

Minnesota Gerontological Society
2007 Spring Conference
Speaker Bios (revised 2_16_07)

Jeanette Aguirre

Jeanette has been employed at the Western Community Action, Inc., Marshall, MN for 25 years in roles dedicated to serving the elderly as well as administering public transportation services throughout a five county project area in southwestern Minnesota for the general public. She now serves as its Transportation Director. She obtained certification as a CCTM (Certified Community Transit Manager) from the Community Transportation Association of America in 1995 and has served on the Minnesota Public Transportation Association Executive Board for six years, the MN/DOT District 8 Area Transportation Partnership, plus other area networking committees and groups. In 1991 she was awarded the Minnesota Public Transit Professional of the Year and received The Program of Excellence Award from the MN Community Action Association in 1992 for new program implementation. Throughout career in transportation, her focus and direction has always been to serve the mobility needs of all residents by coordinating rides, developing partnerships/services, and advocating for standards and policy changes to help systems meet the needs of people living in rural communities.

Gary Barnes

Gary Barnes is a transportation economist at the State and Local Policy Program and a Center for Transportation Studies Research Scholar. He has worked at the University of Minnesota for nine years doing research focused on economic and behavioral aspects of transportation issues. Dr. Barnes is currently involved in research projects examining right-of-way acquisition strategies, evaluation of bicycle infrastructure investments, public attitudes toward road pricing, and improvement of specialized transportation services. He has a bachelor's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Minnesota.

Kari Benson

Kari Benson is the Health Promotion and Nutrition Consultant for the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA). As a part of her role, Ms. Benson manages the Minnesota Falls Prevention Initiative. Prior to her position at the MBA, Ms. Benson was a policy analyst at the U.S. Administration on Aging. Ms. Benson holds a bachelor's degree in human ecology and a certificate in gerontology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a master's degree in public affairs from the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota.

Margaret Christenson

Ms. Christenson is President of Lifease, Inc., the developer of Buildease® software and LivAbility, an on-line questionnaire. The software customizes and prints reports with

ideas and products for safety, convenience, and independence in the home setting. She consults with organizations, architects, interior designers and long term care administrators concerning environmental adaptations to address aging concerns and promote universal design. Ms. Christenson is a frequent seminar leader and has spoken to several hundred consumers and professional groups on the adaptations of the living environment to compensate for age-related changes and the incorporation of universal design. She has written articles and books on these topics. She was Minnesota Occupational Therapist of the Year, chair of the Gerontology Special Interest Section of the AOTA and their Environmental Modification Specialty Certification Task Force.

Lois Cutler

Lois J. Cutler holds a PhD in Housing and Design from the University of Minnesota. She was an NIA postdoctoral at the University of Minnesota, where she was able to initiate a program of environmental research into ongoing studies of quality of life in nursing homes, and ongoing evaluations of assisted living. After her post-doctoral fellowship, she joined the University of Minnesota's Division of Health Policy and Administration in the School of Public Health as a research fellow. She is particularly expert at conducting post-occupancy evaluations to examine how long-term care environments are actually being used by residents, family, staff, and visitors, and how they are evaluated. Her current and recent projects include a longitudinal study of the Green Houses in Tupelo, MS; development and testing of a self-assessment tool for nursing homes to examine their environments with reference to quality of life; development and testing of an idea manual for improving physical environments without major construction; and study of physical settings in assisted living. Recent publications relate to new measurement approaches for physical environments, and use of outdoor space. Dr. Cutler is a board member of the Episcopal Homes of Minnesota, where she has headed up prize-winning designs of low-income housing, and she is on the Health Care Development Committee for Volunteers of America. Recently she completed a resource module on physical environments for Quality Partners of Rhode Island (the Quality Improvement Organization taking the lead on culture change initiatives), and she is a consultant with the National Green House Project.

Elin Schold Davis

Elin Schold Davis OTR/L, CDRS, has headed the American Occupational Therapy Association's Older Driver Initiative since its launch in 2003. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in occupational therapy from the University of Minnesota. She has practiced occupational therapy for more than 25 years, specializing in adult rehabilitation. For the past decade she has pursued opportunities for advancing occupational therapy's role in the ADL of driving and community mobility. Current initiatives include managing NHTSA supported projects targeting therapist education and program expansion to meet the emerging needs of older drivers in their communities. Schold Davis has authored articles and lectured nationally and internationally on the topics of both cognitive rehabilitation and driving. Schold Davis is a certified driving rehabilitation specialist (CDRS), a member of the American Society on Aging's

DriveWell Speakers Bureau, and the CarFit collaborative team. She was recently appointed to represent occupational therapy on the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Committee on the Safe Mobility of Older Persons. She currently holds an off-site staff position for the American Occupational Therapy Association and resides in Edina, Minnesota.

