Celebrating Professor and Gerontology Institute Director, Ellen Bruce

Ellen Bruce, JD, will retire as an instructor and the Director of the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston at the end of the school year. Ellen has worked at UMass Boston for twenty-five years and has had an integral role in shaping the department. She founded the Pension Action Center, which houses the New England Pension Assistance Project, the Illinois Pension Assistance Project, and the National Pension Lawyers Project, in 1993. Ellen has also been active in the local community, serving on many local nonprofit boards and as the past president of the national board of the Older Women’s League and the Health Law Advocates.

In honor of her retirement, GeroNews interviewed professor Bruce to learn more about her time at UMass Boston and her advice for students. Read the interview on page 2.

Congratulations Gerontology Graduates!

2014 Doctoral Degree Graduates:
Caitlin Coyle
Judy Poey
Cathy Wong
Jiyoung Lee
Deborah Gray

2013 and 2014 Master’s Degree Graduates:
Fall 2013
Jennifer Ingle
Kristina Turk
Ping Xu
Spring 2014
Joo Suk Chae
Elizabeth Chen
Brittany Gaines
Emma Quach
Mai See Yang

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Bruce Shares her Insights and Advice after 25 Years

Hayley Gleason: What is your best memory from your early years at the University?
Ellen Bruce: Twenty-five years ago, only a few people were talking about the aging of the U.S. population. I had never heard the term “Gerontologist” and had no idea what it meant so when I got a job as a gerontologist it was a bit of a shock. From the very beginning, I loved teaching. Our students bring so much to the classroom and I love being part of this community of learning.

HG: What have you enjoyed most about working at UMass Boston?
EB: Two aspects of UMass Boston have nurtured me. First, I love the diversity of the faculty and student body. Just walking around the campus gives me hope for the future. Second, the university has allowed me a great deal of freedom to investigate issues and problems of older persons that has kept me interested and engaged for 25 years. You can’t ask for more than that.

HG: What advice do you have for students as they graduate and begin their careers?
EB: I recently read a blog that questioned the advice to graduates that they should follow their passions. The author said people should follow their skills and their passions will follow. I think graduates should take the advice of the SPO panel on Careers in Aging, which together advised students to look for the intersection of their passion, their skills, and where the money is. In essence, that is how I got into aging. My skill was as a lawyer; my passion was to help poor people, and the AoA had just started funding legal service programs for older people.

HG: What are you most looking forward to in your retirement?
EB: My first order of business is to get some sleep! Next, I would like to exercise more regularly, as in every day. I hope to take up some creative hobbies like painting, photography, or woodcutting. But most of all I am looking forward to stepping back and seeing where I can focus my talents to help poor older people – still a passion of mine.

Silverstein Awarded AGHE’s Friedsam Mentorship Award

Nina Silverstein, Director of the Undergraduate Gerontology program, was honored at this years Association of Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) conference with the Hiram Friedsam Mentorship Award. The conference took place at the Westin in Denver, Colorado, from February 27th through March 2nd, 2014. Dr. Silverstein received a plaque at the Hiram Friedsam Award Presentation and Lecture on Sunday, March 2nd. She also shared her thoughts on mentorship in her lecture, “Reflections on mentoring: Connecting and reconnecting across life’s path.”

Dr. Silverstein was nominated by current and former undergraduate and graduate students in the Gerontology program, many of whom were present to see her accept the award in Denver. Dr. Silverstein was selected for her contributions to “gerontological education through excellence in mentorship to students, faculty or administrators.”

The award celebrates Hiram J. Friedsam, who was a professor, co-founder, and director of the Center for Studies in Aging and Dean of the School of Community Service at the University of North Texas. The purpose of the award is to recognize faculty who emulate Dr. Friedsam, who was an outstanding teacher, researcher, colleague, and mentor.
Dr. Kathrin Boerner has accepted the position of associate professor in the Gerontology program. Dr. Boerner currently works as a senior research scientist at the Jewish Home Lifecare Research Institute on Aging and as an associate professor in the Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. She is also a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the Gerontological Society of America, and an advisory board member for the *Journal Clinical Rehabilitation* and an editorial board member of the *Journal of Geriatrics and Palliative Care*. Dr. Boerner’s research interests focus on the adaptation to bereavement and chronic disability in middle and late adulthood. She is currently working on a study examining how direct care workers respond and adapt to patient death.

