

*Center Expands International Connections*

Center for Gerontology director Dr. Karen A. Roberto has received a Visiting Research Fellowship from Queensland University in Brisbane, Australia. Dr. Roberto is working with the Centre for Social Change Research director, Dr. Laurie Buys, a former doctoral student and colleague from Colorado.

Dr. Roberto spent four weeks this summer analyzing aging and rural health similarities between Australians and Americans and she is headed back to Australia this month. Drs. Roberto and Buys are preparing two manuscripts that compare women's health issues and quality of life predictors for aging Americans and Australians.

The Centre for Social Change Research has a broad focus and Roberto sees plenty of opportunity to learn from one another. Their next project involves the needs and issues surrounding primary caregivers in the workforce. Roberto says, in general, Australia is beginning to face some of the aging issues the U.S. has already begun to address.

*From the Director . . .*

As a multidisciplinary university research center, the Center for Gerontology is uniquely positioned to address issues facing our aging population. I am excited to see the number of faculty on campus with an interest in aging-related investigations steadily increasing, along with the number students pursuing the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. Collectively, our research and education programs contribute to the understanding of disease prevention and management, better health care service delivery, improved family relationships, more satisfactory approaches to caregiving, suitable housing and consumer products to meet elderly persons' needs, reduction of fraud and elder abuse, and a host of other outcomes that benefit older adults and their families. It is only through our collaborative efforts that we will come to understand and be able to meet the needs of our rapidly growing and vastly diverse aging population, which by the way, includes each and every one of us!

--- Karen

*Welcome Carlene*

It is with great pleasure we welcome our new administrative assistant, Carlene Arthur, to the Center for Gerontology. Before she joined us, Carlene worked in the College of Engineering Dean's office in Enrichment and International Programs. Carlene has also owned and operated a leather products manufacturing and retail business. She joined the VT community ten years ago. Originally from Fairfax, she and her husband have been living in Montgomery county for almost 30 years and her son attends VCU. Please drop by to say hello. Welcome Carlene, it is great to have you with us!



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## FALL RESEARCH FORUMS

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### ***Building Bridges Across Generations: The In-Law Conundrum***



**Dr. M. Jean Turner, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Arkansas, is breaking new ground in the study of in-law relationships. Dr. Turner is on sabbatical and spent two weeks with the Center for Gerontology conducting focus group sessions and speaking to faculty, staff, and students about in-law and other family relationships.

Dr. Turner joked about how many mothers-in-law it takes to ruin a marriage: just one... mine! Her interest in in-law relationships comes from a genuine desire to learn how to be a good mother-in-law. She reviewed the literature and found very little research on the topic so she has embarked on a journey to understand the nature of in-law relationships and how to make them better.

Using secondary data, Dr. Turner examined mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships. The clearest finding was that the quality of the in-law relationship was most predictive of daughters-in-law providing support. A surprising finding was that a younger child-in-law was more likely to provide care than an older one.

From preliminary focus groups, Dr. Turner has identified core issues for both mothers and daughters-in-law: value of the individual and control of time or control of the relationship. She describes these relationships as the push-me pull-me conundrum.

Dr. Turner is developing a web-based survey she hopes to send out in the next few months that will allow her to expand her data collection.

*Dr. Turner welcomes comments about her research; contact her at [jturner@uark.edu](mailto:jturner@uark.edu).*

### ***Building Community Capacity for Baby Boomers Aging***

**Dr. Judith L. Warren, Ph.D.** is the Extension Program Leader for Family Development and Resource Management and a Professor and Extension Gerontology Specialist at Texas A&M University System. Dr. Warren is the principal investigator of the *Aging Texas Well Project (ATW)* and we had the pleasure of hearing about her work as part of the Center for Gerontology's Fall Research Forum series.

Dr. Warren worked with 21 Texas Area Agencies on Aging and 500 Texas citizens to develop concept maps that served to guide state level planning and policy development. The project allowed community members to articulate, evaluate, and direct their concerns and ideas toward building a healthier and sustainable community. *ATW* was designed to help communities prepare themselves for the aging of Baby Boomers. Demographics in Texas mirror national trends of increasing longevity, increasing Hispanic population, income adequacy risk, and health and income disparities.

