



**SOUTHERN
GERONTOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**

Bridging Aging Research & Practice

THE SOUTHERN GERONTOLOGIST

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ISSUE 1



Dr. Leland "Bert" Waters

What a wonderful conference we experienced this year in Norfolk. It was a full week for me as I arrived on Monday and left on Saturday. I saw more than 300 SGS members with smiling faces over the course of the week, and member participation, from Tuesday's pre-conference to the final panel discussion on Saturday, was robust. It truly took a village to make the conference such a success, and I want to especially thank Amanda James, SGS Executive Director, for all of her planning leading up to the conference, which made the week a seamless event. Amanda had big shoes to fill after Dr. Lee Ann Ferguson stepped down last year. Amanda was always accessible and level-headed during the conference, and I noticed that she was reflectively evaluating the week as it went on and planning ahead for our next conference.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SGS PRESIDENT

This year in Norfolk we focused on interventions targeting priority populations for health disparities research that can lead to practice change, improve population health, and lead to better health equity. The theme for our 45th Annual Conference in Greenville, South Carolina, April 2-6, will also promote practice change to improve individual and population health and health equity by fostering more engagement in our health and aging on both an individual and a population-based level. How do we promote self-management of our health and well-being? We will highlight holistic evidence-based interventions that address health promotion

and foster social support. Greenville is an especially walkable town and the Hyatt Regency, the conference hotel is right at the front door of a beautiful and historic downtown arts and crafts scene. Bring your sneakers because you are going to want to experience Falls Park on the Ready Creek and explore the Swamp Rabbit Trail, and shop and dine in the city that The New York Times calls "a national model for a pedestrian-friendly city center." I am looking forward to seeing another 300, or more smiling SGS faces all wearing comfortable shoes next April.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SGS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to begin by expressing my excitement to be bringing back the Southern Gerontologist. Although we will continue sending emails to our larger network to share information about our events, this is a place for our members to dig deeper into the work of SGS and hear from our members. We want to hear from you – your thoughts on the latest trends in gerontology, your exciting new research, your best practices from the field. If you would like to submit an article for consideration in future issues, please contact me at admin@southerngerontologicalsociety.org.

While I would normally use this opportunity to highlight what will be included in this issue and the latest and greatest happening in the SGS community, I am compelled to talk about another issue that is near and dear to my heart – addressing elder abuse.

Many of you may not know that earlier in my career, I had the pleasure of working with the Forensic Special Initiatives Unit at the Georgia Division of Aging. During my time with FSIU, I got to work with multiple disciplines including law enforcement and other first responders, prosecutors, Area Agencies on Aging, Adult Protective Services, Long-Term Care Ombudsman, service providers, and others as we provided training and worked collaboratively to develop and implement strategies addressing the abuse of older adults and adults with disabilities. I was able to see laws passed that made the abuse of this population a felony. I was able to see agencies use these laws to hold people accountable. I was able to see new resources put in place for victims. It was some of the most rewarding work I will probably ever do. I also saw and heard things that will haunt me to this day.

Despite the tremendous progress I saw in Georgia, the fight continues, and it requires us all. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEADD) is observed on June 15th of each year. It was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEADD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.



I invite everyone to take time to visit the [USC Center for Elder Justice WEADD website](#) and peruse the numerous resources on how you can become involved. I would like to highlight one resource to get you started:

[The WEADD Action Guide](#) - This current edition of the action guide brings into focus the issue of ageism in the context of elder abuse. SGS is committed to bringing awareness to ageism and the SGS Encore Committee is taking the lead. You will hear more about their plans in this issue, but I encourage you to educate yourself on ageism in the context of elder abuse. The guide also includes ideas for ways to commemorate WEAAD, both in-person and virtually, offers considerations for increasing accessibility in your events, and provides more tools for your WEAAD outreach.



Amanda James and Pat King

You can also search for elder justice groups and organizations here on the [Elder Justice Locator](#). I encourage you to sign up for alerts or get more involved with an organization in your state or at the national level.



Pat King

While at FSU, I had the privilege of working with Pat King, a tremendous advocate for fighting elder abuse. She would not take no for an answer and was committed to doing whatever she could to further this cause. She passed away in 2021, but her legacy lives on in the work that is continuing to happen in Georgia and across the country. I will always be inspired by my time with her and committed to bringing awareness to these issues. Please join me in this fight by educating yourself and others this June 15th.

ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE RECAP

In April 2023, attendees joined together to share the latest in aging research and best practices, network with colleagues across the region and beyond, and enjoy the beautiful setting of Norfolk, VA.

We received 322 registrations and had at least 45 additional attendees who participated as presenters only, exhibitors only, companions, and guests. This conference saw the highest attendance since the 2018 joint SGS/GGS conference and the highest SGS stand alone conference attendance in decades.

In addition to great attendance, this year's Annual Meeting & Conference also received great reviews!

“

Among decades of SGS Conferences I've attended, this was absolutely one of the best. From the quality and pacing of the program to the fun location to the excellent hotel and food...it truly made for an enjoyable experience.

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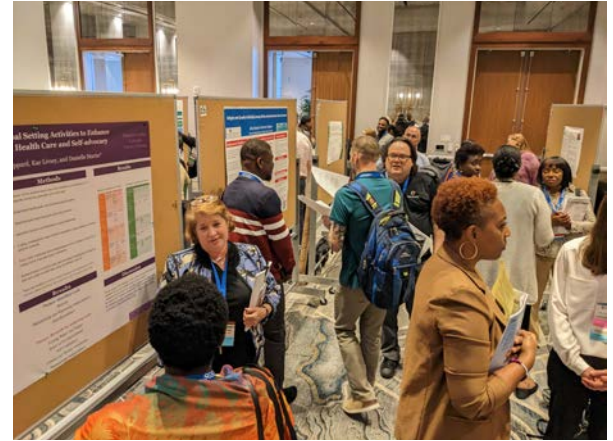
These sessions exposed me to the various ways and forms of conducting research in the care work space and how to achieve not just high-quality research results but how to further apply those results to make an impact in the life of an older adult or a resident in a long-term care setting.

”

“

It was the best conference that I've ever been to! I thoroughly enjoyed the presentations, the networking, the wonderful food, and opportunities to explore Norfolk.

”



2023 SGS AWARD WINNERS



2023 GRITS AWARDS

Althea Taylor Jones

Not Pictured
Shirley Travis
Jim McAuley



2023 BEST PRACTICES AWARDS

Joyful Voices Chorus

NOT PICTURED
Wellspring Solutions, LLC



2023 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP TRAVEL AWARDS

Alfred Boakye
Gretchen Tucker
Karah Alexander



2023 STUDENT POSTER AWARDS

1st Place - Emerald Gibbs
2nd Place - Victoria Helmly (Not Pictured)
3rd Place Tie -
Jessica Yauk
Alfred Boakye

2023 SGS AWARD WINNERS



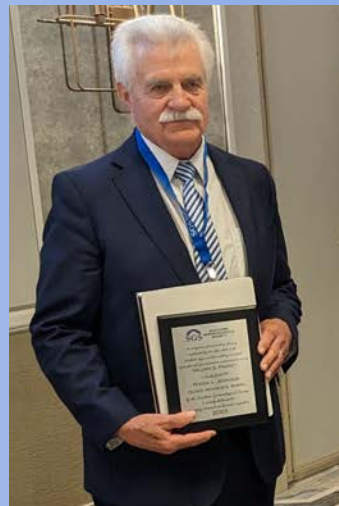
2023 VICTOR MARSHALL FELLOWS

Denise Butler, Jan Wassel, Alexis Bender, Ed Rosenberg



2023 APPLIED GERONTOLOGIST AWARD

Jenny Inker



2023 RHODA L. JENNINGS OLDER ADVOCATE AWARD

William S. Massey



2023 GORDAN STREIB ACADEMIC GERONTOLOGIST AWARDS

Julie Robison
Molly Perkins

NOT PICTURED 2023 MEDIA AWARD

The Caregiver
Community Podcast
Frances Hall,
ACAPcommunity

2023 SERVICE ACTIVITY

For several years, SGS has been working towards a Day of Service as part of the SGS Annual Meeting & Conference. This year, we were thrilled to partner with SPINCLUSION. SPINCLUSION is the Hampton Roads affiliate of the global Cycling Without Age program. They are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in partnership with Bike Norfolk that is run by volunteers and provides bicycle rides to seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities in the Hampton Roads community who wouldn't be able to do so on their own. All rides are free and led by trained pilots in various areas of the community.

