local Program
The Staying Well by Doing Good program, created by 10 Miami University gerontology students in fall 2011, is geared towards those aged 50 and over and joins both personal wellness and civic engagement. It is a new walking-based volunteer program to help maintain older adults’ engagement in their community. The purpose is to match the activity of walking with volunteering. Staying Well by Doing Good is in its preliminary stages of development but the creators of the program said they hope to make it a national campaign.
Singapore Encourages Collaboration Between General Practitioners, Hospice Providers
Channel News Asia has reported that palliative care has become a key issue in Singapore due to a growing older adult population and a shift towards community-based care. A partnership has emerged between Singapore’s largest home hospice provider, HCA Hospice Care, and general practitioners in order to improve the quality of care delivered to its older patients. This collaborative effort has been particularly helpful for patients needing medications geared toward pain relief — due to the fact that they have been prescribed by a physician rather than hospice health experts.

Guinean Military Retirees on the Rise
Agence France Presse reported that 4,000 of Guinea’s military personnel retired in 2011. In addition to soldiers and paramilitary officers, police and customs officials are also among those who retired. Some of these individuals have been involved with the military since 1958, even before the country declared independence from France. Guinea’s current president, Alpha Conde, has made efforts to improve these individuals’ retirement benefits. According to this article, the country’s army consists of 40,000 people.

British Columbia Supreme Court Scheduled to Hear Assisted Suicide Law Case
Canada’s assisted suicide laws will be challenged in British Columbia’s Supreme Court, according to an article that appeared in The Star. Under Canadian laws, it is illegal to counsel, aid, or abet a person to commit suicide. The last major case regarding assisted suicide laws was in 1993, which was rejected. However, a new case is being taken to the high court, where five plaintiffs are challenging these laws once again. Opponents of assisted suicides indicate that the impact of allowing this will have large ramifications on older people, those who are disabled, and on the health care system itself.

Italy Seeks To Raise Retirement Age
Italy’s prime minister has announced intentions to raise the country’s age of retirement to 67. This effort may cause some resistance among Italians, since there are more than 530,000 people in Italy who previously retired under age 50. These individuals, often referred to as “baby pensioners,” sometimes have only 14.5 years of service and spend nearly half of their life, or 40.7 years, retired. Budget concerns are largely driving the prime minister’s actions, according to the Financial Post.
Recognize Leaders in the Field

Nominate Them To Become GSA Fellows!

Fellow status is an acknowledgment of outstanding and continuing work in the field of gerontology. This recognition can come at varying points in a career and can acknowledge a broad scope of activity, including research, teaching, administration, public service, practice, and notable participation within the Society.

Potential candidates must:
• Get a nomination letter from a current GSA fellow of the candidate’s section. Self-nominations are no longer accepted.
• Get an endorsement letter from one other fellow of the candidate’s section (both must be members in good standing).
• Be a regular GSA member for a minimum of five years.
• Meet the specific requirements made by the candidate’s section.
• Submit a current C.V.

Nominations will be accepted until February 15.
Visit www.geron.org/Membership/Fellows for complete details.

Reflections from GSA Fellow Eva Kahana, PhD
Part 2 of 2

Were you mentored as a student? How did this mentorship affect your career?

Having good mentors is a matter of good fortune on the one hand and reaching out to get help on the other. Some mentors are intellectual role models, while others offer sage advice and encouragement. I have had the good fortune of being married for almost 50 years to Boaz Kahana, who has been my closest colleague, friend, and mentor.

For my doctoral dissertation, I studied the merits of the then prevailing practice of age segregation of patients in mental hospitals. The two scholars whose relevant work inspired me were Robert Butler and Powell Lawton, so I wrote long handwritten letters to each asking their advice. I received detailed and highly encouraging responses from both. These letters helped me obtain the blessings of my mentor, Bernice Neugarten. I consider Powell Lawton to be my most influential intellectual mentor in gerontology, and a personal role model for caring about others.

I will always cherish the mentorship, both informal and formal, that launched me on my professional journey. This is a journey that I still find exciting everyday as I continue to learn from my research, from my students, and from my lived experience about the mysteries of growing old. Boaz and I attended our first GSA meeting in St Petersburg, FL, in 1967 and have never missed a meeting since. The members and fellows of GSA showed us great kindness as we started our careers. We hope to serve new members in the same spirit as we take pride in our students who are now fellows of GSA.
Engaging Aging in Higher Education

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Register Today at www.aghe.register

Assistant Professor

The Division of Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine based at Harborview Medical Center and the University of Washington are recruiting a full-time faculty member in the Department of Medicine at the Assistant Professor level on the clinician/teacher pathway, without tenure due to funding. Candidates must hold the degree of M.D. or equivalent and have demonstrated experience and a strong interest in geriatric medicine. In order to be eligible for University sponsorship for an H-1B visa, graduates of foreign (non-U.S.) medical schools must show successful completion of all three steps of the U.S. Medical licensing Exam (USMLE), or equivalent as determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. University of Washington faculty engage in teaching, research and service. The successful candidate will provide clinical activity in Long-term Care Service, working in nursing homes at the Seattle Hospice Program, and at Harborview SeniorCare Clinic and Attending on the General Medicine, and on the Geriatric Medicine Service.

The University of Washington is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer. The University is building a culturally diverse faculty and staff and strongly encourages applications from women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and protected veterans. The position will remain open until filled.

Applicants should send curriculum vitae, 3 letters of recommendation and brief statements summarizing research accomplishments and future plans to:
Dr. Wayne C. McCormick, Professor & Chair, Section Chief, Long Term Care Service
Division of Gerontology & Geriatric Medicine
Department of Medicine, University of Washington School of Medicine
325 9th Avenue, Box 359755
Seattle WA 98104-2499

Contact Information:
mccorm@u.washington.edu and rfw3@u.washington.edu
Contact Phone: 206-744-9100

Thank you for your interest in this faculty position at the University of Washington.
Call for Abstracts

Comprised of more than 3,000 presentations and up to 100 concurrent events per day, GSA’s scientific program is one of the most respected and competitive of its kind. The Call for Abstracts is your opportunity to be a part of this preeminent gerontological event of the year. Deadline: 3.15.2012.

geron.org/abstracts