

9-30-2009

09/30/2009 - Free "Aging with Grace" Mini-Conference Planned at EIU

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2009

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "09/30/2009 - Free "Aging with Grace" Mini-Conference Planned at EIU" (2009). 2009. 90.

https://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2009/90

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2009 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Free "Aging with Grace" Mini-Conference Planned at EIU

Sep-30-2009

Eastern Illinois University plans a multi-disciplinary look at aging -- a condition that affects us all -- in "Aging with Grace," an afternoon mini-conference planned for Friday, Oct. 23.

Author and keynote speaker Dr. David Snowdon will highlight the free event with an hour-long presentation on the [Nun Study](#), a 23-year-old on-going project in which researchers study aging and disability using data collected from nuns. The goal of the study has been to determine the causes and prevention of Alzheimer's disease, other brain diseases, and mental and physical disability associated with old age.

Participants in the Nun Study are American Roman Catholic sisters who are members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, an international religious congregation that began more than 150 years ago in Bavaria, Germany. The 678 participants in the Nun Study were 75 to 102 years old when the study began, and the average age of the participants was 83 years. More than 85 percent of the participants were teachers.

Participants have included women representing a wide range of function and health, from sisters in their 90s who are highly functional with full-time jobs to sisters in their 70s who are severely disabled, unable to communicate, and bed-bound.

Each of the study participants agreed to participate in annual assessments of their cognitive and physical function, medical exams, blood drawing for genetic and nutritional studies, and brain donation at death for neuropathologic studies. In addition, the sisters have given investigators full access to their convent and medical records.

While at Eastern, Snowdon plans to discuss his findings, which indicate that traits in early, mid and late life have strong relationships with the risk of Alzheimer's disease, as well as the mental and cognitive disabilities of old age.

Snowdon, a professor of neurology at the University of Kentucky's College of Medicine, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in epidemiology (i.e., the study of the causes of diseases in populations).

Participants of the "Aging with Grace" mini-conference also will have the opportunity to listen to four 30-minute presentations examining other aspects of aging:

- "Health and Longevity Through Food Portions," presented by Jim Painter, family and consumer sciences;
- "Here Come the Boomers: Ready or Not!" (third-age learning), presented by Will Hine, dean, School of Continuing Education;
- "Living Literature: The Classics and the Mature Reader," presented by Jeffrey Lynch, interim dean, College of Arts and Humanities; and
- "Physical and Psychological Health Through Spirituality: Hmmm Or is it the Other Way Around?" (spiritual resiliency and aging), presented by William Kirk, professor emeritus, psychology.

Conference events will begin at 12:30 p.m. with registration and sign-in. Programming will begin at 1 p.m., with the afternoon ending at 4:30 p.m. with a reception, book-signing and refreshments. All events will take place in the University Ballroom, MLK Jr. Union.

Participation is free, but registration is required. To register, email dkmeadows@eiu.edu. Also, for information, contact Jeanne Snyder (jsnyder@eiu.edu, 217-581-3526) or Janna Overstreet (joverstreet@eiu.edu, 217-581-5114).

This event is being co-sponsored by Eastern's School of Family and Consumer Sciences' MA in Gerontology Program and the School of Continuing Education's Academy of Lifetime Learning.

Additional support was provided by each of Eastern's academic colleges -- the College of Arts and Humanities, the College of Education and Professional Studies, the Lumpkin College of Business, and the College of Sciences -- as well as the Graduate School and Booth Library. Gowin Parc, a local care center for residents with Alzheimer's, and Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center also provided support.