

President's Message



Dear colleagues,

Those of you who have been a member for longer know the tradition to have our biennial conference aligned with the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). We conferred with the Advisory Board about a conference this fall. Although our last conference was in 2018, we decided that it would be better to organize an online meeting early in 2022 instead of a face-to-face meeting connected to GSA.

GSA is between November 10 and 14 in Phoenix, Arizona. GSA has announced that CDC guidelines will be closely followed and that there will be an on-demand viewing registration option. This is a large meeting with some 3,500 people expected to attend. We are not sure how many of you will join GSA this year, but it might be that some find the size of the conference too big and/or are reluctant to travel. So, it is unclear whether there is an advantage of having our conference aligned to this year's GSA meeting.

We were hesitant how safe traveling will be this fall for our international group. Overall, the infection rates seem to have gone down in many places, but the new delta variant is also gaining ground. So, it remains difficult to predict what will happen. If we organize something, we would like to have the possibility for all members to travel safely.

A lot of organizations are trying to catch up and plan events for the fall. This might result in a bit of an overload of meetings this fall.

We had a wonderful online meeting on April 30 that was very well organized by Juliette and her team. This gave us confidence that another online meeting would be valuable.

We hope you understand our decision, which we didn't take lightheartedly. We would all love to see you again and meet new members in person. We very much hope there will be a possibility next year!

Meanwhile, if you are interested in participating in planning the online meeting, you are more than welcome. This would entail discussing the theme of the conference, the specific online forms it can take, as well as organizing the event itself. Hope to hear back from you!

— Gerben Westerhof, Ph.D.

UConn

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LIFE STORY INNOVATIONS AND PRACTICE

Summer 2021 Newsletter

Virtual Opening

On April 30, 2021, the International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice held its first virtual conference marking it as a key entity in the field of reminiscence and life review.

Sixty-four individuals registered for the conference, representing the U.S. from Hawaii to Connecticut. Furthermore, we had representation from the Netherlands, Jordan, Japan, and Canada. We were pleased to have faculty and student representation from the University of Connecticut.

The conference included a variety of approaches and topics representing the mission and goals of the Center. The conference started with a welcome from UConn School of Nursing Dean, Dr. Deborah Chyun. The welcome was followed by remarks from ICLIP President, Dr. Gerben Westerhof. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Phillip Cappeliez, professor emeritus, University of Ottawa, presented an historical overview of the organization describing the early work in Wisconsin, previous conferences, and the transition to UConn.

The structure of the conference was unique and innovative allowing participants to choose from a variety of topics such as the panel discussion featuring Dr. Na-Rae Kim, interim director of the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, and Anne Reeder, a Ph.D. student, who presented, "The Forgotten Experience: Recounting the Lives of Vietnamese Immigrants." The afternoon sessions included interactive roundtable presentations and discussions. [Visit this link for details.](#)

This conference would not have been possible without the technical assistance of the UConn Events and Conference Services, the School of Nursing, the Advisory Board, and our participants. Thank you all!

Director's Corner

Dear ICLIP members,

I am happy to be able to address you again through this newsletter. This has been a busy time since our last newsletter. Some of our activities included organizing the virtual conference, developing the certificate program, and exploring funding opportunities. I am pleased to tell you that we have increased our membership as a result of the conference and other outreach activities.



Our work with students is continuing and has resulted in a variety of projects. I was pleased to see the number of students from the UConn Schools of Social Work and Nursing, as well as UConn's Psychology Department presenting at the conference. They are conducting important work. We will continue to seek collaborations with other schools and departments. Please contact me if you have any student projects you would like to share with our members.

I look forward to working with you as we plan our next virtual conference for early 2022. Please consider joining the conference planning and/or the awards committees. I also encourage you to invite other colleagues to join the Center. I would like to set a goal of increasing our membership by 20% in the coming year and I need your help!

Feel free to contact me at any time: juliette.shellman@uconn.edu as I welcome any suggestions and ideas. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm!

— Juliette Shellman, Ph.D., R.N., Associate Professor

New edition of *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* available!

The latest edition of the *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* is available here: [International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review](#). Thank you to Tom Pierce for all of his work on the journal!

ICLIP News!

Our first cohort of graduate students in the online Life Story Certificate Program started class on June 1. There was a lot of initial interest in the program based on the number of people that requested information. We continue to work on promoting the program to increase participation for next summer.

Become an ICLIP Member!

Move forward in your career by becoming an ICLIP member!

