



February 2018

Associate Alumnae of Douglass College

Volume 2, Issue 3

## Save the Date!

**Saturday, June 2**

*Closing  
Reception*

**More details  
coming soon!**

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## Mentoring Discussion — Don't Forget Caregiving

The featured topic for this issue is caregiving - taking on the responsibility for the care of a spouse, parent or friend who needs help with daily living tasks. This is a silent part of many women's lives.

We plan for college, career, marriage, children, retirement and personal growth. Caregiving was not on the list of topics suggested on the AADC Mabel's Alumnae Mentoring Program application.

But the reality is that nearly half of all U.S. workers expect to be caring for an adult family member within the next five years; women between the ages of 44 and 65 are the largest part of that group. Taking on caregiving responsibilities has major impacts on our employment, career growth, financial plans, health and personal life. For most of us, however, becoming a caregiver is something that happens *to us*. We do not plan for it, train for it or talk about it.

As Douglass alumnae, we are part of this reality. We are the women who are there, have been there or are looking ahead to being there. As participants in this mentoring program, we recognize the value of sharing our experience, wisdom, questions and guidance in a wide range of areas. Talking about the possibility of becoming or needing a caregiver could be an important part of the discussion.

## Family Caregiving: By the Numbers

- In 2014, one out of four employed adults over age 45 was providing care to another person
- 68% of employed caregivers made work accommodations, ranging from changing schedules to stopping work entirely
- Women who left the workforce to provide care lose, on average, over \$324,000 in earnings and benefits
- In 2013, about 40 million family caregivers in the U.S. provided 37 billion hours of care, for an estimated economic value of \$470 billion. This exceeded total Medicare expenditures for that particular year.



Melanie Plasencia '12

***"I simply hoped to be of value to someone else in their journey- whatever the demands of their journey might be."***  
***- Sue Estler '66***

## Mentoring Spotlight

**Melanie Plasencia '12** decided to become a Mentee when she moved to the New Brunswick area to complete her dissertation research. She had been at the University of California – Berkeley and found she missed the academic community there.

Through attending AADC events, she discovered AADC Fellowships and then the AADC Mabel's Alumnae Mentoring Program. She feels that being a Mentee has given her exactly what she was hoping for. Her mentor brings a wealth of experience in a variety of academic roles, insight into working as a woman in academia, and valua-

ble advice on completing her degree.

Since her Mentor lives in Maine, their contact is through frequent Skype talks covering everything from securing letters of recommendation to personal milestones. Melanie feels that her Mentor keeps her motivated to stay on the path to finishing her doctorate, and inspires her to eventually become a mentor.

**Sue Estler '66** originally was not going to be a mentor because she felt "old, retired and out of the workforce." She had navigated the academic world at the height of the anti-war and civil rights movements, in top public and private

universities, as a student, professor, administrator and advisor. Friends at the AADC persuaded her that, retired or not, she has something to offer. Like Melanie, Sue feels the mentoring relationship is going very well. She has found that Melanie is facing familiar academic demands and challenges and sees the importance of ongoing encouragement. She also noted an unexpected bonus to being a Mentor: "It's liberating to be able to observe, listen and offer feedback without the onus of evaluation inherent in being a dissertation adviser or committee member. And I think for her, it's helpful having a faculty mentor without authority over her."

## Mentoring Program Reminders

### Connect Via Social Media

Closed groups have been set up on Facebook for both Mentors and Mentees to facilitate communication. Please sign up through these links:  
[AADC Mentors](#) and

### [AADC Mentees](#)

These groups keep everyone up to date on events, in addition to providing a platform for suggestions and sharing links to pertinent mentoring and career resources.

### [Write for Us!](#)

Interested in submitting content?

Contact Linda Parry '75 ([lmparry@gmail.com](mailto:lmparry@gmail.com)).

We welcome your ideas!

## Starting the Discussion: By Linda Parry '75

I spent an informative hour with the staff of our local area Association on Aging (AOA), and asked for a list of the top issues people should think about before caregiving becomes necessary. Local AOAs are funded by the National Administration on Aging to be information resource agencies in 644 regions covering the entire country. Local staff members handle emergency calls and family struggles, and help find solutions that work. Here are some of their suggestions:

**Who is in your circle of caring?** Who might become dependent on you for care? Who else would be involved? What role are you willing and able to assume?

