Seventy over 70

APRIL 2020

A special section recognizing those 70 and better who are making a difference in other people’s lives throughout East Central Illinois.

Presented by

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Welcome to our special section recognizing those 70 and better who are making a difference in other people’s lives throughout East Central Illinois.

The News-Gazette has honored Forty Under 40 for years. Clark-Lindsey approached us with the idea of creating a similar program for older adults. “We are thrilled that Seventy Over 70 was such a huge success last year, and that we are able to do it again this year!” Clark-Lindsey Director of Marketing, Karen Blatzer, said.

After nominations were submitted, an independent panel of judges selected the 70 winners in February. Our honorees have demonstrated a lively curiosity, a willingness to learn something new, an aptitude for personal and/or professional growth and a commitment to bettering others.

As you read through their profiles, you will see that our awardees reflect the diverse interests, accomplishments and lifestyles of older people in East Central Illinois and prove that impact is ageless. These 70 people exemplify the possibilities that extend to and often grow with maturity.

Harold Balbach | 83 | Born: Chicago (lived in C-U since Jan. 1960)

Motto or philosophy: Try to help the following generations learn and grow.

Tell us a little about your background: Original degree was in science education; later completed Ph.D. in botany at University of Illinois. Taught botany and ecology at U of Illinois and Eastern Illinois. In 1972, joined the US Army research lab in Champaign to work on better ways to perform Environmental Impact assessments. Performed research and managed Army and Department of Defense special projects on related topics until retirement in 2014. Emeritus scientist since then.

What are you up to these days?: Providing help and advice to scientists at the research lab as an emeritus. Staying active in national professional societies. Continuing to help Champaign County History Museum expand its mission.

What is your advice for aging?: This is not original, but aging is better than the only alternative we know of!

What is different about being older?: You just can’t get as much done as you would like.

What keeps you young at heart?: Keeping up with local and national events and activities, including science and the environment.

How do you want people to remember you?: As someone who was always willing to help and advise if you had a question or problem.

From the nominator: “I’m inspired by Hal’s enthusiasm to continue both his research as an environmental biologist and his leadership in the museum community. Hal has a great sense of humor – somewhat understated but very clever. He has great recall and tells stories with tact and humor.” – Perry Morris

Chester L. Alwes, Jr.| 72 | Born: Louisville, Kentucky

Motto or philosophy: Contributing to knowledge through music.

Tell us a little about your background: Started college intending to be a pre-med/chemistry major. Organic chemistry did me in! Changed to music (with minor in theology). Received Master of Sacred Music (and avoided Vietnam) from Union Theological Seminary in NYC. Married Martha Lafferty in 1971 and returned to work in Louisville. Worked for a year doing construction for my father’s outdoor advertising business (my fingerprints are still in some steel beams there due to fear of heights), then enrolled as first Ph.D. musicology student at the University of Louisville. In 1973 was hired by the College of Wooster (initial salary of $8,400!) as an instructor and proceeded to learn to teach as well as becoming a father of two sons there. After four years, I was terminated because I had not finished the Ph.D., so came to Illinois to study with Harold Decker (after being convinced by Alex Ringer that I didn’t want a doctorate in musicology). After three years at Illinois, got a job at the University of Rochester (adjunct status at Eastman). Two years later, Bill Olson called me and asked me to come back to Illinois to teach choral lit and conduct the Concert Choir. I’m still here!

What is different about being older?: I attend many more funerals (too many) and generally have a shrinking circle of friends to talk to.

What keeps you young at heart?: Loving my wife, Marlys Scarbrough, my three sons, her two kids, their families and especially spending time with our combined group of eight grandchildren.

What is your advice for aging?: Stay active!

From the nominator: “Although Chet has received international acclaim for his compositions and conducting, he is very humble. Most people he meets would have no idea of how accomplished he is. He inspires others through his service and example.” – Janet Ellis-Nelson

Barbara Barker | 75 | Born: Decatur

Motto or philosophy: Do as much as you can for as many as you can whenever you can and do it with your heart. This is important.

Tell us a little about your background: I knew as a child I wanted to be a teacher. Education was my major, my lifetime career, and I was blessed to teach 3-2 plus years in the Mahomet-Seymour elementary schools.

What are you up to these days?: I am involved with Carle Philanthropy Women’s Legacy Circle, serve as an officer of my P.E.O. chapter, am on a newly formed steering committee for Parkland College Foundation’s Women of Impact and have recently retired from the position of Administrative Assistant of Illini Rebounders, where I served in one capacity or another for 18 years. I will continue active support for the team, along with my husband.

What is your advice for aging?: Stay connected! Have a group of friends you gather with weekly – your “go-to girls,” be involved in Bible study – and reach out to all you know in times of their need.

What is different about being older?: Aches and pains find every nook and cranny of your body, and staying up late takes real effort.

What keeps you young at heart?: Working with youngsters at church and my five grandkids’ sporting events keep me young at heart. Sometimes their games stop my heart.

From a nominator: “Barb is one of the most positive, most energetic women I have ever known. Her lifelong commitment to education, children and youth and child welfare is second-to-none.” – Becky Ryherd
Dorothy E. Bell  |  86  |  Born: Pontiac, Michigan

Motto or philosophy: Give thanks, laugh a lot and be kind.
Tell us a little about your background: Oldest daughter of a homemaker and a factory worker. My two sisters were eight and 10 years my junior. I was the first person in the Bell family to attend college. I subsequently earned three degrees: B.A. in English and M.A. in counseling and guidance from Michigan State; Ph.D. in higher education administration from University of Illinois. Most of my work years were in education in the states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Wisconsin – teaching high school English; junior high school and adult education counselor; college-level Assistant Dean of Women and Assistant Professor of Education; Assistant Director at a state board of higher education; university-level Assistant Chancellor for Student Affairs.

What are you up to these days? I am an active member of the Clark-Lindsey retirement community. I am the President of our Residents Council and the Managing Editor of our quarterly publication, The Village Voice. A member of Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church for over 40 years, my current service there is as an usher and as an assistant treasurer.

What is your advice for aging? Use whatever gifts you have to contribute to the well-being of your community.

What is different about being older? The perspective that one’s years give.

What keeps you young at heart? The love, shared laughter, joy and affirmation of friends I hold dear.

From a nominator: “Dorothy is someone who gets things done, primarily for the benefit of others.” – Nancy Curran

Willard L. Broom  |  70

Tell us a little about your background: I am the fourth of five sons raised in a small town (Greenville, Illinois) in a home that valued hard work, education and community. Like my father and older brothers, I attended the University of Illinois – came here at the age of 18 and essentially never left. My advertising career dream was sidelined when I started working for Dan Perrino as a student employee. It was also at this time that I met Anne, and we have been married almost 48 years. Dan was a transformational leader in Student Programs and Services during the turbulent late ‘60s/early ‘70s. His mentorship led to my career in the Office of the Dean of Students, lasting almost 35 years. It was a great job – very demanding at times, never boring and greatly rewarding.

What are you up to these days? We yo-yo between New York City, where our son and daughter-in-law live, and Boulder, Colo., where our daughter, son-in-law, 10-year-old grandson and 6-year-old granddaughter live. Nice places to visit! We also have travelled quite a bit, and I am still involved with the University YMCA. Because of our frequent absences, I have curtailed much of my work on various boards and committees in the community.

What is your advice for aging? When I told Dan Perrino I was retiring, he looked at me and said, “If you rest, you rust.” Best advice I’ve ever received about retirement.

What keeps you young at heart? One of the great parts of the University YMCA is having young people around, so I am exposed to new ideas and new information.

From a nominator: “Willard cares about our community and has always been supportive of those around him. Willard is a person who always puts the needs of others before himself. He is one of the most authentic and wonderful human beings I have ever met. I cannot express how much better the world is with Willard Broom in it.” – Gayle Spencer
**Margarette Carter | 71 | Born: Tyler, Texas**

**Motto or philosophy:** Never give up and to always be willing to help others if you can. I also live by what my mom said to me many years ago, and that is, “Never mistreat a child, because they did not ask to be born.”

**What are you up to these days?** Seven years ago, I started Academic Hour, a program at our Youth Center with the help of Director Andy Graham. I volunteer four days a week helping students with homework, and each Thursday there are four ladies who come and help me with the reading part of the program. This past year, I developed the program WePrep 4 Success. My vision with this program is to help parents build a positive relationship with teachers as well as provide them with tools to help their child achieve academic success.

**What is your advice for aging?** My advice is to stay busy but learn how to say “no.” If you were passionate about something when you were still in the workplace, continue to find a way to stay engaged.

**What is different about getting older?** I choose to look at getting older as just a number and thank God every day that he allows me to see another birthday.

**What keeps you young at heart?** My grandchildren and working at the Youth Center with my kids.

**How do you want people to remember you?** I guess that she served with a servant’s heart and was willing to extend her hand to help if you needed her and it was in the realm of possibilities.

**From the nominator:** “Margarette is what you call a lead-by-example person. She has never asked or expected someone to do something for her that she is not willing to do herself. You see this leadership every day. She makes me smile every day when she is working with these kids that are two generations removed from the time she was a teacher, and she gets them to respond to her. She doesn’t yell and scream. When Margarette speaks, you listen.” – Andy Graham

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**Jane G. Cain | 71 | Born: Grundy County (Morris, Illinois)**

**Motto or philosophy:** Stay true to yourself.

**Tell us a little bit about your background:** I was raised on a farm in rural Illinois and attended the University of Illinois for degrees in teaching and curriculum development. I taught or volunteered in the Urbana school district in various ways between the years of 1972 and 2015. I have been married to Mike for 45 years. We raised two children in the C-U area and enjoy our grandchildren, some travel and lots of volunteering.

**What are you up to these days?** I spend most of my volunteering time with McKinley Presbyterian Church and Foundation, where I have attended since my days as a college student. I coordinate Fellowship and Care Activities, help lead the youth group, participate in the Food Pantry and serve on the committee that recognizes community members at a Social Justice event each year. I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren who live locally and sending care packages to those who don’t. I also volunteer some with the Urbana Schools and substitute as a mentor coordinator as needed. At home, I still enjoy canning and preserving produce from our garden.

**What is your advice for aging?** Don’t worry about it.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Filling my days with activities that make a difference – often ones that include kids and youth.

**From the nominator:** I think it’s her energy and ability to start organizing and planning things from the outset. Also, she’s very good about getting others involved. Although I am older than Jane and have operated a very long time at McKinley, I still get instructions along with newcomers! She can’t help it! It’s second nature to her (one of our pastors would tease her by calling her ‘General Jane!’) – Marlyn Rinehart
Steve Carter | 74 | Born: Storm Lake, Iowa

Motto or philosophy: Make choices in line with your values

Tell us a little about your background: I was born in Storm Lake, Iowa, moved about every four years due to my father’s job, went to high school in Omaha. I made my career choice during an internship in Ohio during the Hough riots in 1966. Watching all the pain of the urban riots, I thought we could do better in managing our cities. I received my Master’s in municipal management from the University of Iowa in 1969, having completed my course work and an internship with the City of Phoenix, Ariz. After returning from Vietnam and being discharged from the Army, I returned to Phoenix, married Donna and began a 40-plus-year career in local government management. My career took me to Washington, D.C.; Sioux City, Iowa; Moline, Illinois; and Champaign, where I retired after 28 years as city manager. I will always be thankful for having such a wonderful career and for all the people who helped me along the way!

