

Maiden to receive state society's highest award for research on aging

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An Alfred University (AU) professor who sounded an alarm about the “woeful” shortage of trained professionals to deal with New York State’s aging population will receive the 2012 Walter M. Beattie Jr. Award from the State Society on Aging of New York (SSA) at its annual meeting Oct. 17-19 in Fairport, NY.

Robert Maiden, professor of psychology and director of Alfred University’s Gerontology Program in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, will receive the SSA’s “most prestigious award” for his “outstanding contributions to the work of SSA and for commitment to its goals.”

“I am really appreciative of this honor, and humbled to be recognized by my peers,” said Maiden.

Maiden, who joined the Alfred University faculty in 1982, was one of three researchers who examined the offerings in gerontology (the study of aging) at 241 colleges and universities. They found only 4 percent offer a major in gerontology; there are “very few programs” that train professionals to deal with an aging population, and more than half the schools “don’t even offer a single course on aging.”

A medical school responded, questioning why Maiden would even ask what courses it taught about aging. It offered none, said Maiden, yet physicians now and in the future will be treating an aging population that consumes a large share of the health care budget.

The Baby Boom Generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, are 78 million strong, and the oldest are just reaching the ages of 65-66. “There will be a tsunami” of aging people, said Maiden, and New York State is ill-prepared to deal with it.

Professionals doctors, psychologists, social workers, nurses and others who will need to provide physical, mental and emotional care to the Baby Boomers are too few in number and “woefully undertrained” to deal with what’s ahead, said Maiden. “We have very few people trained and available to serve the explosion in the senior population.”

Co-authors of the study, which was presented at the 58th annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in 2005, are Emily Pimpinella, a 2005 alumna of Alfred University who worked on the project as an undergraduate and Neal Lane, director of the New York State Office for the Aging..

The paper is considered a seminal one in the field, one that is frequently cited.

While Maiden calls attention to what he considers a national crisis a lack of professionals well-equipped to handle the problems of the aging he admits that he “found” his career in gerontology quite by accident, as did many others in the

field. In an article he co-authored for the February 2012 edition of the Atlantic magazine's webpage, Maiden says he is finding some hope, however, in the number of AU undergraduates choosing gerontology.

<http://www.theatlantic.co...>

He has also been extensively involved in the initiative to establish an accreditation process for gerontology programs, developing standards for degree programs at the associate's, bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels as a way of assuring the programs adhere to appropriate levels of quality and competency (See Maiden, R. J., Knight, B., Howe, J., & Seungyoun, Kim (2012). Accreditation in the profession of psychology: A cautionary tale. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 33 (1), 55-74); it's one way to begin addressing concerns about a workforce that is unprepared to deal with the rising number of elderly people in the United States (See Maiden, R. J., Horowitz, B. P., & Howe, J. L. (2010). Workforce Training and Education Gaps in Gerontology and Geriatrics: What We Found in New York State. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 31 (4), 328-348).

Maiden serves on a national task force for the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education; he was elected a Fellow of that association in 2008. He is also a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America.

He has served the State Society on Aging of New York in a variety of capacities, including a term as president in 2002, and has been a member of its board of directors since 1996.

Maiden has frequently published and presented on issues faced by the elderly in isolated rural areas where there is often a lack of services available to them.

He holds a certificate of proficiency in the treatment of alcohol and other psychoactive substance use disorders, and is a board-certified diplomate-fellow in psychopharmacology. He is a licensed psychologist in New York State, a member of the courtesy staff at Jones Memorial Hospital, and an approved evaluator and provider of alcohol and substance abuse services.

Maiden is a member of the American Psychological Association, the Gerontological Society of America, and a member of the Northeast Association of Advisors for Health Professions.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Maiden earned his master's in developmental psychology and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the New School for Social Research in New York.