

### FROM THE GERO CHAIR

As I prepare my latest lecture for family nurse practitioner students at FranU, I highlight how to best engage the students in aging so that upon graduation, they enter the workforce as motivated, compassionate, and evidence-based providers well-suited to caring for the aging.

The events of the past year have put into perspective just how important careers in aging are. As the world has wrestled with the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers, clinicians, educators, direct care workers, and service providers supporting older adults have played an outsized role. And the demand for professionals with expertise in caring for the aging is growing rapidly.

So, how do we help future healthcare providers think about the future of aging? Two things come to mind... overcoming ageism and promoting intergenerational connection. These two likely go hand in hand.

From the failure to effectively respond to a nursing home crisis, to advocacy from some quarters for "focused prevention" by segregating people by age, to elevation of the "OK boomer" meme, the negative effects of ageism became clearer than ever over the past year. Bringing these issues into focus, the first step to breaking down ageism is recognition. Recognition is essential for our young people, particularly students at FranU where we are creating more curricular and service opportunities to connect students and older adults. Intergenerational connections are attributed to improving health by way of reducing social isolation and loneliness and offer

powerful opportunities to increase understanding and empathy and solve vexing social challenges. For more information on this topic read Dr. Mullins' interview in the March 7th edition of The National Catholic Register.

With all of this in mind, FranU works diligently and persistently to create an age-friendly university whether it be through student learning about aging or through older adults being the learner and participating in our University life. We continue to be committed to aging and to educating and forming Franciscan servant leaders of all faiths. Enjoy this newsletter and read more about our efforts at **gerontologyatfranu.edu**.

Here is to healthy aging!

- All my best, Lindsay Mullins PhD, FNP-BC

Sister Agnes Marie Fitzsimons Endowed Chair of Gerontology Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University



Dr. Lindsay Mullins, Phd, ENP-BC

### GERONTOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:

FranU is committed to promoting the advancement of Gerontology throughout its curriculum, and integrates this content in interesting and meaningful ways. One way is through the Life Story Reflection. For this assignment students explore the life history or life story of an elderly person and explore their personal attitudes and feelings of valuing of the elderly.

Students plan two to three meetings where they interview an elder. During these sessions, the student documents/records about the elder's life and before ending their time together, the student presents the elder with their very own life story to share with their family. The students also write and submit for grading, a reflection regarding their experience with the elder.

Each semester, students express their appreciation about the assignment and reflect on its positive impact on aging perspectives.

# DR. MULLINS IN THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER:

Dr. Lindsay Mullins was featured in an article in the National Catholic Register where she discussed the challenges faced by older adults during the pandemic and beyond. An excerpt with Dr. Mullins reads: "In American culture, we are drawn to 'new' and 'shiny' and 'independence' — all things that can be lessened as we age," she said. "When working with students and community groups, one message we try to make clear is that every stage and age is a gift from God. And, actually, the more 'seasoned' a person is, the more valuable they are in sharing life lessons and in what they have contributed to their families and communities."

You can read the entire article on **ncregister.com**.



### **CHECK OUT OUR BLOG!**

Did you know that in addition to our quarterly newsletter, Gero at FranU also has a blog? Located on our website at gerontologyatfranu.com, we explore topics relevant to the older adult experience such as safety issues, health awareness, and exercise. We also like to have a little fun and explore creativity by sharing recipes, reading lists, and more! Is there a topic you would like to learn more about?

Submit your ideas on our website! gerontologyatfranu.com





# JDENT SPOTLIGHT



## Ashley Pistorius



Dr. Paulette McClain is Associate Professor in the Pre-licensure Program at Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, where she's served as nurse educator for the past 18 years. She received her Master of Science in Nursing from Southern University and A & M College, and her Doctorate of Philosophy in Nursing from the Rush University. Dr. McClain serves as an Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner and Legal Nurse Consultant. She thoroughly enjoys providing quality care for the aging population and loves teaching students the importance of gerontology considerations.

Recently Dr. McClain became a children's book author, publishing the first of several books in honor of her beloved late niece. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International, American Nurses Association, Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners, and American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Dr. McClain is also a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., where she is active in making a difference in her community. From Shreveport, LA, Ashley has always had a love for Gerontology. Throughout her time in nursing school, she has been exploring how she could provide them with the best care. Her mentor, Mrs. Schneider, has helped guide her toward her focus. She is currently working on creating more of a home environment to ease the transition of moving into a nursing home facility. For example, allowing the resident to bring memorabilia and their own furniture to promote comfort and familiarity. The positive outcome would result in less stress for the resident as well as their family members and slowing down the progression of their disease. She looks forward to continuing to help the Gerontology community.