

# ASA Section on Aging and the Life Course



## News from the Chair

### ***Celebrating 30 Years of the Section on Aging & the Life Course***

On June 30, 1979, our section, then named the Section on Aging, became official. ASA policies at the time did not favor the formation of new sections, but under the persistent leadership of Hal Orbach and others, the Section on Aging held its first council meeting in 1979. Fast forwarding 30 years, concerns and questions about aging and the life course remain vibrant and important. Classic concerns, such as those about healthy aging, social relationships, stratification & public policies remain, but new theories, methods and data bring fresh insights to aging as a life-long process and to challenges and opportunities of later life.

Attention to age, aging and the life course remains strong through an outstanding set of specialty journals devoted to these topics, such as the *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, *Journal on Aging & Health*, *Research on Aging* and others. Attention to these topics has also permeated across a wide range of general and specialty journals. Cheryl Elman's recent search for the term "life course" in titles or abstracts of papers published from 1985-2009 turns up a large number of papers in sociology journals, such as *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, and *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, but also *American Journal of Public Health*, *International Journal of Epidemiology* and *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. The salience of our theories, concepts and measures clearly extends to a wide range of topics and research questions.

Journals, books, and other publications are one important way we share our ideas & research findings, but for research to flourish and grow, we also need opportunities to talk face-to-face, to exchange feedback on what people are grappling with and working on, and to encourage new scholars to bring new ideas and skills to the area. This is why we go to meetings! Section activities at the 2009 meetings will provide many opportunities for informal chats and formal presentations. Section day will be **Sunday, August 9**. We hope to see you there!

Meeting as a group also gives us the chance to celebrate and honor those who shape our ideas in so many ways. We are so sad to have recently lost one of our beloved colleagues, former section chair (1997-1998), and 2005 Matilda White Riley Distinguished Scholar, Chuck Longino, but also pleased that we got the chance to celebrate and honor his contributions and accomplishments with him. Who are the people who have inspired you, mentored you, and informed your thinking? Are they on our list of those honored by our section as distinguished scholars? As listed at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/asasalc/rileywinners.pdf>, our section is fortunate to have so many exceptional influences. Many are on this list, but there are also others who should be. Please take the time to write a letter nominating someone who we should honor as a distinguished scholar. See page 3 of this newsletter for instructions on how to submit a nomination.

New research, by established colleagues and new graduate students, is critical to our thinking and deserves our recognition and honor. We have two awards that honor the best recent and forthcoming work: the Outstanding Publication Award and the Graduate Student Paper Award. Nominations for both awards, as described on page 3, are due **March 1, 2009**. Please send in your nominations today and join us in honoring our colleagues in August.

Eliza Pavalko, 2008-2009 Section Chair

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Eliza Pavalko  
2008-09 Section Chair

## In Memoriam: Charles "Chuck" Longino

by Cherin C. Poovey

Dr. Charles F. Longino, Jr., the Washington M. Wingate Professor of Sociology & Director of Reynolda Gerontology Program at Wake Forest University, died on Dec. 25, 2008, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, following a brief illness. Longino, a prolific scholar, speaker, and author who was a world-renowned expert on aging and retirement migration research, was also Professor of Public Health Sciences at the Wake Forest School of Medicine.



Influential in and outside of the classroom, Longino wrote countless academic articles, books, chapters and encyclopedia entries, presentations, and amassed millions of dollars in research grants. But more than his body of work, Longino's colleagues said what set him apart was his ability to synthesize many disciplines — sociology, political science, economics, demographics — into the study of aging.

"My goal," he once said, "is to bridge between the sciences, and the social sciences on one side, and the humanities of aging on the other. It allows me to be somewhat of a dilettante, to dabble in things that I find interesting."

Despite his busy schedule, Longino, who came to Wake Forest in 1991, was regarded as a professor who put teaching and students first. "As a freshman," said former student James O'Neill ('02), in a 1998 article in *Wake Forest Magazine*, "I was in his class and I had a question. I went back after class just to ask him what was going on, and about five minutes later I found myself sitting at his table, having coffee with him and getting to know him. That was one of the moments I was glad I came to Wake Forest, because I knew I wouldn't get that kind of contact at another school." Known for his friendly smile and quick wit, Longino was service-minded and was a fixture at Wake Forest's Late-Night Breakfasts, preparing food and serving students during exam week. He also enjoyed helping new students and their families on move-in day.