What are you up to these days? The advantage of retirement is being able to do what you want, mostly. In addition to spending more time with family, I am fortunate to be able to enjoy several volunteer activities. These include UI Airport Advisory Committee Chair, Senior Advisor for the Illinois City and County Management Association, Champaign Rotary Club and Holy Cross Church. I wish more could be done to protect our aquifer because there is more to be done.

What is your advice for aging? Look for opportunities to share your hard-earned wisdom and then hope you can remember it.

From the nominator: “Steve is the kind of person who walks quietly but carries some really big ideas. He doesn’t talk volunteerism, he does it. He is quick to laugh and quick to jump on a project until its completion. Like me he really likes eating breakfast out. That make me smile, especially when he is buying.” – Tom Costello

Rosemary Costello | 70 | Born: Cleveland, Ohio

Tell us a little about your background: I grew up the youngest of four on the west side of Cleveland. I attended St. Procop School and St. Peter High School – all Catholic schools in the Cleveland area.

In 1971, I received a degree in English literature with a minor in education, philosophy/theology from John Carroll University, a Jesuit university in University Heights, Ohio. In 1973, I received a Masters’ degree in English literature from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. In 1997, I earned a reading specialist certification and in 2001 a Masters’ degree in educational administration, both from the University of Illinois.

In 1972, I began teaching at what was once St. Patrick School in Danville. After four years, I took a teaching job at Holy Cross School in Champaign, where I continue to work today. I became principal of Holy Cross in 1999. I did retire twice from the principal position at Holy Cross, once in 2013 and again in 2019. I will retire for the third time this May. Right now, I am finishing up the school year at Holy Cross with the new challenge of e-learning. This is an unusual time for schools, teachers and students.

Tom and I met at John Carroll and married in 1974. We have two sons who live with their families in the Washington, D.C., area. We have two grandchildren: Libby, who will be 2 years old in May, and Rory, who was born a few weeks ago on March 10.

My community involvement includes the Champaign-Urbana Junior League and the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. I worked on many projects with the Junior League and was president in 1989. I served on the board of the Eastern Illinois Foodbank for over 15 years, chairing the Food for Families drive for eight years.

From the nominator: “Her tireless and lifelong efforts in support of education inspire many.” – Steve Beckett

Fowler Connell | 95 | Born: Chicago

Motto or philosophy: Stay active.

Tell us a little about your background: Grew up in Kansas City, Mo.; 1949 graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Worked for Champaign News-Gazette for four years on copy desk and briefly in sports department. Sports writer and sports editor at Danville Commercial-News for 37 years and 30 years at WDAN radio as color commentator on prep football, basketball and baseball games. Never missed a day of work in 70-plus years.

What are you up to these days? Sports color commentator on WDAN and regular panelist on Saturday morning Sports Talk.

Volunteer at Veterans Administration Hospital for 29 years. Played with and called bingo at North Logan Health Center for more than 20 years. Helped at Danville Township food pantry for 25 years plus and served as advisor at Kiwanis Builders Club at North Ridge Middle School for 25 years plus.

What is your advice for aging? Stay busy either working or volunteering.

How do you want people to remember you? A considerate, knowledgeable and active sports writer and broadcaster.

From a nominator: “I find Fowler to be an inspiration. From his military service to his continued service as a member of the Illinois press corps. He maintains a cheerful countenance in his frequent interactions with people. He is professional, respectful, and dedicated to our community.” – Amy Brown

Robert Espeseth, Jim Hack and Walter Tousey from your Good Shepherd family!
**Thomas Costello, Jr.**

**Motto or philosophy:** I think these three sentences sum up my philosophy of life. “Leave every place better than how you found it.” “Be a person for others.” “It is easier to ask forgiveness than permission.”

**What are you up to these days?** I am a senior instructor in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois. I teach three classes. They are an introductory communication class, a business and professional speaking class and a leadership communication class. I’m also a member of the Faculty Senate. My other activities include chair of the IMC, which is the parent company of the Daily Illini, WPGU and the Illio, the University yearbook. Champaign Rotary gets a great deal of my attention. I am also a member of the Developmental Services Foundation Board. I still emcee charity events and charity auctions occasionally. I get together with my MTD friends regularly. I have two grandchildren living in Washington, D.C., one of whom I have yet to meet.

**What is your advice for aging?** You may as well enjoy it; you can’t do anything about it. Live for the moment.

**What keeps you young at heart?** I enjoy my life. I am fortunate to be living the life I am. In the fall I will celebrate four years as a kidney transplant recipient, thanks to a very special friend.

**How do you want people to remember you?** This place is better for him having been here. He made me laugh and he cared.

**From the nominator:** “Incredible commitment to CU community ... He is the role model for role models about being a community person.” – Steve Beckett

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**Bob Davis**

**Motto or philosophy:** Use it or lose it.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I was a high-school math teacher for 30 years in northern Illinois.

**What are you up to these days?** I do a lot of volunteering. I try to find opportunities to serve where my skills coincide with meet needs. I also kayak, fish, hike, garden, travel and work in my shop. I enjoy concerts at Krannert and other venues. My wife of 56 years and I love to travel and have enjoyed a number of Road Scholar programs. We have traveled to all 50 states as well as 10 countries. I enjoy doing all of our home maintenance and repairs.

**What is your advice for aging?** Look for ways to engage in as many opportunities as you can. It is better to be sore from activities than to be stiff from sitting too much. Look for ways to volunteer where you can make a difference. It will give you a good feeling about yourself.

**What is different about being older?** We don’t have to prove anything. We don’t have to make our mark in the world. We don’t have to climb any corporate ladder.

**What keeps you young at heart?** I enjoyed life and tried to make this world a better place.

**From the nominator:** “Bob’s ever-present desire to learn, to create, to share knowledge, to be helpful to others in countless ways, to teach others new skills, to instill in others a sense of self worth and to spread the value of being genuine illustrates his positive nature. He is hardworking and very talented in bringing out the best of those around him. One of the many ways he brings a smile to his wife’s face each night occurs when he prepares his beloved dog Patches for bed by tucking him in and saying prayers for him.” – Sue Wade

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**Debbie Day**

**Motto or philosophy:** I don’t really have a motto or philosophy, but a favorite Winston Churchill quote seems particularly relevant right now: “We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.”

**Tell us a little about your background:** My lifelong volunteer “career” began when I was a teenager growing up in Rochester, N.Y. I’m retired from my 30-plus-year professional career in public broadcasting here with the WILL stations (Illinois Public Media).

**What are you up to these days?** I have been so lucky to be in good health and therefore able to keep learning, exercising, traveling, volunteering and enjoying the company of friends and family, grateful for each day’s blessings. This, I suppose, is the answer to more than one of the questions posed to this year’s Seventy Over 70 class.

**From the nominator:** “Debbie’s commitment to remaining an active participant in the life of our community is inspiring. And her diving into areas of study at OLLI that are new to her, or travel activities that are a bit unusual, is also worthy of mention. But Debbie is also a role model in a more personal way: Her commitment to exercising, healthy eating and staying fit is impressive, and she sets a great example for those around her. We sometimes have to huff and puff to keep up with her – but we’re always the better for the effort. Sometimes, however, Debbie’s bright energy can be dangerous. We frequently laugh at the exuberant hand gestures that accompany her speech – a problem if you’re sitting next to her at dinner and a glass of red wine is nearby.” – Cecile Steinberg
Fred Delcomyn  |  80  |  Born: Copenhagen, Denmark

Motto or philosophy: Persistence pays!

Tell us a little about your background: My family emigrated from Denmark when I was 8 years old and settled in Detroit. My elementary, high school and college education was all in that city. I went to the University of Oregon for my Ph.D. and to meet my future wife (little did I know!). After three years in Glasgow, Scotland, doing biological research and teaching, I joined the faculty of the Department of Entomology at the University of Illinois in 1972. Apart from two sabbaticals away from the university, one in Edmonton, Canada and one in Kaiserslautern, Germany, I spent my entire career there until my retirement in 2008.

What are you up to these days? Visiting nearby family, and soon perhaps, family in New Zealand as well. Volunteering by serving on the Boards of two nonprofit organizations, Grand Prairie Friends and the Urbana Parks Foundation. Taking photographs of family and nature. With co-author James Ellis, working on a book on tall grass prairie, “A Backyard Prairie,” to be published by Southern Illinois University Press later this year. Once spring arrives, visiting Illinois natural areas.

What keeps you young at heart? Being active – with family and friends certainly, but also by doing things, even if it’s only hiking in Busey Woods in 7-degree weather after a snowstorm. Being out in nature reinvigorates the soul.

From a nominator: “Fred inspires those around him with simple kindness, patience and generosity. He is quick to lend a hand, offer advice and he is always giving of his time. He still is willing to serve on university committees when asked!”

Ann Einhorn  |  81  |  Born: New York City

Tell us a little bit about your background: I was raised in a small town in New Jersey. I went to Wellesley College, where I majored in political science, and was the editor-in-chief of the college newspaper. I also had an undergraduate internship in Washington, D.C. I went on to earn a master’s degree from Columbia University in public law and government. I was living in Champaign and working on a quite boring Ph.D. dissertation when I realized I would rather be doing law. I was lucky enough to be able to switch fields and to study law at the U of I, balancing that with raising three wonderful daughters.

My family taught me the need to look out for the needs of others and reinforced the idea that one has an obligation to help one’s neighbors, to use one’s abilities not just selfishly, but for the greater good. I tried to do this in my various jobs, first with the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission, with the Champaign County Public Defender’s Office and then as an associate judge. I could have accomplished very little, however, without the help and encouragement of family, friends and a strong community.

From the nominator: “Ann sees things that others miss. As she points out the beauty of a plant, or the sky, or other parts of nature, one is inspired to look more closely and appreciatively at the world around us. Certainly Ann’s ability to keep up with three adult book clubs, two daily newspapers and several periodicals is an inspiration to those of us who are just ordinary readers. Of course it helps that she reads with amazing speed; it impresses her friends that she remembers most of what she reads! She can pull up details from works read both decades ago and last week. That good memory extends to the names of her teachers from grade school through college and points of history both current and ancient. And darn it, she’s always right. No need to resort to Google. Most of all, she is a pleasure to spend time with.”

Ray Elliott

Motto or philosophy: Don’t limit your challenges; challenge your limits.

Tell us a little about your background: Helped my father farm and truck and joined Marines. Graduated Eastern Illinois University with double major, English/psychology, minor in journalism. Worked as correctional counselor at Menard Penitentiary. Received master’s in English education at Southern Illinois University; master’s in journalism at University of Illinois, worked national Washington Journalism Conference for high-schoolers and taught English and journalism at Illinois high schools, including Urbana, from which I retired in 1999. Edited College of Communications at University of Illinois, did semiweekly lectures, supervised TA’s, covered the Roger Ebert Film Festival for the college publication, then started hosting guests.