Dr. Boerner received her BA in Psychology from the Christian Albrechts University in Kiel, her MA in Psychology from the University of Trier, and her PhD in Adult Development and Aging from the Free University of Berlin. Her dissertation examined family dynamics following parental loss. Dr. Boerner was also a Research Fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Boerner has two daughters, ages five and eight. Her husband currently works in New Hampshire as a cellist with the Apple Hills String Quartet. She is looking forward to being closer to her husband’s job so that her family can spend more time together. She also stated she feels that the University of Massachusetts Boston Gerontology Department will be an excellent fit for her background and interests.

Dr. Kathrin Boerner has accepted the position of associate professor in the Gerontology program.

The Gerontology Institute has announced that Len Fishman, JD, will be the new Director following the retirement of Ellen Bruce, JD. Fishman brings an incredible amount of experience working in the policy, academic, and business sides of the healthcare field. He has most recently been a Visiting Scholar and Executive-in-Residence at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management. He also is the co-founder and director of The Conversation Project, an organization dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for end-of-life care. Prior to his work at Brandeis, Fishman was the CEO of the non-profit, Hebrew Senior Life, from 2000-2013. In addition, Fishman worked as the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services in New Jersey. During this time he oversaw nearly 1,900 employees and was in charge of a budget of $2.3 billion. Prior to this position, Fishman was the president and CEO of LeadingAge (previously the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging). LeadingAge represents non-profit organizations serving seniors throughout the country and advocates on their behalf. Fishman is an attorney and practiced health care law prior to joining LeadingAge.
The Center for Social and Demographic Research in Aging, part of the Gerontology Institute, released a report titled, “Aging in Boston” at an event on April 10, 2014. The report, compiled for the Boston Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, outlines the current and future demographic trends of the aging population in Boston. The event announcing the report’s release was held in the Ryan Lounge at UMass Boston and was attended by the new Boston Mayor, Martin J. Walsh, and Commissioner, Emily Shea. Ellen Bruce, Director of the Gerontology Institute, presented some of the main findings from the report, including the expected growth of Boston seniors and the economic, housing, and health of this population. Data were compiled for the whole city as well as for the individual neighborhoods within Boston. Commissioner, Emily Shea stated about the report, “We are excited to finally have Boston-specific data on this population. We look forward to working with our partner agencies to utilize this data to plan for Boston’s growing and diverse older adult population.” At the event, Mayor Walsh announced that the City of Boston will join the World Health Organization’s Age Friendly Cities Network to help the city prepare for the expanding older adult population.

Gleason Receives Paper Award

Third-year student Hayley Gleason was awarded the student research paper award from the American Society on Aging (ASA). The annual award is given to the best unpublished graduate research paper on a completed project relevant to aging and applicable to practice. Gleason’s second year paper is titled “The caregiving relationship: Does the type of caregiver affect the mental health of the care recipient?” Gleason was recognized at ASA’s annual conference in San Diego, CA, and was presented with a plaque during the general session on March 11, 2014. She also presented her research during a poster session, received a complimentary one-year student membership, and was provided with support for travel and conference registration.
SPO Hosts Careers in Aging Event and Induction Ceremony

On April 7, 2014, UMass Boston Gerontology Department’s Sigma Phi Omega honors society hosted a Careers in Aging Panel Presentation and Induction Ceremony in the Ryan Lounge on the UMass Boston campus. The panel of four well-established professionals shared words of wisdom about their experiences and career paths with students and others in attendance. The presenters included: Elissa Sherman, President of LeadingAge MA; Emmett Schmarsow, Program Manager at the Executive Office of Elder Affairs; Len Fishman, Visiting Scholar and Executive-in-Residence at Brandeis University and former CEO of Hebrew Senior Life; and Jennifer Warren, Executive Director of Geriatric Care Management (CARE) and a graduate of UMass Boston’s Gerontology doctoral program. Following their presentations, students, faculty, and visitors were given the opportunity to ask the speakers questions about their careers and decisions they made along the way. A fantastic lunch was served before the 44 new SPO inductees from the Masters and PhD gerontology programs were announced.

