

Human Biology Newsletter

Finding joy in the little things An Interview with Anne Friedlander, Ph.D.



Friedlander on a 100-mile hike around Mt. Blanc.

For fifteen years, Anne Friedlander, Consulting Professor in Human Biology, has been teaching HumBio students how their bodies work. From Exercise Physiology to Applied Topics in Physiology, (and a team taught interdisciplinary class called Agile Aging through the Design School), she seemed like the right person to ask about “successful aging”. Her answers shed light on both the physiology and the mind-set that help people stay flexible in mind and body.

How did you start teaching in Human Biology?

I came down from UC Berkeley to do my post-doctoral fellowship in the Division of Endocrinology, Gerontology and Metabolism in 1997. I started teaching in HumBio that year and have been at it ever since. The first year that I taught (as a post-doc), I was terrified because I realized that if I failed miserably, I would still have to come back each week and face the

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Henry Ford once said, “Anyone who keeps learning stays young.” One of the major goals of the Program in Human Biology is to instill in our students the desire to become lifelong learners. We do this by planting the seeds of knowledge, fertilizing them with critical thinking skills and watering them with inspiration. We see the fruits of our labor in the seemingly endless string of alumni accomplishments that we are so privileged to celebrate. Thanks to the unfailing enthusiasm and dedication of our faculty and staff, we are also able to lead by example – to model the ongoing pursuit of knowledge in our own academic careers. As I begin a year of sabbatical leave, I welcome Paul Fisher, Beirne Family Professor of Pediatric Neuro-Oncology, as interim director of our program. His connections to Human Biology are deep and long-standing and we are thrilled to know that he will be at our helm!



Professor Carol Boggs



Professor Paul Fisher

See Director's note from Paul Fisher on page 6!

FEATURES

Anne Friedlander, cont'd

students for the rest of the quarter. I started the quarter with a head cold, drugged up on cold medication and a nervous wreck, but after the first class, I realized how much I loved teaching. I was energized by the students and felt that I could really get them excited about the class material. I've been teaching ever since.

What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Watching students get excited about a concept that they finally understand reminds me why I found that concept fascinating to begin with. Teaching keeps the material fresh, not only because you have to stay current in your field, but also because you can view the material through the students' eyes. I also enjoy getting to know my students and feeling like I am making a difference in their lives by raising their awareness of their own physiology. The human body is an amazing, complex machine that can accomplish extraordinary feats and it's fun to nurture that appreciation in the students.

The theme of this newsletter is longevity. You were the Director of the Mobility Division at the Stanford Center for Longevity for several years and promoting health throughout the lifespan has been an important topic in your teaching. **What are the most important things we can do to age successfully?** As an exercise physiologist, I have a strong understanding of how physical activity and movement can contribute to successful aging. We already have the magic "healthy aging" pill and it is physical activity. Everything from functional capacity (your ability to do physical things), to disease risk, cognitive function and mood is positively impacted by regular physical activity. Staying active can reduce your functional age by 14 years. Imagine playing with your grandchildren as a 74 year-old who feels 60.

You conducted research in the mountains of Colorado for several years. Does your high altitude work tie in to longevity?

It does seem like a bit of a stretch, but it is interesting how science has a way of connecting in unexpected ways. First of all, altitude puts a stress on the body to which it needs to adapt to survive. Understanding how the body adapts to any stress gives us a better understanding of the underlying physiology and ways to increase resiliency throughout the lifespan. More specifically though, it turns out that chronic altitude expo-

sure may actually suppress appetite and reduce insulin resistance (a key risk factor for diabetes). Since obesity and type 2 diabetes are two major contributors to health problems associated with aging, altitude (or low oxygen exposure, even at sea level) could eventually provide benefits to successful aging.

What do you do to stay flexible in mind and body?

On a personal level, I exercise and get outside whenever possible. Being surrounded by nature (especially in the mountains)



Friedlander: "I exercise and get outside whenever possible"

grounds me like nothing else. I love to run, bike, ski, hike, explore and learn new things. This may seem trite, but in the last few years I have also tried to find joy and appreciation in the little things and to "play" whenever I can with my friends and family. About 9 months ago, I had a complete rupture of my Achilles tendon. For someone like me who is passionate about physical activity, the prolonged rehabilitation process was daunting. However, what I found was that I re-learned how to appreciate simple movement. Now when I take the dog for a walk or ride my bike to work, I am grateful for every step.