What are you up to these days? Still writing. People can subscribe to my blog for free at http://rayelliott23.blogspot.com. Also planning a movie and a play of “Iwo Blasted Again,” titled “Sundown.”

What is different about being older? Slowing down and dealing with aches and pains. Used to get up at 4:23 a.m. and write 1,000 words a day, seven days a week, when I was a working on a book, then go to work at whatever I was doing. Ran the Chicago Marathon with my son at age 54.

What keeps you young at heart? Things to do, goals and helping people.

How do you want people to remember you? As a man who cared and tried to do the right thing, even if it wasn’t the popular thing to do.

From the nominator: “Ray does not look at himself as being retired. He just continues to work on projects and causes that come along and that he is interested in or thinks he can make a difference.”

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Robert D. Espeseth  |  89  |  Born: Cameron, Wisconsin

Tell us a little about your background: I graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1952 with a degree in landscape architecture. I also received a Navy Commission via Navy ROTC and served three years as an engineering officer aboard the USS Purdy (DD-734) during the Korean War. Married to Mary Ann Krepps of Mt. Union, Penn., on Christmas leave 1952. We have been married 67 years.

Returned to the University of Wisconsin under the GI Bill and received a Master’s Degree in regional planning. While still in grad school, I was employed by the Wisconsin Division of State Forests and Parks as the Chief Park Planner and formed the Park Planning Section. In 1967 we left Wisconsin to help establish the Genesee County Park Commission in Flint, Mich., as deputy director. In 1973 became a faculty member of the University of Illinois in the Department of Park and Recreation Administration, from which I retired in 1995.

What are you up to these days? We currently live at The Windsor of Savoy, where I am on the Resident Advisory Committee. I am also an officer for the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees and also active with RSVP, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

From the nominator: “Bob’s lifetime achievements are nothing short of inspiring. Bob Espeseth is passionate and he throws himself into every role with enthusiasm. I’d really like to know how he does all that he does. He inspires me and has given me a model of what I’d like my retirement years to look like. I also see him inspire his peers with his friendly, calm, grounded demeanor. He has a great sense of humor and a soft laugh that makes you smile. He’s forward-thinking, a visionary, and a well-respected member in this community.” – Courtney Mann

Vern Fein  |  78  |  Born: Hammond, Indiana

Tell us a little about your background: Graduated from Rollins College, Winter Park, Fla., 1963; Master’s in American Literature, University of Illinois, 1965. Helped start Eastern Illinois Foodbank and other community outreaches as outreach pastor for New Covenant Fellowship and Vineyard Church, Urbana. Special ed teacher at Cunningham Gerber School for 34 years but still subbing there.

What are you up to these days? Still volunteering and subbing. Wrote a book. Writing and publishing poetry. Fan of all sports. Coached Urbana girls’ softball for 10 years and helped start summer league that is still going. Traveling. Loving on family.

What keeps you young at heart? Remaining involved as much as possible.

From the nominator: “Anyone who knows Vern, as many people do, will tell you the same thing: Even at 78 years old, he is a tireless community organizer and spirited champion of social justice and economic inequity.” – Seth Fein

Doug Fields  |  72  |  Born: Indianapolis

Tell us a little about your background: Born and raised in Indy. Went to Ball State University, received a degree in business administration. Upon graduating I went into the Marine Corps and was a first lieutenant. After leaving the Marine Corps I went to work for an insurance company and eventually went to work for one of their largest agents in Champaign. In 1983 several of us started an agency called Insurance Risk Managers. The agency was sold a couple of times, and I retired from the current owner, USI, in 2019.

What are you up to these days? Volunteering at Salt & Light, enjoying spending time with my grandchildren, playing golf and traveling.

What is different about being older? Your body has a new surprise for you every morning.

What keeps you young at heart? Grandchildren.

How do you want people to remember you? A man of faith, loved and was devoted to his family and was a good friend.

From the nominator: “As a strong Christian, Doug Fields has always inspired me in his business career through his servant leadership style. As a friend, he continues to amaze and inspire me with his Christian values and his constant positive outlook on life. Even through a recent serious surgery, he maintained his positive attitude and continued to volunteer as he recovered. He is an inspiration to those of us who know him well. “He is gregarious and funny and always puts a smile on our faces.” – Dave Kuhl
Mike Folk | 78 | Born: San Francisco, California

Motto or philosophy: We’re all brothers and sisters in one big family.

Tell us a little about your background: Professionally: Peace Corps Tanzania in the ‘60s, then computer science and math teaching, then data guy at NCSA/University of Illinois, then helped start a nonprofit tech company. Avocations: Old things fascinate me, like ancient sites and geology. Also enjoy backpacking.

What are you up to these days? I came out of retirement to help out my old company. I’m involved with CU FAIR, a local organization that help immigrants and refugees become self-sufficient. We have the joy and privilege of spending a few hours a week with grandchildren.

What is your advice for aging? Keep moving, keep thinking, have a great partner, be lucky.

What is different about being older? It’s harder to see, hear, and get up off the ground. You’ve stopped sweating the small stuff so much.

What keeps you young at heart? Keeping active, learning, kids and grandkids.

How do you want people to remember you? I want them to think, “He loved me.”

From the nominator: “I have so much respect for Mike’s work as a project manager with the Mosaic team and then the team that developed HDF5. As the first graphical web browser, Mosaic really changed the world. So much of what we have today in the palm of our hands with a smart phone, stemmed from that development. HDF5 is less obvious to the non-scientist, but it’s used for everything from space exploration to medical devices to automotive engine development. You’d never know Mike touched those things. He’s so humble and genuinely interested in his coworkers and their interests and is so respectful of the work everyone does.” – Lori Cooper

Darla Gardner | Over 70 | Born: LaPorte, Indiana

Motto or philosophy: I love Robert Kennedy’s quote, “Some men see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not.”

Tell us a little about your background: Most of my background has revolved around the arts. My parents were both artistic, so we grew up surrounded by creativity. I was an art teacher for 38 years in the public schools. And still create!

What are you up to these days? I am involved in giving back to my community and in doing so, hopefully making a positive difference.

What is your advice for aging? My advice for aging is “keep moving.” I have been an aerobics instructor for many years and see the benefits of physical activity.

What is different about being older? I think what is different about being older is your perception of time. As I get older, my philosophy about aging is “life is short; take the trip, buy the shoes, eat the cake.”

What keeps you young at heart? What keeps me young at heart is being needed.

How do you want people to remember you? I want people to remember me as someone who was inclusive. No matter who you are, you are just as good and have something to give ... sometimes more than you realize.

From the nominator: “Darla is a spark plug. She energizes everyone around her and encourages them to be better people and to work to the highest levels to achieve their goals. She is my next-door neighbor and my friend, and some days I get worn out just trying to keep up with her.” – Deb Follett

Elizabeth Goldsmith-Conley

79 | Born: Brooklyn, New York

Motto or philosophy: Borrowed from roofing: One shingle at a time.

Tell us a little about your background: My commitment to promoting literacy is a recurring goal. In addition to having been a professional puppeteer, I have taught at every level from nursery school through university. When Champaign’s alternative school, Columbia Center, closed in 2009, I was not ready to retire.

What are you up to these days? After volunteering for three years at the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, I was invited to join the staff and given the freedom as a literacy specialist to create an environment that would advance our club members’ abilities to read. I have built a leveled library of over 4,000 books, placed book carts in every room and developed a program, now in its fifth year, modeled after the national Reading Partners program. In partnership with the University of Illinois’ Education 201 class, we pair over 20 tutors with 20 club members and provide them with individually tailored lesson plans.

What keeps you young at heart? Working with exuberant children and a lively young staff on a project designed to make a positive difference in lives keeps me young at heart (in addition to my exercise routine at the Fitness Center, and my guitar lessons of the past four years.)

From the nominator: “Ms. Elizabeth always has a cheerful word to share, is a source of constant encouragement and a tremendous reminder that no matter how old you may be, you remain a vital part of the community and an incredible influence in the lives of others.” – Sam Banks

Roger Francisco | 81 | Born: Decatur

Motto or philosophy: Looking back, my philosophies have been “hanging around until you catch on” and “80 percent of success is showing up.”

Tell us a little about your background: I grew up mostly in Springfield, before coming to Champaign-Urbana in 1956 to attend the University of Illinois, then never left. Followed a circuitous professional route as a musician in various bands while building a recording studio where many of the local ‘60s and ‘70s bands recorded, ultimately evolving into primarily radio-TV commercials and corporate audio-video … which led in 1989, along with a video production partner, to a joint venture with the News-Gazette to form the Prairie Production Group. Also during this period, I shared on-air weather duties with Keith Page at WICD-TV. In the mid-’90s, PPG’s top client, Human Kinetics, lured my video partner and me to establish an audio-video department, where I spent the next 20 years as audio-services manager before my retirement at age 78 in 2016.

What are you up to these days? Busy these days continuing some audio production at my home studio, as treasurer of several organizations, fulfilling audio-visual duties at church, continuing on the 401(k) committee at HK and serving on a scholastic award committee for my audio guild.

From the nominator: “Roger’s ability to make every organization he works with better is an inspiration to me and those he works with. He has always shared his technical and artistic knowledge of the recording arts and sciences with younger generations and has influenced many recording artists and professionals. I have known Roger for over 40 years, and he has never ceased to be a consummate professional and committed contributor to and volunteer in our community.” – Douglas Fink
Robert “Bob” Goss | 76 | Born: Alton, Illinois

Motto or philosophy: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Tell us a little about your background: Twenty-six years in the Air Force, 10 years at Yale University and 17 years at University of Illinois.

What are you up to these days? Volunteering at the Daily Bread soup kitchen from its inception, I was 16 hours with no place to work from, and today we put out over five to six current meals a day with no paid staff, privately funded.

What is your advice for aging? I try not to make the same mistake twice, and you learn a lot from your mistakes and do better.

What keeps you young at heart? My wife, children and grandchildren are a big part of my life, and volunteering keeps me out of mischief.

From the nominator: “Bob Goss is a man who demonstrates his love and concern for the hungry and homeless of this community. He has devoted his time and many talents to help establish Daily Bread Soup Kitchen as a special place where people can go for a hot, nutritious lunch in an atmosphere of friendship and acceptance.” – Dolores Sofranko

Kimiko Gunji | 79 | Born: Osaka, Japan

Motto or philosophy: Ikasu, which means, “make use of,” so whatever you get, whether it is an opportunity or to meet a friend, or any experience, try to make use of the experience to the fullest, or make the most of the opportunity or the friendship.

Tell us a little about your background: I was born in Japan and raised in the traditional Japanese environment – in a small town, where my father was a Buddhist priest. Went to college and after the graduation, I taught in a local high school before coming to the U.S.

What are you up to these days? Although retiring from the University in the year of 2011, I have been teaching ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement and tea ceremony) regularly and am also involved in the activities held at Japan House in the University of Illinois.

What keeps you young at heart? Keeping myself busy and being positive and having association with the young people.