"As a person, he glows, he emanates," said William J. Hazzard in that same article. Hazzard, an endocrinologist, internist, and former director of the J. Paul Sticht Center on Aging at the medical school, added, "He's just such an easy person to be around, and you feel better to have spent an hour with Chuck Longino."



Longino taught at the University of Miami & the Universities of Kansas, Virginia, and North Carolina, earlier in his career. In 1967, he received a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, & in the mid-1970s he was a post-doctoral fellow in the Midwest Council for Social Research in Aging. He was a fellow and former President of the Gerontological Society of America, and was the North American chair of the International Association of Gerontology from 1989-1993. He served as editor of *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. He was a founding fellow of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, as well as former president. He served as chair of the Section on Aging and the Life Course of the American Sociological Association, and was former President for the Southern Gerontological Society.

Longino was born in Mississippi and was an Eagle Scout. In addition to his accomplishments as an author, researcher, & world speaker, he was a Master Judge with the Kansas City Barbeque Society. Longino traveled throughout the central east coast judging BBQ contests. He loved travel, books on CD, opera, movies, Civil War history, and art.

Chuck is survived by his wife of 44 years, Dr. Loyce White Longino; his daughter Laura, MSW, LCSW, & her partner Becky; son Charles III, Certified Financial Planner and owner of Guilford Capital Management in Greensboro; daughter-in-law Jackie, Ad Traffic Coordinator for *Our State* magazine; and two grandchildren, Charles Freeman Longino, IV (Chase) (8) and Brynn Nolan Elizabeth Longino (3). He was loved by many and will be missed by all who knew him.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his honor to the Gerontological Society of America in Washington, DC. A memorial service will be held March 17, 2009, at 3 p.m. in Wake Forest University's Wait Chapel.

## SALC Seeks Nominations for 2009 Awards

### Matilda White Riley Distinguished Scholar

This annual award honors a scholar in the field of aging and the life course who has shown exceptional achievement in research, theory, policy analysis, or who has otherwise advanced knowledge of aging and the life course. Letters of nomination should describe the nominee's contributions to the study of aging and the life course that warrant consideration. Additional letters of support are encouraged but not required.

Submit nominations and additional letters of support by **March 1, 2009** to:

Dr. Peter Uhlenberg  
CB 3210 – Sociology  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599  
E-mail: peter\_uhlenberg@unc.edu



Dr. Matilda White Riley

### Outstanding Publication Award

This annual award honors an outstanding recent contribution to the field of sociology of aging and the life course as determined by the Outstanding Publication Award Committee. Eligible publications include original research reports, theoretical or methodological developments, and policy-related contributions. The outstanding publication can be an article, chapter, or book published within the past three years. The committee will consider nominations and self-nominations. The award will rotate between a book and an article (or chapter) at least once every three years.

Nominations should be submitted by **March 1, 2009** to:

Dr. Mark Hayward  
Population Research Center  
1800 Main Building, G1800  
University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712  
Email: mhayward@prc.utexas.edu

### Graduate Student Paper Award

This annual award honors the outstanding paper written by a graduate student (or students) as determined by the Graduate Student Paper Award committee. Unpublished, under review, accepted, or published papers by member(s) of the Section on Aging and the Life Course are eligible. If published, the paper should have appeared within the past two calendar years (e.g., a paper nominated in 2009 may have been published any time during 2008 or 2009). The nominated paper should be journal-length (35 pages maximum) and in the format used by the American Sociological Review. Only one award will be given. The award consists of \$250 presented to the winner at the Business Meeting of the Section, held during the annual ASA meeting. All nominations are due by **March 1, 2009**. Self nominations are encouraged.

To be nominated, send a hard copy and an electronic version of the paper to:

Dr. Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson  
Department of Sociology  
247 Wilson Hall  
Washington State University  
Pullman, WA 99164-4020  
Email: monicakj@wsu.edu

## 2008 Outstanding Publication Award: Marriage and Cohabitation

by Ellen Idler

The Outstanding Publication Award of the Section on Aging and the Life Course honors an exceptional recent contribution to the field. In August 2008 Arland Thornton, William Axinn, & Yu Xie received the Outstanding Publication Award for their book *Marriage and Cohabitation*, published in 2007 by the University of Chicago Press.

Thornton is professor of sociology and research professor at the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan. He is also author of *Reading History Sideways*, published by the University of Chicago Press. Axinn is professor of sociology at the University of Michigan and a research professor at the ISR. Yu Xie is the Otis Dudley Duncan Professor of Sociology and Statistics at the University of Michigan and a research professor at the ISR.