Margaret Donahoe

Margaret Donahoe serves as Legislative Director for The Minnesota Transportation Alliance. Ms. Donahoe joined the Alliance in 2000 to assist with legislative affairs and communications. Prior to joining the Alliance, Margaret spent eight years working for the Minnesota Senate, the last three of those years as Committee Administrator for the Senate Transportation Budget Division. Her prior work experience also includes staff for the Transportation Study Board, a legislative commission established in the early 1990s to develop a 20-year transportation plan for the State of Minnesota.

Frank Douma

Dr. Douma has a Masters Degree in Public Affairs and a Law Degree from the University of Minnesota, and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Grinnell College. He currently is the Assistant Director of the State and Local Policy Program at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and a Research Scholar at the Center for Transportation Studies, both located at the University of Minnesota. He manages research projects related to several different areas of transportation policy, including telecommunications and urban corridor development. In addition to working at the Humphrey Institute, Dr. Douma has a wealth of experience in transportation, having worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Metropolitan Airports Commission and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. While working for these organizations, he gained experience in the legal aspects of transportation policy and an appreciation for the roles that different modes play in urban and rural transportation systems.

Hal Freshley

Hal Freshley holds a PhD in Public Health from the University of Oklahoma. He was involved in research and teaching at the University of Missouri, the University of Michigan and the Humphrey Institute (University of Minnesota). He also held a position at the Metro Area Agency on Aging at the Metropolitan Council. He currently is Planning and Policy Coordinator on the Minnesota Board on Aging. The Minnesota Board on Aging projects he is currently involve in include *Project 2030 and Transform 2010* to raise public awareness of "demographic change" in Minnesota over the next three decades and implement necessary changes to address needs of older Minnesotans. It also includes *Survey of Older Minnesotans*, a statewide sample of 2,250 persons age 55 and older to monitor status of older population. Finally, it includes the *Long-Term Care Reform* project which involves working with network of AAAs, faith-based groups, local

non-profits and counties to expand and improve service and support options for older people and their families.

Micky Gutzmann

Micky Gutzmann holds a Master's degree from the University of St. Thomas. She has more than 13 years of transportation experience starting her career with the Metropolitan Council, Metro Mobility, the Mn/DOT Office of Transit, and is currently the American Red Cross Transportation Services Manager. She also serves on TCRP panel B-31. This research panel is looking at various transit systems across the country, both rural and urban in order to establish "A Guidebook for Measuring, Assessing, and Improving Performance of Demand-Response Transportation." She is a key player in a collaborative effort with the Metropolitan Council to share scheduling and dispatching software. She is very passionate about what she does and who she serves.

Jane Hardin

Jane Hardin is a graduate of Yale University and George Washington University's Law School. She has been the Senior Transportation Specialist at the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) since August 2002. She provides technical assistance and information to transportation providers and social service agencies on developing transportation services to meet the diverse needs of older people. She also serves as liaison between the transportation and aging communities. She is the principal author of CTAA's *Senior Transportation Toolkit and Best Practices* (May 2003). She was the project officer for the Beverly Foundation/CTAA Partnership Project, *Transportation Innovations for Seniors, A Report from Rural America* by Helen Kerschner. Before coming to CTAA, she worked at AARP for over eleven years. Her work there included preparing AARP's five-year strategic plan for transportation; project officer for the joint AARP-NHTSA brochure, *Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully*; liaison with Ford Motor Company's Advanced Safety Team; and the United States representative on the international committee that wrote ISO/IEC Guide 71, *Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities*. She has written numerous publications on legal and aging issues.

LaRhae Knatterud

LaRhae Grindal Knatterud has a BA from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, and an MAPA from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, with major concentrations in gerontology and health care policy. She began her career at the Area Agency on Aging for the Twin Cities, which was at that time housed at the Metropolitan Council. She is currently Director of Aging Transformation for the Continuing Care Administration at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and has worked there for the past 13 years. She was the leader of Project 2030, an initial effort to identify the impacts of the aging of Minnesota's population over the next 30 years. She also was the Chief staff to the state's long-term care task force, from 2000 – 2003 and the Coordinator of Minnesota's efforts on long-term care financing reform.

