

Minnesota State University, Mankato's Gerontology Program

Newslink



New Program Director

Special points of interest:

- New Program Director
- Chesley Lecture 2007
- New Mission

In August 2006, Jim Tift began serving as the new Director of Minnesota State University, Mankato's Gerontology Program and Center on Aging. He comes to MSU with more than 30 years experience in gerontology and in higher education.

After receiving his Master's degree in gerontology from the University of South Florida in 1975, Jim directed and taught for three years in a two year associate degree program in Aging and Human Development. He has also taught courses as an adjunct faculty member in psychology and in human services at two other two year colleges, Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Inver Hills Community College. Since 1979, he has been a part-time community faculty member teaching in the Human Services-Social Gerontology Program at Metropolitan State University. From 2000-2005, he was Program Director and Associate Professor in the Master's degree program in

Health and Human Services Administration at the Twin Cities campus of Saint Mary's University.

In addition to his teaching, Jim has worked in a number of non-profit agencies serving the elderly and people with disabilities, including education and training positions in the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Ebenezer Society and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Jim is a founding member of the Minnesota Gerontological Society (MGS) and continues to serve as a member of its Board of Directors.

When asked about what excited him most about taking this position at MSU, Jim stated, "I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to work in a position that combines two of my greatest passions, gerontology and higher education. Having known and worked with Dave Janovy for many years, and respecting all the time and hard work that Jay Elliott and Leah Rogne put into this program, I am ex-

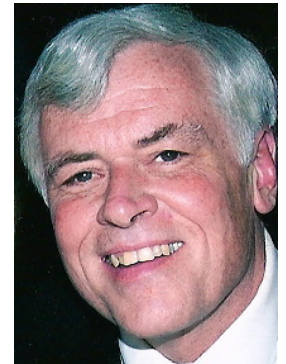


Photo of Jim Tift

cited about the tremendous potential for growth of both the Gerontology Program and Center on Aging.

"I look forward to getting input from faculty, staff, community members and especially students, using their ideas and recommendations to strengthen our efforts in gerontology programming here at Minnesota State University, Mankato."

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Into Aging — Simulation of Aging for Nursing Students

The 2nd semester junior nursing students who are enrolled in the gerontological theory and clinical courses participate in a simulation game “Into Aging”. The objectives are:

1. To gain awareness of the challenges of late adulthood
2. To gain empathy and insight into the problems of late adulthood.
3. To develop a more positive orientation and view of aging
4. To develop strategies for change on a personal and

societal level that will have a positive impact on aging.

The students experience various sensory losses through the use of ear plugs, eye glasses smeared with Vaseline, and oven mitts to simulate arthritis. This game consists of life events that result in the students experiencing the loss of valued objects including their identity, occupation, finances, etc. They become increasingly dependent, isolated and

powerless.

The leaders use humor and sarcasm to enhance the double standard that we apply to older adults, with an increasing negative attitude emerging as the game continues.

Once the game is completed debriefing brings a greater understanding of what the older adult experiences as he ages. This simulation initiates a change in attitudes toward older adults as they become more open to the

challenges they face, reducing dependency and increasing independence as a more valued role is perceived for them in our society.

Submitted by Dr. Regina Smith



2007 Chesley Lecture “Listening to the Lessons of Aging”

Minnesota State University, Mankato’s Center on Aging will be hosting its 2nd annual Chesley Lecture. The Chesley Lecture is named for Betty Chesley, who is a long time resident of Mankato. The lecture will take place on Monday, April 2, 2007 at 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm. The location is at the Country Inn and Suites, which is located in Mankato just North of Hwy 14 and Hwy 22

intersection, on Premier Drive. This years theme is “Listening to the Lessons of Aging” . Dr. Leah Rogne from Minnesota State University, will be hosting the lecture. Our guest speakers will include Helen Kivnick and Jim Klobuchar.

