

K-STATE  
CENTER ON

# AGING

2008 NEWSLETTER



## *The Extra Mile*

The Center on Aging serves gerontology students all over the world  
through innovative distance education programs



**Gayle Doll, Director  
Center on Aging  
gdoll@k-state.edu**

# Greetings!

I love this time of year. Putting together the annual newsletter gives the Center on Aging staff the opportunity to think about all the good things that happen to us. As I think back on the uniting theme of those good things, I can summarize it in one phrase: “It’s all about relationships.”

I think you’ll see that throughout the stories in

this newsletter. Jessica Drugg’s fabulous senior project was through a collaborative experience with gerontology faculty member Migette Kaup; the story about the Intro to Gerontology class illustrates our connection to former students; and the Meadowlark mentor story gives insight into the relationships we are developing with seniors at Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community. We’ve learned

how valuable it has been for our students to develop relationships with these exceptional older persons.

Personally, I have benefited from some special new friendships this past year. I learned that Sarah Palin isn’t the only remarkable woman from Alaska. Sharon Wells and her daughter, Sydney Eden, have been students in our distance education master’s degree program. I hope that you enjoy reading about them as much as I did meeting them. They are the third and fourth distance students that you have met in our newsletters and we look forward to telling you more about future students. Finally, I met Joyce Jenkins. She recently gave a generous donation to the Center — one she decided on when she came back to school for her fiftieth reunion and heard me speak about the needs of elders.

We would love to strengthen our relationships with each one of you. Please keep checking our website to see what we are doing, stop by 103 Leasure Hall for a visit, or remember us when you get a Telefund call. We are grateful for all of you.

## Learning from Experience

When you’re studying a particular part of a population, sometimes it’s hard to grasp what that group is all about. For instance, intangible things like the opinions, emotions and habits of elderly adults could take months for a casual observer to ascertain. But if you’re taking GERON 600: Seminar in Gerontology, you can just ask them.

Thanks to a partnership forged between Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community and the K-State Center on Aging, students in the course take part in a mentoring program that allows them to delve deeply into the lives of older adults. Marla Bugbee, a resident of Meadowlark Hills, has participated in the program for the last three years.

“I found out about it through the Meadowlark newsletter. There are always a lot of activities listed there, and I thought this one sounded interesting,” Bugbee said. “We would meet with the students on Wednesday nights for a few hours, answering their questions or discussing videos that Dr. Gayle Doll would show us.”

The group also discusses various issues that older adults experience on a regular basis. Topics such as funerals, medical issues, family and daily activities are explored at length, and students are able to learn in a far different way than the usual textbook readings. This was an aspect that many students, including Ally Brooks, ’08 graduate in family studies and human services with a secondary major in gerontology, greatly appreciated.

“Being in the group settings, hearing real opinions from older adults, just made the information so much more relevant,” Brooks said.

The course also allowed students an opportunity to examine common stereotypes associated with older adults, as well as with long-term care and assisted living facilities.

“One student asked me, ‘What do you do all day?’” Bugbee recalled with a smile. “I think that the students in this course are able to realize that old age doesn’t mean you’re just going to sit and rock all day. I’m a very active person, and I’m very involved in my community.”

“It really helped me get over the nervousness I felt around older adults that was due in part to society’s views,” Brooks said. “I was really surprised at the level of independence and physical ability the residents had. They don’t need to be treated any differently than anyone else.”

Aside from the opportunity for thoughtful discussion, the residents who participate in the mentoring program are rewarded with some peace of mind about the current generation of students.

“It was reassuring, because you realize that there are a lot of worthwhile kids out there. It really sparked our joy and confidence in them. They’re asking questions and really learning,” Bugbee said.

As to whether or not Bugbee will participate in the mentoring program this spring, things are a little uncertain. She’s got a lot on her plate these days. But she knows one thing for sure:

“The university provides residents with a lot of opportunities. K-State is really important to us, and I think a lot of us are important to K-State in many ways. I think this partnership benefits us both.”