Students Celebrate Mother’s Day by Giving Back

In celebration of Mother’s Day, UMass Boston gerontology students organized a volunteer manicure event at a local nursing home. The event had five volunteers, two of which were UMass gerontology students Kristen Porter (4th year) and Krystal Kittle (1st year). Throughout the morning, the volunteers provided manicures and hand massages to more than 15 residents, including one gentleman who himself a PhD. One resident who had just lost her husband a few days before said this about the event “I can’t remember feeling so cared for. I have no children, and now no husband, but feel special today thanks to you.”
Students Present at Conferences Both on and off Campus


Gleason, H., Coyle, C., Steinman, B. A., Somerville, C. R., & Mutchler, J. E. “Evaluating the needs of older adults in Massachusetts Communities.” Community-Engaged Partnerships Symposium, University of Massachusetts Boston, April 2, 2014. [Poster]


Gleason, H. “The caregiving relationship: Does the type of caregiver affect the mental health of the care recipient?” ASA Aging in America Conference, San Diego, CA, March 12, 2014. [Poster]

Gleason, H., & Lindemer, A. Sigma Phi Omega: Technological innovations to help improve online student member participation. Association for Gerontology in Higher Education Conference, Denver, CO, February 28, 2014. [Poster]


Miller, E. A., Gidmark, S., Gadbois, E., Guihan, M., & Intrator, O. “Nursing home referrals within the Veterans Health Administration: Practice variation according to facility type and payment source.” Community-Engaged Partnerships Symposium, University of Massachusetts Boston, April 2, 2014. [Poster]

Student Presentations continued on to page 7.
Student Presentations continued from page 6.


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**Students Receive Honors, Publish Manuscripts**

**Awards and Honors**

**Jiyoung Lyu, PhD,** was awarded the Gerontology Dissertation Book Award for the Gerontology Department. Her dissertation is titled, “The impact of childhood SES on decline in cognition among older adults.”

Third year student, **ShuangShuang “Wendy” Wang,** was the recipient of the Gerontology Scholarship Award for her 2nd-year paper titled, “Giving and receiving financial transfers and life satisfaction of older parents.”

**Caitlin Coyle, PhD,** and student, **Chae Man “Jay” Lee,** were both awarded the Gerontology Service Award for their commitment to the Gerontology Department, faculty, and students. Caitlin was selected for her continued volunteerism in support of the department as well as her role as a mentor and friend to other students. Jay received the award because of his leadership and mentorship to other students, particularly the International students within the department.

**Ning Xie** and **Ping Xu** were both awarded the Samuel Wu Award, which includes $500, to support their research. The fund was set up to support national and cross-national, or cross-cultural, research on aging Asian-Americans with an emphasis on Chinese and Chinese-American elders.

Second year student, **Elizabeth Chen,** was awarded first place in the student paper contest for the Massachusetts Gerontology Association. She was awarded the prize at MGA’s annual conference, which took place at UMass Boston on May 22, 2014.

*Student Accomplishments continued on to page 8.*
Student Accomplishments continued from page 7.

Awards and Honors (continued)

Third-year student, Hayley Gleason, was selected as the featured student speaker at the Chancellor’s event “The transformative power of philanthropy.” The event for major donors took place on April 30, 2014. Gleason was also awarded second prize in the student paper contest for the Massachusetts Gerontology Association. Awards were given at MGA’s annual conference on May 22, 2014, at UMass Boston. In addition, Gleason was accepted and funded to attend the Survey of Income and Program Participation Introductory Workshop at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, over the summer.

Student, Kristen Porter, was awarded third place prize in the Massachusetts Gerontology Association paper competition.

Publications and Reports:


Recent Faculty Awards, Publications & Presentations

Faculty of the Gerontology Department have been busy receiving awards, publishing books and articles, and presenting at local and national conferences. Below is an excerpt to highlight their work:

Faculty Awards and Service:

Associate Professor Edward Alan Miller was awarded the Joseph P. Healey Research Grant for the proposal, “The Portrayal of the Nursing Home Sector in 49 U.S. Newspapers, 1999-2008.”

Associate Professor Beth Dugan participated in a legislative briefing at the State House on May 6, 2014. The Healthy Aging in Massachusetts briefing was convened by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. State Senator Pat Jehlen and Representative Jim O’Day (co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs) offered remarks, as did Dr. Ruth Palombo, Senior Health Policy Officer at the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. Dr. Dugan presented the results from the Health Aging Data Report.

Faculty Presentations:


Miller, E. A. “Building a career at the intersection of health services research an public policy.” Workshop for Integrating and Discussing Topics on Healthcare (WIDTH), Ph.D. Program in Health Services Organization and Policy, Department of Health Management and Policy, The University of Michigan, February 14, 2014.