Among a large set of strong nominations, Arland Thornton & colleagues have given us the results of a 31-year, 8-wave longitudinal study of families enrolled in the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children. The sample was made up of couples having their first, second, or fourth child during the summer of 1961. Both mothers & their children were interviewed, linking generations across time, to increase our understanding of the ways in which marriage and the institution of the family have changed during our own life course.

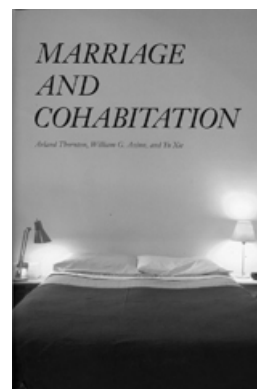
To paraphrase from the Introduction: marriage has become less central in organizing economic production and consumption; it has become less influential in determining identities for men and women; it has become less necessary for the expression of sexuality & for the raising of children; and it has become less sacred. And the pace of this change has been very rapid.

*Marriage and Cohabitation* is a story of parallel life courses, of parents, married or not, and their children, followed from birth, who go on to cohabit, marry, or remain single. It is a story of linked lives, and even linked cohorts. The social conditions of early life, including family history, values, education, lifetime earnings, career aspirations, and religious affiliation, all exert social force on the direction of the course of those lives. Thornton, Axinn, & Xie show us how these apparently intimate decisions made by two individuals take place in a milieu that stretches back in time to their births and before.

While we have less marriage today, we have more cohabitation, and some of the award committee's favorite findings concern this growing group. No, they are not all the children of liberal Protestants, but they are less likely to have been brought up in religiously observant families. And no, they are not the children of the well-educated and wealthy; in fact, the opposite is true. Children in large extended family networks were less likely to cohabit. Perhaps most important, cohabiters were more likely to have had parents who themselves cohabited, or had children outside of marriage, or were nonconforming in other ways.

The selection committee especially appreciated the first chapter of this book, which outlines in fascinating detail the history of marriage and the family in the United States. The chapter underscores the rather dramatic changes that have taken place during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thanks goes to the committee for their careful reading and assessment of the submissions: Ellen Idler, Elaine Wethington, David Ekerdt, and Nick Danigelis. Congratulations to Arland Thornton, William Axinn, and Yu Xie for their fine contribution!



©University of Chicago Press



Arland Thornton



William Axinn



Yu Xie

## Using U.S. Census Data to Teach About Social Forces of Aging

Himes and Caffrey share a class project that promotes principles of social gerontology as well as social research. Students use U.S. Census Bureau data to examine the demographics and social forces of aging. The project has four main objectives: (1) instill knowledge of aging-related demographics, (2) emphasize diversity within the older population, (3) teach quantitative skills, and (4) foster critical thinking.

Using the most recent decennial census data, students compare the demographic characteristics of 2 states expected to differ from each other in size, geography, political climate, economic structure, or other characteristics. Students receive explicit directions on how to access data from the U.S. Census Bureau web page and extract appropriate information. Students take the raw data and transform it into tables, then write a brief report on their findings. Students write about how differences between states might impact population aging & aging policies. For full details see Himes, Christine L. and Christine Caffrey. 2003. "Linking Social Gerontology with Quantitative Skills: A Class Project Using U.S. Census Data." *Teaching Sociology* 31: 85-94.



## Publishing Advice for Graduate Students

Thom Brooks of the University of Newcastle has written a paper disclosing some hidden "secrets" of publishing. The Social Science Research Network has made the essay publically available on-line. (See link below.) Brooks makes the following recommendations to those new to the publishing arena.

### **Publishing 101: Book Reviews as an Introduction to Publishing**

The easiest publication to acquire is a book review. Because most reviews editors are looking for new reviewers for their journals, graduate students can often serve as reviewers. First identify a journal in your area of expertise that publishes book reviews. Then send the reviews editor a brief message stating who you are, the topic of your graduate work, and your interest in reviewing a book for the journal. If unsuccessful with one journal, try another. When writing a book review, remember your audience is the broader general profession who is acquainted with the area but lacks familiarity with the book you are reviewing. Added benefits to writing a book review are free books and gaining a glimpse of the world of publishing. Book reviews are less prestigious than other forms of publications, but they help newcomers to publishing find their voice and experience the various stages of publishing.

