

# History of the UW-Madison Institute on Aging (IOA)

1970

## 1973 • The Institute is Founded

- as the [Faye McBeath Institute on Aging and Adult Life](#).
- Faye McBeath, whose uncle founded the *Milwaukee Journal* where she worked for 20 years, inherited her uncle's fortune and gave generously during her later years.
- She was explicitly interested in establishing a gerontology center.
- Additional support came from the UW-Madison Graduate School.

## 1973-1981 • Beginnings of the Institute: Focus on Community Service

- The Faye McBeath Foundation supported the Institute financially through 1980.
- The Institute was led by [Director Martin Loeb](#), from the School of Social Work.
- The focus was largely on [serving the needs of older people in the community](#).
- [During its first 8 years](#), the Institute:
  - expended \$221,000 in [community service projects](#)
  - was awarded [training grants](#) for graduate education from the Administration on Aging and National Institute on Aging
  - had [6 research projects](#) on many aspects of the aging process, yielding about \$125,900 per annum, from various funding sources
  - stimulated the development of [campus courses on aging](#) and [services to professionals](#) working on behalf of older adults.
- Over [120 faculty affiliates](#) from approximately [fifty campus departments](#) participated in the Institute's programs.
- The Institute became a [known resource](#) for individuals and community workers serving older adults.
- Ultimately, during the first 8 years, the Institute [laid the groundwork to advance knowledge in the field of aging at UW](#).

*Gerontology is the study of aging, including its biological, psychological, and social aspects, across the lifespan.*



*"Aging Notes" logo*

1980

1980

### 1980s • The Institute's Mission Changes: Focus on Social Science Research

- Professor **David Featherman**, Dept. of Sociology, was named IOA Director in 1980.
- The **UW Graduate School assumed administrative leadership & funding** for the Institute in 1981.
- A new mission statement:
  - made aging research and education prominent goals
  - included a multidisciplinary research emphasis
  - noted that explorations of both growth and decline in life are best pursued within a lifespan framework.
- There was steady growth and productivity during the 1980s, particularly in social science research.
- The Institute began forging links between the psychosocial & biomedical aspects of aging research, and included biomedical faculty in the IOA's executive committee.
- Four multidisciplinary research areas were conceived as frontiers of aging:
  - biology of aging and clinical geriatrics (biomedical sciences)
  - life-span development and social gerontology (social behavioral perspectives).
- IOA began offering a **Biology of Aging seminar**.
- In response to its changing mission and new funding, we became the UW–Madison Institute on Aging (IOA).

1985

1990

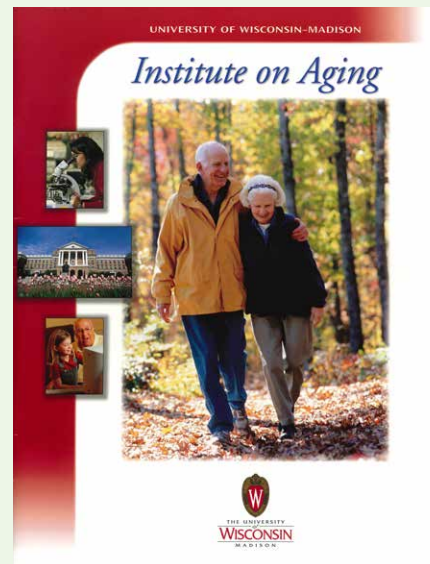
### 1989 • IOA Colloquium Begins

- IOA began offering its free, annual colloquium in 1989, a key element in fulfilling its outreach goals.
- The colloquium continues to bring together well-known researchers from other institutions and UW faculty to provide updates on the social and biological aspects of aging.
- The event, conceived largely as an endeavor in research translation and dissemination, draws a large crowd of both researchers and the general public.



1998 Colloquium audience

### 1990 • IOA Affiliates



IOA's 2003  
Affiliate booklet

- From its beginning, IOA has worked to promote awareness of aging research on campus.
- In 1990 IOA began publishing informational booklets that offered an overview of aging research from faculty across campus.
- These booklets were published periodically for more than a decade, until most information became available via the IOA website.
- Services provided to affiliates included:
  - support applying for and administering grants
  - computing through IOA's membership in the UW Social Science Computing Cooperative.

## 1989-1994 • IOA Expands to Include More Biomedical Research

- The IOA was expanded to include **funding from the UW Medical School**, which **joined the Graduate School** to oversee the direction and activities of the Institute— **a key step in making the IOA a truly multidisciplinary institute.**
- The new IOA Director, appointed in 1989, Professor **William Ershler**, was from the Department of Medicine, where he was Head of the new Geriatrics Section.
- He was also Director of the VA GRECC (the Veteran's Administration's Geriatrics, Research, Education, and Clinical Center), and ties were forged between IOA & GRECC to administer the **Biology of Aging and Age-Related Diseases Training Grant** awarded by the National Institute on Aging in 1990. The grant supported training in the biology of aging for several physician/scientists each year, **funding over 80 trainees** over three decades.
- The IOA included a **clinical emphasis** during this time, hosting:
  - interdisciplinary geriatric assessment and primary care geriatric clinics
  - problem-oriented, half day clinics, on topics such as osteoporosis, memory disorders, falls, incontinence
  - a separate Older Adult and Geriatric Clinic at the University Station.