Joyce Jenkins,  
during her  
K-State years



Jenkins  
today



## Alumna Establishes Excellence Fund for Center

The right information at the right time led to benefits on both sides

It's very rewarding to directly impact the lives of others in ways that are also important to you personally. When Joyce Jenkins, '57 general human ecology, realized how much work the College of Human Ecology and the Center on Aging were doing on behalf of older adults, she knew she had to be a part of it.

Jenkins periodically has received information from K-State about how alumni can help the university through their gifts. One piece of information that especially caught her eye mentioned that gifts of securities to K-State can be structured in several different ways, to the advantage of both the donor and K-State.

Jenkins began talking with Jennifer Rettele-Thomas, director of development for the College, and Darci Cain, gift planning officer, about what would be best in her particular financial situation. Jenkins had also attended her 50th K-State class reunion and learned at a Human Ecology luncheon about the work of the Center. Everything sort of came together for her at that point.

"I was not aware of how much they were doing in the area of aging and gerontology issues, and it piqued my interest. With getting older myself and having gone through so much with my parents, and seeing my friends and their parents, I felt that there was such a need for more work to be done helping older people.

"In going further in discussions with Darci and Jenny, I decided this (donating stock to the University) would help us both. I chose to set up an 'excellence fund,' which helps the Center right now. Gayle (Doll, director of the Center) can use the fund at her discretion, and I can add to it over time."

Jenkins has a family full of Wildcats, including her father (agriculture), her son (milling) and her son-in-law (engineering). Jenkins' daughter studied at Emporia State University and finished her education in medical laboratory science in Illinois.

**"With so many people living longer, it may be that I'll see some of the benefits of my contribution myself!"**

— Joyce Jenkins

Jenkins taught for several years in the 1960s and '70s, then began managing the fabric department at a Walmart, continuing to use her human ecology education to good advantage. She has been a 4-H leader, a Pilot Club International member, and served two terms on her school board.

Jenkins later worked with a seniors group at a bank, arranging travel and social activities, which gave her many opportunities to build relationships with older adults. She moved to Topeka in 2001, where she stays active volunteering for her church and Meals on Wheels. Jenkins is proud to be able to help her alma mater in important new work.

"With so many people living longer, it may be that I'll see some of the benefits of my contribution myself!"

*If you would like information about how you can invest in the work of the Center on Aging, please contact Jennifer Rettele-Thomas, director of development, at [jennifer@found.k-state.edu](mailto:jennifer@found.k-state.edu) or 800-432-1578.*

# Partnering Up

Corporate relationships are creating win-win situations at K-State

Moving is never easy. But it does seem to get a little more difficult as we age. Over the years, we accumulate a lot of stuff, and it gets harder to weed out the nonessential. So imagine moving into a room at an assisted living facility. What do you bring with you? And how will you know where to put it, if you've never seen your room? Thanks to a talented K-State interior design student and an innovative corporate partnership, these questions are easier to answer.

Jessica Drugg, a spring '08 graduate in interior design, decided to answer these questions for the residents at Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community in Manhattan. She used her senior project to help older adults with the moving process, giving the residents and their families a tool to plan the layout of their new room ahead of time. Drugg had seen for herself the way an institutional atmosphere can affect older adults, and was thrilled when she saw the changes that were going on at Meadowlark.

"I had grandparents that were in a poorly designed long-term care facility, and it was a very bad arrangement for them

because they had no privacy," Drugg said. "The benefits you get from living in a household model at Meadowlark, as opposed to a facility that's just a bunch of long hallways, are amazing. Everyone should have the opportunity to live in a place like Meadowlark."

**"The partnership between Meadowlark and the Center on Aging allows me to list something like this project on my résumé to show that I have specialized knowledge and training to help this very large part of our society."** — Jessica Drugg

A native of Ankeny, Iowa, Drugg knew K-State had a top-ranked interior design program, and the scholarships the university offered her sealed the deal — she was headed to Manhattan. Early in her college career, Drugg enrolled in Introduction to Gerontology as an elective course. Soon after, she began seeing the interior design possibilities in long-term care facilities.