On the professional side, I focus on work that I find engaging and meaningful. I am in a phase right now where I am trying new things and figuring out ways to apply my academic knowledge in a startup environment. I also thrive on connecting with students. It is especially rewarding when I feel as if my classes have impacted their career paths. When they get turned on to the study of physiology and are inspired to pursue a related field in science or medicine, it definitely makes me smile.



Crane (top, center) with the Happiness Within Reach Conference team from 2011

Steven Crane: Strength through community

Steven Crane (HB'12) chose *The Psychology and Philosophy of Successful Aging* as his Area of Concentration. Raised in a small town in Northern Arizona, by parents who were both teachers at the local school, his interest in successful aging stems



Crane hiking in Marin 2010

from the gratitude he feels towards the generation of his teachers and mentors. There is no doubt that Steven has the right approach - not only to successful aging - but to successful living at the age of twenty-something! When asked about his plans for the future, this young person (so

obviously wise beyond his years) begins by describing the community in which he wishes to live – one that is characterized by deep and caring friendships with people who will nurture his contemplative nature. What about his daily work? This apple didn't fall far from the tree: Steven speaks of his passion for researching and teaching. He'll start right here in the Human Biology Core, as a B-side CA, for the 2012-13 academic year.

As part of his AC, Steven participated in the Longevity Practicum, offered through the Psychology Department here at Stanford. The following are excerpts from [the blog](#) he wrote for this course:

Imagine you're 88 years old, a couple decades down the line. You recently learned that your eyesight disqualifies you from driving any longer, but that's okay. You live in the same house you've lived in for forty years, and everything you need is just a five-minute walk down the street – groceries, the mail, your favorite coffee shop. On your daily walk down to the town center, you pass the beautifully-designed houses of your neighbors as you navigate a road built for

walking with good paths and large trees. You run into people you know on the sidewalk, and wave as bicyclists pass by. You go check your P.O. box then stop for a coffee at your favorite café where half the people know your name and the waitress brings you "your usual." You live in a town where the young and the old live together, and help each other. Your social network is rich and overlapping, built on decades of having the same neighbors and fostering a community that welcomes newcomers to the neighborhood so all are known. You know that if you need some help – a hot meal or somebody to assist with house chores – all you have to do is reach out to your friends and neighbors who are children, adolescents, and adults of all ages. You're happy, emotionally fulfilled, and supported by your long-term community. For me, this sounds like the picture-perfect place to spend any part of my life, especially my later years...

I'm now graduated from Stanford (this is my very last formal academic assignment!) and have a wonderful teaching job next year with my girlfriend. I hope to broaden and build on my existing Stanford co-op experience by creating, finding, and exploring all manner of communities over the next 5 years or so. And who knows, maybe I'll end up finding a group of people I feel comfortable setting in with for the long-term, with whom I could raise children and grow until the day I die! Or in the more likely event that my route is more twisted and interesting, I hope to find a community eventually, at least by the time I settle in for my retirement years. And maybe at that point I'll be set to design or jumpstart a new community, and everything I've learned here will be of great service in that endeavor. My expectations are open and I hope my contributions will be many. I'll shoot for a community:

- Designed according to universal design principles from the bottom up
- Integrated across generations
- Connected to social services
- Built around a communal spirit with expectations and roles for all community members
- Built around dedication to shared values, contribution to each other and the world, health, and relationships.



Crane in Tucson, 2011

Leslie Johnson: In conclusion... Creativity



Johnson HB'12

Leslie Johnson graduated in June 2012 in Human Biology with a concentration in “Health Promotion Across the Life Course.” She was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, but spent most summers until college in Napa at her grandparents’ house where she witnessed exemplary healthy aging. The deep connection that she developed with her grandparents—a mentoring friendship—inspired her involvement in bringing music to

nursing homes throughout high school. Leslie continued this passion for fostering intergenerational interaction at Stanford as president of the United Students for Veterans’ Health (USVH) program. This program allowed Stanford students to form relationships with the elderly hospitalized veterans at the Menlo Park Veterans Hospital nursing home facilities. Leslie also spent several summers working in hospitals in Dallas collaborating with doctors investigating and treating neurodegenerative diseases. Recently, she moved to New York City to participate in Teach for America as a middle school science teacher in East Harlem. While aging has been her focus, she believes that in order to promote health across the life course, it is essential for all children to have access to an excellent education. She doesn’t know where the future will take her, but some exciting options include geriatric medicine and education reform. As part of her interest in aging, Leslie completed the Longevity Practicum, offered through the Psychology Department in conjunction with the Center on Longevity. Some excerpts from [her blog](#) follow:

(Dec. 17th, 2011) Throughout most of human history it was relatively unusual to live to an advanced age and unusual to make it there in good shape. Recently it’s becoming increasingly common for people to expect to live to be old, very old in fact, and to have a “third age” of life. We are left with several competing images of what it means to be old: people dying of acute events versus the image of people suffering quite a bit and living in socially impoverished conditions. The latter brings about a “new ageism” that views the elderly as “those poor old people” and equates advanced age with inevitable suffering. There is a more recent image of increasingly active, engaged, healthy, and often wealthy older adults. But, most of the perspectives on healthy aging are not aging at all, but rather remaining in middle age

forever. This is not a productive model—because it assumes that aging is inherently negative and therefore not aging is inherently good. This trivializes the later quarter of the life cycle and implies that there is nothing positive or constructive or uniquely developmental about the later part of life. One’s perspectives and priorities do shift as one ages. This is important, significant, and meaningful. Similarly, how one defines wisdom and experiential learning—having the ability and life span to have accumulated wisdom that one is able to access - is important. We live in a society that so values materialism, but in many societies a connection with the past and one’s ancestors and something beyond the immediate material reality is equally important, and older adults are more likely to have these types of connections. I recently communicated with Betty Rothaus who runs the [“Discovering the Artist Within” program](#) at Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living. Mrs. Rothaus is an artist herself and has been working with this program since 1990. She sent me a booklet highlighting the art program that included this excerpt: “In our culture, aging carries strict definitions of body, mind and spirit that color



Johnson with her late grandfather in his garden

our perceptions and expectations...[Our] art program...challenges prescribed definitions of aging and creativity.” Mrs. Rothaus describes the process of getting elders who have never created art before to do so. She points out that limiting beliefs must be overcome in order to even get people started. Getting in the mindset of eradicating limiting beliefs about aging is what we all need in order to continue in the future with successful aging.

STUDENT/ALUMNI AWARDS

2012 H&S Dean's Award for Academic Accomplishment:

Chase Richard HB'12 & Mikaela Kelly HB'12

2012 Fulbright IIE

Abena Bruce HB'12 (Ghana)

2012 Haas International Fellowship:

Lauren Platt HB'12

2012 Tom Ford Fellowship in Philanthropy:

Isabelle Wijangco HB'12

We missed these 2011 awards due to the reunion focus last fall! Please join us in wishing belated congratulations to...

2011 Fulbright IIE:

Daniel Crichton HB'11 (South Korea), Lucinda Lai HB'11 (Thailand), Carmen Stellar HB'11 (Columbia)

2011 Haas International Fellowship:

Lucinda Lai HB'11

2011 Tom Ford Fellowship in Philanthropy:

Elisabeth Liesl Spitz HB'11 & John Thomas HB'11

2011 Gardner Fellowship:

Pooja Bakhai HB'11

HUMBIO OLYMPIANS...

The following HumBio alumni and students earned the great honor of competing in the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Congratulations to:

Rachel Buehler HB'08

women's soccer - gold medalist

Jason Dunford HB'09,

men's swimming

Foluke Akinradewo HB'09

women's volleyball - silver medalist

Annika Dries HB'14

women's water polo - gold medalist

Matt Gentry HB'04

wrestling

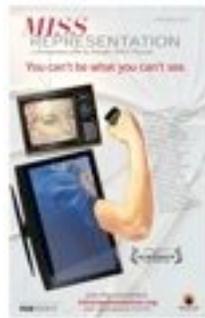
We are so proud of our Olympians!

photo courtesy of adoseofshipboy.com

ALUMNI NEWS



Pamela Oatis, MD, (HB'74) chosen Ohio American Academy of Pediatrics Pediatrician of the Year. Dr. Oatis was recognized for her distinguished achievements and outstanding contributions to the advancement of pediatric care and education for patients and physicians in Ohio. [Read more here.](#)