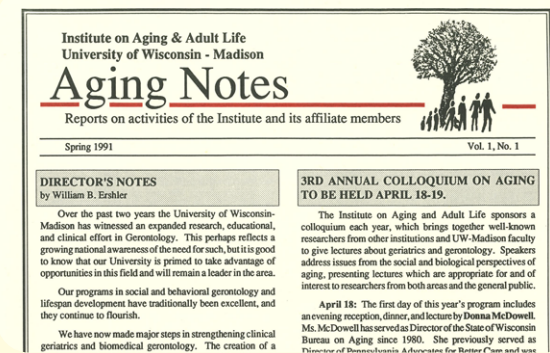
## 1993 • Eloquence & Eminence Lectures Begin

- Co-sponsored by the IOA, this series **featured emeritus faculty** from UW departments speaking about their areas of expertise.
- The lectures were held at UW on Sundays to maximize attendance and were broadcast on Wisconsin Public Radio.
- **Audiences gained insights and inspiration from hearing active older adults** known for their teaching excellence and historical perspective.
- 2018 was the **25th anniversary** of this lecture series.

*Geriatrics is a medical specialty focused on the diseases of old age*

## 1991 • IOA Newsletter Begins

- IOA's first newsletter was called *Aging Notes*.
- It began by **reporting on activities of the Institute and its affiliates (grants received, new faculty profiles, aging events).**
- Later it began to include summaries of research findings.



A previous IOA logo

## 1995 - onward • Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) study

- Professor **Carol Ryff**, Dept. of Psychology, became the new Director of IOA in 1995. She was part of the initial MIDUS study, a national survey funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 1995.
- Under her leadership, MIDUS was expanded to include cognitive, biological, and neuroscience assessments, as well as to broaden the focus on racial disparities via recruitment of African Americans from Milwaukee.
- New funding for MIDUS was obtained from the National Institute on Aging in 2002. Such funding has been continuous over the past two decades, totaling more than \$150 million.
- In 2011, MIDUS was further expanded to include a second national sample to study the impact of historical changes on aging, such as the Great Recession.
- Now with over 11,000 participants, MIDUS has become the major component of IOA's work.
- In 2022 funding was received to carry the study forward another 6 years.
- Assessments on the original participants **will span 30 years of aging.**
- New projects will focus on identifying **risk factors for Alzheimer's disease** and the **impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.**



## 1996 • IOA Establishes a Website

- In 1996, IOA established its first home page on the world wide web, providing IOA affiliates opportunities to post information about their aging research.
- The website has continued to increase networking and spread information about aging related events, news, classes, job opportunities, and community resources.

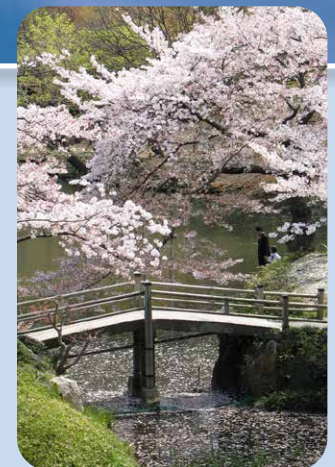


## 2008-2014 • IOA Receives NIA Funding for MIDJA



MIDJA meeting in Japan 2008

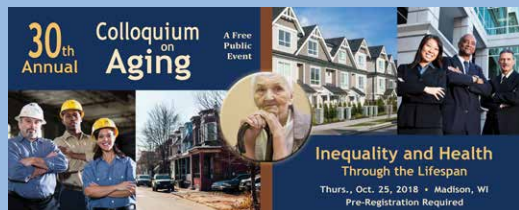
- The MIDJA study (**Midlife in Japan**) is a parallel study to MIDUS that began in 2008 with 1000 adults, aged 30 to 79, living in Tokyo.
- Funding was renewed in 2012 and supported collection of two rounds of data (sociodemographics, psychosocial factors, and physical health, including biomarker data).
- Comparison of MIDUS & MIDJA data has shown, for example, that independence is more strongly associated with better health and well-being in the US, whereas interdependence with others is more firmly linked to health in Japan.



2015

## 2018 • 30th annual IOA Colloquium

- The colloquium continues to be IOA's popular outreach event, with **650 people registering for its 30th annual event.**
- Now a one day event held on campus, the 2018 colloquium included:
  - an internationally known, keynote speaker, Sir Michael Marmot, and three speakers from UW addressing the topic of *Inequality & Health*
  - a health & resource fair with 45 local exhibitors
  - a poster session showcasing recent aging research
  - new investigator awards given to students & trainees to recognize outstanding achievement in aging research.



2020

## 2023 • IOA turns 50 years old

2025

## 2021 • 30 years of IOA Newsletters

- 2021 marked the 30th anniversary of IOA's newsletter, now called *Aging News*.
- The newsletter now focuses on sharing aging research results from IOA affiliates and MIDUS, for 2000 readers from the public and campus.
- Below are the banners from some previous issues:

