

transitions

INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY

Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond

Fall 2011



Professor Hector González Assumes New Leadership Role

A promotion and a new appointment to lead a key section of the Hispanic Community Health Study (Study of Latinos) marked an exciting summer for Dr. Hector González. Jointly appointed at the Institute of Gerontology and the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences, Dr. González' work has concentrated on Latino health and on identifying and reversing the inequalities in health care that affect minorities.

His promotion to associate professor with tenure recognizes the breadth and depth of his work which has been awarded major funding support until 2013 from the National Institutes of Health. "Depression in certain minority communities is under-diagnosed and under-treated," he said about results from an earlier study. "It is the most disabling disorder in the world so everyone should have equal access to treatment."

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Respecting the Person Inside the Dementia

A well-made horror film can make anyone's heart race, but to really scare someone over age 50, mention the word "dementia." Alzheimer's disease or dementia is the top fear of more than 30% of all older adults in the U.S., scarier than cancer. Concerns center around the ambiguous diagnosis, the progressive nature of the disease, the lack of effective drugs, and the eventual dependence on caregivers.

Benjamin Mast, Ph.D., an IOG pre-doctoral trainee (1996-2002), has worked in gerontology for a decade and seen this panic firsthand. His newly published book, **Whole Person Dementia Assessment**, is written to edu-

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Dr. Mast autographs his book, *Whole Person Dementia Assessment*, is available through www.healthpropress.com, www.Amazon.com and select book stores.



IOG Director Peter Lichtenberg receives the John Santos Distinguished Program Development Award for his outstanding service to the field of gerontology. The American Psychological Association award recognizes Dr. Lichtenberg's vision in developing the IOG's new continuing education programs, public events, training programs and large-scale research dedicated to aging issues (Award presented by Cameron Camp, Ph.D, president of APA Division 20, Adult Development and Aging.)

research
education
outreach
partnerships

Goodbye to an Admired Friend

An avid supporter of IOG programs and a conscientious member of the Board of Visitors, our good friend Donald Haas passed away on August 2 after a brief illness. Don was a financial gerontologist, financial planner and president of the Haas Institute for Wealth & Aging. *Worth Magazine* named him one of the “300 Best Financial Advisors in America.”

“When Don believed passionately in something, he made results happen.”

- Dr. Lichtenberg

From the moment Don, 81, joined the IOG board, his concerns for the financial stability of older adults became known. “He believed strongly in the importance of research to understand financial gerontology,” IOG Director Peter Lichtenberg said. “We had many discussions about the need to

learn more about how older adults invest and spend. His goal was to increase support for this research.”

Within a few months of joining the board, Don delivered a generous challenge to his friends and clients: “If you send the IOG a donation in support of financial gerontology research, I’ll match every gift, dollar for dollar.” He quickly raised \$15,000.

His exemplary career in financial planning included two books, a weekly CBS radio show, expert commentary on Fox TV Detroit, and a regular column in *Advisor Today* magazine. Music was his other love and he played trumpet for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for 20 years.

Don’s wit, wisdom, passion and commitment to our work will be sorely missed at the IOG. He is survived by his wife Carol, three children and six grandchildren. His family asks that tributes to Don’s memory be sent to the IOG to support education and research on financial gerontology.

AWARDS & HONORS



SUMMERS

A Distinguished Faculty Fellowship was awarded to the IOG’s **Gail Jensen Summers, Ph.D.**, for the exceptional caliber of her achievements, scholarship and research. The honor, presented by Wayne State University’s Board of Governors, recognizes that Dr. Jensen Summers’ work reaches the “highest level of national distinction.” Her research focuses on health insurance and well-being among older adults, especially how insurance coverage affects medication adherence and health.

Graduate trainee **Elham Mahmoudi** (Dr. Jensen Summers is her faculty advisor) received the prestigious 2011 Dissertation Fellowship Award from the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. This nationally competitive award provides a full-time dissertation grant for one year.



