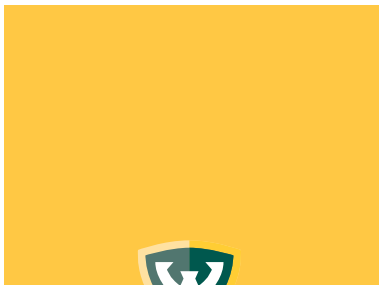




INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY

2022/2023



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY



Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond



From the Director

Each year I am excited about the research, research training and community outreach and engagement accomplished at the Institute of Gerontology (IOG). This coming year, my 25th and last as director, I'm beyond thrilled to see what great impacts our faculty, students and staff are having on older adults. We now have four junior faculty at the IOG, each an assistant professor, and each achieving extraordinary things.

In her first week here, Dr. Amanda Leggett received major funding from the National Institutes of Health to conduct work on caregiving networks in dementia. A month later Dr. Rodlescia Sneed received an exceptional (perfect even) score on her grant to provide her with extra training and research support. Dr. Carrie Leach got the IOG's first Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute grant, and Dr. Ana Daugherty received a prestigious grant from the American Federation for Aging Research.

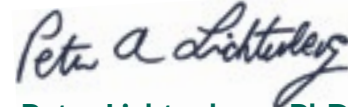
These faculty join our more senior faculty to produce important and impactful research; results are shared directly with the public and our community. As you will see in this report, faculty grants totaled \$5.4M for 2023. Our administrative and grant support staff provide superb support for our faculty.

Our community engagement to older adults and the professionals who work with them is unsurpassed. We've educated more than 60,000 persons in the past two years across 400 programs. Donna MacDonald organizes most of our annual 200+ professional development programs that are known nationally for their high quality.

One of our community programs, the Healthier Black Elders Center, was recently renewed for its sixth five-year cycle, making it continuously funded for 30 years. HBEC's free, health-focused Lunch & Learns are some of our best-known com-

munity programs, combining education with enhancing the participation of older African Americans in research. It is an amazing resource of the City of Detroit.

It has been my incredible honor to serve as IOG Director since 1999 and to help facilitate its growth and impact. I look forward to continuing my work in gerontology as an IOG faculty member.



Peter Lichtenberg, PhD, ABPP
Director, Institute of Gerontology
Distinguished Service Professor
of Psychology



1999 - 2024



OUR VISION

The Institute of Gerontology (IOG) at Wayne State University has established itself as a premier program intensively focused on research, advanced pre- and post-doctoral student training, community outreach, and continuing education for health care providers. Our foremost goal is to inform and empower older adults and those who serve them through discovery and learning. We strive to enhance the Institute's local, national and international impact through bolstering its role as a preeminent hub of gerontological research and training, within and beyond Wayne State's campus.

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Scan here to help our endowment grow!

Cheryl Deep, Editor / Catherine Blasio, Designer

Securing the Future of the IOG

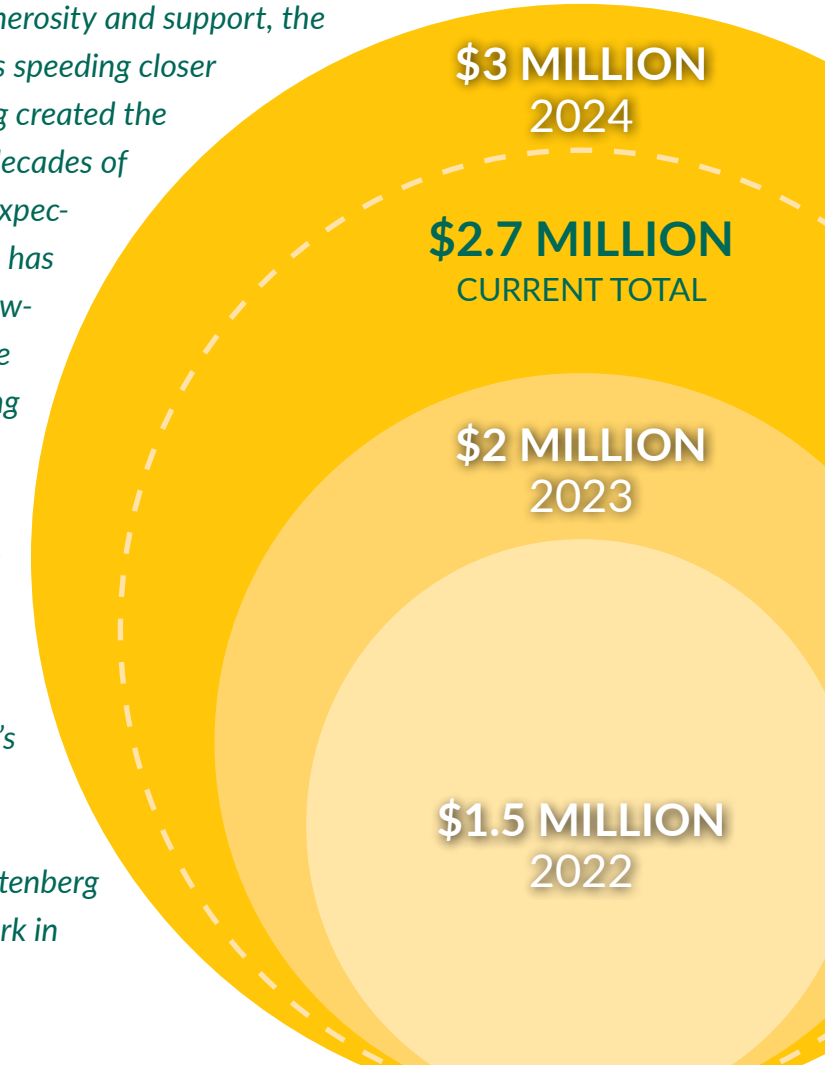
In a stunning example of widespread generosity and support, the IOG Endowment has reached \$2.7M and is speeding closer to its goal of \$3M by 2024. Dr. Lichtenberg created the fund in 2018 with \$800,000 raised from decades of donations, sponsorships and savings. His expectations for the fund were high, but even he has been overwhelmed by its success. An endowment is a forever fund, invested to generate dividends that can be spent while preserving 100% of the principal.

The original goal – \$1.5 million by 2022 – was quickly surpassed and revised upward. Several members of the IOG's board donated significant Leadership Gifts to move the project closer to each goal. "The



endowment is the IOG's legacy to older adults, researchers and professionals," Dr. Lichtenberg said, "to ensure our work in aging never ends."

Board Chair Mike Damone joins Dr. Lichtenberg at a recent board meeting. Mike, president of Cedarbrook Senior Living, helped launch the endowment with a generous leadership gift.

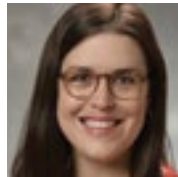


OUR ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

Aging, Alzheimer's & Cognitive Neuroscience

Amanda Leggett, PhD
Psychology

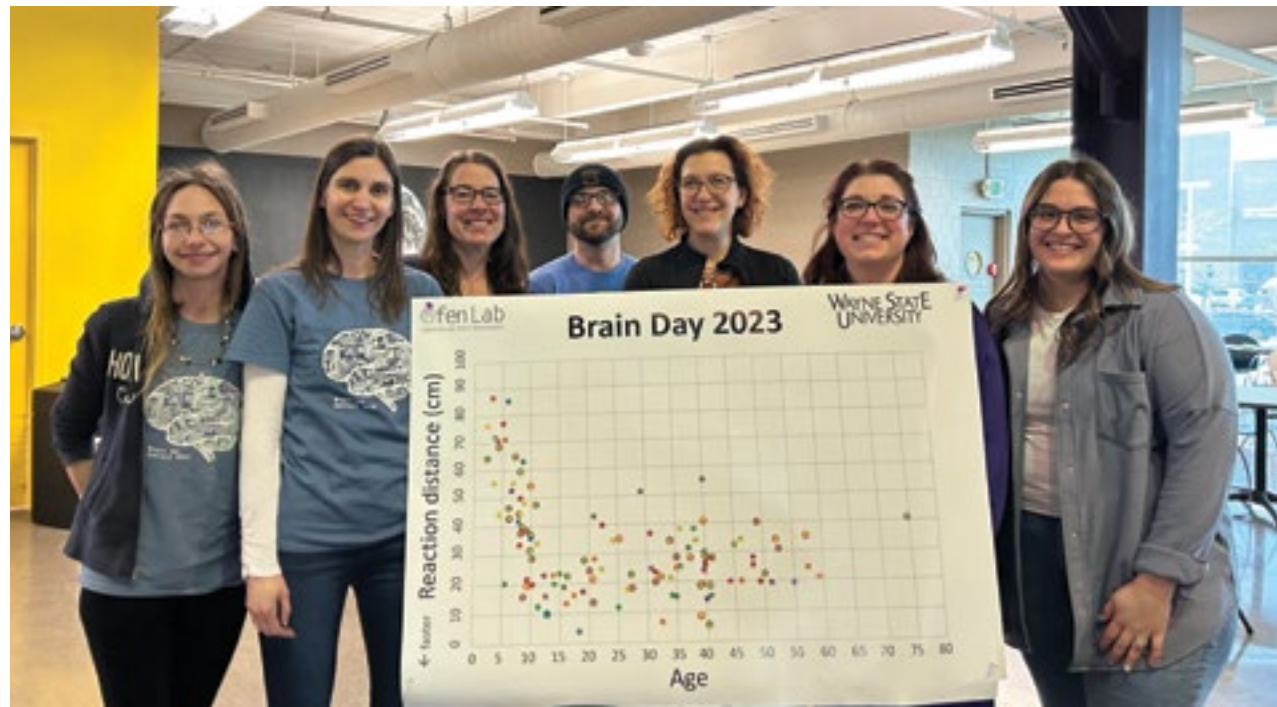
Dr. Leggett's research focuses on dementia caregiver well-being, burden, and social and physiological stress (daily, life event, and chronic stress and stress biomarkers) and identifying risk and protective factors relating to late-life depression, cognition, and well-being. She has a new R01 grant exploring dementia caregiving networks (see right), and has received associated funding from the Alzheimer's Association to develop the first measure to classify one's caregiving style.