### **Publishing 201: Conferences and Their Proceedings**

Get on the program of a graduate or professional conference. You will gain feedback on your work, learning which problems you must work harder to pre-empt in revisions. Through networking, you become familiar with fellow members of the profession. You can meet others engaged in similar areas of research while speaking with past or future referees of your work. These are some of the reasons why reputable articles were once conference papers.

### **Publishing 301: Articles, Book Chapters and Replies**

Immerse yourself with the literature in your area. Consider putting together a "reply" or "discussion piece" that makes clear the importance of a defect in an article. When writing a full-length article, make a case for why your topic should be of interest to others. Make sure the arguments keep a strict focus. Appearances count, so submit clean, professional-looking work. Stick closely to the journal's guidelines for contributors and include a cover letter with full contact details. Be prepared for a negative response in 3-4 months. Most journals have acceptance rates of 15% or less. Do not be afraid to try. If you never try, then you will never publish.

### **Publishing 401: Securing Book Contracts**

Produce a book proposal, making a case for the book's existence in light of what is currently available. Give a brief but thorough review of existing literature to show that your project is different and an improvement on these past efforts. Contact an appropriate publisher. If a publisher is interested in the proposal, you will receive suggestions for some changes. Ensure that any reasonable changes called for by the reviewers are made in the final product.

See Brooks' full essay at: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf\\_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per\\_id=512554](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=512554).

## Publication Opportunities



### **Editor Needed for Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences**

The Gerontological Society of America's Publications Committee is seeking nominations for the position of editor of *The Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. Self nominations are welcomed and encouraged. This four-year position will become effective January 1, 2010. Nominations and applications must be accompanied by candidate's curriculum vitae and a statement of willingness to accept the position. All nominations and applications must be received by March 31, 2009, and should be sent by mail or e-mail to the Publications Committee, attn: Patricia Walker ( [walker@geron.org](mailto:walker@geron.org) ), The Gerontological Society of America, 1220 L Street, NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20005-4018.



### **New Journal Format for Advances in Life Course Research**

In 2009 the well-established Elsevier book series *Advances in Life Course Research* will become a journal under the editorship of Professor Francesco Billari, Università Bocconi, Milan, Italy. The journal publishes articles dealing with various aspects of the human life course. Seeing life course research as an interdisciplinary field of study, it invites and welcomes contributions from anthropology, biosocial science, demography, epidemiology, economics, gerontology, management and organization science, policy studies, psychology, research methodology and sociology. Original empirical analyses, theoretical contributions, methodological studies and reviews accessible to a broad set of readers are welcome. Articles might focus on specific events as well as on whole segments of the life course, including determinants and consequences, social relationships and policy implications, without restrictions over time and space. The first issue is due to be published online, via ScienceDirect in April 2009. Visit the journal homepage for information and to find out how to submit an article: [www.elsevier.com](http://www.elsevier.com).



## Conference News

### **ASA/NCOA Joint Conference**

Aging in America, the 2009 joint annual conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on Aging, will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, from March 15 – 19. This diverse, multidisciplinary meeting will offer a comprehensive educational program and dynamic networking opportunities. Attendees come from abroad and around the country to find the answers, experts, research, and best practices to respond to the ever-growing demands of serving an aging population. Visit [www.agingconference.org](http://www.agingconference.org) for more information.

### **ASA 2009 Annual Meeting**

The 104th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association meets in San Francisco August 8-11, 2009. The Section on Aging and the Life Course will sponsor a session of roundtables and research groups, organized by Dennis Hogan and Ross Macmillan. Bridget Gorman is organizing a session on "Early Life Predictors of Health Through the Life Course" and Scott Lynch is organizing a session on "Methodological Innovations in Research on Aging and the Life Course." Co-sponsored by ASA's Section on Children and Youth, Jeylan Mortimer is organizing a session on the "Transition to Adulthood: The Importance of the Health Domain." SALC section day is **Sunday, August 9**.



## Training Programs

### Policy Fellows Program

The Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program is now accepting applications for its second year. Supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies and directed by Harold Alan Pincus, MD, (in collaboration with the American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship Program), this unique professional opportunity seeks to provide professionals in health and aging with the experience and skills necessary to make a positive contribution to the development and implementation of health policies that affect older Americans. The application deadline for the 2009-2010 fellowship year is **April 15, 2009**. For further information, please visit [www.healthandagingpolicy.org](http://www.healthandagingpolicy.org).