MAHMOUDI



TAYLOR

IOG trainee alum **Jacquelyn Taylor, Ph.D., R.N.**, will be inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing, one of nursing’s highest and most exclusive honors. Dr. Taylor is an associate professor at Yale University in the pediatric nurse practitioner specialty.

Predocutorial trainees **Daniel Paulson** and **Emily Brice** won awards in clinical psychology this spring. Daniel received the Norine Johnson Award for excellence in scholarship, outstanding practicum training, and a commitment to clinical service with preference to graduate students balancing school with family obligations. Daniel has been researching caregiving, vascular depression and frailty, and has presented on the quality of life for persons with end-stage liver disease. He is the father of two toddlers. Emily won the \$1,000 Gerald Rosenbaum Endowed Graduate Training Scholarship.



PAULSON



HUANG

Jinghua Huang, Ph.D., a recent IOG alum who successfully defended her dissertation in economics in April, won the 2011 Elizabeth Olson Award for best written paper in gerontology. Titled, *Effects of Medicare Part A Reimbursement on the Quality of Health Care: The Case of Pneumonia*, the paper received high praise from judges and won Jinghua a \$500 cash prize. She now works for research consulting firm Ingenix in Ann Arbor evaluating health care sector organizations and government groups.

Drs. Cathy Lysack and **Stewart Neufeld** published research in July’s *Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine* showing that a spinal cord injury did not impact how a person rated the quality of their health. “This is important because health and disability are not the same thing,” Dr. Lysack said. “You can be living with a disability and still be in very good or even excellent health.”



LYSACK



NEUFELD

Inside the Mind of the IOG's Newest Brain Researcher

When Noa Ofen and her family moved to Michigan from Massachusetts on a recent Saturday, traffic on Woodward crawled. She was driving with her husband and two young sons to their new residence in Pleasant Ridge, taking in the local sights as they headed south.

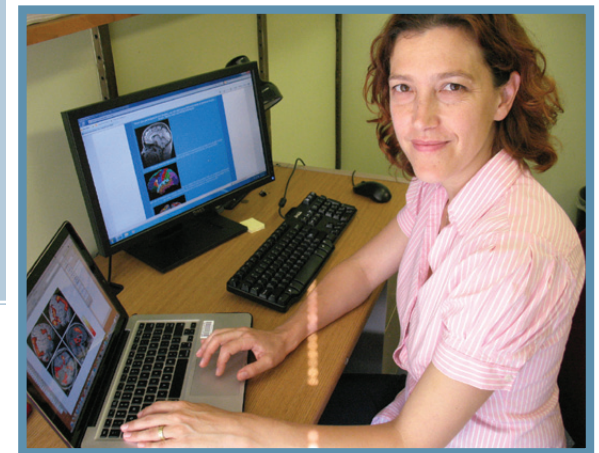
Dr. Ofen, a cognitive neuroscientist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), observed strange behavior. "Why are all those people sitting in chairs, on patches of grass along the road, staring at traffic?" she wondered. "What sort of odd Detroit custom is this?" She'd been, of course, an involuntary participant in this year's Dream Cruise.

"Now that I know what they're doing," she said, "it looks like a lot of fun."

The mystery of local customs aside, Dr. Ofen is adapting well to life at Wayne State University where she is jointly appointed at the IOG and the Pediatrics Department of the School of Medicine. Born in Haifa, Israel, she earned her doctorate there at the Weizmann Institute of Science before

*"I scanned over 300 children...
We gave them a
'tour of their brain'"*

- Dr. Noa Ofen



completing a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University. The past five years she spent as a postdoctoral associate at the Gabrieli Laboratory of Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience at MIT.

"MIT was a fantastic experience," she said. "I ran a research group studying the brain basis of memory development in typically developing children. But MIT's focus is basic research and I am now thinking more about clinical applications." Her voice rises with excitement about the potential to expand her work at WSU. "You have a strong medical school and a strong collaborative environment. Here I can research the clinical implications of what we've learned about memory development."