How do you want people to remember you? Being caring and considerate.

From the nominator: “Everyone who knows Kimiko would do anything for her. She has extremely high expectations, but those who know and love her will do anything to meet her expectations.” – Janet Ellis-Nelson

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James Hack | 80 | Born: Cullom, Illinois

Tell us a little about your background: I was born in 1940 in the small town of Cullom. I graduated from Cullom High School (now Tri-Point) and earned a degree in business from Marycrest Business College. I married my high-school sweetheart. We lived in Ashkum, Ill., for 38 years, five years in Wisconsin, and now we have been in Champaign going on 14 years. We have three married children, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. I worked for many years in the grain elevator business, both at sales and designing grain storage facilities and drying equipment. I also spent a number of years in the fertilizer application business.

What are you up to these days? I am a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where I serve on the church council as treasurer. I have volunteered on any number of projects at the church. I also have led nine mission trips to El Salvador to help build homes with Habitat/Thrivent Builds. I also am working with members of Good Shepherd who are providing scholarships for the youth at Cristo-Rey Lutheran Church in Santa Ana, El Salvador.

What is your advice for aging? I think the best way to handle age is to stay very active in the community. One thing about retirement is you have time to do what you think is very important. I like to spend as much time as I can with my family and my church family. It helps to stay young at heart by staying active with your family and following the grandkids in their sporting events. I help at church in whatever way I can.

From the nominator: “Whenever water leaks into a hallway after a storm, or a pipe busts spilling water all over the bathroom floor, he greets me with a smile and a solution. He has worked behind the scenes to repair roofs, drywall, carpeting and many other mishaps all as a willing and joy-filled volunteer.” – Jason Fisher

Robert E. Hambrick | 79 | Born: Nashville, Tennessee

Motto or philosophy: God is the head of my household, and with God all things are possible.

Tell us a little about your background: I have been an entrepreneur for the last 45 years. I successfully started and operated (along with my deceased wife, Hazel C. Hambrick) in 1977 Hambrick Maintenance Service, which locally employed about 25 employees and successfully operated in business for 33 years. Also, over the vast years I have owned Hair Essence Beauty Salong, Hambrick and Son Funeral Home and Hambrick Realty Company.

What is your advice for aging? Age gracefully ... literally take each day “one day at a time.”

What is different about being older? I am older and hopefully wiser with each passing day. Every day is a blessing – yesterday, today and tomorrow.

What keeps you young at heart? Well, constantly being around my family (five children, seven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren) and friends, sharing thoughts, breaking bread and great fellowship.

From the nominator: “Mr. Hambrick aided in forming the Community Collaboration for Economic Development (CCED) in our community. CCED is a program that aids local individuals that demonstrate a strong desire to achieve entrepreneurship. The CCED program helps guide them in securing financing, business plan development and small business education. One of the participants in the CCED program was Mr. Seon Williams, who ultimately became the very successful owner of Williams Memorial Service – Champaign. Mr. Williams’ entrepreneurial success is due in part to being a dedicated participant in the first class of the CCED program. The hard work, positive focus and great attitude of Mr. Williams and all the entrepreneurs over the years and those today give Mr. Hambrock great inspiration.” – LaShunda Hambrick

Anh Ha Ho | 72 | Born: Vietnam

Motto or philosophy: “Be well, be happy, be peaceful”

Tell us a little about your background: I was born in Vietnam, raised in France, lived in Canada and now have been in Champaign-Urbana for the last 35 years. I am married with three daughters (aged 47, 44 and 36). I speak five languages: Vietnamese, French, English, Spanish and German.

What are you up to these days? Lately, I’ve slowed down quite a bit because of the covid-19 quarantine. After things return to normal, however, I will go back to helping the refugee families navigate their new lives in the States. This includes helping them apply for benefits, registering for school, finding work, etc.

What is your advice for aging? Aging is a beautiful and natural thing.

What is different about being older? Being older gives the tools to advise younger people better. We have acquired experiences, wisdom and lived through life.

What keeps you young at heart? Keeping busy and helpful keeps me young at heart.

How do you want people to remember you? I would love to be remembered as the little Asian woman who promoted kindness and compassion.

From the nominator: “Ha has faced a lot of darkness as a refugee, as a teacher, and a bilingual counselor, and yet she still approaches everyone with the kind of pure-hearted joy and love you might think only child capable of. That is not naivety but a boundless wisdom I can only hope to one day have myself.” – Mary Danner

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**Stephen Hamburg** | 76 | Born: Urbana

**Motto or philosophy:** The Golden Rule. Treat people with dignity, kindness and respect.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I grew up in C-U, attended Champaign schools and the University of Illinois. I worked in the family business, Garber’s Cleaners, for 43 of the 78 years of the company’s existence, selling it in 2007.

**What are you up to these days?** Since retirement, I donate my efforts to assist the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club and the Salvation Army in multiple ways. I enjoy social interaction with friends and golf.

**What is your advice for aging?** A regular exercise program and efforts to stimulate and expand your mind as fully as possible.

**What is different about being older?** I believe life experiences give one different perspectives about life and direction I didn’t possess previously. Also, the aging process can have its challenges.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Being blessed with good health, good friends and a healthy lifestyle.

**How do you want people to remember you?** I hope to be remembered as a good, kind, sensitive and giving person.

*From the nominator:* “Steve inspires all who are lucky enough to know him. His passion for youth and helping those in need inspires others to get involved and ‘active’ in helping to make our community a better place for everyone. He never talks about himself but rather always about what he can do to help others.” – Sam Banks

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**Sandra Hannum** | 75 | Born: Canada

**Tell us a little bit about your background:** My life has been rich with great family and friends, interesting work, dancing, music and fun. I am an optimist and always look for the good in people. My background includes a B.A. in English and work as a freelance writer. I have a daughter and son, who turned into wonderful adults. I later earned a M.S. in nutrition and worked as a nutrition researcher at the University of Illinois.

**What are you up to these days?** After retirement I became involved with Court Appointed Special Advocates. I served on the board, then became an advocate for abused children, which I continue. I also enjoy working for the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Tuesday crew. As a member of the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society, I plan Blues in the Schools programs for public schools, demonstrating what blues music has given to American culture. I am on the CROP Walk Committee, a community-wide interfaith effort to fight hunger and poverty.

**What is your advice for aging?** A regular exercise program and efforts to stimulate and expand your mind as fully as possible.

**What is different about being older?** I believe life experiences give one different perspectives about life and direction I didn’t possess previously. Also, the aging process can have its challenges.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Being blessed with good health, good friends and a healthy lifestyle.

**How do you want people to remember you?** As an older person, I have more moments of wonder and awe. I am so thankful for my husband. Life is great with the right partner. I would be delighted if people remember me as being a loving person.

*From the nominator:* “Sandy is a doer and leads by example. She dives head first into jobs without waiting to see if others will do them instead of her. She is enormously generous with her time and is steadfastly supportive of her friends, our family, and the many people she encounters in her volunteer activities. She has an infectious laugh that can get a whole group chuckling and has an amazing memory for great jokes that she can deliver with perfect timing. I love to watch her interacting with our grandsons, whom she showers with affection.” – James Hannum

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**Dick Harvey** | 91 | Born: Evansville, Indiana

**Motto or philosophy:** Travel widely, share with family.

**Tell us a little about your background:** Research geologist.

**What are you up to these days?** Volunteering at Carle Hospital.

**What is your advice for aging?** Be active.

**What is different about being older?** Not much, but don’t forget your prescriptions.

**What keeps you young at heart?** A puzzling question.

**How do you want people to remember you?** A joyful person.

*From the nominator:* “Dick is a true ‘lifetime learner.’” Even at his age, he continues to look for ways to improve upon himself as well as his community. A modest man focused on continual self-improvement, he feels that there are individuals more deserving of this award than himself. But his focus on volunteerism and improving the lives of those around him tells a different story.” – Courtney Mann
Dave Hensleigh | 70
Born: On a farm near Winchester, Kansas, population 450 and high school class of 17

Motto or philosophy: I am loved, I am created just right, I am the light of the world.

Tell us a little about your background: I am a traveler, runner, creative type who just loves Mexico. After retiring, I started Authentic Mexico Travel with a vision to give curious travelers a vivid experience in the true life of the less traveled places of Mexico and its people. All through my youth, the trails, mountains, grasslands and wild places of the Midwest and West were my haunt.

I am an outdoor guy. I did math in undergrad and biology in grad school. I was enthusiastic on the first Earth Day, I care about living things and am deeply concerned over the degradation of the environment, especially in the last 20 years.

What are you up to these days? Running, running a tour business, running around building/remodeling homes.

What is your advice for aging? Do what the New York Times bestseller “Younger Next Year” advises: 1) Eat less and don’t eat crap, 2) work out every day, and 3) have deep relationships.


How do you want people to remember you? Giver, creator, authentic.

From the nominator: “When Dave Hensleigh asks you a question, you can tell he is asking out of complete sincerity. And when you respond, you have his undivided attention. He has been a mentor and friend to many.” – Brice Hutchcraft

Vincent Hock | 75 | Born: Pottsville, Pennsylvania

Motto or philosophy: Trust in God, treat everyone with respect and dignity regardless of race, creed and age, and the world will be a better place.

What are you up to these days? Currently am a part-time federal reemployed annuitant with the Corps of Engineers at CERL, where my primary mission is to mentor our young and older researchers and help develop some new corrosion mitigation technology. Youth Chair Champaign County Pheasants Forever Chapter, Supervisor Condit Township. My wife and I farm in Champaign County, participate in judging regional and state Science Olympiad and First Lego competitions: This is one of the greatest mentoring opportunities I experience.

What is your advice for aging? Stay active, keep exercising, keep the mind working. Mentor young people and trust in God.

What is different about being older? You learn how to pass on your knowledge and beliefs to the younger generation.

What keeps you young at heart? Very good question. Mentoring and working with our young folks at CERL and helping grade and high school students to shape their lives and careers.

From the nominator: “What inspires me about Vince – and makes me smile, too – is his enthusiasm for everything he does. He shows me that, whatever your age, the way to live life is to get involved and do things for other people, your community, your country and the environment – and let nothing stop you, including physical infirmities. Three joint replacements (two shoulders and a knee) and a heart vascular stent procedure have not slowed him down. When I visited him in the hospital a few days after the stent procedure, I found him making phone calls from his bed, selling ads for the Champaign County Pheasants Forever banquet program. That made me smile, too. Vince is constantly looking ahead to the next contribution he can make.” – Darrell Smith

Joan M. Hood | 82 | Born: Norwell, Massachusetts

Motto or philosophy: Engage the world; stay curious.

Tell us a little about your background: Youth in New England; 50 years ago moved to Urbana, where I volunteered in numerous local organizations.

Professional career: Director of Development and Public Affairs for the University of Illinois at U-C Library System; consultant to libraries around the world.

What are you up to these days? Remain active in several local organizations: Rotary International, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Krannert Art Museum, Illinois Club, PEO, Champaign Social Science Club, Score Club; continue to travel. We have visited over 135 countries and all seven continents.

What is your advice for aging? Remain active mentally, physically and socially.

