BrooklineCAN and Will: A Village Movement Success Story

Although he officially retired from the Gerontology Department and Gerontology Institute in 2008, Professor Emeritus Frank Caro has been very busy. He has produced 11 publications, including eight in peer-reviewed journals; is overseeing a multi-university research effort with funding from the Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making; and has devoted himself to service in his community, most notably as the cofounder of the Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN). This organization is part of the new national “village movement,” in which older people collectively influence their experiences and increase their capacity to live successfully in their community.

According to Caro, Brookline’s approach to the village movement through BrooklineCAN is distinctive. The nominal dues ($25 per year) designed to make membership accessible to all are one unusual feature. Another is advocacy to make Brookline more livable for people of all ages. With more than 350 members, Caro says, the Brookline community itself is what helps this type of movement,

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A Lifelong Passion for Social Justice Extends Into Retirement

Activist work around social justice has been a lifelong passion for recently retired professor of English Elsa Auerbach. The daughter of parents who were deeply affected by injustices (they were refugees from Hitler’s Germany), Professor Auerbach learned at a young age the importance of speaking out against injustice. Her parents lost their “land, livelihood, and homes” and it became important to her to continue their social justice ideals in her own work. She became involved with the fight against apartheid in South Africa in 1967 and continues to pursue her

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Message from the Provost

A new academic year has begun, and I am pleased to share with you an overview of on-campus goings-on. These include some achievements of the faculty, the furthering of the internationalization of the campus, receiving new grant supports, the pursuit of new initiatives, and the recruitment of new faculty.

Achievements of our faculty are, in part, expressions of our academic growth and development, and we have many expressions of both. Professor Brian White of Biology won SCIENCE magazine’s Inquiry-Based Instruction Prize for a tool he created to teach genetics; Professor Maxim Olchanyi of Physics was elected a fellow of the American Physical Society, signaling broad recognition of his significant contribution in the application of physics to science and technology; Professor Maria Ivanova, of Conflict Resolution, Global Governance, and Human Security and co-director of our Center for Global Governance and Sustainability (with some of our students), helped to win for the campus “consultative status” at
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organization to thrive. "Brookline is a special community. Never before have there been so many older, well-educated people that want to play an active role in their community," he says.

Professor Caro serves as co-chair of BrooklineCAN’s steering committee and chair of the Livable Community Advocacy Committee. Since its creation in 2011, BrooklineCAN has spearheaded a number of initiatives, among them: developing a guide to residential buildings with elevators; developing a guide and interactive map of restrooms that are available for members (suggested by UMass Boston Professor Emerita Mary Stevenson, who is also on the committee); providing a list of screened service providers in the area; lobbying with the town to reenact unlimited street parking for caregivers; and creating an extensive website, www.brooklinecan.org, with many links for education, support services, and activities. BrooklineCAN is currently encouraging its local government to become part of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. With the cooperation of town departments, it is hoping to submit a letter of intent this fall and put an action plan in place.

For those who live outside of Brookline but would like to be part of the village movement in their own city or town, Professor Caro offers the following advice:

1. Network. What's the interest level in your community? You may need to start with a smaller group, and you may find that the Senior Center in your community is a great place to find volunteers.


3. Collaboration. Who else is willing to work with you? Look for a strong local organization that can help provide you with a base, such as the Council on Aging for your city or town.

As a result of his efforts with BrooklineCAN, Professor Caro has found that his academic interests have been sparked as well. Recently, he has been working with a graduate of the UMass Boston PhD Program in Gerontology, Kelly Fitzgerald, editing a special issue of the Journal of Aging and Social Policy on age-friendly cities. The quality of the responses Professor Caro and Kelly Fitzgerald have received for the issue has encouraged them to seek publisher approval for expanding this work into an edited book. Another outcome of this initiative has been involvement from UMass Boston gerontology graduate students who have found their way to Brookline.

Professor Caro was honored in 2011 with the Brookline Community Foundation's Unsung Hero Award for his efforts with BrooklineCAN.
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interests in social change in both South Africa and Palestine today.

