

# LEISURE SERVICES *with the* ELDERLY

*Joseph D. Teaff*

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# LEISURE SERVICES WITH THE ELDERLY

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With **51** illustrations



Prospect Heights, Illinois

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For information about this book, write or call:

Waveland Press, Inc.

P.O. Box 400

Prospect Heights, Illinois 60070

(708) 634-0081

Copyright © 1985 by Joseph D. Teaff  
1990 reissued by Waveland Press, Inc.

ISBN 0-88133-571-1

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Printed in the United States of America

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I wish to dedicate this book to my parents  
**Joseph F. Teaff** (1905-1970) and **Corinne Sphire Teaff**  
who taught me very early in life that older persons should be valued  
not just for what they have done but for what they are.

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# Preface

Students of leisure services, as well as students of gerontology, require a background in leisure services with the elderly because *leisure is an integral part of the life-style of the elderly*. Educating individuals to provide leisure services with the elderly is expected to become more important because of the growing size of the elderly population, the availability of leisure settings and services, and both the current and potential job markets for trained leisure service personnel. The purpose of this book is to introduce students to the emerging and exciting area of leisure services with the elderly.

This book is designed as a textbook for undergraduate- and undergraduate/graduate-level courses in leisure services with the elderly, but it will also serve as a resource for graduate students and leisure service providers. The information is presented in a concise form easily read by the average undergraduate student. The use of current literature and research studies, case histories, and illustrations makes this text interesting and enjoyable.

## **PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE**

This text has several features that other texts in the area of leisure and aging do not have. Current literature related to gerontological theory, research, and practice is integrated in a comprehensive, concise, and organized format easily understood by the average undergraduate student. Procedures for developing leisure services in a variety of community and institutional settings or in specific program areas are presented, thus providing students with concrete, specific information about programming. Future leisure services and the elderly are discussed to alert students to anticipated changes in the elderly population and leisure services. Extensive references and suggested readings at the end of chapters assist the instructor in lecture development and students in reading assignments and term papers. Finally, students are alerted to job opportunities in community and institutional leisure service settings. The book further benefits from my 17-year history of involvement with the elderly as an educator (Columbia University, Texas Woman's University, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale), researcher (Philadelphia Geriatric Center), and service provider (Duke University Information and Counseling Service for Older Persons, North Texas Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, Park and Recreation Board member advisor to Denton, Texas, Senior Center), and advisory council chairman for SPAN (Service Program for Aging Needs, Denton, Texas).

## **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES**

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**PEDAGOGICAL  
FEATURES**

The philosophical orientation of this text is grounded in the basic principles that aging is a natural life cycle process and that leisure services are absolutely vital if there is to be enjoyment in life throughout the life cycle. The book reflects this philosophical orientation in its organization. Part One introduces the student to aging and leisure through an examination of background, physiological, psychological, and social characteristics of the elderly, followed by a chapter on social theories of aging, and closing with a chapter examining the research on leisure and the aged and concluding with a theoretical framework with particular application to leisure services. Part Two examines leisure service settings that form a continuum from community to institution (voluntary associations and volunteerism, senior centers, planned community housing, and institutions), with each chapter highlighting procedures for developing leisure services in each setting of the continuum. Part Three addresses the subject of special leisure services in four domains: sensory-motor (exercise), affective (creative arts), cognitive (education), and environmental (outdoor recreation); each chapter focuses on step-by-step procedures for delivering special leisure services for the domain under consideration. Part Four orients the student to the projected characteristics of the future elderly and future leisure services for the elderly.

This book employs a variety of pedagogical aids to facilitate its use by students and teachers. *Chapter outlines and introductions* in each chapter provide overviews of the main topics to be presented. *Figures, tables, and illustrations* are important in each chapter; these visual materials are keyed to the content of the chapter. The *summaries* at the end of each chapter capsulize the chapter's major contents. *References and suggested readings* after each chapter are listings of references cited in the chapter and recommended readings from books and the periodical literature. Six *appendixes* of practical interest contain lists of state agencies on aging, state arts agencies, national organizations pertaining to the elderly, periodicals on aging, and programmatic resources (books and periodicals, films and slide presentations, and phonograph records) and a summary of the Older Americans Act of 1978. A *subject index* is included to facilitate location of information in the body of the text.