What is different about getting older? Longer and hopefully wiser perspective on issues and situations; keeping fit takes more time.

What keeps you young at heart? Learning about other people and cultures has been important to me my entire life, also interaction with the natural world. Now, fortunately, Peter and I are able to continue traveling nationally and internationally.

How do you want people to remember you? Thoughtful; both a good listener and questioner.

From the nominator: “Joan inspires others with her intelligence, her commitment and follow-through and her generous donations of time, expertise and money.” – Janet Ellis-Nelson

W. Peter Hood | 85 | Born: Concord, New Hampshire

Motto or philosophy: Lifelong learning. Stay active and be involved physically and mentally.

Tell us a little about your background: Grew up in New Hampshire, attending public schools and the State University. Obligation with the U.S. Army. Stationed in Heidelberg, Germany.

Master’s Degree at Indiana University. Taught/counselor in N.H. public high schools.

Year-long National Defense Education Act Institute at Indiana University, where I stayed on for a doctorate degree in 1970.

Job opportunity at the University of Illinois resulted in a career there, first as an Associate Dean in LAS, then Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

What are you up to these days? Upon retirement in 1997, initiated and researched two archivist collections for two state-wide associations housed at the U of I Archives. Active in these two organizations for 10-plus years. Served on several boards; State University Annuitant Association, Krannert Center for Performing Arts and Urbana Rotary.

Fortunate to travel during my career and in retirement, having visited over 135 countries and all seven continents, learning about the people and their cultures.

Just completed two weeks of snorkeling in the Seychelles Archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

What keeps you young at heart? Staying active and keeping physically fit. For me, swimming, walking and strength classes help.

From the nominator: “Peter inspires others with his wisdom, knowledge, and humor. His knowledge of the university and community is encyclopedic and is sought after by current leaders. His continued hands-on service and philanthropy is also very inspiring.” – Janet Ellis-Nelson
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Donna Jones

**Motto or philosophy:** Change ain’t change until you change

**What are you up to these days?** Thanking God I’m alive

**What is your advice for aging?** Never stop if you don’t take but one step and say one word

**What is different about getting older?** Limited mobility

**What keeps you young at heart?** My children and praising God.

**How do you want people to remember you?** As a woman of God who loved God’s people.

*From the nominator:* “Donna is positive force of energy who generously cares for those around her. Even though she has survived her fair share of tragedy, she approaches life with such joy that it is contagious to everyone lucky enough to know her. She is a joy to behold.” – Jenette Jurczyk

Ronald Kiddoo

**Motto or philosophy:** I am not big into philosophy, but I believe people should live for today and tomorrow and not worry about yesterday.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I grew up on a farm in Western Illinois and went to a small high school and then went to the University of Illinois, where I received a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in accounting and was lucky enough to be awarded the Bronze Tablet. I spent three years in the United States Army with most of the time being spent in Berlin, Germany. I worked for a public accounting firm in Champaign, becoming a managing partner of the firm. In 1982 I left public accounting and joined Cozad Asset Management, where I currently am the Chief Investment Officer.

**What are you up to these days?** I am still working and hope to continue to be able to work as long as physically and mentally possible.

**What is your advice for aging?** I believe you should associate with younger people as it helps keep you from growing old. Also I think it is important to keep active, whether it be through work or through volunteering.

**What is different about being older?** Other than the fact my golf handicap has continued to increase, you realize you have experience with life and passing it on to the younger generation is important, provided they listen.

*From the nominator:* “At 77 years old, Ron is the first person at work each day, arriving typically at 6:30 a.m. His clients have literally worked with him for several generations. He leads by example but also has a wry sense of humor and often lightens the mood during our firm lunches with his wit. He has served faithfully and fully his family, profession, community and church with little signs of wanting to stop anytime soon.” – Greg Cozad
Tell us a little about your background: Attended Champaign schools, graduating from Champaign High in 1950. Aside from military service (1952-1956), lifelong resident.

When I enlisted in the Air Force in 1952, aptitude tests identified me for technical training in the aircraft mechanic program. Upon training completion, I was named an Honor Graduate. I was retained in the training program to train as a technical instructor. Upon release from active duty in 1956, I became an Air Force civilian employee, as an aircraft mechanic at Chanute Air Force Base. An opportunity arose to transfer to the aircraft mechanic training program, then also at Chanute.

Spent most of the next 35 years in Air Force training: Instructor, Instructor Supervisor, Testing Materials Writer, Training Materials Development Specialist, Technical Writer, Analysis of Field Training Reports, Training Standards Development, Course Development for resident and non-resident programs and more; retired in 1993 as Chief, Training Development Branch, Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE).

What are you up to these days? After the museum closed in 2015, I have devoted many hours of volunteer time to my church, where I chair the buildings and grounds committee. I also participate in community-oriented programs such as food and clothing drives for those less fortunate. I also participate in Meals On Wheels.

What is your advice for aging? My approach to aging is ignore it as best you can. Stay active as much as you can. Associate with younger people whenever you can. Pass on the benefit of your experiences. They may not listen to your advice, but they might return the favor by teaching you how to use your cell phone or other electronic device.

From the nominator: “Ed’s sense of humor makes a lot of people smile. He has an easy-going personality, and his sense of humor helps lighten tough situations.” – Mark Williams

Charles Lansford | 79 | Born: Lincoln, Illinois

Tell us a little about your background: I had a typical Midwestern small-town childhood in Lincoln, consisting of neighborhood schools, Boy Scouts, church youth groups and lots of time to enjoy the outdoors. I began working at age 9, helping my brother carry newspapers, then at age 11 had a route of my own. At 16, I became a delivery boy/jack of all trades for a local floral shop. I worked as a pharmacy assistant and then a hospital assistant while in premed at the University of Illinois and then went to U of I College of Medicine in Chicago. I met my wife while in premed, and we attended medical school together, getting married after our sophomore year. We interned and completed over two years of training at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Fla., before I was called up to serve two years in the USAF as a flight surgeon. Afterwards we finished our training in Denver, Colo., before coming to Carle Clinic. We practiced there until our retirement. We have three sons and 10 grandchildren.

What is your advice for aging? Keep physically active, keep contact with current friends while making new friends, read good books to expand your awareness of the world you live in.

What is different about being older? Things take longer; enjoy the slower pace.

How do you want people to remember you? Made a positive difference for others in my time on earth.

From the nominator: “Chuck takes a keen interest in people, current events, history, politics and pretty much everything and everyone around him. He is interested in the opinions of others and is a thoughtful listener. And, he is known for his homemade cookies and fudge, which sometimes accompany him to meetings.” – Donna Pittman
Mary Laros | 90 | Born: Arvanitokerasia, Arcadia, Greece

**Motto or philosophy:** Love your family, pray each day, work hard, and every day thank God for the United States of America. I have followed these rules of life daily. God, family, hard work and being able to be a citizen of the United States of America made me the person that I am today. If you know me, you know my story.

**What are you up to these days?** I am retired from my job as a seamstress for Carson Pirie Scott and Bergners but still sew for some longtime clients. I have been a volunteer at the Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church ever since it received its charter in 1965. I love to cook, garden and be outside.

**What is your advice for aging?** Keep busy mentally. Visit with your friends. Be happy. I stay close to my family and grandkids, who help with anything. My family is No. 1 in my life. Keep working hard, pray, and everything else will fall into place.

**What is different about being older?** Some things change, and you can’t do as much, but for me I think I am active and independent and I hope I am like this for the rest of my life. I am 90 years old, and the most important thing is to be close to my family.

**What keeps you young at heart?** My grandkids. I have a nice family, and they include me in everything. My work and wonderful clients keep me young. I also have a good relationship with my friends.

From the nominator: “Mary is a great storyteller. She has a wonderful ability to recount poignant as well as funny stories from her young and adult life that are always engaging. Her granddaughter will never forget the day Mary shared her memories of living through World War II in front of her fifth-grade class and the awe and wonder she inspired in the students. She is genuine, confident and proud of what she has accomplished in her life. Her happy nature and strong faith in God endure despite the tragedies she has faced. Everyone enjoys being around her. Mary inspires other by her actions, commitment, leadership and drive.” – Lou Laros

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John Marlin | 70 | Born: Murphysboro, Illinois

**Motto or philosophy:** Regarding pork barrel politics: When someone gets something for nothing, the rest of us get nothing for something.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I delivered newspapers in all weather with a bike, cleaned a grade school for 65 cents an hour and collected native bees all over Illinois while in college. I have a Ph.D. in entomology, spent about 12 years as executive director of the Coalition on American Rivers fighting to protect Allerton Park and numerous rivers from Army Engineer dams and channels and was an Illinois quasi-judicial officer as a member of the Pollution Control Board. I worked on numerous issues at the Prairie Research Institute including livestock waste, river restoration and reuse of sediment as topsoil.

**What are you up to these days?** I am finishing up some research papers and helping establish plantings for native pollinators.

**What is different about being older?** Realizing that I have some physical limitations – like now I can only leap one building at a single bound.

From the nominator: “John is so passionate about everything that he does that he inspires people to not only learn about his projects, but also to be supportive about the impact that he strives to make. When he was appointed to the Illinois Pollution Control Board by the governor, John was able to reach out and work with people from different political parties by focusing on the goals of a particular project. He is so passionate about his work and interests that you can’t help but get carried away into his world. I guess that is what makes everyone smile when they are with John. It doesn’t matter if it is mud, or mosquitos, or LEGOS or bees or a German Black Forest Cake — whatever John loves becomes a part of your life, too because he conveys a pure joy with sharing all of his passions.” – Sheri Langendorf

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Gregory B. “Greg” Lykins | 72 | Born: Urbana

**Motto or philosophy:** Work to help others achieve their goals, and the results will be beneficial for all.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I grew up in the rural community of Bellflower, learning the value of education and work ethic. I followed my father’s experience to obtain a degree from the University of Illinois. I became an accountant (CPA) and a partner in McGladrey. After 14 years, in 1983, I joined First Busey Corporation as President, then became Chairman of the Board in 1994 until the present. I have been married to my childhood sweetheart, Margo, for 51 years!

I have previously volunteered as a board member, becoming Chairman of The Carle Foundation and Hospital and the University of Illinois Foundation. I have served on a number of private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations and have participated in a number of philanthropic efforts.

**What are you up to these days?** Continuing to work. I continue to be the Chairman of the Board of First Busey Corporation and a partner in Armory Capital, a family investment office investing in private businesses.

**What is different about being older?** Being older is a bit more peaceful.

From the nominator: “Greg has been instrumental in helping Busey grow from $3.7 billion to nearly $10 billion in assets and 800 associates to more than 1,600 team members in the past five years alone – with, more importantly, a laser focus on serving customers and associates to the highest degree. Greg’s mentorship has been instrumental in Busey’s success. Our personal and business partnership stretches 30-plus years. His humble generosity and support have been impactful to me personally, not to mention the great things he and Margo have done for the community.” – Van Dukeman
Marge Mead  |  92  |  Braymer, Missouri

Tell us a little bit about your background: I grew up in Braymer, graduated from Braymer High School. My mother was a nurse, and my father was a funeral director. I had a sister and brother. I received an A.A. degree from Christian College in Columbia, Mo., a bachelor’s degree in home economics education from Iowa State University, and a master’s degree in textiles and apparel from Iowa State. My first job was as a home economics teacher in Bedford, Iowa, and then I taught in Fergus Falls, Minn. I came here to work for the University of Illinois Extension as a home economics specialist in the subject of textiles and apparel; I did that from 1957 to 1990.