Currently, she is staff leader for the department's Transform 2010, a project to prepare Minnesota for the aging of the state's population, especially as the large baby boom generation begins to turn 65 in 2011.

Brian Martinson

Brian C. Martinson, Ph.D., is a Research Investigator with HealthPartners Research Foundation in Minneapolis, MN. He is formally trained in Sociology and Demography (University of Wisconsin-Madison), with postdoctoral training in cardiovascular behavioral health (University of Minnesota). Brian Martinson has been involved in health promotion and research at HealthPartners Research Foundation for the past eight years. He is currently the principal investigator on the Keep Active Minnesota project, a five-year study funded by the National Institute on Aging. Much of Dr. Martinson's current research is focused on development of interventions to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy aging, particularly around the areas of physical activity and healthy weight management.

Sims McMahon

An eager participant in physical activity since childhood, Sims McMahon has made exercise her passion and career. Sims did her undergraduate work at Hamline University in the areas of psychology and exercise science. She is currently doing graduate work there in the area of education. Her past positions include personal trainer at many local gyms including the SweatShop. She also was Fitness Coordinator and Fitness Director at several area YMCA's. She is currently an Account Manager for the SilverSneakers Fitness Program throughout Minnesota. Ms. McMahon is certified in personal training through the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA).

Maureen Melgaard-Schneider

Maureen Melgaard-Schneider holds a Bachelor of Science-Management and Ethics, from Crown College, St. Bonifacius, MN and a Fellowship in Geriatric Education from the Minnesota Geriatric Center (MAGEC), University of Minnesota. She currently manages Schneider Consulting Associates, Inc. She served for 11 years (1992 to 2003) as the Regional Coordinator for the Mid Minnesota Seniors Agenda for Independent Living (SAIL) project serving the counties of Big Stone, Carver, Chippewa, Kanidyohi, Lac Qui Parle, McLeod, Meeler, Nicollet, Redwood, Renville, Sibley, Swift and Yellow Medicine. She has also served as project consultant for the Minnesota Chore Corps, Interfaith Institute on Aging, and numerous public and private sector clients including Area Agencies on Aging, elderly housing developers, non-profits, faith-based groups and managed care organizations. She is a Board member of Dare to Dream, Augustana Home Care/Litchfield Area Hospice, Meeker County Aging Council and Dementia Care Foundation. She is a popular speaker and a guest lecturer on issues related to aging at

Ridgewater College, Willmar and Hutchinson, and a regular guest on Radio KWLM “Open Mike” radio broadcast.

Linda Norlander

Linda Norlander, RN, MS, is the planning supervisor for the Minnesota Department of Health Office of Rural Health and Primary Care. She is responsible for rural health program and policy development and staffs the governor appointed Minnesota Rural Health Advisory Committee. Recent program development projects include a statewide workgroup on creating healthy communities for the aging population and a report on rural mental health and primary care. She is author of two books, *Choices at the End of Life: Finding Out What Your Parents Want Before It's Too Late*, (co-authored with Kerstin McSteen) and *To Comfort Always: A Nurse's Guide to End of Life Care* and has also published journal articles on advance care planning, management of patient suffering, and interdisciplinary teamwork.

Bob Roepke

Bob Roepke is a former 3M Executive, where he was working in the areas of technology recruiting, HR and more. He was the Mayor of Chaska for 20 years (1982-2002) and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Carver County Health Partnership as Senior Commission Chair. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Moravian Care Ministries, Ridgeview Medical Foundation, Klein Banks, CAP Agency of Scott, Dakota and Carver Counties, Carver-Scott Educational Foundation, Chaska Chamber of Commerce, Chaska Leadership, Carver County Elected Officials Leadership Program, Carver County Economic Development Corporation and Chaska Housing Land Trust. He is the president of the Board of St. John's Lutheran Church. He is retired but working part-time in real estate development with Klingelutz Corporation.

Nina M. Silverstein, Ph.D.