Membership benefits:

- Attend ICLIP biennial meetings at a discount after two consecutive years of membership.
- Attend and/or participate in the University of Connecticut's annual ICLIP symposiums.
- Serve on one of our committees.
- Opportunity to list one's contact information and areas of interest and expertise on the Center's Registry, which is accessible by anyone who visits the ICLIP website.
- Exclusive access to educational webinars.
- Provide your expertise through consultation and participation in student dissertation committees and faculty research.
- Receive advance announcement of the publication of our quarterly online newsletter, which furthers networking opportunities and reviews the latest research, books, and other developments in the field.
- Participate in the election of Advisory Board members and officers and take part in the General Assembly meeting at the biennial conference.
- Take a leadership role in the administration of the Center's mission and goals through participation in the Advisory Board.
- Participate in the nomination of candidates for ICLIP awards.
- Receive advance announcement of the publication of the most recent issue of the online *International Journal for Reminiscence and Life Review*, containing peer-reviewed articles related to all aspects of reminiscence and life review.
- Identify oneself as a leader in the field who is dedicated to the Center's mission.

Membership annual dues:

Professional: \$50
Student: \$25

Sign up today at iclip.nursing.uconn.edu/membership-information/

Mission

The International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP) brings together researchers, educators, practitioners, students, historians, and artists from around the world to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities through written and oral narratives, personal histories, reminiscence, life review, and guided autobiographies. With the overarching goal of generating new knowledge in this emerging field, ICLIP provides a collaborative infrastructure to establish programs of research, implement educational programs, develop innovative applications in practice, and disseminate life story best practices.

Student Corner

This section focuses on student projects and progress. Please send updates about your students to iclip@uconn.edu.



Congratulations to ...

... Madisyn Longdin '21 for completing her honors thesis titled, "Reminiscence, Resilience, and COVID-19: A Feasibility Study Examining the Use of Technology for Structured Reminiscence Interventions for Older-Adults in Assisted-Living Facilities."

Updates:

Our **ST**tudents **A**dvancing **R**eminiscence **R**esearch (STARR) group continues to meet virtually and work on reminiscence projects:

- Yuxuan Yang is finalizing the group's manuscript describing a scoping review of the uses of reminiscence in nursing homes.
- Madisyn Longdin and Leah Graf are working with faculty on the study: "Surviving COVID-19: Older Adults' Experiences and Resilience." Data have been collected and we're preparing for analysis.
- Anne Reeder analyzed data collected by Taryn Nguyen '20 and is preparing the manuscript, "The Forgotten Experience: Recounting the Lives of Vietnamese Immigrants."
- Jenna Joshi will be working with faculty on a qualitative study using reminiscence methods to explore nurses' experiences of caring for patients during COVID.

Johannes J.F. Schroots, 1943-2020

Hans J.F. Schroots died on August 14, 2020, in Amsterdam.

Hans launched his career in gerontology when he arrived at James Birren's office at the University of Southern California (USC) as a young, inquiring 23-year-old psychology student from Amsterdam in 1966. With his interest piqued in aging, and fueled by a fast-growing relationship with Jim Birren, Hans completed his doctoral studies in The Netherlands and then returned to USC in 1979 to study for a year on a research fellowship. His task was to work on the evaluation of the guided autobiography data Jim Birren had collected. This was the beginning of a lifelong collaboration and friendship between Jim and Hans. They worked together on a number of conferences, publications, and books, in addition to extended visits in one another's homes.

Hans may be most remembered for his development of the "Lifeline Interview Method" (LIM). With this method, interviewees create their own chronological lifeline, which records all the important, critical events of their life and they are left with a visual map of their life. Each peak and dip is labeled with a short summary of the event. They briefly tell the story of each event and thus their life. The LIM was used to study individual lives and autobiographical memory.

When analyzing the autobiographical memories (AM) data he collected using the LIM, Hans contributed to our understanding of the critical events which stood out the most to the participants: a) a forgetting or retention curve in the form of a mathematical power function; b) childhood amnesia or a reduction of memories from the early years of life; and c) a reminiscence or autobiographical "memory bump" that showed people are more likely to recall memories from their late teens through their early 30s. A parallel finding is a "reminiscence trough" and fewer memories recalled from 40-50 years of age. The memory distribution forms a bimodal distribution with a concentration of memories from the recent past (recency effect) and from the ages of 10-30 years of age. Hans liked to call this the bump in our memory.

For a closer look at Hans' articles, visit the *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* and click on this link to one of his last articles, "[From Counterpart Theory to Janus Model: In Memoriam – James E. Birren, Friend, Mentor, and Colleague.](#)"

Hans' daughters, Eva and Anna Schroots, are planning a virtual memorial for their father in 2021. Details of the service will be posted on the International Center for Life Story Innovation and Practice (ICLIP) website as they become available.

Hans was a big, smiling, jovial man who enjoyed people and life. His work continues to be a major contribution to the field of autobiographical memory research. He will be missed by all those who knew him and called him friend.

— Cheryl Svensson, Ph.D.