### 2009 Summer Institute on Aging Research

The Summer Institute on Aging Research will take place July 11-17 in Queenstown, Maryland. The NIA program seeks applications from emerging researchers, including those who may have had limited involvement in research on aging. The program includes lectures, seminars, and small group discussions in research design relative to aging, including issues relevant to aging of ethnic and racial minorities. Sessions will focus on methodological approaches and interventions. The program also will include consultation on the development of research interests and advice on preparing and submitting research grant applications to NIA. Submit applications and letters of recommendation by **March 6, 2009**. For more information, see <http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/Calendar/summerinstitute2009.htm>



## Funding Opportunities

### Dissertation Support for 2009

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) announces funding for dissertation awards in all areas of research within its mandate to increase diversity of the research workforce on research on aging and aging-related health conditions. These awards are available to qualified Pre-doctoral students in research doctoral programs in the United States, including Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories or possessions. Support is provided for up to two years. Total allowable costs per year are the current fiscal year NRSA Predoctoral stipend level and up to \$15,000 for additional expenses. The NIA expects to award \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually to support up to 5 dissertation awards. See the Program Announcement at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-250.html>

### Grants Available for Careers in Aging Week

The Gerontological Society of America and its educational branch, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, are now gearing up for Careers in Aging Week 2009, which will take place from April 12-18. This annual venture is intended to bring greater awareness and visibility to the wide-ranging career opportunities in aging and aging research. Universities and colleges around the world participate by sponsoring events at their schools or in their communities. Educational institutions are invited to apply for one of 10 \$200 grants for their planned activities. The application for these funds is available online and must be submitted by **March 15**. For more information, visit [www.careersinagingweek.com](http://www.careersinagingweek.com) or send an email to [ciaw@geron.org](mailto:ciaw@geron.org).

### Research on Fatigue among Older Adults

The NIA encourages submissions of R01 research grant applications on fatigue and fatigability in aging. Proposed research should employ trans-disciplinary approaches that could lead to increased understanding of the mechanisms contributing to, assessment of, or potential interventions for increased fatigue or fatigability in older persons. Collaborations among investigators across disciplines are particularly valuable for understanding the relationships among the various physical, cognitive, emotional, and social factors influencing fatigue & fatigability. For more information visit: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-161.html>.

### Data Archiving and Development

The NIA has supported the development of major data collection efforts in areas such as the dynamics of health and disability in the very old, cognition, psychosocial and sociodemographic factors, biomarkers, long term care, caregiving, retirement and economic status. The NIA is seeking small grant (R03) applications to stimulate and facilitate data archiving and development of these data sources that can be user friendly and easily accessible for public use and secondary analysis. The creation of data extraction web tools for public use databases, such as Health and Retirement Study (HRS), National Long-Term Care Survey (NLTC) or National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS) is also of interest to NIA. A project period of up to two years and a budget for direct costs of up to two \$25,000 modules, or \$50,000 per year, may be requested. Please visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-252.html#SectionII> for more information.

**We're on the web!**

<http://www.pop.psu.edu/asasalc/index.htm>

## Spotlight on Aging Research: Study Finds Link Between Volunteering and Healthy Aging

by Reuben Chow

In a study carried out at Purdue University, it was found that regular volunteers have better cardiovascular health as well as lower blood pressure than their non volunteering counterparts. Significantly, they also had fewer signs of depression. Led by Kenneth Ferraro, a sociology professor studying health and volunteering and the director of Purdue's Center on Aging and the Life Course, the study also found that the health benefits were more pronounced in older persons aged 65 years and above as compared with those aged 45 to 64. "The older adults who were engaged in regular volunteering had slower increases in physical disability, and they stayed independent and physically active for a longer period of time. We believe that social engagement is essential to their well-being," said Dr Ferraro.

**It's paradoxical, but as you give, you receive.**

**Dr. Kenneth Ferraro**

In the 8-year longitudinal study, the study team looked at whether regular formal volunteering cumulatively impacted mental & physical health positively. This cumulative effect is a possible explanation why older & longer term volunteers experienced more benefits. Or perhaps older persons, with reduced activity as they wind down on their careers and become physically less able, simply need the social interaction more than younger and still very much active persons. In any case, three things we can learn here are - volunteering is good for health, long-term volunteering is even better, and older persons benefit more from it.

## Section on Aging and the Life Course

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