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**ACKNOWLEDG-  
MENTS**

This textbook, while appearing to be the work of one person, is in actuality the work of many persons. I owe a great debt to a number of professors and colleagues from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (H. Douglas Sessoms, Thomas Stein, and Mary E. Fortune), Columbia University (Elliott M. Avedon, Richard Kraus, Ruth Bennett, Comilda Weinstock), and the Philadelphia Geriatric Center (M. Powell Lawton and Morton Kleban), who helped to shape through word and example my teaching, research, and service skills in leisure services and gerontology.

My colleagues at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale were a constant source of support. Current and former faculty from the Department of Recreation kindly allowed me to have some weekly writing days unencumbered

by departmental responsibilities: William Abernathy, John Allen, Leonard Cleary, Regina Glover, Walter Kinney, Jean Loveland, Douglas McEwen, and Owen Smith. Special thanks must go to William E. O'Brien, the former chairman of the Department of Recreation, for his very special interest, and to Donald Beggs, dean of the College of Education, who very generously acted as my advisor from the very beginning of this undertaking.

Reviewers are an absolutely essential component of any successful writing venture. I was very fortunate to have very fine teacher-scholars to review the manuscript: Robert M. Beland, Ph.D., University of Florida; Barbara D. Sanchez, M.A., T.R.S., North Texas State University; Shirley J. Kammeyer, Ph.D., California State University at Sacramento; Ann Gowans, M.S., formerly of the University of Missouri at Columbia; Andrew Weiner, Ed.D., University of Kentucky; and Carol Cooper, Ed.D., University of Northern Iowa. In addition, chapter-by-chapter reviews were done by two classes of upper division undergraduates enrolled in my course on leisure and aging at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Earlier chapters were reviewed by Maureen Barrett, Randy Bettis, Laura Dyer, Laura Fickel, Monica Lee, Mary Beth Logue, Michael Nolan, Joseph Stafford, Patricia Stang, Cynthia Terao, and Bridget Truitt. Later chapters were reviewed by Curt Baer, Sondra Cocking, Colleen Lesniak, Roni Jankowski, Jeanine Janos, Yvonne Menke, Marla Minsky, Richard Murphy, Susan Stapleton, Rhonda Ubben, Barbara Weisbruch, Tammie Widloski, and Brenda Yusko. These students provided invaluable insights concerning substantive and stylistic issues as the manuscript was being written.

I was also fortunate to benefit from the expertise of outstanding graduate assistants and typists. Graduate assistants Sue Bulmer and Nancy Kaufman spent hours researching reference materials and providing expertise based on their years of experience as providers of leisure services with the elderly. Typists Mary Falaster and Loretta Koch were very conscientious in their attention to detail and provided reviewers with clean copy to make their jobs easier.

The staff of Times Mirror/Mosby College Publishing skillfully guided this complex publishing task with expertise and enthusiasm. Special thanks go to my editor, Nancy Roberson, who provided the efficient organization essential to a project of this magnitude. I wish to acknowledge in a special way the work of Kathy Sedovic, editorial assistant to Nancy Roberson, whose attention to detail and good humor saw me through some difficult times, and the fine work of April Nauman and Judi Wolken, manuscript editors, who contributed immeasurably to the readability of this text. Finally, thanks to all the behind-the-scenes production staff.

I am deeply grateful for the loving support and encouragement of my wife, Evelyn, and our two children, Kevin and Karen. What a delight they are.

**Joseph D. Teaff**



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# PART ONE

## Introduction to aging and leisure

Quality leisure services with the elderly very much depend on the quality of the personnel providing these services. Leisure service providers have been criticized for their lack of understanding of aging and the relationship between leisure and aging. Chapter 1 examines characteristics of the elderly through an overview of the background, physiological, psychological, and social characteristics of older persons. Chapter 2 is an overview of some of the more significant social theories of aging that have emerged in recent years. Chapter 3 reviews conceptualizations of leisure, leisure through the life cycle, and leisure and the elderly. These three chapters serve as the foundation on which following chapters are built. Considerable effort has been made to condense this information into a readable and concise form, yet to document it fully with references and resources for additional reading.





# Characteristics of the elderly

## Demographic characteristics

Population growth  
Life expectancy  
Sex ratio  
Marital status  
Living arrangements  
Place of residence  
Racial and ethnic composition

## Physiological characteristics

Brain and nervous system  
Heart and circulatory system  
Lungs and pulmonary system  
Digestive system  
Excretory system  
Skeletal system  
Muscular system  
Endocrine system  
Skin

## Psychological characteristics

Sensory processes  
Psychomotor performance  
Mental functioning  
Psychological disorders

## Social characteristics

Education  
Economic status  
Health status  
Political status  
Religion  
Family

## Summary

**T**he elderly are becoming a larger and more influential element in American society. The decreasing birthrate in the 1960s coupled with increasing life expectancy are resulting in a demographic shift toward a greater percentage of elderly in the total population. The number of elderly with economic and political resources is growing; government officials are becoming more sensitive to their voting strength and political influence. Colleges and universities are creating educational programs tailored to the interests and needs of older persons. Researchers in specialties such as medicine, physiology, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines are increasingly focusing their research attention on old age. Thus government, organizations, and professions have moved from little or no interest to a very active interest in the elderly.

Despite growing interest in and knowledge of the elderly, older persons are still the subject of myths (erroneous generalizations) and stereotypes (oversimplifications). Although problems with health and income may become more pronounced as persons age, the elderly are still a diverse group because of varied life conditions and are likely to become more diverse in the future. To focus on the frail elderly, those in nursing homes, and the impoverished is a serious misperception—the elderly possess many widely differing characteristics. The elderly are not a homogeneous group despite similarities of age.

The study of the characteristics of the elderly may not immediately remove all myths and stereotypes, but it may counteract, with evidence, the more

harmful ones. Palmore (1977) developed a short quiz of 25 true or false questions to determine the amount of factual information that differing segments of society possessed and to attack some of the common myths and stereotypes. The quiz included statements such as:

1. The majority of older persons have incomes below the poverty level.
2. The majority of older persons are socially isolated and lonely.

**TABLE 1-1 The total aging population in the United States**

Year	Number of persons age 65 and over (thousands)	Percentage of total population	Percentage of increase from preceding decade
1900	3,099	4.1	—
1910	3,986	4.3	28.6
1920	4,929	4.7	23.7
1930	6,705	5.4	36.0
1940	9,031	6.8	34.7
1950	12,397	8.2	37.3
1960	16,675	9.2	34.5
1970	20,087	9.8	20.4
1980	25,544	11.3	27.1
<b>Projections:</b>			
1990	29,824	12.2	16.7
2000	31,822	12.2	6.7
2010	34,837	12.7	9.5
2020	45,102	15.5	29.5

From U.S. Bureau of the Census: Census of population, 1970, detailed characteristics, Final Report PC(1)-D1, Washington, D.C., 1973, U.S. Government Printing Office; and U.S. Bureau of the Census: Statistical abstracts of the United States, Washington, D.C., 1981, U.S. Government Printing Office.

**TABLE 1-2 Life expectancy at birth: 1920 to 1975**

Year	Total	Male	Female
1920	54.1	53.6	54.6
1930	59.7	58.1	61.6
1950	68.2	65.6	71.1
1955	69.6	66.7	72.8
1960	69.7	66.6	73.1
1965	70.2	66.8	73.7
1970	70.9	67.1	74.8
1971	71.1	67.4	75.0
1972	71.1	67.4	75.1
1973	71.3	67.6	75.3
1974	71.9	68.2	75.9
1975	72.5	68.7	76.5

From U.S. Bureau of the Census: Statistical abstracts of the United States, Washington, D.C., 1977, U.S. Government Printing Office.