What are you up to these days? After retiring, I moved into the Windsor of Savoy, where I am at the present time. I participate in Windsor activities like exercise classes, various programs and educational activities. I keep up with longtime friends, going to lunch with them and visiting on the phone. I go to Krannert programs, am active in PEO and volunteer in the Carle surgical waiting room. I like to knit and read.

What is your advice for aging? Spend time with family members of all ages whenever possible and make new ones. And keep physically fit.

What is different about getting older? People tend to want to help me if I can’t reach something in the grocery store and occasionally help me cross the street. I hadn’t experienced that before. We have to realize our physical limitations with our eyesight, hearing and ability to walk.

From the nominator: “At the age of 92, Marge is young and vibrant. She looks and acts as if she were three decades younger than she really is! She has a large presence wrapped in a small package and moves as if nothing can get in her way. She has a very genuine sense of compassion and a radiant smile. Marge feels she is not too old to have goals and aspirations and she still looks forward to travel.” – Courtney Mann

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Motto or philosophy: This life is preparation for the next.

Tell us a little about your background: Born in Champaign-Urbana, attended Urbana schools, University of Illinois degree in Architecture, U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps, taught architecture for 15 years and was Dean of Student Affairs in College of Fine and Applied Arts for another 15 years … all at the U of I. In leadership of Bible Study Fellowship International for 25 years.

What are you up to these days? Doing pro bono work for the Rafiki Foundation as Head of Africa Facilities, designing and supervising construction of over 300 buildings for villages in 10 countries in Africa. The villages are comprised of orphan housing, schools and missionary housing for orphaned and vulnerable children. Forty-nine trips to Africa so far.

What is your advice for aging? Do not become sedentary. Keep active physically and mentally.

What is different about being older? Being more reflective on what has gone before and appreciating the opportunities I have been given.

What keeps you young at heart? Having an active, supportive wife. Not thinking it’s time to slow down.

How do you want people to remember you? As a God-led, loving husband and father who tried to have a positive effect on people with whom he came in contact.

From the nominator: “Chris sets an example for doing purposeful work beyond retirement. He has helped hundreds of young adults gain access to education and is an inspiration to others on how to share one’s talents in a volunteer capacity.” – Deb Reardanz
Frederick L. Neumann | 89 | Born: New Britain, CT

Motto or philosophy: Micah 6:8.
Tell us a little about your background: Youngest in family of four (three boys, one girl, three deceased); 1948 - Graduated from New Britain Senior High School; 1952 - Graduated from Dartmouth College; 1953 - Graduated from Tuck School of Business, MBA; 1954 - General Stores & Repair Parts Officer, USS Hornet (CVA 12); 1955-56 - Supply Officer, USS Mansfield (DD - Department of Accountancy, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Price Waterhouse Professor; Head, Department of Accountancy; Associate Dean and Interim Dean, College of Business; 1960-03 - Married to Elizabeth Robinson, three children: Brad, Carla, Marshall; 2004-08 - Married to Joan Newcomb; Commander (SC) U. S. Navy; Certified Public Accountant (Connecticut and Illinois); Past President and Treasurer of Phi Beta Kappa, U of I Chapter; Eagle Scout.

What are you up to these days? Volunteer: OSF Health Center; empty tomb; Virginia Theatre; Optimist Club; Wesley United Methodist Church.

What is your advice for aging? Stay open to new friends, ideas and opportunities.

What is different about being older? More experience.

What keeps you young at heart? Faith.

How do you want people to remember you? A friend.

From the nominator: “Fred strikes you as the person who cannot sit still and puts to shame with his energy and vigor many folk junior in years.” – John Kelley

Iris Nigg-Lundin | 101 | Born: Duluth, Minnesota

Motto or philosophy: Keep breathing!

Tell us a little about your background: I grew up in the country, walking two miles to school every day. I got a scholarship to go to college (Superior State, in Wisconsin). Taught school for a few years, then joined the Marine Corps. I was in the Corps for two and a half years, stationed at the Marine Corps Base in Hollywood, Fla., where I taught navigation to Navy pilots. Got married, raised a family.

What are you up to these days? Doing what has to be done – at 101. Reading, taking naps.

What is your advice for aging? Enjoy!

What is different about being older? You have to go slower than you want to.

What keeps you young at heart? People.

How do you want people to remember you? That I liked people.

From the nominator: “Iris is a gregarious story-teller and has an eagerness to teach others. During World War II people were asked to do their part and Iris did – then and now. Iris was a first lieutenant in the Marines in WWII. She was the fourth female Marine to earn her wings and she taught male pilots how to navigate. Iris does not act her age in the best way possible. At 101, Iris is seemingly decades younger than she is. She is vibrant, engaging, full-of-life, quick-witted and feisty. It is impossible to capture Iris in words alone. She is a force of nature and enriches the lives of everyone who has the opportunity to meet her.” – Courtney Mann
Alan Nudo  |  Born: Blue Island, Illinois  

**Motto or philosophy:** My tombstone will read “I told you ________‘s I didn’t feel good”.

**Tell us a little about your background:** Grew up on south side of Chicago, attended Thornton Township High School. Graduated from Illinois with B.A. in history, with minors in political science and advertising. Lucky and blessed to work with the Robeson family for 40 years. Coached basketball as a hobby for 25 years at three levels. Now enjoy commercial real estate and helping to develop downtown Champaign.

**Married (Kassie),** have three wonderful children (Sal, Maggie, Nick and spouses) and seven grandchildren, Logan, Cece, Abby, Julia, Claire, Olivia and Matthew.

**What are you up to these days?** Still active in commercial real estate in downtown Champaign. Spending quality time with my lovely wife, Kassie.

**What is your advice for aging?** Stay involved with family, friends and business if you can; read as much as you can and love your family and friends.

**From the nominator:** “Alan inspires our team and many throughout the community with his relational caring spirit. In our journey with him leading up to the launch of The Venue CU, we never felt he was looking to simply profit off of us. He cares about us as a team and as a family launching a local business. He cares about the legacy this venue will leave Champaign-Urbana and the people in our community. Alan also cares for his wife as she deals with some substantial health issues. He is always by her side, displaying tremendous love and care that we all can take lessons from. Alan truly enjoys life. He is retired from Robeson Inc., but instead of simply laying low, he is active and making a difference every day! Alan is truly a blessing to all who cross his path.” – Dan Church

Ann Paul  |  84  |  Born: White Heath

**Motto or philosophy:** Keep God in your heart at all times, help others, always be kind and patient. Always smile.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I was born and raised on a farm. I graduated from Monticello High School in 1953 and worked there until moving to Seymour. Then I started working at Paul’s Cafe in Mahomet, where I met my husband, Keith. We were married in July 1955 and built a house in Mahomet. We have three children, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. We took care of 89 foster babies from 1971 until 1984. Also done childcare for many others. I started working at Mahomet Helping Hands food pantry in 1994. My husband died in 2015. Had been married 60 years. I still live in the same place in Mahomet.

**What are you up to these days?** Staying active with Mahomet Helping Hands, my church and the community.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Going to my grandchildren’s sporting events and other events they are involved in.

**From the nominator:** “Ann inspires by example. She is always kind, compassionate and nonjudgmental of Helping Hands clients. She meets individuals at the Center in response to calls for emergency food – never looking at it as an imposition. She has a wonderful way of dealing with volunteers. She’s always cheerful, grateful and understanding if you can’t work on a certain day. She is well-liked by everyone. She takes on many odd jobs at the Center, such as cleaning, of which most volunteers aren’t even aware. I smile at Foodbank deliveries when we seem overwhelmed by boxes of cereal, Hamburger Helper, macaroni and cheese, crackers, etc., etc. Ann will often say, ‘I don’t know where we are going to put everything!’ In the end, there is always a spot for each box, package or can!” – Karen Wilkinson

Harry Rakers  |  74  |  Born: Breese, Ill.

**Motto or philosophy:** With the right partner, life is so good ... enjoy every moment

**Tell us a little about your background:** Married for 51 years to the girl I always dreamed about marrying. Bachelor degree (U of I) in accounting, CPA, Master’s in Business Administration (U of I), U.S. Marine Corps

**What are you up to these days?** Playing and managing a 55-year-old softball team in Champaign; playing on a travel softball team out of Chicago and playing on a travel softball team out of Omaha/DesMoines – about 90 games per year ... and still working full-time

**What is your advice for aging?** Stay active, don’t sit around, don’t watch TV except for sports

**What keeps you young at heart?** My wife, Cheri, and administer American Legion Baseball teams for ages 13 to 19 and various senior softball teams

**How do you want people to remember you?** Fun-loving and always in an upbeat good mood, would do anything for any member of my family, loved to help people in whatever way they needed help, loved to organize and lead in various sports activities, was always wanting to stay athletically fit and strong.

**From the nominator:** “How hard Harry works to stay active, both physically and mentally, is an inspiration to those who know him. He studied for six months to take necessary tests to become a licensed investment advisor, at the age of 70-plus. That same year, he won the ‘Mr. Gun’ champion award at a world softball championship for throwing a softball with distance and accuracy. What makes me smile: When he hits an inside-the-park homerun and crosses the plate with the grin of a 10-year-old on his face. Living the dream.” – Cheri Rakers
Leonard Rumery | 72 | Born: Los Angeles

**Motto or philosophy:** Be the change you wish to see in the world.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I’ve had at least two careers: First, as a professor of music at the University of Illinois. Then I went to law school and became the assistant state’s attorney for Piatt County. In 2000, I was elected to be the state’s attorney for Piatt County and I retired from that position in 2008. I have conducted several pit orchestras for the Champaign Urbana Theater Company. In other musical pursuits I sang in Four Wheel Drive, the Monticello Rotary Club’s barbershop quartet, and played in a trio called Stringtown Lane. Lately I have directed several plays for the Monticello Theater Association.

**What is your advice for aging?** Keep mentally active.

**What is different about being older?** I don’t have the energy that I once had.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Music, books and my wife and friends.

**How do you want people to remember you?** As optimistic and having integrity.

**From the nominator:** “Leonard is one of the most interesting and intelligent people I have ever known. His wit and knowledge are legendary.” – Jeff Clodfelter

Prudence Runkle | Born: Rock Rapids, Iowa

**Motto or philosophy:** “Live life to its fullest!”

**Tell us a little about your background:** Grew up in Iowa, daughter of school superintendent and drama/English teacher. In high school played basketball; as junior, team went to state. At Macalester College, involved with drama, political causes and early childhood education, graduating in 1965.

My husband and I educated and assisted in public health in the Peace Corps in Malawi when tuberculosis was rampant there. We moved 13 times in 10 years, from California to Ohio. My husband was furthering his education. We have three sons, two grandsons and two daughters-in-law.