As part of our service project, we invited conference attendees, SGS members, our broader aging network, and members of the Norfolk community to consider making a donation to SPINCLUSION to assist in the purchase of another bike. This will allow them to provide more rides. SGS will be providing a \$820 donation to SPINCLUSION.

In addition to raising funds, we also wanted to help inform older adults in the Norfolk community about the wonderful work being done by SPINCLUSION. Below are some photos from our Stroll – Roll – Socialize event on April 15th at Neptune’s Fury Café & Roastery. We look forward to partnering with other nonprofits in our host cities for years to come. A special thank you to our community partners: SPINCLUSION, Neptune's Fury Café & Roastery, the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation, Bike Norfolk, Pedego Electric Bikes, and Old Dominion University. This effort was coordinated by the Victor Marshall Fellows, the Encore Committee, and the Student/Early Career Committee



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- Public Partnerships PPL

Making the Most of Your Membership

Contribute to the *Southern Gerontologist*

SGS is excited to bring back the *Southern Gerontologist* to our membership. Our next issue will be released in the fall, and we invite SGS members to submit articles on issues.

What's New(s)?

- Please send your professional accomplishments (i.e. promotions, job changes, awards, grant work, scholarships, graduation notices) and newsworthy personal events such as weddings, anniversaries, births, etc.
- Have you published a video, article, or podcast you would like to have liked into the newsletter? We can do that! Just send us a link to the material and a description, along with any information you need us to include to help promote the great things you are working on!
- Also, we would like to remember those who have been influential to SGS. Should you know of anyone who may have passed away, please let us know. We welcome the opportunity to publish "In Memoriams" written on the behalf of SGS members who are no longer with us.
- And if you need to brag on one of your fellow members, that's okay too!
- If you have any upcoming events you'd like other members to put on their calendars, please be sure to send the dates and details!

Please limit articles to 250 words with no more than two photos. Send content to Amanda James at admin@southerngerontologicalsociety.org.

Join a Committee

Are you currently on a SGS committee? Joining a committee is one of the best ways to influence the work of SGS and meet other SGS members. You can read about all of our committees at <https://southerngerontologicalsociety.org/committees.html>.

Update Your Profile

Did you know that all SGS members have access to our Member Directory? The Directory can be a wonderful tool for networking with other members, looking for resources, and identifying potential mentors. In order for our Directory to serve its purpose, we need all members to make sure their profile includes helpful information. Our [SGS Member Directory Profile Guide](#) guide will walk you through how to update your profile as well as suggested items to include. If you would like help updating your profile, please reach out to Amanda James at admin@southerngerontologicalsociety.org.

What's On The Horizon for SGS

SGS Supports Two New Projects

SGS is excited to be partnering on two wonderful projects over the next year.

Atención y Apoyo a la Demencia; Adaptation of Culture and Ethnicity-Specific Caregiver Guides for Black and Hispanic/Latinx Families

The guiding purpose of this project is to adapt illustrated and compassionate culture- and ethnicity-specific caregiver guides for use by family youth and older caregivers who are Black, Hispanic/Latinx and especially, those groups of immigrants most likely to seek direct care work in health.

Partner Organization: University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Supported by the SGS Development Committee

Enhancing Health and Well-Being over the Life Course by Promoting Positive Views of Aging among Young Children in the South

The purpose of this project is to provide preschool through second grade (pk-2) teachers with evidence-based educational materials related to aging (and centenarians in particular) with the goal of promoting positive views of aging among teachers and students.

Partner Organization: University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Supported by the SGS Gerontological Education Committee



SAVE THE DATE
October 17th & 18th
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET

SGS Advocacy in Aging Virtual Forum

**Finding Your Place in
Advocacy for Disaster
Planning & Response**

<https://southerngerontologicalsociety.org/advocacy-forum.html>

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What's On The Horizon for SGS

SGS Encore Committee Seeks to Address Ageism

Developed by VCU Gerontology, SGS shared guidelines with the presenters at our 2023 Annual Meeting & Conference on *How to Avoid Ageism in Your Presentations and Publications*. The SGS Encore Committee has determined that they will continue this conversation and look for additional opportunities to address this important issue within the work of SGS. The Committee is currently in the process of planning a webinar in October to support Ageism Awareness Day.

