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Contact: Cheryl Deep (cell) 248-225-9474
(work) 313-664-2607
cheryldeep@wayne.edu

Institute of Gerontology to host 500 seniors at Art of Aging Successfully

DETROIT – Sculpture, jewelry, watercolors, photos, quilts and oil paintings will crowd the halls of Greater Grace Conference Center April 16 when Wayne State University’s Institute of Gerontology hosts 500 seniors at the Art of Aging. Designed to showcase the creative methods older adults use to grow older with meaning and purpose, the Art of Aging is in its 16th year. The event sold out in early April.

“We are extremely proud that this event is – and always has been -- organized by older adults. ‘For seniors and by seniors’ is more than a motto,” said Dr. Peter Lichtenberg, director of the Institute of Gerontology and a strong advocate of the conference. “We provide resources and assistance, but the themes, workshops and speakers are all decided by the Elder Advisors to Research, our volunteer committee of seniors.” This year’s theme is ‘Retired and Rewired: How Sweet it Is.’

“I always wanted to write,” said Joann Castle of Detroit. Twenty-seven years spent in a health care career and raising 7 children left little time to write anything down. “Now I can’t stop,” she said. “Writing my memoirs has given me the opportunity to assess my life and realize how fortunate I have been to live, work and raise my family in this unique city of Detroit.” Joann also belongs to Legacy Writer’s, a free writing support and education group that meets twice monthly at the Institute of Gerontology.

Lynett Cooper of West Bloomfield makes “wearable art.” She said the feedback from people about the quality of her jewelry is positive and rewarding, plus creating jewelry is a great way to relieve stress. Pricilla Phifer, 69, of Franklin, said, “Painting keeps the mind sharp and the body moving. Researching the art is a must and this stimulates the brain. I get much enjoyment from creating and it’s very therapeutic.”

“*Art of Aging Successfully* celebrates creativity throughout life,” said IOG Outreach Director Donna MacDonald. “It’s a beautiful example of how the Institute of Gerontology acts as a catalyst in the community to enhance aging and empower older adults.”

Art of Aging is held April 16, from 9 am to 2 pm at Greater Grace. Artists hail from Detroit, Canton, Dearborn Heights, Southfield, Franklin, Novi, Ypsilanti, Southgate and West Bloomfield. Artists range in age from 55 – 90 and submit jewelry, clay sculpture, oil paintings, quilting, calligraphy, watercolors, memoirs, poems and music. ([Click](#) for full conference brochure or visit www.iog.wayne.edu.) Call Cheryl Deep to arrange an advance interview with an artist from a specific suburb.

The Institute of Gerontology researches aging, educates students in gerontology, and presents programs on aging issues relevant to professionals, caregivers and older adults in the community (www.iog.wayne.edu). The Institute is part of the Division of Research at Wayne State University, one of the nation’s preeminent public research institutions in an urban setting. For more information about research at Wayne State University, visit <http://www.research.wayne.edu>.