*For more information about the project, contact Dr. Warren at [jl-warren@tamu.edu](mailto:jl-warren@tamu.edu).*



Faculty, students, and community members at Dr. Warren's research forum

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## Spring 2004: The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Certificate and Awards Celebration

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Drs. S. Jewell and Elizabeth Ritchey with S. J. Ritchie Scholarship recipients Christina Gigliotti and Stephen Guill

### ***Dr. Koenig Gives Keynote Address***

**Dr. Harold G. Koenig, M.D., M.H.Sc.** presented *Religion, Spirituality and Health: History, Research, and Application* at the eighth Annual Gerontology Graduate Certificate and Awards Recognition Ceremony. Dr. Koenig suggested the medical community begin taking spiritual histories of patients in an effort to improve care practices. *The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* published a study that showed 88% of hospitalized older adults identified themselves as religious and spiritual. He admits it is a complex issue but believes religion is a key factor in coping and decision-making processes. *Dr. Koenig is Professor of Psychiatry and Medicine at Duke University, and founder and director of the University's Center for the Study of Religion/Spirituality and Health.*



Certificate recipients Adrienne Byrne, Brandy Bratton, Jeannette Steeves, and Emily Maples-Stumb

### ***Awards & Recognitions***

#### **Center for Gerontology Futures Board Scholarship**

*Jennifer Denise Love-Norris*  
Ph.D. Student, Human Development  
Adult Development & Aging

#### **Peggy Lavery Gerontology Research and Professional Development Awards**

*Mary Elizabeth (Libbey) Bowen*  
Ph.D. Student, Sociology

*Erica K. Husser*

M.S. Student, Human Development  
Adult Development & Aging

*Sharon Dale Rogers*

Ph.D. Candidate, Human Development  
Adult Development & Aging

#### **S. J. Ritchey Scholarships**

*Christina Marie Gigliotti*  
Ph.D. Student, Human Development  
Adult Development & Aging

*Stephen Gregory Guill*

Ph.D. Student, Human Nutrition, Foods, & Exercise

#### **Center for Gerontology Faculty Affiliate Research Development Grant**

*Dr. Tammy L. Henderson*  
Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development

#### **The Gerontological Society of America Fellow Status**

*Dr. Katherine R. Allen*  
Professor, Department of Human Development

#### **Southern Gerontological Society Gordon Streib Distinguished Academic Gerontologist Award**

*Dr. Karen A. Roberto*  
Director, Center for Gerontology

#### **Virginia Association on Aging Outstanding Gerontology Educator**

*Dr. Shannon E. Jarrott*  
Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development

#### **Outstanding Doctoral Student**

*Sharon Dale Rogers*  
Ph.D. Candidate, Human Development  
Adult Development & Aging

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## *Resources on Aging*

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**The Pocket Guide To Staying Healthy at 50+**  
[www.ahrq.gov/ppip/50plus](http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/50plus)

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in partnership with AARP has recently released *The Pocket Guide* to replace *Staying Healthy at 50+* (2000). The new guide incorporates recent research-based recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. It includes tips on good health habits, screening tests, and immunizations; charts to track personal health information; key questions to ask health care providers; and resources to contact for additional information.

**The Geriatric Mental Health Foundation**  
[www.gmhfonline.org](http://www.gmhfonline.org)

Provides information and resources on mental health care for older adults. The site includes a data base for locating a local geriatric psychiatrist, and information on late-life depression and dementia, including Alzheimer's disease and caregiving.



Scholarship and Award recipients. R: Erica Husser, Sharon Rogers, Stephen Guill, Libbey Bowen; F: Christina Gigliotti and Denise Love-Norris



Center for Gerontology Futures Board Scholarship recipient Denise Love-Norris, her Great Uncle, Hensel L. Johnson, and Center Director, Dr. Karen A. Roberto

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## *Center for Gerontology Staff*

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**Karen A. Roberto**, Ph.D., Professor & Director  
**Rosemary Blieszner**, Ph.D., Alumni Distinguished Professor & Associate Director  
**Carlene Arthur**, Administrative Assistant  
**Research Associates:** Anne Glass, Ph.D., Karen Wilcox, Ph.D.  
**Graduate Assistants:** Nancy Brossoie, Christina Gigliotti, Erica Husser, Susan Tice, Brianne Weaver  
**Undergraduate Assistants:** Ashley Renfrow, Kelly Roller

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## *Contact Us*

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## *Contributing to the Center for Gerontology does make a difference!*

Please make a contribution now to help support ongoing gerontology programs such as student travel, special publications, scholarships, and professional development activities. Visit [www.givingto.vt.edu](http://www.givingto.vt.edu) or the Center for Gerontology's website at [www.gerontology.vt.edu](http://www.gerontology.vt.edu).

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