Jennifer Siebel Newsome, (HB'96), brings us 'Miss Representation' her documentary about the media's distortion of women and how it impacts our society. The film was screened to a full house at Cubberly Auditorium this Spring. It aired at the Sundance Film Festival in 2011 to great acclaim! [Read more here.](#)



International Public Service Fellows **Noel Foster, Fatima Hassan (HB'09), Lucinda Lai (HB'11) and Josh Wong (HB'10)** (left to right) "Go Global" in [Stanford News 8/2011](#) The Haas Center's Post-Graduate Fellowship for International Public Service offers new graduates a chance to make a difference.



Ted Marcy (HB'76), is Koop Foundation's "Unsung Hero". The American Lung Association and Koop Foundation, Inc. jointly recently recognized Theodore Marcy, M.D., M.P.H. (father of current HumBio CA, Ariel Marcy) as the recipient of the 2011 Unsung Heroes' Award. [Read more here.](#)

WELCOME AND FAREWELL



Interim Director Paul Fisher examines a patient

A message from Paul Fisher, Interim Director of HumBio

The brain is more plastic than we ever thought. A neurologist myself, I am rewiring networks formed long ago, as I serve this year as director of Human Biology in Carol Boggs' absence (she must use both synaptic and ephaptic transmission to accomplish so much). As you scroll these pages, you cannot help but marvel at the global impact of Human Biology. Its legacy over 40 plus years is impressive. I'm one of a few people who can say I've known every director, and it is humbling to be at the helm. So, like me, reconnect. Whether you are a student, alum, or friend, wire up with the richness that is Human Biology. Email pfisher@stanford.edu or even stop by Building 20.

Walter Scheidel, Dickason Professor in the Humanities and Professor of History will teach in the Core

Professor Scheidel's research focuses on ancient social and economic history, with particular emphasis on historical demography, slavery, and state formation. More generally, he is interested in comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the ancient world, and is trying to build bridges between the humanities, the social sciences, and the life sciences. He is among the most influential contemporary Roman historians, having written or (co-)edited 13 books and lectured in 22 countries. We look forward to his contributions to the HumBio Core.



Walter Scheidel



Photo courtesy of Annette Salmeen

Welcome Annette Salmeen, D.Phil., who replaces Noa Pinter-Wollman as Human Biology Core Coordinator. Salmeen received her D.Phil. as a Rhodes Scholar in Biochemistry at Oxford University. She has worked as project scientist in the Structural Genomics Group at the DOE Joint Genome Institute, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in Walnut Creek and also conducted postdoctoral research in the Stanford University School of Medicine's Department of Chemical and Systems Biology. Over and above her academic achievements, Salmeen won an Olympic gold medal as part of the USA swimming 800 m freestyle relay team in 1996. We are thrilled to have her on board and welcome her warmly!

Noa Pinter-Wollman embarks on a new adventure

After a productive year as Core Coordinator, Noa Pinter-Wollman leaves HumBio to pursue research at the University of San Diego, California. In her free time, she hopes to enjoy some surfing... We wish her well in her future endeavors. Good luck, Noa!

Photo courtesy of Noa Pinter-Wollman



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR FACULTY & STAFF

Younger Next Year: Live Strong, Fit, and Sexy - Until You're 80 and Beyond

Chris Crowley and Henry S. Lodge

"Co-written by one of the country's most prominent internists, Dr. Henry Lodge, and his star patient, the 73-year-old Chris Crowley. This book shows us how to turn back our biological clocks—how to put off 70% of the normal problems of aging... and eliminate 50% of serious illness and injury."-Amazon



1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created

Charles C. Mann

"From the author of 1491—the best-selling study of the pre-Columbian Americas—a deeply engaging new history of the most momentous biological event since the death of the dinosaurs."-Amazon



FACULTY NEWS

Congratulations, Carol!

Carol Boggs, Bing Director of the Program in Human Biology and Professor (Teaching), Biology is the 2012 recipient of the Lloyd W. Dinkelspiel Award for Distinctive Contributions to Undergraduate Education.

