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David E. Daniel
President

For more information please contact:
Center for Vital Longevity
Office of Development & Alumni Relations
t 972-883-3200
utdallas.edu/campaign
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We invite you to share our vision of advancing the frontiers of aging-mind research.

Someone once said, “Youth is glorious—but it isn’t a career.” It is true of the body, and true of the mind. Over the past century, scientific and medical advances have led to tremendous increases in longevity for our bodies. But these advances have not been matched by corresponding progress in the vitality of the aging brain. At least not yet.

The Center for Vital Longevity at UT Dallas exists to change that. Founded in 2010, it has become an internationally respected research leader in record time. The Center brings together an extraordinary—and extraordinarily productive—group of research scientists, using cutting-edge brain-imaging technology and research techniques in cognitive neuroscience to understand, maintain and improve the vitality of the aging mind.

Of particular importance to our society, which has a higher proportion of older adults than ever before, is our Center’s groundbreaking work to ultimately decrease the prevalence of Alzheimer’s disease and other causes of dementia. Our scientists are studying the brain to learn how memory malfunctions as people age, to discover early markers of Alzheimer’s disease long before symptoms appear, and to develop interventions that enhance cognitive function and slow the aging process.

The Center for Vital Longevity has achieved a great deal in a short time and with little private funding. Currently, our work is largely supported by competitive research grants from the National Institutes of Health. But the needs of our rapidly aging society are pressing, and only further investment will ensure that these needs are met.

We invite you to share our vision of advancing the frontiers of aging-mind research and to take an active role in achieving it. With your generosity we can greatly further our efforts to improve the long-term cognitive health and vitality of present and future generations. The benefits will be enormous.

Denise C. Park, PhD
Co-Director, UT Regents’ Research Scholar & Distinguished University Chair in Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Michael D. Rugg, PhD
Co-Director & Distinguished Chair in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Today, America’s 79 million baby boomers are reaching age 65 at the rate of about one every eight seconds. It is clear that the impact of age-related cognitive decline, as well as the increased incidence of age-related neurological diseases, present ever more significant challenges—in terms of both economic consequences and compromised quality of life for an increasing proportion of the population. The Center of Vital Longevity, one of the affiliated centers of the UT Dallas School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, is at the forefront of understanding how we can age well, how we can ensure that our minds will stay as healthy as our bodies and how we can utilize the vast experience and potential of aging Americans both in our workforce and society.

The Center is led by two prominent cognitive neuroscientists, Drs. Park and Rugg, who have held senior appointments at renowned universities including the University of Michigan, University of Illinois, University College London, St. Andrews University and University of California, Irvine. Both are fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Association for Psychological Science and hold distinguished endowed chairs in the UT Dallas School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences. Each has made major contributions to our understanding of memory and cognitive aging. Drs. Park and Rugg lead research teams that include more than a dozen PhD scientists working to solve the problems of the aging mind.

Center scientists are engaged in a fascinating variety of research projects. Some involve basic-science-oriented discovery—for example, gaining a better understanding of the patterns of neural activity associated with memory formation and retrieval. Other studies are investigating the factors that help predict who will age well cognitively and who will not, as well as interventions that might stave off age-related memory and cognitive decline. A few examples from many:
The Dallas Lifespan Brain Study
The Dallas Lifespan Brain Study, one of the nation’s largest projects examining neural and cognitive aging across the entire adult lifespan, is investigating who ages successfully and why, as well as who may be at risk for Alzheimer’s disease well before symptoms appear. Using a breadth of sophisticated brain-imaging techniques together with data about individuals’ cognitive function, Center scientists hope to isolate a “neural signature” in middle age that will predict who will and who will not age well.

Functional Neuroimaging of Memory
Using a combination of advanced brain-imaging techniques and recordings of brain activity, Center scientists are researching how patterns of activity in different brain regions give rise to fundamental cognitive functions such as memory. A major focus of this work is to identify the core neural systems and processes that allow healthy individuals to successfully acquire and retrieve memories, and to determine how these systems are affected by the aging process.

Memory Training and Cognition
Center scientists are actively investigating whether computer-based memory training can increase the amount of information we can retain in both early and late adulthood and improve skills that typically decline with age, such as multi-tasking and complex reasoning. The goal of this research is to better understand not just how memory improves with training, but also what brain changes may underlie such improvements in older adults.

The Synapse Project
The Synapse Project is designed to test the much-debated theory that you can keep your mind healthy in old age by leading an engaged lifestyle—the “use it or lose it” hypothesis. The study is unique in that participants who enroll actually change their lifestyle, learning a complex new skill (such as quilting or digital photography), exercising or even engaging in extended social activities.
You’re going to want to pay attention to this: Center for Vital Longevity assistant professor Chandramallika Basak, PhD, is researching the processes in the brain that enable us to focus our attention and remember information—and her findings indicate that we can get better at both as we grow older.

Central to Basak’s work is the concept of brain plasticity, the ability of the brain to reorganize itself, creating new neural connections based on new experiences. Basak is investigating why and how our attention and memory skills decline as we age and exploring whether new kinds of training and exercise, both cognitive and physical, can improve brain plasticity and thus our capacity to attend to multiple tasks and remember.