*Continued to back cover*

**MEADOWLARK MOVING PLAN**

---

**RESIDENT NAME (S):** \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION MOVING FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION MOVING TO: \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**FLOOR PLAN ROOM K-1**



- 1 S.Q. = 1'-0" x 1'-0"
- ⊕ EMERGENCY OUTLET
- ⊖ OUTLET
- OVERHEAD LIGHT
- ▢ TV/CABLE BOX
- △ TELEPHONE JACK
- WALL SCONCE
- ⊕ THERMOSTAT
- ▭ HVAC UNIT
- ▽ SHOWER HEAD

**GENERAL NOTES & SPECIAL REQUESTS:**

---

DOCUMENT WAS CREATED BY JESSICA DRUGG, INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENT AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2008 FRONT PAGE

**MEADOWLARK MOVING PLAN**

---

**RESIDENT NAME (S):** \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION MOVING FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION MOVING TO: \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**FLOOR PLAN ROOM D-1**



- △ TELEPHONE JACK
- WALL SCONCE
- ⊕ THERMOSTAT
- ▭ HVAC UNIT
- ▽ SHOWER HEAD
- 1 S.Q. = 1'-0" x 1'-0"
- ⊕ EMERGENCY OUTLET
- ⊖ OUTLET
- OVERHEAD LIGHT
- ▢ TV/CABLE BOX

**GENERAL NOTES & SPECIAL REQUESTS:**

---

DOCUMENT WAS CREATED BY JESSICA DRUGG, INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENT AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2008 FRONT PAGE

*The design schematics produced by Drugg were incorporated into worksheets that are distributed to future Meadowlark residents and their families, in order to help with planning and moving.*

PRODUCED BY AN AUTODESK EDUCATIONAL PRODUCT

# Aging Gracefully

Introduction course continues to open minds as it closes in on 30-year anniversary

Introduction courses are meant to be just that — an introduction to a subject. But sometimes, given the right mind, an introduction course can open doors, spark imaginations and ignite passions. Talk to many of the students who are familiar with the Center on Aging, and you'll find that Introduction to Gerontology is one of those courses.

The first section of Introduction to Gerontology was offered in 1979, just four years after the Center on Aging was founded. Younger people had seemed to stop revering those older adults who had lived to see so much, and — all too aware of their own mortality — began fearing them instead.

"It was such an eye-opening course. People fear aging, but after taking this course, you wonder why. It's a natural part of life, and to fear it is behind the times," Jake Quigley said.

Quigley, '06 B.S. family studies and human services and gerontology, is currently working on his master's in gerontology and is so committed to his studies that he's completing his degree online — from Spain. As a sophomore, he'd changed his major "about five times" and was clueless as to how to proceed in his academic career. Gayle Doll, director of the Center on Aging, recommended that he take Introduction to Gerontology just to see what it was about.

"Gayle has such a passion for what she teaches, and that course was a turning point for me. A few days after Pam (Evans, the Center's administrative officer) visited our class as a guest lecturer, I was in their office adding gerontology as my secondary major," Quigley said.

Tim McGlasson, '90 B.A. psychology and gerontology, didn't automatically make a connection to gerontology, either. His advisor steered McGlasson toward the Center on Aging. Currently working toward a doctorate of nursing practice at University of Washington and specializing in mental health and dementia care, McGlasson remembers his first meeting with Edith Stunkel, a faculty member of the Center on Aging who passed away in 2001.

"She was my first contact in gerontology. We spent one and a half hours in her office that first day, figuring out classes," McGlasson said. "She emphasized that quality

of life is a very complex issue, and that there needs to be a comprehensive look at aging in society. That's why gerontology is so important."

A specialist at the Alzheimer's Association Professional Training Institute, Courtney Bouker ('06 B.S. marketing and gerontology) sees firsthand the ways in which gerontology can help anyone later in life. Being able to help professionals who work with people affected by Alzheimer's Disease is an example of something about the course that has really stuck with her.