I’ve worked in many area groups/boards. I enjoy being part of the city and working with all kinds of people on all kinds of projects. I’m a member of the Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation board. One of my most important projects was working with others to pass the Unit 4 referendum four years ago. It was a lot of work and most satisfying.

**What is your advice for aging?** My advice for aging is just “Go with the flow and make the most of your life.” If we’re lucky, we’ll get older, and I much prefer that to the alternative.

**What keeps you young at heart?** My grandsons, my family, my friends and my involvement keep me “young at heart.” I like to laugh. I like to travel and I like to spend time with my friends. I also enjoy being alone. It is just fine to be alone.

**From the nominator:** “Prue genuinely cares about people and making the world a better place. She recognized from an early age that education is the cornerstone to a better life and she wanted to be a part of providing that opportunity by becoming an educator. I enjoy watching her around young children including her two young grandchildren, as she has a beautiful way of inspiring and instilling a sense of pride in these young members of our community that I am sure will serve them well in their life’s journey.” – Anita Stein

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Shozo Sato | 87 | Born: Kobe, Japan

**Motto or philosophy:** Because I grew up in the midst of World War II, I seek total peace among the public, and between countries, and better understanding of one another’s cultures through grassroots cultural exchange.

**Tell us a little about your background:** I have been interested in the visual and the performing arts since childhood. Therefore, I have pursued my adult life in deference to perfecting the traditional arts of Japan and Western art. I believe an art has the direct voice of its culture.

**What are you up to these days?** Since we are planning to expand Japan House at the University of Illinois, I am contemplating how we can serve the community through our activities in our new facilities.

**What is your advice for aging?** Constant activity with the younger generations is key. Their youth, their mentality, and drive for physical activity will rub off on aged people and imbue them with additional strength and rejuvenation.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Creativity. In every given task, applying one’s own creativity will make it better than the past iterations.

**How do you want to be remembered?** I would be pleased if my activities in the Champaign-Urbana community since 1964 were seen as pioneer work for the injection of Asian culture to the Midwest, through both the performing and visual arts, based on the centuries-old Japanese philosophy of Zen. I would like to be remembered through the work of the next generation of pioneers, who build bridges so that cultures can continue to live in harmony.

From the nominator: “He is the most positive person you will ever meet: Kind, considerate, always wants to help others. He has been a mentor to many people.” – Louis Lay

James Sheehan | 71 | Born: A farm near Trowbridge, Illinois

**Motto or philosophy:** Do the things that you do to the best of your ability.

**Tell us a little about your background:** Eventually one grows out of and survives youth. After college, 48 years ago, I married my favorite person, Pat. We worked as a team doing jobs, raising a child and everything that comes along. We worked with contractors, interior decorators, plumbers, electricians and clients. I always admired a well-done job and cherished a great relationship with our clients.

**What is your advice for aging?** Drive through life focused on windshield, not the rearview mirror.

**What is different about being older?** Life is not a box of chocolates; it is a tractor pull. We move easily at the beginning, eventually slowing as increasing weights are laid upon us till we can proceed no longer. Keep pulling!

**What keeps you young at heart?** The desire to do something every day. Taking a mental snapshot from thought to a finished project is the most fun.

From the nominator: “Jim’s first woodcarving was an homage to Albrecht Dürer, and once he’d carved the old man in relief, he had to create an old woman to match. He carves and makes things out of wood because he thinks ‘wood is cool.’ He inspires all by his generosity of vision, spirit, talent and imagination. His creativity is vast, and his imagination is matched only by his work ethic. He imagines it and he achieves it. His mermaid sculpture, ‘Minnow’s Day in the Sun,’ is a delightful illustration of the way his playful and creative mind works. I think it makes everyone who sees it chuckle some ... as does the caterpillar that’s devoured a chunk of his leaf bowl or the chameleon perched on one of his wood urns.” – Pamela Wolf

Rob Siedenburg | 74 | Born: Clinton, Iowa

**Motto or philosophy:** Be available and even on call for others who need help.

**Tell us a little about your background:** Farm kid from the hills of northwestern Illinois.

**What are you up to these days?** Writing a couple of books, editing and contributing to a monthly newspaper for seniors, editing books for several authors, writing an index, leading a Bible study, teaching advanced academic writing, working in a Hispanic church, singing on a worship team, translating for a local company.

**What is your advice for aging?** Do not become sedentary. Keep active physically and mentally. Prioritize. There are so many worthwhile things to do, but there is very little time in which to do them.

**What is different about being older?** Though one is wiser, acting on that wisdom can be a challenge.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Learning something every day and hanging out with some of the amazing young people of our community.

**How do you want people to remember you?** I hope they will recall my kindness.

From the nominator: “Rob combines all the qualities of a renaissance man with those of a mentor. His heart lies in service, and he uses that service to pass on the wisdom he has accumulated through a life unusually rich with experiences of all kinds.” – Jonathan Harrison

Steven T. Sonka | 71 | Born: Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Motto or philosophy:** A job well done is its own reward.

**Tell us a little about your background:** Raised on an Iowa family farm, discovered economics and an interest in research and teaching at Iowa State University. Joined the University of Illinois in 1975 and benefitted from its professional challenge and freedom over the next four decades. My wife, Karilyn, and I have been blessed raising four daughters and making many friends while living in Champaign-Urbana.

**What are you up to these days?** Personally, my wife and I enjoy travel and time with our 13 grandchildren. I continue to be professionally active pursuing efforts to enhance global agriculture and food security in developing countries.

**What is your advice for aging?** Enjoy the process, even as it changes.

**What is different about being older?** One’s perspective as to what is important.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Thirteen grandkids and working with entrepreneurs.

**How do you want people to remember you?** He was never too busy to listen.

From a nominator: “Dr. Sonka has the rare ability to conceptualize a complex problem, see a path to a solution and then explain it to the broader community in a clear, coherent message that encourages optimism and adoption of new ideas. The world is a better place because of him.” – Bob Easter
Kay Stauffer  |  Born: Flora, Illinois

**Motto or philosophy:** Be yourself, learn, enjoy challenges.

**Tell me a little about your background:** Sports, loving family, mother, golfer, clay tennis, basketball courts (our father and partner). Built for them, me; two brothers, neighbors, friends for our playgrounds. Flora High graduate, pharmacy tech, attended Purdue University; associate degree, Parkland, public relations. Husband Darrel, daughters Robyn, Kris; grandchildren Teddy, Hannah, Erik, August, Charlie. Homemaker, 20 years Sears (Champaign) associate, various areas, store trainer. Tennis instructor, preschooler music … dulcimer, bluegrass.

**What are you up to these days?** Gift of Hope advocate (Indiana, Illinois). Ukulele clubs. Volunteer singalongs; play banjo, ukulele, kazoo, harmonica, tell jokes with “Everything But the Kitchen Sync” band at senior living and assisted care facilities, rehabs, memory care, etc. (all presently cancelled due to coronavirus). I’m knitting, playing piano, homemaking, planning to meet with band weekly … new songs, lunch and laughs … ready for all clear future schedules.

June 6, 2020 (our 65th wedding anniversary) squeezed into wedding dress, played ukulele, hubby played Washboard tie, serenaded granddaughter for photos.

**What is your advice for aging?** I’m OK with my age … normally only the doctor’s office wants birth dates … don’t worry about age in numbers.

**From a nominator:** “Kay is a beacon of joy and enthusiasm. In particular, she loves to share her vast collection of corny jokes and has written quite a few sets of charming parody song lyrics (such as her ‘Groundhog,’ sung each year in early February to the tune of ‘Hound Dog’). In the best possible way, she doesn’t ‘act her age,’ and I think her musical activities have reminded a lot of folks in this community that they don’t have to either.” – Jenny Applequist

Nancy Strunk

**Motto or philosophy:** Simply BLESSED

**Tell me a little about your background:** Moved to Champaign in 1976 with husband and children 6, 4, 2 and brand new. Best move in life. Great place to raise a family and to grow professionally as a woman.

**What are you up to these days?** Own and manage Claymore Realty, Inc., along with teaching continuing education classes to real estate agents, farming and enjoying my family.

**What is your advice for aging?** Stay busy, get involved in organizations. Be an active member, not sitting back passively watching others do things you can do. My happiness comes from 10 grandchildren 18 to 7 years of age and their parents.

**What is different about being older?** I may not be able to lift as much on the farm; however, that is when tractors and other equipment comes in handy.

**What keeps you young at heart?** Music, my grandchildren keep me busy learning about showing pigs, horses and now goats. My granddaughters and their mothers keep me informed on fashions. The support of my son and sons-in-law both mentally and physically keeps me challenged to stay young.

**How do you want people to remember you?** I would like for people to remember me as loyal, loving and a great hugger!

**From the nominator:** “Nancy and her late husband, Duane, have been dear friends of mine for nearly 15 years. They have supported me and been mentors since the moment we met. Nancy inspires by selflessly using her time to lift others. She’s constantly working to impact children or move her community forward. Nancy’s dedication makes others better and positively impacts our community in ways many may not see.” – Kirk Builta

Margaret Stewart  |  90  |  Born: Charleston, West Virginia

**Tell me a little about your background:** When we moved to Champaign in 1959, I was a stay-at-home mom but enjoyed getting to know the community. My husband died unexpectedly, and I became a single parent, so I needed to enter the workforce. Through my community involvement I’d become interested in social work, so I applied to the University of Illinois School of Social Work and received an MSW degree.

I became employed at Family Service of Champaign County. When I retired after 23 years, I felt I had been fortunate that my life experiences drew me to this work.

**What are you up to these days?** These days I participate in the 1-to-1 Mentoring Program and I’m looking for another volunteer experience. I also belong to three discussion groups that encourage reading.

**What is your advice for aging?** For most of us, aging brings the gift of time and provides the opportunity to pursue new interests, as well as to enjoy familiar ones. That could be to learn a new skill, change a habit that doesn’t work well anymore, or contact an old acquaintance you haven’t heard from for a long time.

**What keeps you young at heart?** To stay young at heart, I try to be open to new ideas and recognize old prejudices. I also try to be tolerant of new ways younger people communicate, since they may use words and expressions that startle me.

**From the nominator:** “Margaret is such a humble person. Talking about the possibility of an award or possible recognition made her blush, and quickly she came up with names of people who deserve the applause over her. Margaret’s attitude of compassion warms the hearts of her family and friends. She is small in stature yet greatly cheerful in her ways.” – Courtney Mann

Jamie Storm  |  74  |  Born: Palestine, Texas

**Motto or philosophy:** See good, do good.

**Tell me a little about your background:** Only child raised in piney woods of East Texas; B.A. in math from University of Texas – Austin; M.S. in computer science University of Illinois; R.N. Parkland College; hospice R.N.; three children; two stepchildren; two grandchildren.

**What are you up to these days?** Volunteering Books to Prisoners, Krannert Art Museum Council Board, Tiger Market (food pantry at Urbana High School) volunteer.