We invite you to read these remarks from **Dr. Stephen Marson**, a member of the SGS Encore Committee and learn from his first hand account. Please stay tuned for ways to engage with us on this issue.

Just prior to my retirement, I began reflecting on my experience and working with nursing home staff. The most annoying and reoccurring experience I observed was the manner in which some staff, including professionals, speak to residents. I found it irritating when I observed some staff speak to residents in a baby-like manner. It was irritating, but I did not know how to articulate my reaction. As a result, I studied it, and made a presentation of my findings at the 2013 SGS conference. Eventually, this paper was published:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277711094_Goffman_and_the_Infantilization_of_Elderly_Persons_A_Theory_in_Development#fullTextFileContent

This theoretical excursion into the infantilization of elders emerged into my analysis on elder suicide. Elder suicide was also a presentation at an SGS conference. The harmful effects of infantilization became more and more transparent to me. It propelled me to have a face-to-face conference with the North Carolina administrative head for Adult Protective Services. I spoke about the grotesque problems of infantilization within the context of unintentional abuse at nursing homes. The reply I received from this administrative head was that speaking to elders in an infantile manner is a sign of endearment and facilitates relationship building. I was absolutely dumbfounded when I heard her response. It was a response by a long-time leader in gerontological services who advocated for treating elderly in an infantile manner. Frankly, I felt sick when I left her office.

What's On The Horizon for SGS

In my study of elder suicide, I found that infantilization is one of the elements that propels elders to contemplate suicide. The relationship between infantilization and suicide is addressed in my presentation at SGS and in my book.

A closely related and unsavory event of ageism relates to application of a research grant for my suicide research. I work closely with our grants department in order to get funds for a sample size to assess suicidal ideation among elders. I, of course, went through all the appropriate IRB channels within my university. Both the director of our grants department and I were dumbfounded when we received that reply from the granting foundation. The letter we received was hostile, stating that the funders were shocked that our IRB would endorse a research project that addressed death and suicide with elderly subjects. The funders insisted that elderly populations were too fragile to think about death and suicide.

The incidences with the head of Adult Protective Services and the foundation for suicide research demonstrates how ageism has been institutionalized within our social structure. In both cases, I was dumbfounded to learn how people who should know better - don't.





Julie Robison, PhD

Farewell but Not Goodbye

This July 2023 issue of *Journal of Applied Gerontology* (JAG) marks my final month as Editor-in-Chief. Editing JAG has provided me the opportunity to vastly expand my knowledge, scholarship, and professional and personal relationships. The past 6 years witnessed momentous changes globally which had profound effects on older adults, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, increased awareness of inequities due to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, ability, and (of course) age, and growing political and cultural divisions resulting in new skepticism toward science and research. In the context of these societal shifts, JAG also underwent significant growth, resulting from the dedication and hard work of a strong and diverse team whose efforts I am so pleased to recognize in this farewell editorial.

I must start by recognizing the nine preceding JAG editors who set this journal on its path of continuing success, especially Malcolm Cutchin who first invited me to join the Editorial Board in 2007, and Joe Gaugler who recruited and coached me through my early years as Editor-in-Chief (see <https://journals.sagepub.com/editorial-board/JAG> for full editorial team roster). Next, I extend my enduring thanks to JAG's two Managing Editors, Kaleigh Ligus followed by Christine Bailey, who operated the day-to-day editorial machine, finding reviewers, responding to author and reviewer queries, consulting with Editorial Board members, managing the busy email inbox, and training and supporting the Associate Editors. As article submissions rose, six Associate Editors joined the JAG team, managing all aspects of assigned articles, diligently inviting reviewers, providing detailed feedback to authors and to me, and maintaining a cohesive editorial experience for JAG authors despite the multiple editorial voices now involved. Book Editors Keith Anderson and newly appointed Ellen Brown coordinated with publishers and volunteer book reviewers to produce thoughtful and timely reflections on new books for educators, practitioners and researchers. Members of the Editorial Board, Statistical Advisors (newly formed in 2021), Guest Editors and hundreds of scholars of applied gerontology dedicated their time as advisors and reviewers: essential, selfless, and under-recognized work that is the lynchpin enabling publication of high quality, clearly presented research. Meanwhile, our partners at Sage Publishing provided the industry expertise and technological platform to keep the whole enterprise humming! Over 6 years, we worked with four excellent endlessly responsive Publishing Editors, two Sage peer review teams who screened every submission for required elements, and numerous Production Editors who brought accepted articles through to their final publication.