"The gerontology program at K-State is all about the culture change aspect — how to help older adults live better lives. They bring in the professionals and teach you ethics, as well as the different fields in gerontology," Bouker said.

What stuck with Gail Halterman, '91 B.S. life span human development and gerontology, wasn't a lesson from a textbook, but a chapter in her professor's life. Halterman, who is now an attorney

specializing in regulatory and compliance issues in hospitals and long-term care facilities, was taught by Dr. George Peters. Peters served as the Center on Aging's second director, and was gravely ill throughout the course.

"It was so awe-inspiring. He was so open about his experience, and it really showed me that growing older isn't a bad thing or something to be afraid of," Halterman said. "Life is full of transitions, and Dr. Peters was able to show us that getting older, even being ill, is yet another transition."

"In the near future, older adults will be a dominant section of our population, and they are a vital part of our lives. They are very proactive, and it's important to realize that they have a voice," McGlasson said.

## THE FACTS:

1800 Intro students since the course's inception

275 secondary majors since 1993

65 current secondary major students



*Tim McGlasson (left) uses his gerontology experience to help older adults with dementia and mental health issues.*



*As a festive tribute to their favorite show, Survivor, tiki torches lit Eden and Wells' path down to the ceremony site*

*Doll presented a commencement address from a homemade podium, fashioned from a log and decorated with the Kansas state flower*



*Saucer, the family dog, stood in as a special guest during the commencement ceremony*

# The Extra Mile

In Alaska, a mother-daughter distance education duo welcomed Gayle Doll to their very nontraditional commencement

The ceremony had all the pomp and circumstance associated with any graduation: professorial regalia, speeches, a torchlight procession, a wandering dog, the ritual burning of term papers . . .

Well, maybe not just *any* graduation. This one took place this summer against the backdrop of a log home and the blue Alaska sky, where two Kansas State University distance education graduates marked the completion of their master's degrees with the help of Gayle Doll, K-State assistant professor in gerontology and director of the Center on Aging.

"Having a ceremony certainly made the completion of this program special and it was nice to be able to share our accomplishment with our family, friends and colleagues," said graduate Sharon Wells.

The notion started with a light-hearted e-mail to Doll from Wells and her daughter Sydney Eden, both of Anchorage, Alaska. Wells and Eden earned master's degrees in gerontology through the Great Plains Interactive Distance

Education Alliance (GP-IDEA), which is a consortium of 11 universities, including K-State, that offers online degree, certificate and other programs.

"My sister lives in Wamego (Kan.), and went to the University of Kansas. We thought it would be fun to go to the competing school. Of all the schools in the GP-IDEA program, it was the one that we could find a connection to," Wells said.

Wells and Eden's proposal: If Doll would bring their diplomas to Willow, Alaska — which is outside Anchorage and just down the road from Sarah Palin's Wasilla — they would put Doll up at the bed-and-breakfast they operate.

While Doll had only symbolic diplomas to hand over, other aspects of the ceremony left no doubt that a real academic event was in progress. Wells and Eden purchased the appropriate hoods and gowns. A lectern, made of a section of tree trunk, stood behind bouquets heavy with sunflowers. The proud graduates descended a torch-lit path, where, before taking their seats for Doll's address, they



*Wells (left) and Eden celebrated their commencement by barbecued their least favorite course work in an open pit. Keeping close track of everything was Saucer, the family dog.*

barbecued their least favorite course work in an open pit. Keeping close track of everything was Saucer, the family dog.

“Saucer is 13 and a half years old, and as a geriatric dog, was actually the topic of many things we wrote about for our classes,” Eden said.

Being in the same courses at the same time was something that paid off for the mother-daughter duo in several ways.

“It was very nice to be able to share opinions and knowledge with each other,” Eden said. “And having each other in the program was also a huge motivator to get things done, and done well. One couldn’t get a better grade than the other. That just wasn’t acceptable!”

“They were excellent students, very strong, opinionated ladies who worked well in distance education,” Doll said.

Wells and Eden worked in Alaska’s court-designated guardian program before beginning their master’s curriculum, and their experiences often ran counter to some of the theorizing of the assignments.