Dr. Leggett aims to move dementia caregiving toward precision and preventive medicine by succinctly screening for care-

giving styles and leveraging existing interventions in a targeted and efficient manner to improve the well-being of individuals living with dementia and their caregiving networks. She serves as associate editor for dementia and caregiving for the journal *Innovation in Aging* and sits on the editorial board for *Research on Aging*. She is also on the steering committee for the Michigan Dementia Coalition and is an eight-year hospice volunteer.

Each year IOG cognitive neuroscience faculty and students present at the Brain Day exhibit at Michigan Science Center. They provide live demonstrations, information about their research and give attendees the chance to hold real human brains! (Lt to rt: Jessica Hayes, Jessica Damoiseaux, Cheryl Dahle, Bradley Dixon, Noa Ofen, Ana Daugherty and Alexis Chargo)



Caregiving with Style

Amanda Leggett is committed to understanding caregivers and their varied approaches and to using that understanding to keep caregivers and recipients healthier.

Her \$2 million, four-year RO1 grant from the National Institute on Aging will help her do just that: study the impact of different networks of caregivers on the health of persons with dementia. Delineating caregiving styles and using those styles to tailor interventions that improve caregiving outcomes has upended the traditional view that caregiving is "one size fits all."

Dr. Leggett is an assistant professor



Dr. Leggett presents "Pathways to Positive Aging" to a full house at the Art of Aging Successfully Conference.

and a member of the Leaders Initiative and Clinical Core of the MADRC, a combined WSU, U-M and MSU effort to study non-amyloid causes of Alzheimer's.

With degrees in human development and family studies, she didn't set out to study caregiving. She enjoyed working with children and adolescents but also saw value in a lifespan perspective. Caregiving

research offered the perfect marriage. "I get to interview spouses, children, grandchildren, neighbors. It's a unique, intergenerational approach I enjoy."

In 2017, Dr. Leggett studied caregiving styles for persons with dementia and their effect on health. In interviews with about 100 primary caregivers, five caregiving styles emerged. Health care professionals

subsequently honed and affirmed them. Dr. Leggett had tapped into a new way to understand caregiving.

Caregiving styles are not judged or ranked. "Every profile has strengths and room to grow," she said. "By understanding the styles, interventions with caregivers can have more impact. We can speak their language." Since persons with dementia are often cared for by more than one person, her new grant explores broader networks of up to five caregivers per recipient.

"We'll tie health outcomes like depression and sleep quality to types of networks," Dr. Leggett said. "Does one type keep mom out of the ER? Or rush her to the ER though she could have been helped at home? The goal is tailored interventions to help caregivers provide good care while staying healthy themselves."

Jessica Robbins-Panko, PhD
Anthropology

For over a decade, Dr. Robbins-Panko has studied memory, aging, and personhood in Poland. Her 2021 book, *Aging Nationally in Contemporary Poland*, argues that storytelling, remembering, and relatedness create, sustain, or transform moral personhood, such that older Poles come to live meaningful lives. "Telling stories, having someone over for coffee, singing songs – these create social relationships and



they're similar whether people are aging at home or in an institution."

The relationship between memory and aging is a theme that runs through her work. Alzheimer's disease and other memory loss can trigger a kind of social death. People can be ignored, marginalized, or seen as fundamentally different than before. Drawing on insights from her own family's experience of Alzheimer's disease, Dr. Robbins-Panko conducts research that works against the stigma of living with memory loss by documenting and analyzing people's experiences from a holistic perspective.

Dr. Robbins-Panko's new study explores how social relations shape reminiscence among older adults with and without cognitive impairment. She is conducting ethnographic fieldwork on reminiscence and social relations among older adults living in a memory care residence. Previous ethnographic research focused on gardening and wellbeing among older African Americans in Detroit, and older adults' experiences of the Flint water crisis. Dr. Robbins-Panko also advises and mentors graduate students and serves as digital editor for *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.

Ana Daugherty, PhD
Psychology

Dr. Daugherty directs the Healthy Brain Aging laboratory. She studies vascular and metabolic health that changes in brain structure and function across the adult lifespan. In the longitudinal Detroit Aging Brain Study, she combines neuroimaging measures of brain structure with blood markers of vascular health, lifestyle factors, and tests of memory and thinking to characterize typical aging and modifiable risk for dementia. Her work is motivated by the goal to inform older adults on lifestyle strategies that can promote cognitive health and reduce health disparities in aging.

Her research is funded by the National Institutes of Health, the American Federation for Aging Research, and other foundations. She serves in the Neuro Imaging Core and Data Analysis Core of the NIH-funded Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. She is also in the leadership of the Hippocampal Subfield Group: a collaboration of over 200 researchers from 15 countries dedicated to developing and validating MRI methods to measure hippocampal subfields that atrophy in aging and Alzheimer's disease.



CELEBRATING YOU:

Honoring Participants & Brain Health

For 22 years, a committed group of 650 older volunteers has taken part in the Detroit Aging Brain Study at the IOG, a long-term look at the impact of aging on the architecture and function of the human brain. As the project prepares for its next five-year phase, Director Ana Daugherty, wanted to thank her volunteers and share research results.

Participants, age 18 to 90, have undergone more than 1,150 brain scans, hundreds of blood draws, and 8,300 hours of cognitive testing. "Our goal has been to understand typical aging, to determine what causes decline and learn how to detect it early. We want to promote resilience while reducing risk," Dr. Daugherty said. "The generous people who participate play a key role in discovering how to keep the brain healthy."

The reception drew more than 200 attendees and guests, from Gaylord to Erie, Michigan. Barbara Ginther, 57, joined the study in 2019 and gladly made the 80-minute trek from Erie. "I care about health and was curious about the results," she said. She is a physical therapy assistant, an EMT, and a wellness trainer for older adults. "If I can help, I will," she said. "It's important to give back."



Dr. Dahle (left) catches up with a participant at the reception to honor volunteers. Guests felt appreciated and engaged as Dr. Daugherty (above) thanked them and shared study results.

Dorothy Bennick, 74, joined in 2005. "I especially like the MRI machine," she said. "Sometimes I fall asleep in there." A researcher once told her she had the brain of a 40-year-old, a consolation since her sister and mother had shown signs of dementia.

"Our participants are highly motivated to make a difference," Project Manager Cheryl Dahle, PhD, said. Dr. Dahle is widely regarded as the heart and soul of the study, a relationship builder who connects with each participant. The audience gave her an ovation. "Dr. Cheryl is the reason I'm here" was a frequent comment.

The study is co-directed with Naftali Raz, PhD, formerly of the IOG and now at Stony Brook University. **Learn more about the Detroit Aging Brain Study at <https://agingbrain.wayne.edu> or call 313-664-2649.**



Insights from the Study's 500,000+ Data Points

1. Excessive iron in the brain causes oxidative stress that can lead to cell dysfunction and tissue damage.
2. Shrinkage of areas in the brain's hippocampus can be an early sign of Alzheimer's and memory deficits.
3. Difficulties with spatial navigation, or wayfinding, are a common symptom of Alzheimer's and related dementias.
4. Hypertension is a risk factor for cognitive decline and dementia. A dangerous cycle can ensue when brain iron triggers damage that triggers inflammation that decreases control of blood pressure. 1 in 3 adults has high blood pressure.



Noa Ofen, PhD
Psychology

Dr. Ofen directs the Cognitive and Brain Development Laboratory investigating how changes in the functional and structural organization of the human brain support growth in the human capacity to encode, maintain, and retrieve information. Her research combines cognitive-ability testing with a range of neuroimaging techniques, including MRI and electrophysiology. Dr. Ofen also investigates environmental and genetic factors that modify typical lifespan development and is interested in the possible implications of her work for clinical populations such as children with epilepsy. Her primary research project is funded by multiple five-year research awards from the National Institute of Mental Health.