Helen Kivnick is the executive director of City Songs and faculty of the Social Work Department

at the University of Minnesota. Helen’s current research includes “Vital Involvement Practice” and “Elder Role Models in Long-Term Care”.

Klobuchar was a columnist with the Star Tribune for thirty years, authored 20 books . Jim was voted the nation’s outstanding columnist in 1984.

He keeps busy with Jim Klobuchar Adventures and writing. This lecture includes a meal and the cost is \$5.00 per person. For more details call 507-389-5188.

Center on Aging New Mission Statement and Open Forum

Minnesota State University, Mankato's Center on Aging is hosting an open forum on February 20, 2007 from 3:00pm until 5:00 pm. at the Summit Center – Library in Mankato. The Summit Center is located at 518 South 5th Street. The Center on Aging at Minnesota State University, Mankato recently revised its mission statement and plans to identify priority activities

and programs of the Center for the next year. The new mission statement is: The Center on Aging is dedicated to enhancing the process and prospects of aging for individuals and the community through integrated education, research, and service. As part of this process, the Center on Aging will be seeking input from the community at this Open Forum. This invitation is

open to anyone who is interested in the future of Minnesota State University, Mankato's Center on Aging. Refreshments will be available.

If you have questions about this event, please contact the Gerontology Program Office 507-389-5188.

Please RSVP to Kristeen Giese at kristeen.giese@mnsu.edu.



*Open Forum! February 20th
at the Summit Center in Man-
kato. Refreshments will be
served!*

Survey on Older Minnesotans

The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) is a gateway to services for seniors and their families in Minnesota. Approximately every five years the MBA conducts a statewide survey of persons aged 50 and over in Minnesota. The survey is to monitor the changing needs, assets and expectations of older persons in the state. They use this

information to improve the design and targeting of public programs for older persons and to help researchers and policymakers better understand Minnesota's older population. The survey includes questions in the following general areas:
economic status, health status, housing status, and family/social status.

You can obtain more information about this survey at the Minnesota Board on Aging website:
<http://www.mnaging.org/>

*The Minnesota
Board on Aging
"First established in
1956, the MBA is
one of the pioneers in
the field of aging."*

Adapting to an Aging Population

Gerontology program faculty member Leah Rogne, Assistant Professor of Sociology, presented February 7 at a management symposium sponsored by the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce. Her talk, "Adapting to an Aging Population," re-

viewed the coming demographic changes in the population and examined what employers could be doing to retain the business wisdom or critical talent held by their older workers. Rogne urged participants to find out what their older workers want and to create innova-

tive strategies for creating a work environment that maximizes the happiness and productivity of all their workers, of any age.

Submitted by Dr. Leah Rogne



Happy Valentines Day

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We are on the web

www.mnsu.edu/gerontology

Dates to Remember

February 20— Open Forum at Summit Center 3:00 pm

April 2— 2007 Chesley Lecture at Country Inn and Suites 5:00 pm

Graduate Assistant

Greetings everyone! My name is Kristeen Giese, I am a second year graduate student who is working towards her Masters of Arts in Sociology. I feel fortunate to be involved with the Gerontology Program and the Center on Aging for a second year. Last year I worked closely with Dr. Leah Rogne on developing the different committees for different specific areas of the Gerontology Program including the Center on Aging. Providing background research for the committees has been exciting and rewarding. This year is exciting as well, I have gotten the opportunity to work with Jim Tift, program director. It is not often to have the opportunity

to work with diverse group of people as I have with this position. I enjoy meeting the faculty, community professionals, community members, students and administration .

I am very happy to say that the Gerontology Club was re-established last year and continues to grow and be involved on our campus. This years President is Daniel Wischer.

I also was able to participate in the Nursing Programs "Into Aging" exercise the first day of classes this semester. The exercise did bring real awareness to the students about the issues that elders are facing.

Working with the staff and commu-

nity has taught me some valuable lessons that I will use every day for years to come.



Kristeen Giese—Graduate Assistant