Faculty Accomplishments continued on to page 10.
Faculty Publications and Reports:


Alumni Make Waves Around the Country

R. Turner Goins (Gerontology PhD class of 1998) was selected as Western Carolina University’s first Ambassador Jeanette Hyde Distinguished Professor of Gerontological Social Work. Goins is the associate director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research and associate professor in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences at Oregon State University. She will join Western Carolina faculty on August 1, 2014.

Bei Wu (Gerontology PhD class of 2000) has been named a distinguished professor of nursing at Duke University. Bei Wu is a professor in Duke’s School of Nursing, as well as the Director for International Research and the Director of Methods Core, ADAPT Center. Wu is a member of the Global Health Institute and a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development. She had held appointments at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and at the West Virginia University Department of Community Medicine and Center on Aging. Immediately following her graduation from UMass Boston, Wu worked as a research associate and research methodologist at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and as a senior research associate at the Center for Health Economics Research in Massachusetts.

View her award celebration on YouTube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gx4-340Vt_I&feature=youtu.be
Celebrating Student, Alumni and Faculty’s Big Moments

The Gerontology Department would like to offer its Congratulations to:

Professor Eddie Miller and his wife, Jessica Hoffman, on the birth of their son, Noah Ephrym Hoffman Miller. Noah was born on Monday, April 28th at 2:06 am weighing 7lbs 3 oz and 19 inches long. His sisters, Anabelle and Dina, are thrilled!

PhD student, Corina Ronneberg, on accepting a position as a Senior Research Specialist at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of Disability and Human Development beginning May 1st.

PhD student, Kristina Turk, on her new position as an adjunct professor at Salem State University. She will be teaching two sections of Adulthood and Old Age in the Psychology Department.

Abigail Butt on her appointment to the Board of Directors of the Salem Council on Aging.

Judith Poey on the completion of her PhD. Judy’s dissertation was entitled, “The social environment, APOE e4, and dementia: The social environment as a moderating factor among individuals genetically predisposed to develop dementia.” Her defense occurred on February 28, 2014, and Jeffrey Burr, Frank Porell, and J. Scott Roberts from the University of Michigan served on her committee.

Deborah Gray on the successful defense of her dissertation titled, “Patterns of dissaving among U.S. elders.” Her defense was held on March 21, 2014, and her committee members included Ellen Bruce, Frank Porell, and Christian Weller.

And Caitlin Coyle on her successful defense of her dissertation, “The effects of loneliness and social isolation on hypertension in later life: Including the risk, diagnosis and management of the chronic condition” on March 28, 2014. Her committee members included Jan Mutchler, Elizabeth Dugan, and Jane Sacynski from UMass Medical School. Caitlin has accepted a post doctoral fellowship in the Yale School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy and Management. She will begin this two-year position in the Fall of 2014.
### Academic Calendar 2014–2015 School Year

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<tr>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Winter 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Labor Day- No Classes</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
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<td>Classes Begin</td>
<td>Jan 5</td>
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<td>Add/Drop Ends</td>
<td>Martin Luther King– No Classes</td>
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<td>Columbus Day– No Classes</td>
<td>Jan 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring/Winter 2015 Registration Begins</td>
<td>Classes End</td>
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<td>Veterans Day– No Class</td>
<td>Jan 23</td>
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<td>Pass/Fail &amp; Course Withdrawal Deadline</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Recess– No Class</td>
<td>Semester Begins</td>
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<td>Classes Resume</td>
<td>Jan 26</td>
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<td>Semester Ends</td>
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<td>Study Period</td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
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<td>Final Exam Period</td>
<td>Presidents Day– No Classes</td>
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<td>Emergency Snow Day</td>
<td>Feb 16</td>
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<td>Spring Vacation– No Classes</td>
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<td>March 15-22</td>
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<td>Classes Resume</td>
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<td>Summer/Fall 2015 Registration Begins</td>
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<td>April 6</td>
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<td>Patriots Day– No Classes</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
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<td>Semester Ends</td>
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<td>May 13</td>
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<td>Final Exam Period</td>
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<td>May 18-22</td>
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<td>Memorial Day– No Classes</td>
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### National Conferences 2014-2015

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<th>Gerontological Society of America</th>
<th>AGHE’s Annual Meeting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Walter E. Washington Convention Center</td>
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