“We have found that training exercises can actually result in changes in the brain processes that control attention and memory,” Basak says, “enabling us to efficiently change our focus of attention from one task to another and even to better retain information. Aerobic fitness training can build more gray matter in the brain—which is associated with improved memory in aging adults—while using video games can increase so-called attentional control, as well as complex reasoning and memory abilities.”

That’s right—a leading brain researcher recommends video games for aging adults. Not the point-and-shoot mayhem of the games their grandkids love, but games that employ strategy and quick thinking to improve and expand brain plasticity.

“The Center for Vital Longevity is a tremendous environment for collaboration and multidisciplinary research,” says Basak. “The Center is already on the world’s radar, even though it is so new. I am proud to belong to such an exceptional group of scientists dedicated to understanding and improving cognitive health as we age. The best news for everyone is that our brains need not grow weaker as we grow older—they can be trained, strengthened and improved throughout life.”

The best news for everyone is that our brains need not grow weaker as we grow older—they can be trained, strengthened and improved throughout life.
The Center for Vital Longevity has the intellectual capital and track record of scientific achievement to become one of the leading aging-mind research centers in the world. As we continue our progress toward the top tier of research institutions, your philanthropic support will ensure the rapid pace of discovery required to improve the cognitive health of our aging populace and that of future generations. Our $15 million campaign goal includes the following opportunities for your generous investment:

**Frontiers of the Mind Research Fund**

An array of state-of-the-art brain imaging tools have enabled Center scientists to make remarkable new discoveries about the inner workings of the brain, how areas of the brain associated with learning and memory are affected by age, and how the brain can reorganize and repair itself. For the first time, amyloid proteins associated with Alzheimer’s disease can be imaged decades before disease symptoms appear, and Center scientists are at the forefront of learning if and how this could translate to early diagnosis and interventions to protect the brain from age-related damage. Contributions to the Frontiers of the Mind Research Fund will ensure that these groundbreaking discoveries continue, by offsetting the ever growing costs of brain imaging, as well as supporting the training of young scientists, graduate students, research managers and lab technicians.

**Enabling Independence through Technology Fund**

Center researchers are studying innovative ways to foster independence of older adults and enhance their brain function by training them
in the use of technology. An “iPad Camp” trains senior citizens how to use the tablet device to connect to the World Wide Web, gather news and information, play interactive games and connect with family members—activities that enrich their everyday lives and may also help maintain or stimulate their cognitive abilities. Another research project is investigating the effects of video game training on improving cognitive skills that typically decline with age, such as multi-tasking and complex reasoning. And a large community-based study, the Synapse Project, as already noted, is examining the impact of learning challenging new skills on brain function over the short and long-term. Financial contributions are needed to support these groundbreaking projects.

**Community Enrichment Fund**

Scientific outreach is integral to the Center for Vital Longevity’s mission of advancing the science of the aging mind and enhancing the long-term cognitive health and vitality of our society. Your contribution to the Community Enrichment Fund will help sustain efforts to enrich the Dallas community through education about the Center’s groundbreaking discoveries and stimulate scientific discourse and new research collaborations with memory, aging and cognition experts around the world. Ongoing community and scientific outreach efforts include:

**The Dallas Aging and Cognition Conference**, an international scientific meeting held every two years that brings together the field’s top researchers.

**Science Luncheon Series**, a schedule of weekly seminars that brings together Center scientists and outside experts to discuss advances in aging-mind research.

**Public lectures and receptions** to educate and inform the community about the latest discoveries relating to memory, cognitive aging, and Alzheimer’s disease.

**Endowed Chairs and Other Naming Opportunities**

The high international profile of the Center for Vital Longevity, combined with superb facilities, allows the Center to attract the best and brightest scientists. Endowed chairs and professorships that would be occupied by internationally prominent researchers will bolster the Center’s position as an intellectual powerhouse for the study of the aging mind.

Additional naming opportunities are available that will permanently associate the name of a foundation, corporation or individual donor—or that of a family member, friend or colleague—with the Center for Vital Longevity at UT Dallas. These opportunities include naming the Center itself, a scientific lecture series, a laboratory, or the biennial Dallas Aging and Cognition Conference.
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David E. Daniel
President
The founders of UT Dallas—Eugene McDermott, Erik Jonsson and Cecil Green—shared a vision. They saw the need for a great research university in North Texas, and they set a lofty goal by publicly announcing their confidence that UT Dallas would one day become the “MIT of the Southwest.”

UT Dallas has made remarkable strides since this bold vision was set in motion a half-century ago. This comprehensive campaign—the first in UT Dallas history—will accelerate our progress toward becoming the world-class Tier One research university the founders envisioned for North Texas.
# Campaign Priorities

## Schools

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<tbody>
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<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
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<td>Behavioral &amp; Brain Sciences</td>
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## Major Centers

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<td>CENTER FOR VITAL LONGEVITY</td>
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## Major Units

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<td>McDermott Library</td>
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## All Other Gifts

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## Total Campaign Goal

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