Twenty Somethings Remember More

Dr. Ofen's natural warmth and easy smile define her, whether as a proud mother describing her sons (3 ½ and 10 months) or as a gifted researcher expertly analyzing images of brains. Her research at MIT added significant knowledge to the

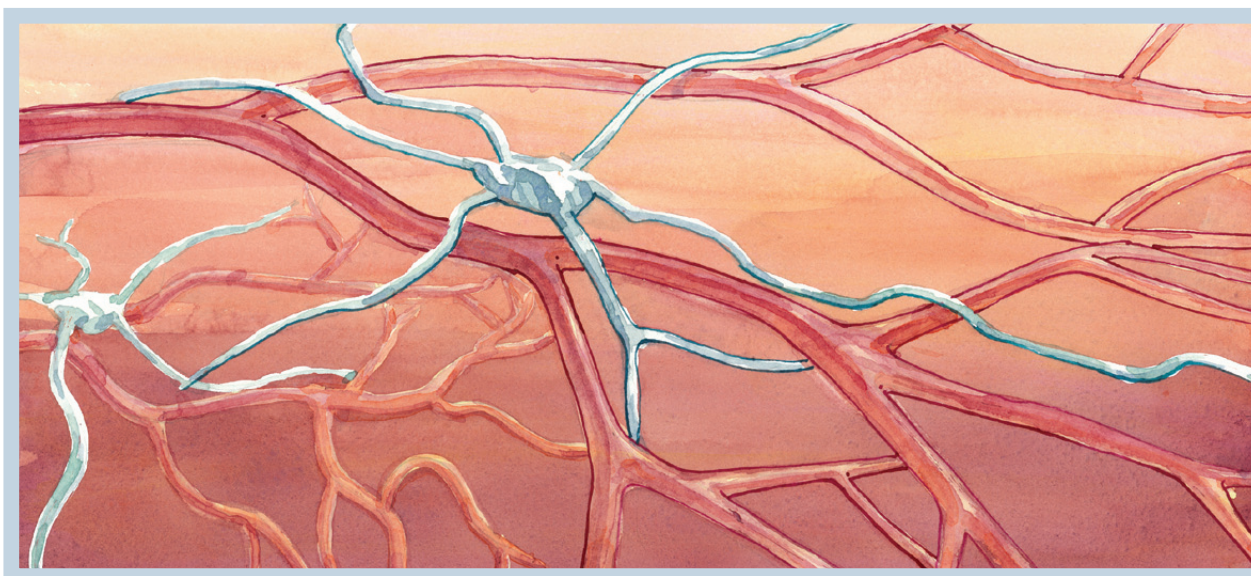
understanding of normal memory development. She used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to study memory in about 300 participants aged 5 to 24. She found that young adults create more vivid memories than children, and showed that this is linked to the maturity of the prefrontal cortex, a late maturing region in the brain responsible for, among other things, the richness of memories. While a 5-year-old will remember having seen a picture of a white house, a 24-year-old will remember that the house was a two-story Colonial with midnight blue shutters and an Adirondack chair on the lawn.

Until recently, brain scans of children were difficult to conduct so research tended to concentrate on brain changes in older adults. "Studying children's cognition with fMRI is a recent development. Not much was known about the brain basis of memory in children," she said.

Scanning brains at Wayne State has distinct advantages. "You have a fantastic imaging center," Dr. Ofen said. Harper Hospital provides access to the latest generation of scanners but more important to Dr. Ofen is the exceptional level of expertise, tools and cutting edge analysis methods available here. "These physicists at Harper develop tools and methods that will allow me to access a new type of information from the brain images that will greatly enrich our understanding of brain development."

Role Playing with an MRI

For fMRI scan to be successful though, a child has to get into the scanner and stay there with



minimal movement for about 45 minutes. Sedation isn't an option because Dr. Ofen studies the way brains function while fully awake. Enter the mock MRI to familiarize children with the process. "That's another great thing about being at Wayne," Dr. Ofen said.

