



Illinois Wesleyan University
Digital Commons @ IWU

John Wesley Powell Student Research
Conference

2002, 13th Annual JWP Conference

Apr 21st, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

The Graying of America: A Photo-Essay of Older Americans in the Workforce

Lauren Kaintz, '03
Illinois Wesleyan University

Rebecca Gearhart, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

Kaintz, '03, Lauren and Gearhart, Faculty Advisor, Rebecca, "The Graying of America: A Photo-Essay of Older Americans in the Workforce" (2002). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 8.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2002/posters2/8>

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Poster Presentation PC

**THE GRAYING OF AMERICA: A PHOTO-ESSAY OF OLDER
AMERICANS IN THE WORKFORCE**

Lauren Kaintz and Rebecca Gearhart*

Department of Anthropology, Illinois Wesleyan University

How old are you? As old as you look? As old as you act? When asked that question most people would answer by giving a number, their age in years. Growing old is a subject we all become more familiar with each day. Growing old in American society, as in any human society, is also a variable in a person's ability to sustain their self through his or her own form of work. Working through old age is significant to our society for which it is predicted that between 1996 and 2006, the percentage of 55-64 year olds will grow by 54%. With increased life expectancies of 73 years old for men and 80 years old for women, dynamic changes are occurring in the age structure of the working population. Older Americans are becoming a more prevalent portion of the workforce with increasingly later retirement ages resulting in secure, longer lasting and more rewarding careers. Remaining employed later in life is a meaningful and healthy alternative to early retirement for citizens like Elmo Quinn and Jackie Ahlers who have the ability to adapt their work capacity to fit their work environment based upon their individual needs. As a result, these older figures in the workforce provide a source of inspiration to all Americans and serve as role models to the workforce of tomorrow.