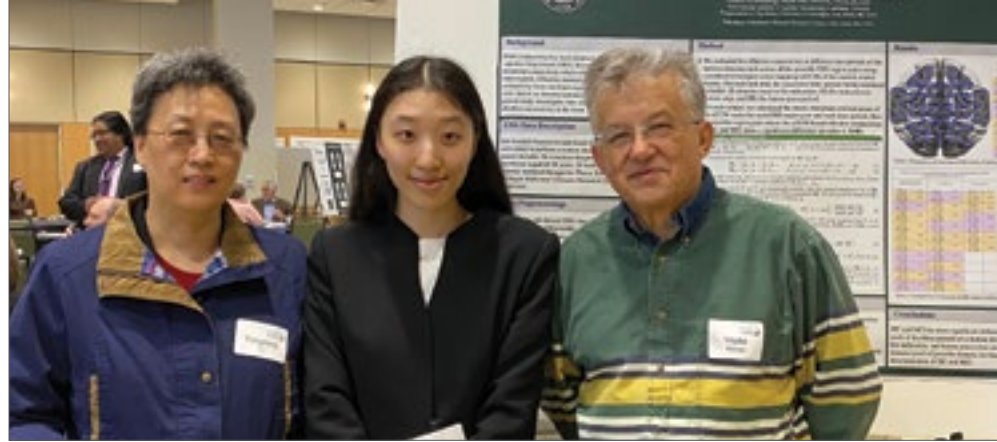


Voyko Kavcic, PhD
Cognitive Neuroscience

Dr. Kavcic is the principal investigator of a National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging R01 study, *Community-based approach to early identification of transitions to mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and Alzheimer's Disease*. Known as ELECTRA, the project uses computerized cognitive tests and recordings of electroencephalographic (EEG) signals, which are cost effective and culturally acceptable methods for the early



Dr. Kavcic with MSU students (from left) Tong-tong Li and Alina B. Renli, co-authors of the research poster on EEG detection methods.



detection of MCI and Alzheimer's disease in healthy older African Americans.

Dr. Kavcic and his international team of colleagues have developed a new EEG biomarker for early detection of MCI and a new analytical method for analyzing EEG signaling. His research shows that this new EEG biomarker can successfully discriminate between older adults without cognitive

impairment and those with MCI. His group's new analytical approach for EEG data, called Soft Detection, is based on communication theory and machine learning. With only three minutes of eyes-closed resting state EEG, it correctly classified persons with normal cognition, versus MCI, 91% of the time. It showed an 85% correct prediction rate in identifying normal controls who then

move on to MCI within 18 months. Dr. Kavcic and his team are now further validating and expanding this EEG biomarker and Soft Detection analysis.

Jessica Damoiseaux, PhD
Psychology

Dr. Damoiseaux directs the ConnectLab for Brain Connectivity and Aging. Her lab examines the associations between genetic, lifestyle and environmental risk factors, cognitive performance, and brain structure and function in older adults with and without cognitive decline.



The aim is to characterize risk factors and identify biomarkers that predict neurodegeneration and cognitive decline, and to determine the effect of lifestyle interventions to maintain cognitive and brain health. Her research includes collaborations with local, national and international research groups.

Dr. Damoiseaux co-directs the Lifespan Cognitive Neuroscience program at the IOG. She serves in leadership positions for the Organization for Human Brain Mapping (the major international neuroimaging society), including a three-year term as council member. She also serves as a neuroimaging core member for the NIH-funded Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.



Wassim Tarraf, PhD
Healthcare Sciences

Dr. Tarraf's research evaluates disparities in health, health behavior, and health-care access and use in racial and ethnic minorities in the



US, and investigates the social determinants of health and healthcare. His work relies primarily on analyses of large complex data sets. He is an affiliated investigator on the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos, the largest epidemiological study of diverse Hispanic/Latinos in the US.

Through this work, Dr. Tarraf leads the statistical analysis on studies of Latinos' cognitive aging and the risk of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and an exploratory (R21) grant to examine sleep as a risk factor for unhealthy aging among Latinos. He co-leads the Analysis Core of two Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research focused on training the next generation of researchers in minority health and enhancing the diversity of researchers in aging. He has co-authored dozens of peer-reviewed papers and is the principal investigator (on site) of five R01 grant projects. Dr. Tarraf is a member of the National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging grant review panel and the Alzheimer's Association International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment.

A Non-Amyloid Approach to Alzheimer's

The Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (MADRC) advances innovative research in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias to better understand and treat them. As one of 33 centers across the country, the MADRC pursues a non-beta amyloid approach to the study of Alzheimer's and is committed to including under-represented groups in dementia research.

The MADRC is a three-university (with U-M and MSU) National Institute on Aging Center grant to facilitate the most advanced

research on Alzheimer's disease. Several IOG faculty play key leadership roles at the MADRC. Dr. Lichtenberg is WSU site PI and co-leads the Research Education Component that provides career development resources in interdisciplinary research, and offers mentoring and education events to support junior investigators.

Because the MADRC links Alzheimer's research at three major Michigan universities it is a critically important statewide resource for researchers, trainees, health care profes-

sionals and the broader public. Each May, a partner hosts the Beyond Amyloid Research Symposium with presentations by national experts and a student research competition. WSU hosted more than 120 researchers and students at their 2023 event.

Drs. Leggett, Damoiseaux and Daugherty belong to the MADRC Leadership Initiative. Dr. Leggett serves on the Clinical Core, overseeing research and creating opportunities for innovative research. Dr. Damoiseaux is part of the Neuroimaging Core that manages MRI and PET scans, shares imaging with investigators across the country and gathers new vascular health measures.

Dr. Daugherty is part of the Neuroimaging Core, as well, and also the Data Management & Statistical Core. There, she manages data privacy, analyzes data for specific research, and facilitates data sharing

through the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center. Dr. Kavcic has also used the MADRC to recruit participants to his study of EEG as a predictor of Alzheimer's disease.



Dr. Donna Wilcock of Indiana University School of Medicine presents on vascular contributions to dementia at the MADRC conference.

Rodlescia Sneed, PhD
Psychology

Dr. Sneed investigates how the social environment impacts adult development and aging. She has expertise in biopsychosocial models of health, chronic disease, and community



engaged research. She engages community and institutional stakeholders to improve factors that contribute to health inequities. Weak and/or difficult social ties are common concerns for older adults. One line of Dr. Sneed's research seeks innovative solutions to help older adults navigate problematic social relationships and identify new, mutually supportive social connections. She wants to better understand the mechanisms that link

social ties to well-being.

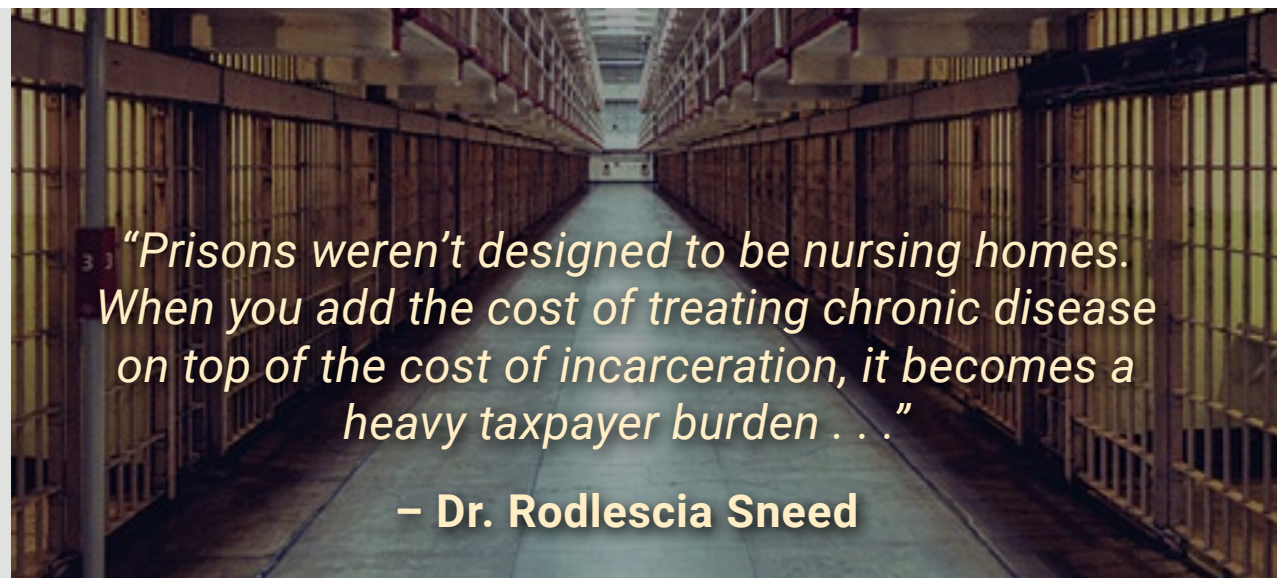
Dr. Sneed also investigates how incarceration impacts the well-being of older adults, as the number of adults age 55+ with justice system involvement has increased more than 280% in the last two decades. Her goal is to better understand the psychological and physical health consequences of justice system involvement to design and implement effective interventions.

Dr. Sneed is an investigator with the WSU Center for Health Equity and Community Knowledge in Urban Populations (CHECK-UP), which uses community engaged approaches to address chronic disease outcomes in Detroit. She also serves as faculty advisor to the WSU Alzheimer's Buddies Program (page 26), which connects students to older adults with dementia for weekly social interaction.

8
Better Health and Lower Costs for Older Adults in State Prison

Dr. Rodlescia Sneed's focus is the health of incarcerated older adults, especially racial and ethnic minorities. Half of all people in prison have at least one chronic health condition, such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease or arthritis. Without intervention, these conditions will worsen as the population ages.

Dr. Sneed's five-year, \$600,000 Career Development grant from the National Institute on Aging will study the effectiveness of an existing six-week program called the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program.



"Prisons weren't designed to be nursing homes. When you add the cost of treating chronic disease on top of the cost of incarceration, it becomes a heavy taxpayer burden . . ."

– Dr. Rodlescia Sneed

Its use in community settings has been linked to improvements in health care communications, reduced emergency room visits and hospitalizations, and decreases in health care spending. The award will deepen Dr. Sneed's training and refine her research for a future R01 grant submission to the Na-

tional Institutes of Health.