In 2011, while still at UMass Boston, Professor Auerbach visited South Africa’s University of Western Cape and became involved with the Alternative Information Development Centre (AIDC). The center was established in 1996 “in response to the democratic transition in South Africa and the new opportunities and challenges it brought those seeking greater social justice within the democracy.” In her work with this center, she helped others follow through on progressive ideas of the original democratic movement in South Africa. Specifically, she worked on the center’s magazine, Amandla! (the word means “power”), a leading progressive magazine in South Africa. She also sought to develop skills, education, and training to help grassroots activists learn how to disseminate media messages about themselves.

Professor Auerbach also devotes time to volunteering with the organization Jewish Voice for Peace (www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org). Through education and advocacy, this organization supports human rights in Palestine while the country struggles against Israeli occupation. “Palestine is the new South Africa. Although these struggles may not appear to be related, Palestine is really an apartheid situation as well,” says Professor Auerbach. This connection between two very different countries continues to keep Professor Auerbach engaged and passionate.

A recent (May 2012) retiree, Professor Auerbach feels it is important to remain involved with the types of issues on which most of her career was focused. She will be traveling to South Africa from January 2013 to April 2013 to continue her work there with AIDC and Amandla! magazine. She will also be working with popular educators and supporting their work. For more information about the magazine, please visit its website: www.amandlapublishers.co.za.

*Taken from www.aidc.org.za.

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the United Nations—giving UMass Boston special access to UN deliberations; and Professor Hartwell of Sociology was selected to receive a 2012 Commonwealth Citation for Outstanding Performance by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health for her work with the Plymouth Mental Health Court.

In international matters, we have been involved in a number of activities that have either increased our international partnerships (in Germany, China, Brazil, and Cambodia, among other countries); expanded the number of study-abroad opportunities for our faculty and students (Australia, Haiti, Kenya, Spain, and Colombia, for example); or strengthened our International Visiting Scholars Academy, which saw 26 scholars join us from several countries, including China, Japan, and Korea. In addition, the work of the Institute for International and Comparative Education saw some 70 scholars working with our College of Education and Human Development; three of our professors (two from American Studies and one from English) taught during the summer at Renmin University in China, as part of the work of our Office on International and Transnational Affairs; and we increased the number of international students who joined UMass Boston.

The year also witnessed record grants and research expenditures, including a $6.7 million collaborative effort—led by Professor Maria Idali Torres of the Gaston Institute—with UMass Worcester. We received more than $56 million in research funding, including monies from abroad.

New initiatives include the creation of academic/research units such as the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring (a national entity with endowed support), the Institute for International and Comparative Education, and the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development. This school, which will make disability studies the center of its emphasis on inclusion, has partners in every state of the Union except one, and similar partners in many countries throughout the world. University College launched its Center for Innovation and Excellence in e-learning, and the university added to its library holdings through donations, including gifts from the former Peace Abbey in Sherborn to our newly created Center and Archives for Peace, Social Action, and the Arts.

Nothing we do exceeds the importance of faculty recruiting. Last year, we recruited 50 new faculty, 38 of whom are tenure-track, 4 of whom were recruited with tenure, 4 of whom are research or clinical professors, and 4 of whom are visiting professors. Fifty-four percent of those recruited are female, and 26 percent are persons of color. They join us from 14 countries and are of the first standing in their academic achievements.

I hope the activities mentioned above give you a sense of the growth and renewal taking place at UMass Boston. We also hope you will be visiting with us soon.
Retired Faculty Reconnect with UMass Boston through Lifelong Learning Program

Since its inception in 1999, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), a lifelong learning program for older adults at UMass Boston, has offered non-credit courses taught by many volunteer retired faculty. This fall, ten retired professors will teach 5- to 8-week courses and conduct one-time lectures to more than 1,000 members of OLLI. These courses and lectures include the following:

- What Can Film Teach Us about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?, Linda Dittmar (English)
- African Film Series, Herman Hemingway (Criminal and Constitutional Law)
- Darwin, Evolution, and Biology Today, Ruth Bennett (Biology)
- Basic Italian II and Introduction to Italy and Italian Culture, Irene Roman (Modern Languages)
- Writing Stories and Memoirs, Carter Jefferson (History)
- Brookline’s Variation on the “Village” Model: Implications for Your Community (lecture), Frank Caro (Gerontology)
- Stephen A. Douglas and Antebellum Democracy (lecture), Martin Quitt (History), whose book on the same subject is being published this fall

To learn more about OLLI and teaching opportunities, please visit www.oli.umb.edu, email paula.ogier@umb.edu, or call 617.287.7312.