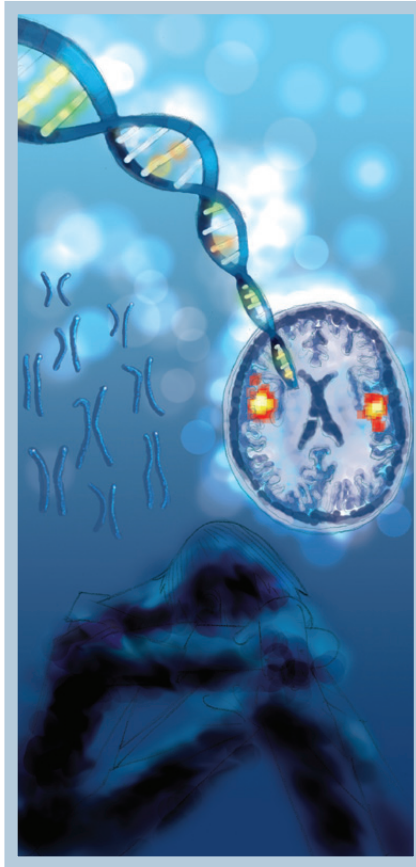
John Hannigan, the associate director of WSU's Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child & Family Development, is overseeing the installation of this simulated MRI with the look and sounds of the real machine. The step-by-step introduction to the MRI prepares the children and makes them more comfortable during the scan. "This will be especially important when we work with clinical populations, such as children with fetal alcohol syndrome or ADHD," Dr. Hannigan said.

Dr. Ofen sees the MRI research participation as a wonderful experience for children, one that often ignites a deeper interest in science. Dr. Ofen's young participants have produced science projects, show-and-tell presentations, and science fair entries on the brain after being in her study. "I scanned over 300 children at MIT and Stanford," she said. "As they came out of the scanner, we gave them a 'tour of their brain' and a print-out of their brain. We make sure they have a positive experience and try to involve the whole family. Typically the children are very excited, raving to their friends, and our best recruiters for the next study."

From Aikido to Shakespeare

Teaching comes naturally to Dr. Ofen. As a grad student, she taught brain development to both ends of the lifespan – children and retirees – and directed the science, music and arts summer camp for 60 adolescents. Her husband, Julian Wong, connects well with children, too. As an artist and freelance designer, he has created children's book illustrations, as well as designs for the McGovern Institute for brain research at MIT and landscape paintings. He is also a third degree black belt aikido instructor. "Even his aikido style is more art than martial art," Dr. Ofen said. "It's all about movement and flow."

As a brown belt herself, Dr. Ofen embraces aikido harmony. The couple met at a dojo and married three years later. She also enjoys acting and



played Viola in an amateur production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. "Not much time for that now," she laughs. First, she has a five-room neuroscience lab to equip with students and furniture, some of it reclaimed from bargain hunting visits to WSU's surplus warehouse.

Dr. Ofen's lab is part of the Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience program, jointly run by the IOG and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute, and directed by Dr. Naftali Raz, a world-renowned researcher on brain changes in aging. Dr. Moriah Thomason joined recently (from Stanford University) to study anxiety and brain development in the 0 to age 15 segment. Dr. Ofen's lab focuses on typical and atypical brain development in 5 to 30-year-olds. "I am proud to be invited to add to extending our understanding of brain changes across the lifespan," she said. "I look forward to a career of productive collaborations."

Original illustrations by
Julian Wong

Respecting from page 1

cate while it soothes fears. "We need a broader assessment," Dr. Mast said to a ballroom of professionals at the 2011 Issues in Aging Conference in Dearborn. "We need more treatment options. Diagnosis is important but we need to understand the person and how to provide better care for him or her." His book advises caregivers to live the disease from the patient's point of view. "We know what dementia does to the brain but what does it do to the person?" he asks.

Dr. Mast has been fascinated with gerontology since college when his grandfather disappeared after heading to a union meeting. A day later, he showed up in a farmhouse 200 miles from home. When his wife retrieved him, he had no explanation for the disappearance. He was just going for a drive. Autopsy eventually confirmed he had Alzheimer's.