Sneed wants to scale up the self-management program for widespread use in state prisons and to maximize its effectiveness with older adults. She will analyze the factors that influence the ability to scale up and use interviews, surveys and participant

recommendations to create a user manual. She is particularly interested in how prisons adapt chronic disease management programming to reflect the special constraints of incarceration.

"Incarcerated individuals get their snacks from prison commissaries and have to exercise in the prison yard or in the confines of a cell," she said. "In these situations, what can the incarcerated person realistically do to improve their health?"

In 2013, the Federal Bureau of Prisons spent \$881 million to care for older prisoners. It has risen exponentially since. "Incarceration is already very expensive," Dr. Sneed said. "Prisons weren't designed to be nursing homes. When you add the cost of treating chronic disease to the cost of incarceration, it becomes a heavy taxpayer burden."



As GSA President for 2022, Dr. Lichtenberg welcomes 3,200 people from 38 countries to the Gerontological Society of America's annual meeting.

Peter Lichtenberg, PhD, ABPP
Director, IOG
Clinical Geropsychology and Geriatric Neuropsychology

Over 15 years ago, Dr. Lichtenberg used his clinical and research experience in geropsychology and neuropsychology to create new tools for the fields of financial capacity and financial exploitation. He and his colleagues developed financial decision-making and financial vulnerability scales. That research led to a partnership with LaToya Hall, MSW, at the IOG to provide a financial coaching program for caregivers and for older adult



victims of financial exploitation. Funded in the past decade by the National Institute of Justice, National Institute on Aging, Office on Victims of Crime, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Lichtenberg and his colleagues contribute unique research findings to the field.

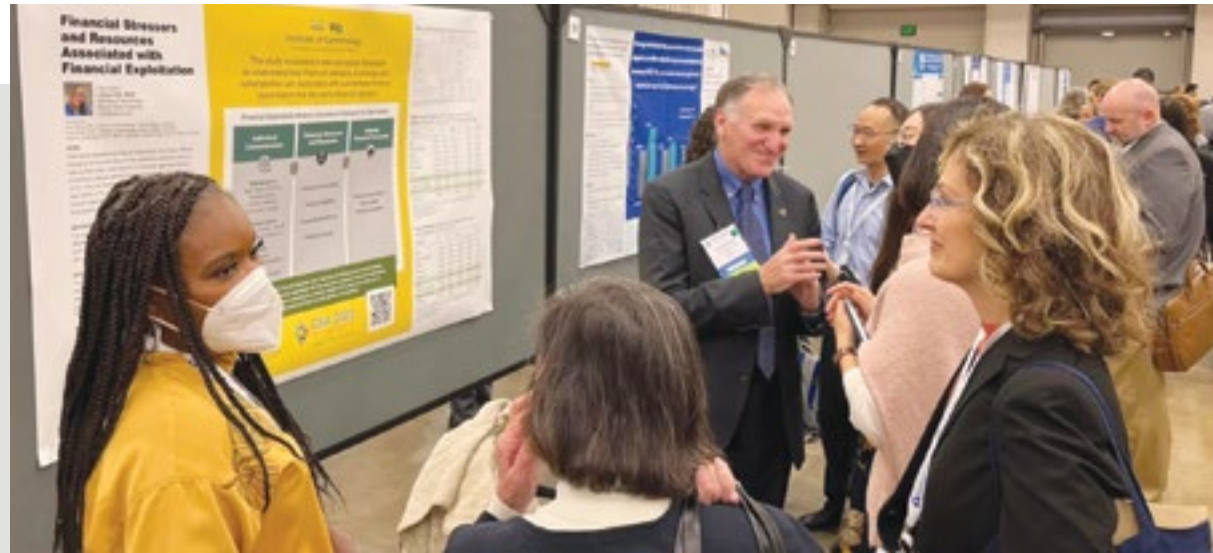
He is currently conducting a feasibility study for a new financial exploitation prevention program. To expand the use and impact of his tools and trainings, the Peter Lichtenberg Consultancy, LLC, was formed and is actively working to broaden the use of his website, <https://olderadultnestegg.com>. In the website's first four years, more than 5,000 Lichtenberg scales have been administered.

LaToya Hall, MSW Program Director, SAFE

LaToya Hall, MSW, directs the Successful Aging thru Financial Empowerment (SAFE) program at the IOG, a free financial coaching, fraud prevention and identity recovery service for older adults and caregivers. Ms. Hall has dedicated her career to advancing research and service delivery to promote positive financial decision-making, while addressing the factors that influence financial decisions, retirement security and health disparities of older adult minorities. Ms. Hall's newest grant relies on assessments, financial coaching and tailored, person-centered interventions to try to prevent financial exploitation.



SAFE was launched in 2017 to educate seniors and caregivers on protecting finances against the fast-growing threat of fraud and exploitation. Ms. Hall provides free one-on-one assistance to help seniors recover financially and emotionally after being victimized by financial scams or identity theft. SAFE services are also offered virtually. Since its inception, SAFE has assisted more than 200 older adults victims of scams and identity theft.



LaToya Hall (left) and Dr. Lichtenberg (center) present SAFE findings at the 2022 Gerontological Society of America.

Can the SAFE Program Prevent Financial Fraud?

Successful Aging thru Financial Empowerment (SAFE) provides no-cost financial education, coaching and recovery services to older adults and caregivers. Some clients want to learn about money management; others have been victims of financial fraud or exploitation and need serious help rebuilding their financial foundations. SAFE services have helped hundreds of victims, primarily older African Americans in Detroit. SAFE presentations have been watched by more than 5,000 people, and SAFE has recovered more than \$150,000 in stolen funds.



This year, SAFE received a \$320,000 grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to see if SAFE's services and education tools could protect vulnerable older adults from being financially exploited. About 50 people have signed up for the study so far. Ms. Hall will assess their vulnerability and identify areas of financial knowledge that should be strengthened. This person-centered approach asks each participant what information they need – and then works to supply it. Toward the end of the two-year study, participants will be re-interviewed about their experience with financial exploitation.



Older adults listen intently in Dr. Lichtenberg's "Don't Get Taken to the Cleaners" workshop at the 2023 Art of Aging Successfully conference. He reviewed common scams and what individuals can do to protect themselves

Fighting Exploitation with Older Adult Nest Egg

OlderAdultNestEgg.com, the IOG's website dedicated to understanding and assessing financial decision-making in older adults, added a Financial Vulnerability Survey. This simple, 17-question form is a do-it-yourself check-up for older adults concerned they are at risk of financial exploitation. All services, assessments and resources (including tips for brain health) are free. Sections are tailored to professionals, older adults and informal caregivers.



Mark Luborsky, PhD Director, Aging & Health Disparities Anthropology

A professor of anthropology and gerontology, Dr. Luborsky contributes insights into how our responses to life's changes and challenges as we age are shaped by cultural, environmental, and institutional factors. He is the IOG's Aging & Health Disparities research program leader, where he is working with students and the Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry to conduct and evaluate pop-up, neighborhood-based dental care for disadvantaged older residents.



Through the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research, Dr. Luborsky mentors minority scholars to improve minority health. He has worked

with the CDC, EPA and the Michigan Department of Health to reduce harms from toxic industrial chemical for anglers who fish the Detroit River for food.

In 2022, Dr. Luborsky was elected into WSU's Academy of Scholars, and he received the Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award. Only the top five percent of university faculty are offered membership into the Academy of Scholars. The Mentor Award recognizes Dr. Luborsky's profound ability to advise, support, sponsor and inspire graduate students. This is the second time he has won.

Dr. Luborsky is a member of the training faculty for the NIH-funded Johns Hopkins University and Harvard University Mixed Methods Training Program for the Health Sciences. He is regularly invited to present at national and international conferences, and he is dual-PI of a European consortium to advance the use of patient-centered practice by health care providers for frail older adults.

Preparing for the Needs of Older Adults

IOG Helms Age-friendly Wayne State Initiative

WSU was designated “age friendly” in 2022 when it was inducted into the Age-Friendly University Global Network, an innovative consortium of universities dedicated to promoting equity, inclusion and opportunity for older adults. The AFU designation confirms “age” as an important dimension of WSU’s diversity, equity and inclusion strategic priority.

The AFU Global Network started in 2012 in Ireland and now includes nearly 100 universities worldwide. Its 10 principles ask universities to fight ageism and to ensure older adults feel welcomed on campus. Older adults are encouraged to attend campus programs and classes, to participate in and help guide research, to develop late-life and post-retirement careers, and to use health and wellness resources. WSU is Michigan’s third university to receive the designation after Michigan State and Eastern Michigan universities.

AFU Chairperson Dr. Tom Jankowski, helped lead the effort to bring WSU into the network and now oversees next steps. “We



James Appleby, CEO of the Gerontological Society of America, and Dr. Leach pause for a quick selfie during a recent IOG visit. The GSA strongly promotes age inclusivity.

plan to partner with campus organizations like the Alumni Association on community events to amplify and promote AFU resources,” he said. “We’re also working with the Office of Teaching and Learning to train instructors on effective teaching methods for older learners. Cultivating partnerships will be a primary method for expanding our efforts.”

The U.S. is in an unprecedented upward demographic shift of age. In four years, the number of older adults in Southeast Michigan will exceed the number of children, an event destined to recur across the country.



WSU Age-friendly Year One Progress

Examining WSU web and print materials to replace ageist language with words that are age positive and inclusive.