Finally, I am exceedingly grateful to Southern Gerontological Society (SGS) executive directors LeeAnn Ferguson and Amanda James, and all the SGS officers, board, and committee members, particularly of the Publications Committee, who entrusted me as the Editor of the Society's sponsored journal. These colleagues warmly welcomed three New Englanders into the SGS family, provided suggestions and feedback in innumerable formal and informal meetings, supported changes to accommodate the journal's growth, and always respected our editorial freedom.

Reflecting on JAG's growth since 2017 brings me such pride! We've had a consistent rise in Impact Factor and Altmetric scores, and explosive increases in numbers of article submissions, downloads, and citations. Even the physical size and shape of the journal grew, allowing more space in each issue and better graphic display of tables and figures to improve readability. We no longer have a backlog. Accepted articles are published in their permanent print issue within 5 months. We have also expanded reader access to journal content in multiple ways, increasing open access articles, featuring author podcasts and Sage Perspectives blogs on the JAG website (<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jag>), and curating a COVID-19 special collection with over 60 articles to date. Each year we worked with guest editors to publish Special Issues, initially selecting from articles waiting for publication in the Online First queue and culminating with two robust 2023 Special Issues with articles responding to calls for submissions on critically important topics: the home care workforce (April) and ageism (June).

I am so pleased to introduce *Journal of Applied Gerontology's* next Editor-in-Chief, Debra Dobbs, a renowned applied gerontology researcher at the University of South Florida (USF) and a highly experienced editor. Dr. Dobbs' numerous areas of research expertise include end of life, hospice and palliative care, dementia and disaster preparedness; she is skilled in quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research. Dr. Dobbs directs the USF PhD in Aging Studies, and currently chairs the Gerontological Society of America Social Research, Policy and Practice section. She has been reviewing articles for gerontology journals for over 20 years, serving on several editorial boards, and is the outgoing editor of *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine (GGM)*, JAG's partner open access journal. In her GGM Editor capacity,



Debra Dobbs, PhD

Dr. Dobbs has participated in the SGS Publications Committee since 2017, providing her with strong historical knowledge of JAG's inner workings. As I join my predecessor Honorary Editors-in-Chief and return to the Editorial Board, I am excited to watch Dr. Dobbs, with assistance from new Managing Editor Jessica Yauk, lead JAG into a new era, continuing to expand our mission to promote excellent gerontological research with clear and compelling applications to policy and practice.

A Supplement of the Southern Gerontologist provided by the Student and Early Career Committee

Highlight of SGS Student Member Work:

We want to recognize and congratulate all SGS student members for their hard work and effort put forth for the conference.

Students with Paper Sessions:

- Karah Alexander, Emory University
- Joy Birabwa, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Yun-Zih Chen, University of Maryland Baltimore and Baltimore County
- Reese Frederickson, Clemson University
- Ginger Heidbreder, Georgia State University
- Jaylah James, North Carolina A&T State University, University of Minnesota
- Sydney Jatio, Clemson University
- Chanel Reid, Georgia State University
- Desiree Sied, Georgetown University School of Medicine
- Gretchen Tucker, University of Maryland Baltimore and Baltimore County
- Lauren Zink, Clemson University

Students with Poster Sessions:

- Brian Battle, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Alfred Boakye, Georgia State University
- Gretchen Tucker, University of Maryland Baltimore and Baltimore County
- Taylor Everly, Mercer University
- Emerald Gibbs, Georgia State University
- Janelle Gore, Emory University
- Victoria Helmly, Georgia State University
- Rachel Scrivano, The Ohio State University

Students with Other Presentations:

- Min Kyoung Park, University of Maryland Baltimore and Baltimore County
 - Best Practices Presentation
- Khushbu Patel, Virginia Tech
 - Wellness Workshop
- Deneisha Scott-Poe, Virginia Tech
 - Wellness Workshop
- Taylor Everly, Mercer University
 - Encore/Student and Early Career Committee Spotlight Session



Brian Battle

My first time at the SGS conference was such a blast! Everyone was so welcoming, and the poster session was a great opportunity to talk to other in the gerontology world about my research. It was also great to have a student mixer to allow the students to get together and explore the wonderful and nearby attractions.