“It was nice to have someone ‘live’ to talk to and discuss things with outside of the chat rooms and discussion boards. That meant we could express our sometimes not-so-polite opinions,” Eden said.

“That’s exactly the kind of student we look for,” Doll said. “These two women were able to give real-world feedback and share their experiences with others. Their insights might even lead to curriculum changes.”

Doll was happy to have the rare chance to mark such an important occasion with her far-flung students. She’s open to participating in other distance commencements, one of which might happen in the coming spring. A gerontology conference in Paris could put Doll within striking distance of Spain, where Jake Quigley, graduate student in gerontology from Westmoreland, Kan., will be completing his course work while serving in the U.S. Navy.

“You feel a connection with students,” Doll said. “So it’s great to be able to be a part of that commencement process.”



*Wells (left) and Eden paid homage to Great Plains IDEA with homemade banners hung to represent each school in the gerontology master’s program*



*Doll, Wells and Eden mingle with friends and family after the ceremony*

“That age demographic is becoming so large in our country,” Drugg said. “There are so many people I could be designing for in that age group, and they often have very specific needs. There are so many ways to design for them that would help them and make their lives easier.”

Drugg decided to add gerontology as a secondary major, and soon found that the gerontology program connected her with faculty in a variety of colleges and departments across campus. These faculty members bring expertise and fresh perspective to the program, creating a scholastic model of how gerontology touches nearly every aspect of our lives.

Drugg approached Center on Aging director Gayle Doll about her senior project, and was put in contact with Meadowlark’s chief operating officer, Willie Novotny, and his assistant, Rebecca Booher. Working closely with Migette Kaup, associate professor in interior design, Drugg researched the needs of her new client. By discussing her project with Novotny and Booher, she began to get a picture of what residents and their families experience during the moving process.

“Because our rooms have so many different floor plans, furniture arrangement can be a challenge,” Booher said. “We needed a way for residents and their families to know where important fixtures are before they move in, and also help them narrow down what items they’d be bringing from home.”

Drugg started by reviewing the official floor plans of each of the 12 different room layouts. She then scaled the

floor plans down and drew them by hand, and later digitized them using a computer software program called AutoCAD. Drugg also created a key plan in order to show residents and their families where various outlets and lighting fixtures were located in each room. The result was a detailed, to-scale floor plan that allowed residents and their families to plan for the move, making the process more organized and less stressful for all involved.

“I’ve been told they help a lot, because the residents can actually see their rooms without having to walk there,” Drugg said.

“The project has worked out very well for us, and has been extremely helpful. We use them whenever an existing resident changes rooms, or a new resident moves in,” Booher said.

Drugg plans to work for a firm in a larger metropolitan area and earn her certification from the National Council for Interior Design Qualification. Someday, she’d like to be a principal or own her own design firm, and she’s certain that working with older adults is something she’ll continue to do.

“There’s a constant flow of new information to help designers find ways to improve the lives of others. I want to work in healthcare design and long-term care design, and I’m hoping to build on the kinds of models and advances Meadowlark has made in that field,” Drugg said.

“The partnership between Meadowlark and the Center on Aging allows me to list something like this project on my résumé to show that I have specialized knowledge and training to help this very large part of our society.”

If you would like information about distance education courses in gerontology from K-State, please contact Gayle Doll at 785-532-5945 or [gdoll@k-state.edu](mailto:gdoll@k-state.edu). To learn more about supporting the work of the Center, please contact Jennifer Rettele-Thomas at 800-432-1578 or [jenniferr@found.k-state.edu](mailto:jenniferr@found.k-state.edu).

Visit us on the web!  
[www.k-state.edu/gerontology](http://www.k-state.edu/gerontology)



**K-State Center on Aging**  
103 Leasure Hall  
Manhattan, KS 66506-3501  
181

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit # 525  
Manhattan, Kan. 66502

**Notice of Nondiscrimination**

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or other nonmerit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities and employment (including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era), as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, has been delegated to Clyde Howard, Director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 214 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0124, 785-532-6220