Promoting widespread training in digital and print accessibility standards to aid persons with low vision.

Cataloging WSU’s existing age-related activities such as the older adult tuition discount and the Gerontology Certificate program in the School of Social Work.

Sharing results from WSU’s Adult Learner Climate Survey of undergrads, 25 and up, working toward their first degree.

Maintaining an AFU presence on the WSU Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion website (code below) with resources for combatting ageism and forms to share information on age-friendly programs.



Thomas B. Jankowski, PhD
Assoc. Director for Research
Political Science



Dr. Jankowski is responsible for ensuring that the faculty and staff of the IOG have the facilities, resources, and technical support to successfully conduct their research. In his own research, Dr. Jankowski works with local and regional units of government, state agencies, non-profit service providers, community-based organizations, and older adult advocacy groups to help them assess the needs of older adults and the effectiveness of the programs and services they deliver.

He is immediate past chair of the board of directors of The Senior Alliance (Michi-

gan Area Agency on Aging 1-C) and is vice president of the board of trustees of the Hannan Center in Detroit. He also serves on the boards of Presbyterian Village of Michigan, the Southeast Michigan Senior Regional Collaborative, and the Baldwin Society Supporting Older Adults. Through his involvement in these community-based

organizations, Dr. Jankowski works to serve the needs of low-income older adults, people with disabilities, and those struggling with loneliness and social isolation, and to evaluate the impact that supportive services have on the lives of older adults trying to maintain their independence in their homes and communities.



Dr. Jankowski is interviewed for an event video at the Baldwin Society Supporting Older Adults’ 2023 fundraiser.

\$7M Grant Helps Persons with Developmental Disabilities Receive Vaccines



Dr. Jankowski is a member of the project team tasked with increasing the number of people with disabilities who are vaccinated – as well as their family members, caregivers and other homebound Michiganders adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute at WSU received a 3-year, \$7 million grant to improve understanding of disproportionately affected populations and their barriers to vaccination. The

Institute joins the Autism Alliance of Michigan and Disability Rights Michigan to administer the Covid-19 Supplement IV grant.

Dr. Jankowski acts as a liaison with area aging networks and human services organizations. “I work with local health departments, such as Wayne and Monroe counties, to get them certified as Michigan Vaccination Partners,” he said. He will also assist with evaluation.

One in four U.S. adults has a disability. People with disabilities were six times more likely to die from Covid-19 than those without disabilities.

Carrie Leach, PhD, MPA
Community-Engaged Research
& Health Communication

Dr. Leach's work centers on fostering meaningful community involvement with research and co-developing communication strategies to increase access to meaningful information that can improve health. She has more than a dozen years of experience partnering with community stakeholders to translate scientific and assessment findings into actionable strategies that improve the usability of health enhancing information.



Dr. Leach works to eliminate older adults' communication inequities by addressing digital exclusion and increasing community involvement with science. Partnerships with community stakeholders have resulted in the dissemination of environmental health information to more than 5,000 Detroit residents. She has received funding to address issues of digital exclusion among older Detroiters and distributed computer devices paired with digital literacy materials to more than 1,700 older residents. Dr. Leach was recently named Associate Center Director of Community Inclusion for WSU's new Center for Health Equity and Community Knowledge for Urban Populations (CHECK-UP).

She co-leads the Community Engagement Core at the Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES) and is an adjunct assistant professor of public health.

Digital Exclusion Hurts Detroit's Older African Americans

Technological barriers, especially the inability to access telehealth and telemedicine, likely worsened health disparities in Detroit's older African Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. An article co-authored by Dr. Leach analyzed the health impact of Detroit's low internet access.

Older African Americans struggle with health disparities that put them at higher risk of hypertension, heart disease, cancers and other health problems. The increase in virtual methods of care required to protect patients from COVID-19 left many Detroiters without the information and services to stay healthy.

The article, *The Exacerbating Role of Technological and Connectivity Challenges on Older Detroiters' Health in a Pandem-*

ic, appeared in the May 2023 issue of the *Seattle Journal of Technology, Environmental & Innovation Law*. The authors looked at Detroit's demographics, internet access and ways to bridge the digital gap.



The majority of Detroit's residents are African American. The city is the second-most impoverished city in the nation and has one of the lowest rates of internet connectivity. Even residents with internet access may not have the digital literacy necessary to discern trusted and reliable health

information. This "digital exclusion" contributes to poorer health outcomes.

Michigan recently allocated \$250 million to expand broadband access across the state, including upgrades and expansions to Detroit's networks — a good start. The authors recommend also disseminating health information to Detroiters through in-person social networking. Hospitals could provide patients with devices for virtual check-ins and monitoring at discharge, and churches and other organizations could host virtual worship services and meet-ups to engage members.

Community activist Dell Stubblefield (left) and Dr. Leach discuss digital equity at the Academic Research Symposium for Connect 313, an outreach program to make internet connections affordable for all.

"With better broadband, affordable devices and convenient training options, we can bridge the digital gap and improve the health of older Detroiters," Dr. Leach said.

her extensive experience working with community members to co-develop digital and research literacy tools tailored to older adults that can translate to use by other community stakeholders.



Dr. Perry (right) and WSU social work faculty, Melissa Draughn co-presented "A Detroit-based Coalition to Promote Equity at the Intersection of Health, Housing and Aging: A Macro Social Work Case Study" at the awards ceremony of the Macro United Conference at Washington University in St. Louis.

Tam Perry, PhD
Director, IOG Training Program
Social Work

Dr. Perry's research addresses urban aging from a life-course perspective, focusing on how underserved older adults navigate their social and built environments in times of instability and change. She serves as research chair and vice-chair of strategic planning of the multi-agency coalition Senior Housing Preservation Detroit.



Two of Dr. Perry's current projects are *Navigating Time and Space: Experiences of Aging with Hemophilia* and *Experiences of Belonging: Assessing Vulnerabilities of Older*

Detroiters Within Changing Urban Environments. She was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Gerontological Society of America and is a fellow with them. She served as past president of the Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work.

IOG ADJUNCT FACULTY

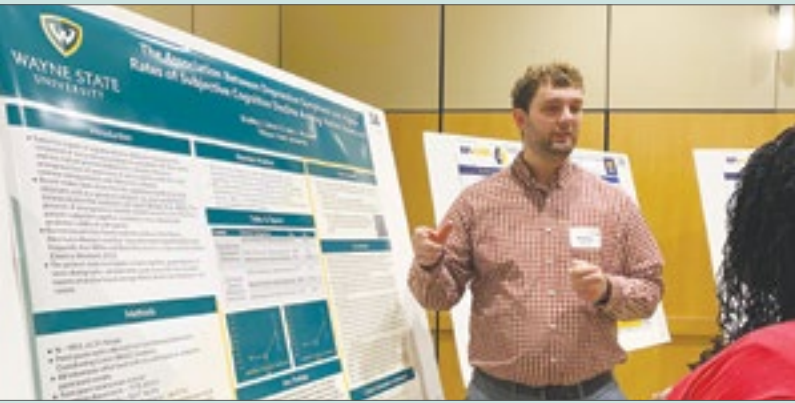
Diane Adamo, PhD, OTR
Director of Research, Physical Therapy

Patricia Morton, PhD
Sociology, Public Health & Gerontology

John Woodard, PhD
Neuropsychology of Aging

Training in Aging for Pre-doctoral Students

TRAINEE HIGHLIGHTS



Trainee Bradley Dixon presents research on depression among Native Americans, at the MADRC symposium.

- Gave more than 25 national and local academic presentations
- Gave 6 community presentations
- Won more than 12 academic awards and scholarships
- Authored or co-authored 9 publications
- Submitted 4 papers for journal publication
- Published 5 health information articles for community newsletters

The IOG Pre-Doctoral Training Program in Aging & Health has provided gerontology mentoring and training to more than 100 doctoral candidates from departments such as psychology, economics, nursing, occupational therapy, anthropology, health care sciences, sociology, political science and engineering. Students study problems prevalent in older adults, like Alzheimer's disease, hypertension, access to health care, and vulnerability to financial exploitation.

Anthropology & Social Work

Kimberly Shay (trainee since 2019)

- Two research presentations as first author
- Competitive Fellowship, Gerontological Society of America

Laura Sutherland (2022)

- One publication as first author
- Two research presentations as first author
- One community presentation: "Art Activities & Persons with Dementia"
- Social & Behavioral Determinants of Health Research Stimulus Award (\$5000)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation Student Award (\$3000)



Trainee Candace Ryan answers questions from a curious study participant at the Detroit Aging Brain reception.