**Where are the papers?** Seems like a no-brainer, but someone needs to know the location of birth certificates and other critical documents.

**What resources are out there in your community?** The list varies widely among regions and changes frequently. There is one official referral agency, but there may be other church or private service agencies as well. Knowing where to go for information, and having an idea about the range of services available, is key to identifying options and finding good solutions.

**What does your employer offer?** An increasing number of

businesses are making accommodations for employees with caregiving responsibilities, recognizing the importance of the role by approving schedule changes, leaves of absence and work from home options. If yours is not among them, perhaps there is a way to nudge them in that direction.

The AOA staff wanted to point out that, while there are challenges and costs associated with caregiving, there are also joys and rewards stemming from being there for loved ones who need help. The possibility of caregiving should be included in discussions of goals and life plans within a mentoring relationship.



***"If careers were to stop caring tomorrow, our health and social systems would crumble."***  
- Scott Williams



## More Resources to Explore

<https://eldercare.acl.gov/> Search by ZIP code for your local Area Administration on Aging

<http://www.aarp.org/caregiving/> AARP resource with statistics, tips and support

<https://www.caregiver.org/national-center-caregiving> Home page for the National Center for Caregiving

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/crone-corner-office-bad-daughter-work-kathi-love> Thoughtful post by Kathi Love '75 on the emotional toll of caregiving

[https://www.ted.com/talks/scott\\_williams\\_the\\_hidden\\_role\\_informal\\_caregivers\\_play\\_in\\_health\\_care](https://www.ted.com/talks/scott_williams_the_hidden_role_informal_caregivers_play_in_health_care)

TED talk on the importance of caregiving to the world



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*AADC Mabel's Alumnae  
Mentoring Program*



*The AADC develops and promotes connections among Douglass alumnae by providing programs, services, networks and life-long learning opportunities that represent the interests and needs of our diverse alumnae. The AADC provides prudent stewardship of the Douglass Fund and other endowed funds held by the AADC for the benefit of Douglass; distributions from these funds contribute financial support to Douglass and her students.*

Visit our website:  
[www.douglassalumnae.org](http://www.douglassalumnae.org)

douglassalumnae at

## AADC Upcoming Events and Programs

**Tuesday, March 6, 7:00 pm**

### Annual Zagoren Lecture

Albers-Schonberg Room, Kathleen W. Ludwig '75 Global Village Living Learning Center

Featuring **Laura Micheletti Puaca '99**, Associate Professor in the History Department at Christopher Newport University, author of "Searching for Scientific Womanpower: Technocratic Feminism and the Politics of National Security, 1940-1980" — [sign up here](#).

**Friday, March 16, 5:00 pm**

**AADC Victoria Dabrowski Schmidt '42 Workplace and Professional Development Symposium Networking Happy Hour**  
On the Border Restaurant, New Brunswick — [sign up here](#).

**Saturday, March 31, 11:00 am**

**AADC Black Alumnae Network Presents: An Open Dialogue with Emma Andrews Warren '49**  
Ruth Schilling Hennessy Alumnae Center — [sign up here](#).

**Thursday, April 19 - Saturday, April 21**

### AADC Alumnae Reunion Weekend

Enjoy the Vanguard Luncheon on Friday; Convocation, with the Milestone Classes Parade and AADC Alumnae Awards; Champagne Jazz Brunch; and activities and programs on Saturday afternoon! Join us as we herald the Vanguard Class of 1968, celebrating their 50th reunion, as well as milestone classes ending in 3s and 8s. [Register here](#).

**Saturday, April 21, 6:00 pm**

### Forward Together Gala, Heldrich Hotel

Gala event recognizing the Vanguard Class of 1968, milestone classes ending in 3s and 8s, with special keynote Carmen Twillie Ambar; event honors the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs of GFWC. [Register here](#).

**Saturday, May 5, 8:45 am**

### Spring Alumnae Council

Trayes Hall, Douglass Student Center; registration coming soon.

**Saturday, May 5, 1:00 pm**

### AADC Smart Talks: "Pay Off Your College Debt and More"

Ruth Schilling Hennessy Alumnae Center; registration coming soon.