This award honors Boggs: "For her many contributions to the Program in Human Biology -- from teaching enormous numbers of undergraduates to curriculum development, advising honors theses, training student advisors and serving as program director; For raising the profile of HumBio throughout the university and beyond campus, increasing community awareness of the program, as well as participation among alumni; For the cooperative and open atmosphere she fosters among faculty and staff within the program and from other departments; and for the myriad ways she has served as an inspiration to budding conservationists and given fully and enthusiastically to students at Stanford." - official citation

As Katherine Preston, Associate Director of the Program in Human Biology, writes:

"Carol is extremely worthy of this recognition. As noted in the official citation, Carol has contributed considerably to undergraduate education at Stanford in many diverse ways. We are fortunate that she has given so much of her heart and so many of her talents to HumBio. Thank you Carol, and congratulations!"



Carol Boggs



Donald Kennedy

Donald Kennedy, President, Emeritus, and Bing Professor of Environmental Science, Emeritus, wins 2011-12 School of Humanities & Sciences Dean's Award for Lifetime Achievements in Teaching. Kennedy has served on the faculty of Stanford University from 1960 to the present. He was one of the founders of the Program in Human Biology and was director of the program from 1973-1977. He was Commissioner of the US Food and Drug Administration from 1977-79 and from 1980 to 1992 he served as President of Stanford University. At present, he is the editor-in-chief of *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and his present research program examines policy on trans-boundary environmental problems including major land-use changes; economically-driven alterations in agricultural practice; global climate change; and the development of regulatory policies. This award reflects Kennedy's work in Human Biology, the Goldman seminar,

Biology and elsewhere over his career (to date!) at Stanford, and is richly deserved. Congratulations, Professor Kennedy!

LINKS TO MORE FACULTY HEADLINES

Click on the following links to read and hear more exciting Faculty News items!

[Carol Boggs](#): Early spring drives down butterfly population, Stanford study shows

[Bob Siegel](#): Virus Models at Cantor Arts Center Reveal Diverse Forms and Students' Creativity

[Nathan Wolfe](#) on the Colbert Report

[Robert Sapolsky](#) speaks on Radio Lab: I haven't been myself lately...

[Anne Firth Murray](#) on women and war in the humanexperience.stanford.edu

[Merritt Ruhlen](#) on the "language tree" in the humanexperience.stanford.edu



photo courtesy of animalconnection.com

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

HUMBIO FALL EVENTS!

HumBio Reunion: October 5th, 2012
4:30pm. Location: HumBio Bldg 20



The Stanford Historical Society will feature the Program in Human Biology as part of our extended 40th anniversary celebration! The program will include excerpts from the documentary, Human Biology at 40, as well as a panel discussion with founders and early faculty, (including Donald Kennedy, Sandy Dornbusch, Herant Katchadourian and Shirley Feldman), moderated by director Carol Boggs.

When and where: Tuesday Dec 11th in Tressidder Oak West from 5-7pm.



(from left to right) Kennedy, Feldman, Dornbusch, Katchadourian

TED TALK

Firdaus Dhabhar:
The positive effects of stress

Firdaus Dhabhar is a Professor of Psychiatry who researches the mind-body connection at the Immunology Institute and the Cancer Institute at Stanford University. He studies the positive aspects of stress on the body. [Click here](#) to watch the talk!



My grandmother, Amartham Moodley (96 years)

Working on this issue of our newsletter, focused on longevity and successful aging, I found myself repeatedly confronted by some questions: Am I on the right track? Am I surrounded by a supportive community? Will I be able to stay physically active into the decades ahead? Do I regularly default to a position of seeing the glass half full?

From all of the fascinating interviews and casual discussions I've had over the past three months, the key to successful and happy aging seems to boil down to... successful and happy living.

My 96 year-old grandmother puts it like this: "Make sure you're living the life you want to live, not the one others want for you. That way, every day you spend in this world will be the richest it could possibly be, at every age."

I like taking advice from someone who's been around the block a few times, especially when I hear that advice echoed by a series of other kind, elderly ladies who have stopped me in the supermarket time and time again. They stop me hesitantly, with faint smiles of recognition on their faces as they watch me trying to maneuver three children and my groceries toward the check-out till. And they say, "Enjoy every minute, dear. It doesn't get any better than this."

Please send comments to:
madam@stanford.edu



STAY IN TOUCH!
Visit the HumBio webpage:

<http://humbio.stanford.edu/alumni>

Where to send alumni news and stories:

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