Behavioral & Cognitive Neuroscience

Rachel (Scott) Carey (2021)

- One research presentation as first author
- Three lay publications: *Healthier Black Elders Newsletter*, *IOG Transitions Newsletter*
- Fellowship, National Institutes of Health, Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity, 2021-23

Alexis Chargo (2022)

- One research presentation as first author
- Poster award, Beyond Amyloid Research Symposium, 2023
- Elizabeth Olson Award for best paper, co-recipient, 2023
- Certified Dementia Practitioner certification, 2023

Youjin Jung (2019)

- Five publications, one as first author
- Six research presentations, five as first author
- 1st Place, Podium Presentation in Brain & Cognition, Lifespan Alliance Research Day
- 1st Place, Graduate Level, Beyond Amyloid Research Symposium

Parisa Vahidi (2022)

- Seven research presentations, four as first author
- Brain Day host, Michigan Science Center
- Future Docs Day participant, WSU School of Medicine

Qin Yin (2018)

- Six research presentations at conferences including the Society for Neuroscience, Cognitive Neuroscience Society, and the Dallas Aging and Cognition Conference

Clinical Psychology

Bradley Dixon (2022)

- One publication
- Two research presentations as first author
- One lay publication: *Caregiver Connection E-News*

- Runner-Up, National Psychological Assessment Competition
- Finalist at WSU Graduate Student Poster Day, 2022
- Pres., WSU Clinical Psychology Graduate School Organization

Allison Moll (2021)

- One publication as first author
- Two research presentations as first author
- Gerald Rosenbaum Clinical Psychology Award, 2023
- Elizabeth Olson Award for best paper, co-recipient, 2023
- One lay publication: *Healthier Black Elders newsletter*
- 2nd Place, Poster Award, WSU Graduate Student Research Poster Day

Moyosoreoluwa Jacobs (2022)

- Vice President, Membership, Clinical Psychology Graduate Student Organization, 2023
- Mentor, Mentoring Undergraduate Students toward Excellence (MUSE) program

Neuropsychology

Emily Flores (2022)

- One publication as first author
- One research presentation as first author
- Reviewer, two scientific journal articles
- Mercedes Florez Memorial Research Award, Michigan Center for Contextual Factors in Alzheimer's Disease (MCCFAD)
- Founded WSU graduate student group for LatinX students

Nursing

Candace Ryan (2022)

- Graduate Professional Scholarship, 2022-23
- Founders Research Support Grant, Sigma Theta Tau Upsilon Chapter
- Rumble Graduate Fellowship, 2020-22



Colleagues and committee members celebrate the successful defense of Qin Yin's dissertation to receive her PhD. Qin (second from rt.) was a trainee at the IOG and is now a postdoctoral fellow in the Ofen Lab.

Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral fellows have completed their doctoral studies and are now conducting research in a specialty subject related to aging with IOG faculty as advisors and mentors.

2022/2023 Class

Kelsey Canada, PhD
Cognitive Neuroscience

Kristin Davis, PhD
Biobehavioral Health

Katherine Knauff, PhD
Brain and Cognitive Development

Wen-Hua (Zoey) Lai, PhD
Sociology

Natasha Peterson, PhD
Human Development and Family Studies

Patrick Monaghan, PhD
Rehabilitation Medicine & Biomechanics

Michael Vannostrand, PhD
Human Functioning

Alumni Update

DeAnnah Byrd, PhD (2017-21)
Assistant Professor
Arizona State University

Adit Doza, PhD (2017-19)
Health Economist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Yi-Ling Hu, PhD (2019-21)
Assistant Professor
Chang Gung University, Taiwan

Lisa Johnson, PhD (2019-21)
Assistant Professor
Northwestern University

Katherine Kero, PhD (2021-22)
Clinical Research Project Manager
Optum

Patrick Pruitt, PhD (2018-20)
Data Analyst
Massachusetts General Brigham Hospital

Adriana Ruiz Rizzo, PhD (2019-21)
Postdoctoral Research Scientist
Universitätsklinikum Jena, Germany

Mohammad Usama Toseef, PhD (2018-19)
Health Economics Research Scientist
Beaumont Research Institute

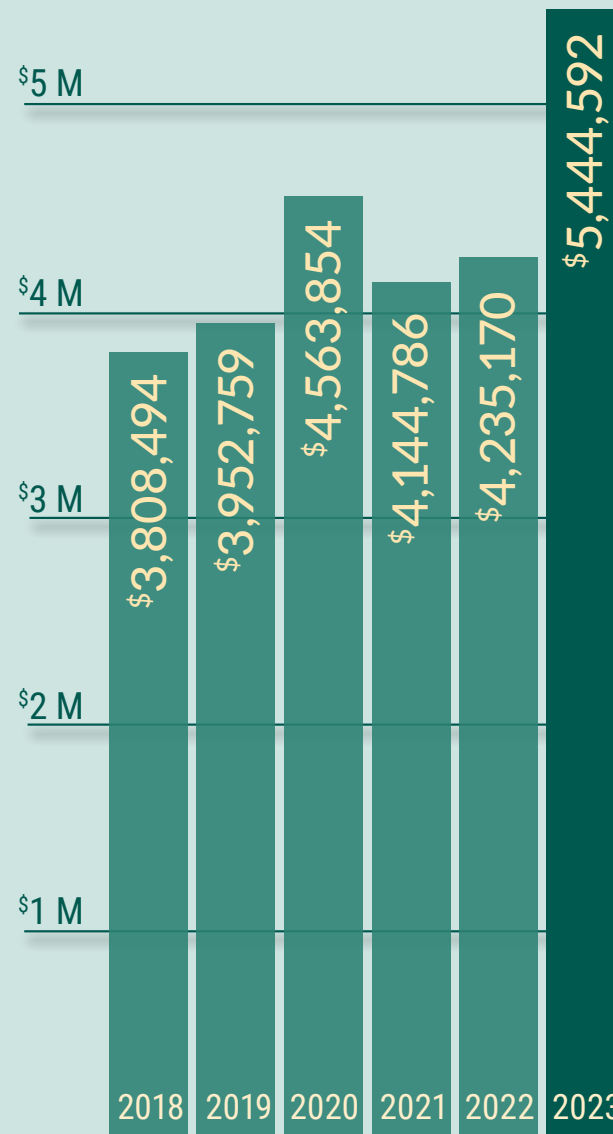
Qijing Yu, PhD (2020-2021)
Contractor in UX Research
Alibaba Group and Rehabilitation Science

Research Grants

Amount listed is the total to the IOG over life of grant



Dr. Jessica Damoiseaux discusses findings with a student presenter at the MADRC Beyond Amyloid Research Symposium in 2023, hosted by the IOG.



JESSICA DAMOISEAUX, Site-PI

Yoga, Aerobic and Stretching Exercise Effects on Neurocognitive Performance: A Randomized Controlled Trial

National Institute on Aging (with University of Illinois) (5Y) / \$340,000 – Assist with research design, coordinate MRI data processing and analysis, and contribute to interpretation and dissemination of the results through her Connect Lab for Brain Connectivity and Aging.

ANA DAUGHERTY

Neural Correlates and Modifiers of Cognitive Aging

PI, National Institutes of Health / National Institute on Aging, RO1 (5Y) / \$3.7M – Research the modifiers of normal cognitive aging from a neuroscience perspective.

A Harmonized Medial Temporal Lobe Subregion Segmentation Protocol

Site PI, National Institute of Health (with Ohio State University) (5Y) / \$173,000 – Contribute expertise in cardiovascular disease as a

risk factor for neurodegeneration and risk for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, train raters for reliability assessments, and conduct appropriate statistical analyses.

Brain Iron-Mediated Effect of Inflammation and Mitochondrial Metabolic Dysfunction on Cognitive Aging

PI, American Federation for Aging Research (2Y) / \$161,000 – Use of an MRI biomarker of iron concentration to evaluate the convergence of oxidative damage, inflammation, and mitochondrial energy dysfunction as they account for longitudinal changes in age-sensitive brain volumes and cognitive functions.

THOMAS JANKOWSKI, PI

Covid-19 Vaccination for Underserved Populations

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (2Y) / \$139,000 – Assist in collecting, testing and evaluating data as well as helping in the design and testing of tools and processes to complete Elder Law of Michigan's grant project with the Department of Justice.

Senior Alliance Needs Assessment

Southeast Michigan Senior Alliance (1.5Y) / \$54,000 – Review existing data and evaluations of older adults and survey older adults, service providers and community stakeholders in Michigan’s Western Wayne and Downriver communities about service availability, use and needs.

VOYKO KAVCIC, PI

Community Based Approach to Early ID of MCI to Alzheimer’s Disease in African Americans

National Institutes of Health, R01 (5Y) / \$3.3M – Use low-cost computerized tests and EEGs to detect early cognitive changes in otherwise healthy older African Americans and determine those at risk for later mild cognitive changes or Alzheimer’s disease.

CARRIE LEACH, PI

Bridging the Divide: Fostering Partnerships for Urban African American Aging Research Patient-Centered Outcomes Research

Institute (PCORI) (2Y) / \$228,000 – Minority representation in research is critical to understand the health disparities that put older African Americans at higher risk of hypertension, heart disease, and other health problems. Through person-centered councils, trainings and communications the goal is to increase participation of Detroit’s older minority population in research projects.

Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES)

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (3Y) / \$81,000 – Leader of the Community Engagement Core where she assembled a Community Advisory Board to enact strategy focused on education and advocacy.

AMANDA LEGGETT, PI

Profiling Psychosocial Dementia Caregiving Networks

National Institute on Aging (4Y) / \$1.94M – Profiling the shared compositional and psychosocial characteristics of caregiver networks to better understand their impact on the well-being and healthcare use of persons living with dementia.

Measuring Dementia Caregiving Styles to Tailor Interventions

Alzheimer’s Association (1.5Y) / \$204,000 – Create the first assessment of caregiving styles for use by clinicians, service providers, and caregivers to increase understanding of the different cognitive-behavioral caregiving styles and personalize treatment recommendations and interventions.

PETER LICHTENBERG

Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR) (P30)

PI with Dr. Robert Taylor (U-M), National

Institute on Aging (5Y) / \$3.5 M Renewal – Reduce health disparities between older African Americans and other ethnic groups through research, faculty mentoring and education. Funded for 30 continuous years, MCUAAAR is a collaboration between the IOG, U-M and MSU.