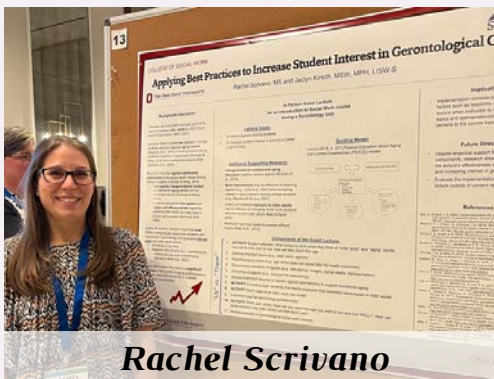
- Taylor Everly



Victoria Helmlly

- I attended the SGS conference for the first time and had a great time. Being around so many like-minded individuals and organizations making changes in the older population was such a rush. I presented a poster at conference and received such positive feedback that I will take going forward in my academic and professional career.

- Morgan Alexander



Rachel Scrivano



Alfred Boakye

Attending the SGS 44th Meeting & Conference was informative and inspirational. It was an empowering, safe space to present my research topic of social isolation, loneliness, depression, and suicide desire that impact the older adults. I am looking forward to next year.

- Chanel Reid



Yun-Zih Chen

A Supplement of the Southern Gerontologist provided by the Student and Early Career Committee

Current Gerontological News/Events

- On April 20th, the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging met to focus on dismantling barriers and building economic resilience for older workers. In April 2021, this Committee held a hearing about older workers' economic security and now two years later they discussed the state of the aging workforce and opportunities to support Americans into the future. Recent data shows that only 45% of 65-year-olds are currently retired, compared to 58% in 2000. One in three older adults aged 65 and older are economically insecure, with the average income being below 200% of the federal poverty level. In communities of color over half of Black and Hispanic older adults are economically insecure. Senator Bob Casey motioned to reintroduce the Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act to restore crucial age discrimination protections and make it easier for older adult workers to seek justice in court when they experience ageism.
- The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging came together on May 18th to examine the shortfalls in the United States nursing home inspection system from an investigation of 15,000 certified nursing homes. Federal data shows that one out of nine nursing homes in the Nation has not received a comprehensive annual inspection in two years. They reported that less than 80 cents per resident per day goes towards nursing home oversight.

Call for Scholarship and Dissertation Funding Information



The SGS Student and Early Career Committee is seeking information pertaining to possible scholarships and/or dissertation funding. Funding and scholarships allow students to not only complete important research but also achieve their academic goals.

If you or your organization offer funding or scholarship opportunities please reach out to Morgan Alexander (mechandl@vcu.edu) and Gretchen Tucker (gtucke1@umbc.edu).

Please include the name of the organization/foundation offering the funding/scholarship, contact information and link, a brief description, and the deadline for application.



CAREERS IN GERONTOLOGY



WHAT IS GERONTOLOGY?

Gerontology is the discipline that studies how aging impacts the physical, mental, and social condition of an older person. These professions seek to support and improve the lives of older adults and their families.

According to Indeed, the following are a few career opportunities in the field:

1. Health educators are employed to empower communities or groups to provide resources to assist older adults on how to take care of themselves.
2. Personal care assistants assist older adults in performing daily activities such as helping individuals dress, prepare meals, personal hygiene, and other tasks.
3. Grief counselors are mental health professionals who support older adults in recovering from losses in the aging process.
4. Director of social services provides resources to support older adults that require assistance, such as transportation, mental health, and educational support.
5. Health services administrators operate healthcare facilities, nursing homes, and hospitals in a management role that employs, supervises, and coordinates support services for older adults.

Are you interested in learning more about these and other professions?

Visit here: <http://ow.ly/STBf500Cn0q>.

INCOMING SGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023 - 2024

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**A special thank you to
Dr. Julie Robison for your incredible leadership as
Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Applied Gerontology* from
August 2017 - August 2023.**

**We are excited to welcome Dr. Debra Dobbs as our
new Editor-in-Chief beginning August 2023.**

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