**What is your advice for aging?** Get out of the house, walk, meet with friends, volunteer, read, learn.

**What is different about being older?** Freedom of retirement, opportunities to travel.

**What keeps you young at heart?** My husband and our Siamese cat, Wallander.

**How do you want people to remember you?** Reliable, honest, direct, curious.

**From the nominator:** “Jamie is a very capable leader and encourages others to become volunteers for many causes. She personally inspires me to be more involved and is a role model for other seniors. Though often quiet, she can make others smile with her wit, humility and honesty.” – Nancy Uchtmann
Paul Tatman  |  80  |  Born: Mattoon

Motto or philosophy: Limitations and restrictions in life are self-imposed. Believe in yourself and go for it.

Tell us a little about your background: Born in Mattoon 1940. Moved to Urbana at 5 years old. Eight brothers and three sisters raised in a single-parent home (mother). Attended Urbana schools. Entered into a Diversified Occupation course offered at Urbana High in senior year. Worked in a body shop half-day and attended class a half-day. Six months after graduation opened my own shop on a part-time basis. Worked as a police officer in Urbana for six years before entering business full-time.

After almost 60 years in the auto body business with six locations and 100-or-so employees sold out to a consolidator and entered into the real estate development business. Numerous developments over the years including Fairway Estates subdivision, Inception of Berringer Commons, Prairie Winds Active Adult Community, Prairie Winds Supportive Living Facility, Hilton Hotels in Champaign, Walgreens and OSF Urgent Care in Urbana and numerous others, both locally and statewide.

What are you up to these days? Still tinkering with real estate development on a smaller scale. Doing some business consulting with some smaller local businesses, trying to share some of the knowledge I acquired over the years.

From a nominator: “Paul never backs off of a challenge but is never pushed in to doing something he does not have his own passion for. He is admired for his intelligence, wit, humor, discipline, business aptitude, tenacity, integrity and heart for his community. He loathes excuses for why things can’t get done. He never allowed his impoverished beginnings to determine his course in life … he blazed his own trail.” – Debra Greer

Chris Todd  |  71  |  Born: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Motto or philosophy: Together we can do this!

What are you up to these days?
• Enjoying time with family and friends
• Member and involved in ministries of St. Peter’s United Church of Christ in Champaign
• Coordinating the Food and More Partnership Program, an ecumenical and interfaith food ministry offered at First Presbyterian Church of Urbana providing food, nutrition classes and fellowship to 65 low-income households monthly; supported by First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Champaign, St. Peter’s United Church of Christ and local wards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
• Oblate at Holy Wisdom Monastery, an ecumenical Benedictine monastery in Middleton, Wis.

What is your advice for aging? Keep active and adapt as needed so you can continue to do what you love.

What keeps you young at heart? My family, especially Jon, my husband of 50 years, who is my rock; my two sons who make me laugh and make me proud; and my 9-year-old granddaughter, who teaches me something new every day. Using my organizational and analytic skills in service to others also adds joy to my life.

From the nominator: “Chris is extremely bright, an excellent communicator, an awesome organizer and skillful at using resources. Chris inspires volunteers to continue giving and make a difference in the lives of others. By providing information (as in her monthly reports of the food pantry) she enlightens people, inspiring them to become more involved in their communities. Chris makes me smile when she tells me of her successes, her stories of people she is helping, and how she feels blessed to assist needy people in our midst.” – Nancy Uchtmann
Walter Tousey | 82 | Born: Toledo, Ohio

Tell us a little bit about your background: I spent most of early life in Drexel Hill, Penn., prior to a number of moves that resulted in my attending three different schools for eighth grade and a different high school each year. This experience left me with the conviction that children are more adaptable than we often think. I attended West Point followed by four years in the Army (Germany). My German experience awakened a desire to study modern European history (Illinois State University M.A. and a Ph.D. at the University of Illinois). I married Marlene while at ISU. We arrived in Champaign in 1966, where Marlene became an assistant dean in Student Affairs, and I became an associate provost dealing with financial matters. Champaign proved to be a fine place to raise two children, Erika and Philip (four grandchildren). Marlene passed away in 1998. Joan and I married in 2000, a union that has prospered.

What are you up to these days? A cabin in the woods in Oakwood has provided a fine place to relax (and fish). Along the way I found tennis, softball, and involvement with United Way, Safe House and CASA (where I still volunteer) to be rewarding.

From the nominator: "Walt is a practical individual who enjoys conversations on a wide variety of topics and can build a relationship with folks from all walks of life. Although he might be considered a 'renaissance' man in many ways, his down-to-earth nature endears him to people of all ages, including the young children he meets in his CASA role. During his years on campus as the chief budget officer (associate provost), he was known as someone who provided great assistance to the business managers of departments and colleges and was seen as a very fair and honest administrator with great integrity. Walt can express great enthusiasm for causes and events for which he is passionate. He has a keen sense of humor which he brings to all aspects of his life." – Joan Tousey

Allan Vogelsang | 77 | Born: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Motto or philosophy: I try to do everything with respect and kindness.

Tell us a little bit about your background: I am a graduate of Rantoul Township High School, graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a bachelor’s degree, graduate of the University of Illinois with a master’s degree, taught at Lincoln Way High School, in Rantoul High School for 11 years. Owner of Gery and Al’s Sporting Goods for 24 years, sales manager of Kesslers Sporting Goods and BSN Sports for 16 years. Retired in 2014. Have served on the executive board of Christian Life Church for 36 years.

What are you up to these days? These days I volunteer at the Salvation Army, also serve on the advisory board, currently the chairman of the advisory board. I am the men’s ministry director of Christian Life Church. I also am the president of the Rantoul Kids Foundation. Donna and I do quite a bit of traveling.

What is your advice for aging? My advice for aging would be to stay mentally and physically active. I also try to learn and do new things.

What keeps you young at heart? It seems like our family, there is a ribbon of humor running through that keeps us all laughing. Our granddaughters range in age from 13 to 28, and they have provided much entertainment through the years.

From a nominator: “Allan’s servant heart is contagious. We consistently have about 100 people help at each of our Feed the Need events. Our men’s ministry draws a full room each week in the fall for our Men’s Fraternity classes (which he leads as well). Al’s selfless attitude makes me smile. I recently told someone that I have no intention of ever retiring because I see the impact Al continues to make and I plan to follow his example.” – Barry Hinkle

Thomas S. Ulen | 73 | Born: Lebanon, Indiana

Tell us a little about your background: I was raised in Indianapolis. My father was a lawyer; my mother a homemaker and schoolteacher. I went to Dartmouth College, was then in the Peace Corps in South Korea for two years, studied at the University of Oxford and got a Ph.D. in economics at Stanford. We moved to Champaign-Urbana in 1977. From 1983 till retirement in 2010 I taught at the University of Illinois College of Law. Julia and I were married in 1974 and have two boys and four grandchildren.

What are you up to these days? I’m still reading and writing, working on two books and a few articles, but doing very limited teaching. I serve on several community boards, and we travel to see our grandchildren on the East and West coasts frequently.

What is different about being older? Aside from the obvious differences – energy and health, I think that you narrow your focus onto the things that really matter – the love of family and friends, the joys of discovery, the small but numerous pleasures of every day.

What keeps you young at heart? Watching our sons grow into adulthood and our grandchildren discover the many blessings of life.

From a nominator: “In addition to Tom’s tireless desire and ability to help and serve, Tom never stops learning and seeking knowledge. He is open to exploring and considering every new and current idea and trend. His enthusiasm for life is contagious, and he positively motivates everyone around him.” – Joan Sensenbrenner
Edward (Ted) Wells | 84 | Born: Macomb, Illinois

Motto or philosophy: Anything is possible and can be done
Tell us a little about your background: General management in retail food (Jewel store in Chicago); private pilot
What are you up to these days? Working full-time as CFO of Stephens Family YMCA. My career at the YMCA began after I “retired” at 65.
What is your advice for aging? Don’t put off things you want to do in early life thinking you will do them when you retire.
What is different about being older? Things take longer to do
What keeps you young at heart? Working and interacting with younger people on a daily basis.
How do you want people to remember you? I always helped when I could.

From the nominator: “Ted inspires our entire YMCA team to be the best that they can be. He inspires people to continue to learn, often relating things that he has learned over the years to his younger coworkers. Ted has stayed relevant in so many ways and continues to set the standard of a forward-thinking, highly involved, dedicated and caring coworker. Ted is a friend to many and has established himself as a pillar of the YMCA. Ted continues to participate in sharing devotions, book studies and inspiring quotes with our staff.” – Jeff Scott

Nancy Whitford | 71 | Born: Chicago

Motto or philosophy: My motto is to always be positive and to “look for the silver lining whenever clouds appear in the sky.”
Tell us a little about your background: I grew up in Montclair, N.J., and graduated from Duke University.
What are you up to these days? Currently, I stay busy with volunteer activities, playing golf and tennis, spending quality time with friends and family. I am happy when I am at home, reading, cooking and sometimes sewing.
What is your advice for aging? My advice for aging and the way to stay young at heart is to be willing to try new things, face new challenges and make friends of all ages.
What is different about being older? Being older means you have more control over how you spend your time. That said, it is important not to be selfish about your time ... give your time to helping others, even if it is just being cheerful.
What keeps you young at heart? This should be obvious, but the “secret” to aging is a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle, proper eating habits and regular exercise.

From a nominator: “Since moving to the Champaign-Urbana community in the late 1970s, Nancy has been constantly involved in volunteer activities in a variety of civic and church organizations. As a member of the Champaign-Urbana Junior League, she chaired the organization’s Holiday Mart in 1988 and served in several other board positions. She served on the Boy Scouts’ Prairielands Council Board from 1996 to 2006 and was awarded the Silver Beaver award for her service and dedication to Scouting. She has also served on the boards of WILL’s Community Committee, the Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation, The Carle Foundation Quality Committee and the Champaign Country Club.” – Beth Katsinas

Thomas Williams, Sr. | 77

Born: Burnham Hospital in Champaign

Motto or philosophy: Enjoy every day!
Tell us a little about your background: I attended Dr. Howard and Lottie Switzer grade schools, Franklin Junior High, Champaign High School, Illinois Commercial College and University of Illinois. I’ve only held one job. I worked at Collegiate Cap & Gown/Herff-Jones for 43-plus years, retiring as Purchasing and Production Control Manager for the Cap & Gown Division. I’ve been married almost 56 years to Nancy, and we have three wonderful sons and five grandchildren.
What are you up to these days? We’ve traveled to 58 countries, and I’m deeply involved in all the Champaign Exchange Club’s programs of service.
What is your advice for aging? Don’t put off what you can do today because tomorrow may never come.
What is different about being older? There’s more time to travel and to attend the University of Illinois and St. Louis Cardinals games.
What keeps you young at heart? My wonderful wife, visiting foreign countries, learning new things and Ridley, our West Highland Terrier.
How do you want people to remember you? That I was a good boss, loving husband and father and good friend.

From a nominator: “Tom inspires those around him to follow in his footsteps – to find a task you love and give yourself to it fully, seeking excellence with it.” – Nancy Williams
Clark-Lindsey's residents and staff have risen to the occasion beautifully during this pandemic. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication!

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