Dr. Mast received his doctorate in clinical psychology from Wayne State University followed by research training at the IOG under Director Peter Lichtenberg. "Peter has been a wonderful mentor and friend whose support and investment in me has been unwavering over the past 15 years," he writes in his acknowledgements. Today, he is an associate professor in psychological and brain sciences at the University of Louisville.

Whole Person Dementia Assessment explains how to apply the person-centered approach to all the technical aspects of assessment, including assessing the caregiver, integrating information from multiple disciplines and providing feedback. "A person is more than the sum of his or her cognitive abilities," Dr. Mast says. We have an emotional side, a life story, fears, hopes." Listening is paramount, not just to the words but to the body language and the emotion expressed.

Alzheimer's is frustrating because no one is cured to be able to tell you how they wished they were treated. "I hope this book will influence how health care professionals think – and feel – about people with dementia as well as their approach to assessment. We need intelligence tempered by sensitivity."

Partnership

American House Foundation Award

Robert W. Gillette, chair of the American House Foundation (AHF), received the Board of Visitors Faculty Research Award for his foundation's multiple contributions to the IOG's mission, including being a funder of research.

As a long-time IOG board member, Rob appreciates the importance of gerontology research. The BOV award will be used to continue funding Dr. Thomas Jankowski's *SeniorsCount!* project which aggregates and analyzes data on the social, economic and health status of southeast Michigan seniors.

A recent *SeniorsCount!* report, for instance, revealed that 1 in 3 older adults in the state is economically insecure and having difficulty paying everyday living expenses. Media coverage of this report included the *Detroit Free Press*, *Lansing State Journal* and *First Science*.

"The Foundation's generous gift allows us to continue our important work while we seek additional sources of funding," a grateful Dr. Jankowski said. "It is flattering to have our work recognized in this way."

The AHF supports research and resources to help older adults in need in the Detroit area. Created in 2007, AHF gifts preserve hope and dignity in older adults during hardship. Seventy percent of all monies raised provides direct service or supplies to seniors. The remaining 30% of monies raised supports IOG research projects on aging.

PARTNERSHIP CORNER

Senior Living Honors Whole person

Waltonwood Senior Living communities offer various levels of care in their seven southeast Michigan locations. From independent living to memory care to respite, Walton-

wood takes a whole-person approach to caring for older adults. Mind, body and spirit share equal importance. Amenities such as European fitness rooms (designed especially for seniors), libraries, wellness checks, and computer work stations serve multiple dimensions of the whole person.

The IOG is proud to partner with SINGH Senior Living Communities (owners of Waltonwood facilities) to expand their life-enhancing impact on older adults and professionals. As a Gold Level partner, Waltonwood's



events with the IOG embrace the whole person, and are true to SINGH's mission to instill respect and honesty in everything they do. Waltonwood understands that quality care for se-

niors requires educating health care professionals, so they sponsor four continuing education workshops a year (with the help of the IOG) to reach more than 300 nurses, doctors, aides and therapists. Their caregiver support programs also reflect a positive, can-do approach toward helping older adults.

A Waltonwood at Cherry Hill resident sums it up: "We love it here. We found a home away from home. The staff and residents who live here are our new family!"

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ALL GIFTS ARE DEEPLY APPRECIATED

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5475 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202

9/11 PRINT

González from page 1

The Hispanic Community Health Study/ Study of Latinos is a large, longitudinal epidemiologic study of 16,000 Latinos ages 18-74. Four field center sites are located in the Bronx, Chicago, San Diego and Miami. Dr. González leads the Neurocognitive Reading Center of the study tasked with overseeing cognitive assessment of over 10,000 Latinos aged 45 and older. "We will look at mid-life risks for cognitive decline and dementia in hopes that we can forestall or prevent their occurrence," he said. "We will also test new hypotheses concerning the relationship between acculturation and health." The work is funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and the National Institute of Neurological Disease and Stroke.



Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond

UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and FREE unless otherwise noted (For more information contact Donna MacDonald at 313-664-2605)

Tuesday, Oct. 18 (8:30 am – 12:30 pm)

Enhancing Life for Older Adults

Speakers on “Hoarding,” “Difficult Behaviors,” & “Aging and Addiction”
Waltonwood at Lakeside Circle, 14750 Lakeside Cir., Sterling Heights, 48313

Tuesday, Oct. 18 (9:30 am – 10:30 pm) IOG COLLOQUIUM

The U.S. Housing Market Collapses and its Impact on Boomer Retirement

Speaker: Stewart Neufeld, Ph.D., WSU IOG
71 E. Ferry St., Second Floor Conference Rm, (Hoobler Room-Freer House next to IOG)

Tuesday, Oct. 25 (9:30 am – 10:30 pm) IOG COLLOQUIUM

Aesthetics: Observation and What Escapes Notice

in Clinical Research, Speaker: Melissa Park, Ph.D. McGill University, Montreal Canada
71 E. Ferry St., Second Floor Conference Rm, (Hoobler Room-Freer House next to IOG)

Thursday, Oct. 27 (8 am – noon) Cost: \$25 for 3 CEs

Alzheimer's Issues: Pain Management, Ethics, and Musical Connections

Concurrent FREE Workshop for Caregivers “A Personal Journey,” “Caregiver’s Toolbox,”
“Musical Connections,” and “Support and Resources”
Greater Grace Conference Center, 23500 W Seven Mile Rd, Detroit, 48219

Tuesday, Nov. 1 (9:30 am – 10:30 pm) IOG COLLOQUIUM

Breast Cancer; Disparities in Detection, Treatment and Outcomes

Speaker: Hayley S. Thompson, Ph.D, Karmanos Cancer Institute, Dept. of Oncology
71 E. Ferry St., Second Floor Conference Rm, (Hoobler Room-Freer House next to IOG)

Tuesday, Nov. 8 (9:30 am – 10:30 pm) IOG COLLOQUIUM

Beyond the PhD: Navigating Your Career Choices

Speaker: LaShawn Wordlaw-Stinson, PhD, North Carolina University
71 E. Ferry St., Second Floor Conference Rm, (Hoobler Room-Freer House next to IOG)

Tuesday, Nov. 15 (8 am – 3 pm) Cost: \$65 for 5 CEs

Parkinson's disease from multiple perspectives: physical, emotional, financial and legal.

Management Education Center, 811 W. Square Lake Rd., Troy, 48098

Wednesday, Nov. 16 (9:30 am – 10:30 pm) IOG COLLOQUIUM

Mobility and Aging: New Results on the Brain-Body Connection

Speaker: Stephanie Studenski, MD, MPH, University of Pittsburgh
Location: WSU College of Sciences

Tuesday, Nov. 29 (9:30 am – 10:30 pm) IOG COLLOQUIUM

Sexual Violence and the Civil Rights Movement: Legacy for Women

Speaker: Danielle Lunn McQuire, PhD, WSU
71 E. Ferry St., Second Floor Conference Rm, (Hoobler Room-Freer House next to IOG)

Tuesday, Dec. 6 (9:30 am – 11:30 pm) 2 CEs provided

Alzheimer's and Dementia: Legal and Ethical Issues, Dealing with Difficult Behaviors

Bortz Health Care of Warren, 11700 E. Ten Mile Road, Warren, 48089

Thursday, Feb. 16 (9 am – noon), 3 CEs provided

3rd Annual Judith Walberg Conference, Mental illness that affects older adults and poly-pharmacy problems in the treatment of mental illness.

The Costick Center, 28600 Eleven Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, 48336

SAVE THE DATE

Art of Aging Successfully Conference

Thursday, March 22, 2012, Greater Grace Temple, Detroit
Submissions of Creative Artworks accepted Nov. 15 through Feb. 15. Check
www.iog.wayne.edu after October 15 for registration form or contact Deborah Vinson,
ej8629@wayne.edu or 313-664-2610.