Advancing Reliable Measurement in Cognitive Aging and Decision-making Ability

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (with Northwestern University) (5Y) / \$654,000 – Lead the design of the decision-making measures in the financial domain of this project and inform the design of other decision-making domains as needed.

Successful Aging after Financial Exploitation

PI, Department of Justice (3Y) / \$499,000 – A project to deliver financial coaching and identity recovery services to vulnerable populations in the Detroit city area and the rural Michigan county of Hillsdale.

New Methods to Assess Financial Decisions, Management & Exploitation in Older Adults with MCI or PCI

PI, National Institutes of Health (2Y) / \$423,500 – Interview persons with Mild or Perceived Cognitive Impairment to create a new “real world” financial management test from examining the older adult’s bank records, wealth loss, financial decision-making and vulnerability to financial exploitation over time.



\$3.5 Million Grant Renewal Supports 30 Years of Research and Scholarship in Minority Aging

The IOG, in partnership with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, received a \$3.5 million grant renewal from the National Insti-



Amanda Horn, Healthier Black Elders Center Coordinator and Brenda Evans, Community Advisory board member, recruit research participants at African World Festival.

tute on Aging to continue the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR) to 2028. Funded since 1997, the Michigan Center is one of 18 resource centers across the nation tasked with improving the health of older diverse populations through research, scholarship and education.

“This program has been groundbreaking in its dual focus on mentoring junior faculty and partnering with older adults across diverse communities,” said IOG Director Dr. Lichtenberg, one of two principal investigators on the grant.

“Our mentoring program to assist junior faculty interested in African American aging research has propelled many careers forward over the course of this grant,” Dr. Lichtenberg said. “Over 70 percent of our junior faculty scientists are African American and over 70 percent are tenured. MCUAAAR mentoring prioritizes high

quality research based in real world experiences.”

Principal investigator and co-director Robert Joseph Taylor of the University of Michigan said it is rewarding to see the center’s long-term work bearing fruit. “Many assistant professors and graduate students mentored by MCUAAAR are now full professors, professors who hold endowed chairs and deans at various universities across the country.”

Dr. Lichtenberg is also proud of how the project has enabled Michigan’s big three universities to engage more deeply with the African American community in Detroit and Flint. The grant supports the Healthier Black Elders Center and its Participant Resource Pool of more than 1,000 older adults willing to participate in research projects. “In the past five years, more than 80 studies have used this registry for recruitment,” he said. “Researchers find it invaluable.”

Preventing Financial Exploitation in Older Adults

PI, Michigan Health Endowment Fund (2Y) / \$320,000 – Identify a subpopulation at increased risk of financial exploitation using the Financial Vulnerability Survey, conduct one-on-one prevention interventions and evaluate relative risk levels and the subsequent rates of financial exploitation and fraud.

Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (P30)

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (with U-M and MSU) (5Y) / \$288,000 – As Research Education Component Core Co-Leader of this tri-university consortium grant, the IOG trains junior faculty across a wide variety of topics relevant to Alzheimer's including minority outreach and recruitment.

Recruiting and Retaining Older African Americans into Research (ROAR)

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (2Y) / \$166,000 – Transferring best practices from the development of the Participant Resource Pool in Detroit to starting a new registry in Flint, MI, to enhance the recruitment of older African Americans for research projects.

Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (P30)

Site PI, University of Michigan (5Y) / \$100,000 – Oversee all recruitment and retention of older African Americans into the Participant Registry and assist Pepper Cen-

ter faculty in accessing the registry for their research.

NOA OFEN, PI

Development of Memory Networks in Children

National Institutes of Health / National Institute on Mental Health, R01 (11Y) / \$3.3M – Investigate brain activity that predicts memory formation in children with difficult to control epilepsy by analyzing data collected from electrodes implanted for their treatment.

An Integrative Multisite Study of the Influence of Socioeconomic Disparities on Hippocampal Subfields Developmental Trajectories

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (3Y Fellowship for Trainee) / \$215,000 Post-doctoral fellow will obtain estimates of hippocampal subfield development and identify the effects of socioeconomic disparities to establish the potential of hippocampal subfield volumes as markers for those at risk for neurodevelopmental disorders.

RODLESCIA SNEED, PI

Maximizing the Scalability of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program among Older Adults in State Correctional Settings

National Institute on Aging, K01 (5Y) / \$600,000 – Engage community-agency

leaders in the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program with correctional staff and incarcerated individuals to develop strategies to scale up the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program among older adults within a state correctional system.

Lowering the Age for Medicare Eligibility: Who Benefits?

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (1Y) / \$82,000 – Estimate and identify subgroups of uninsured Americans who would be impacted by expanding Medicare coverage to lower age groups, and analyze the connections to preventative care, health status, employment and out-of-pocket health care spending among these groups.

WASSIM TARRAF

MRI Measures of Cerebrovascular Injury and AD Atrophy in the Study of Latinos

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (5Y) / \$554,000 – Measure vascular brain injury, cortical volume and thickness, and hippocampal volume to estimate degrees of Alzheimer's atrophy in various Latino racial admixtures.

Study of Latinos – Investigation of Neurocognitive Aging and Alzheimer's Disease

Site PI and Lead Statistician, National Institutes of Health (with University of California at San Diego) (2Y) / \$544,000 – Study 6,600 Latino and Hispanic older adults to better



Daniel Saleh, lab manager for the Heart of Detroit Study, updates HBEC Community Advisory Board members about a new research toolkit.

understand the progression from mild cognitive impairment to Alzheimer's.

Study of Latinos – Investigation of Neurocognitive Aging 2

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (with University of California San Diego) (3Y) / \$515,000 – Follow-on to original Study of Latinos above.

Neurocognitive Aging & Alzheimer's Disease DNA Methylation in Diverse Latinos

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (5Y) / \$405,000 – Integrate DNA methylation into several areas of the Study of Latinos project by helping to generate data, maintain quality control and ensure sample conformity to meet the study aims.

Sleep in Neurocognitive Aging and Alzheimer's Research

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (with University of Miami) (5Y) / \$344,000 – Work with the PI to integrate longitudinal data from the parent Study of Latinos project into data collected from this sleep research, including supervising statistical analysis, data collection and quality control.

Network on Education, Biosocial Pathways and Dementia across Diverse Populations

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (with University of Maryland) (5Y) / \$84,000 – Provide expertise in training, recruitment, Latino disparities in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and review of pilot projects.

Subjective Cognitive Decline and Objective Cognitive Trajectories in Older Hispanics/Latinos

Site PI, National Institutes of Health (with University of California San Diego) (5Y) / \$58,000 – Supervise statistical analysis for publications, and assist in supervising data collection, quality control and data maintenance.

Community Engagement



A post-Covid Lunch & Learn event in an open air shed at Eastern Market

Improving the Care of Thousands of Older Adults

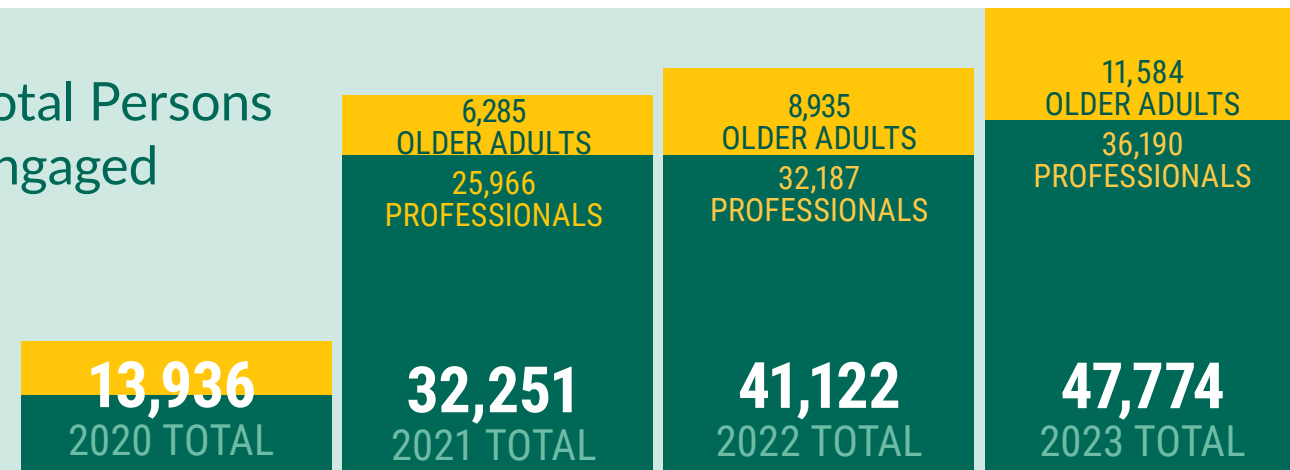
The IOG's community engagement has continued to cross borders and break records with new virtual programs and the resurgence of signature live events. Thanks to the wide acceptance of virtual trainings (a by-product of the Covid epidemic), IOG programs reach health care professionals

in Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Utah and of course Michigan. "Our goal is to transform the provision of care," said Donna MacDonald, community engagement director. "We bring gerontology and the health issues of older adults to the forefront."