Nina M. Silverstein, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the University of Massachusetts Boston, College of Public and Community Service. She received her Ph.D. in 1980 from the Heller School at Brandeis University. Since 1984, she has worked closely with the Alzheimer's Association on projects relating to the Association's Helpline, its Safe Return Program, respite care, support groups for family caregivers, home safety adaptations, and environmental and behavioral issues in special care units for people with dementia. She is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. She has co-authored two books: *Dementia and Wandering Behavior: Concern for the Lost Elder* and *Improving Hospital Care for Persons with Dementia* (Springer Publishing: NY). Recent publications have appeared in *The Gerontologist*, *Gerontology and Geriatrics Education*, *Geriatrics and Aging*, *Transportation Research Record*, *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, and *The Journal of Women and Aging*. Technical research reports on transportation available through the Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston include: *Driving in Massachusetts: When to Stop and Who Should Decide* and *Promoting Safe Mobility among Elders by Increasing Awareness of Vehicle Modifications*. She recently spent a sabbatical in Washington, DC for the '04-05 academic year, where she

divided her time between the Department of Transportation and the Alzheimer's Association Public Policy Division. She is a co-investigator with a team from the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute that was awarded funding in 2006 from the national Alzheimer's Association for a project titled: *Fitness to Drive in Early Stage Dementia: An Instrumented Vehicle Study*.

Russell Smiley

Russell Smiley earned a PhD in Health Education from Southern Illinois University – Carbondale. A college professor at Normandale Community College, he teaches stress management, Tai Chi, and First Responder. Dr. Smiley has been studying Tai Chi for 28 years and is a National Trainer for Dr. Paul Lam's Tai Chi for Arthritis and Tai Chi for Diabetes Programs.

Tom Sorel

Tom Sorel has served as Division Administrator, Minnesota, since February 2005. His office, located in St. Paul, oversees an annual program of approximately \$500 million in Federal-aid to the State of Minnesota. The Minnesota Division provides technical and program assistance to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, city, county and tribal governments throughout the State.

Renee Wixon

Renee Wixon is the Lead Planner for the Carver County Health Partnership. She is responsible for facilitating the work of the Senior Commission. Renee holds a Masters in Public Health and has more than 20 years experience working in public health and non-profit organizations.

Jean Wyman

Dr. Jean Wyman is a Professor and the Cora Meidl Siehl Chair of Nursing Research at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing where she directs the Center for Gerontological Nursing and the Minnesota Center for Health Trajectory Research. She also holds a joint appointment in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, and serves as an Associate Director of the University Center on Aging. Dr. Wyman who is certified as a gerontological nurse practitioner directs the Minnesota Continence Associates, a School-owned clinical practice that provides care to incontinent adults in clinic, nursing homes, and assisted living facility settings. She is nationally and internationally recognized for her research on urinary incontinence and fall prevention in older adults. She recently completed a NIH-funded fall prevention trial in high risk elderly women. Dr. Wyman received the National Gerontological Nursing Association's Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Gerontological Nursing in 2006.

Fang Yu

Dr. Fang Yu received her BS in Nursing in China and completed her MSN as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner in 2002 and her PhD in Nursing in 2003 at the University of Pennsylvania. She was subsequently awarded the highly competitive John A. Hartford *Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity* Postdoctoral Fellowship from 2004-2006. While pursuing higher education, Dr. Yu had worked in a variety of clinical settings as staff nurse, clinical educator, and nurse supervisor. Her dissertation focused on the effectiveness of outpatient rehabilitation for promoting functional independence in older adults with cognitive impairment. She continued to pursue this line of research with an emphasis on the impact of aerobic exercise on cognition and function in older adults with Alzheimer's disease as a post-doctoral fellow. Dr. Yu is recently funded by NIH K12 career development award to further her research on examining physical activities and exercise.

Carol J. Zierman

Carol has a M.S. in Public Policy and Management from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh PA. She came to Dakota County since March 2006, with over five years of public sector consulting experience and 12 years of Health and Human Services research experience. She currently is the Coordinator for the Dakota County Aging Initiative. She also serves as Management Analyst for the Dakota County Office of Planning, Evaluation and Development. Her former employers include: Deloitte Consulting, The Wilder Foundation, The National Consortium for Violence Research, and The Center for Policy, Planning and Performance. Her co-presenters are Lynn Moratzka, Director of the Dakota County Office of Planning, Active Living by Design Coordinator and Kurt Chatfield, Dakota County Office of Planning, Comprehensive Plan Coordinator