The IOG's three main conferences suspended in-person formats during Covid but came roaring back in 2023. The *Art of Aging Successfully*, now in its 24th year, provided DIY art, yoga, nutrition, scam prevention, and more to about 400 older adults in June. *Issues in Aging*, a continuing education conference for professionals working with older adults, turned 27 this year. About 150 nurses, social workers, and physical and occupational therapists attended, citing the positive impact of the quality speakers and latest information on dementia on their clinical practice.

The third IOG signature event, *A Meaningful Life with Alzheimer's*, is a unique conference bringing together 200 health care professionals, and 60 informal caregivers, and persons with dementia. "We learn from each other," Donna said. "It's rare to find a conference that listens to and empowers all those voices."

Total Persons Engaged



Communications expert Jay Johnson commands the room of healthcare professionals with his energy and prowess.

Chair yoga calms the crowd at the Art of Aging Successfully.

Community Board Guides Research and Outreach to Older Adults

For more than two decades, the Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC) has worked to reduce the significant health disparities between older African Americans and their Caucasian counterparts. The focus has been on recruiting more minority members to participate in research projects and to provide quality community education and outreach to encourage health enhancing behaviors.

A few years ago, HBEC launched a consultancy of Advisory Board members who help tailor research projects and public presentations to engage the community more deeply.

Coordinated by HBEC Coordinator Vanessa Rorai, MSW, and HBEC Faculty Leader Tam Perry, PhD, the consultants are hired by outside researchers and organizations to provide feedback on issues such as project design, materials, and disseminating results, and to ensure public presentations use best practices



HBEC consultancy members review a proposal with Dr. Annalise Rahman-Filipiak (at head) and her team on Cognition and Neuromodulation Based Interventions.

to communicate with older adults in research.

Seventeen consultancies have been completed, including projects on caregiving, adapting technology for older minorities, adherence to glaucoma medication, and improving Google voice technologies for older African Americans. Proceeds from the consultancy support the work of the HBEC.

"These consultancies have made incredible improvements to researchers'

projects," said Ms. Rorai. "CAB consultants have re-worded focus group questions for clarity and increased the impact of recruitment strategies."

Dr. Perry, who is also the IOG's director of training, published results of the consultancy in *Generations*, a publication of the American Society on Aging that focuses on civic engagement as a pillar of productive aging. "This program has really made our members' voices matter in enhancing projects and mentoring researchers," she said.

Buddy Up: WSU Students Befriend Persons with Alzheimer's

Two WSU undergrads with a strong affinity for older adults launched the campus' first ever chapter of National Alzheimer's Buddies, a program to connect college students with persons with dementia. Students volunteer an hour each week to visit in-person with their "Buddy." The goal is to end social isolation in dementia.

The club's advisor is IOG faculty member Dr. Rodlescica Sneed. WSU was recently designated an Age Friendly University. "What could be more age friendly than pairing a college student with a vulnerable older adult to build a relationship that will benefit both?" Dr. Sneed said.

The IOG's premier partner, Waltonwood Senior Living, also embraced the program, inviting Alzheimer's Buddies to connect with residents at several area locations.

"We can enhance our residents' quality of life while offering students a profound experience they will carry throughout their careers," said Steven Tyshka, Waltonwood's director of operations.

IOG Outreach Director Donna MacDonald agreed. "For 15 years, the IOG has worked with Waltonwood to train thousands of professionals about aging. Alzheimer's Buddies adds an intergenerational component to Waltonwood's strong life enrichment programs. It's the perfect match."

An estimated 6.7 million Americans live with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. About 20% of those people are in senior housing facilities. Waltonwood Senior Living offers independent living, assisted living and memory care services in Michigan, North Carolina and Virginia.

"We hope this experience will make students more compassionate and informed about memory loss," co-founder Kulsoom Ali said. Ali is a senior majoring in neuroscience with plans to apply to medical school next year. Ali joined forces with friend and pre-med student Archana Matheswaran to launch the chapter. Matheswaran, a junior, was in high school when she first volunteered at a senior residence and realized she enjoyed the company of older adults. "They were so engaged in what we did," she said. "It brought my mood up every single visit. It's so important to stay connected."



Archana Matheswaran (left) and Kulsoom Ali launched the campus' first-ever chapter of National Alzheimer's Buddies, a program to connect college students with people with dementia.



Above: EAR committee plans the Art of Aging Successfully Conference. From left - Carol Edwards, Laura Sutherland, Gloria Myers, Donna MacDonald, Barb Kopasz, Susan McEwan, Dorothy Jackson. Not shown: Pat Baldwin, Pam Byrnes, Cheryl Deep, Deborah Vinson.



Corporate & Community Partners

Foundations

(\$2,500-\$10,000)

- Clannad Foundation
- Frank and Gretrude Dunlap Fund
- John and Margrite Davis Foundation
- Keystone Center
- Louis and Nellie Sieg Fund
- Managed Health Care Associates
- Mary Thompson Foundation
- Michigan Public Health Institute
- Westerman Foundation

Legacy

Baldwin House Foundation

Platinum (\$30,000-\$49,999)

- BrightStar Care
- Janus Henderson Group

Gold (\$10,000-\$29,999)

- AARP
- Heart to Heart Hospice
- One Care, LTC
- Waltonwood Senior Living

Silver (\$2,000-\$5,000)

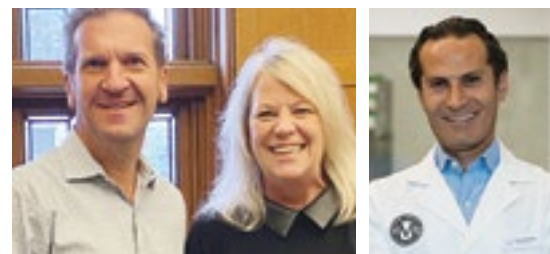
- Allegria Village
- Avalon Senior Living
- Center for Financial Planning
- CorsoCare
- Henry Ford Health
- PACE Southeast Michigan

Bronze (\$1,000-\$1,999)

- Alzheimer's Association Michigan Chapter
- Area Agency on Aging 1-B
- Jewish Senior Life
- Parents Changing Spaces
- Parkinson's Association
- Presbyterian Villages of Michigan
- ProMedica
- Senior Caregiver & Resource Network (SACRN)



Hooray for Our Board of Visitors



Clockwise from top: Rob Gillette thanks dozens of generous guests at the Baldwin Society Foundation fundraiser. Perre Boutros welcomes customers to his Mills Pharmacy in Birmingham. Sandy Adams explains financial implications in her "You Could Live to 100" workshop at the Art of Aging Successfully Conference. Donna MacDonald welcomes new board member Steven Tyshka to his first meeting.

We consider ourselves very lucky to have a board of visitors full of passion and drive to improve the lives of older adults. These highly committed volunteers are active retirees or hail from a range of professions: hospice care, elder law, communications, medicine, home health care, financial services, pharmacy, business, education, and senior living residences. Many members have been on our board more than five years. Lynn Alexander, senior VP at Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, recently announced her retirement from PVM and our board. Lynn joined when the IOG first formed a board of visitors – 20 years ago. We'll miss her community engagement, ideas to increase our impact and her devotion to appreciating all older adults.

Mike Damone, president of Cedarbrook Senior Living, provides active and generous leadership of our Board. He also agreed to chair our endowment campaign. He and Carol Edwards, Frances Shani Parker, David Howell, Pierre Boutros, James Speir, Pat Simasko and Sandy Adams provided important leadership gifts and community connections to help ignite the project. Rob Gillette, chairman of the Baldwin Society Supporting Older Adults, has raised funds each year since 2007 through the Baldwin House Foundation to support IOG research.



Lynn Alexander (It) represented PVM at the Leading Age Leadership Summit on Capitol Hill in DC. To her right are Congressman Andy Levin and Dalton Herbel of LeadingAge MI.

We at the IOG work hard to stay in touch with how older adults are faring in the community. Many members work directly with older adults and are our eyes and ears. We thank Marcia Relyea, Kathleen Newell, Terri Murphy, Barb Kopasz, David Sengstock, MD, and Brian Jenney for keeping us abreast of aging issues of concern. Maria Marcantonio helps us fine-tune our communications. Arun Anand brings an entrepreneurial perspective to ideas for new programs. Roger Myers will keep us connected to PVM as Lynn takes her exit. And we welcome our newest member, Steven Tyshka, director of operations at Waltonwood Senior Living, one of the IOG's premier partners.

We cannot overstate how fundamentally important this fine group of volunteers is to the success of the IOG. They are our dream team!!



Dr. Sneed shares her research approach with board members. She is studying ways to improve the health of older adults who are incarcerated.

Remembering David Howell (1928-2023)



David and Esther Howell cheer the IOG at a 2006 fundraiser. The Board established a Faculty Research Award in their honor.

David Howell, of the IOG's Board of Visitors, died peacefully at home on September 7. He was 94.

He first came to the IOG in 2004 as the "driver" of his wife, Esther, who had joined the board six months earlier. David grew bored waiting for Esther in the lobby and was invited to sit in on the meetings. In short time he was appointed a member and then chairman. He held his chairmanship for more than a decade.

David received his accounting degree from WSU and was a strong advocate for the IOG to partner with area senior service providers to increase donations and engagement with the community. This sponsorship model proved hugely successful. Monies raised provided the foundation on which the endowment was built. David also donated leadership-level gifts to help the endowment reach its goal.

Dr. Lichtenberg visited David at his home in Grosse Pointe about a month before his death. "David was smart and generous and became a big part of my life," he said. "He was as vibrant as usual at our visit. We will all miss his warmth, humor and high standards."

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