

Featured Speakers



Joy Harjo, M.F.A.

Poet, Storyteller, Musician, Memoirist, Playwright, and Activist

Throughout Harjo's extraordinary career, she has expanded the American language, culture, and soul. A Creek Indian and student of First Nation history, she is rooted in both the natural world—especially the landscape of the American southwest— and the world of the spirit. Incorporating native traditions of prayer and myth into a powerfully contemporary idiom as illustrated in *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*, *Crazy Brave*, *She Had some Horses*. Harjo's justice-seeking art transforms aging, bitterness and trauma to beauty, wholeness, and healing.



Barbara Ann Holmes, Ph.D.

President, United Theological School, St. Paul, MN

Dr. Holmes works at the intersection of ethics, spirituality, mysticism, cosmology and African American religious culture. Her research, from oral and written accounts and church records, details ways in which contemplative experience are built into African American collective worship as well as the legacy of African monasticism, spiritual exemplars, and worship. An accomplished attorney, she is author of *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*, *Race and the Cosmos* and *A Private Woman in Public Spaces: Barbara Jordan's Speeches on Ethics, Public Religion, and Law*.



Stuart Kandell, Ph.D.

Founder, National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), Washington, DC

Dr. Kandell is nationally known as a "global pioneer of creative aging" and leads Stagebridge, the nation's premiere performing arts company of older adults which he founded in 1978. It remains a thriving example of how to make theatre and storytelling an opportunity to bridge generations through arts. In 2002, he pioneered the National Center for Creative Aging, a network of individuals and organizations who catalyze creative expression among older people. He is currently based in Berlin, Germany and is globally interviewing older artists.



Nina Kraus, Ph.D.

Head of *brainvolts*, Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

Dr. Kraus is a scientist, inventor, and musician who studies the biology of auditory learning. Her groundbreaking research brings together the worlds of neuroscience and health care to strengthen our knowledge of how structured engagement with music can heal, rejuvenate and improve well-being. She was one of the first to demonstrate, through a series of innovative studies involving thousands of research participants, that making music can actually change our brains from birth to age 90.



John Leland, M.A.

Reporter for The New York Times, New York, NY

When Leland set out to meet members of America's fastest-growing age group on behalf of the Times, he expected to hear about loneliness, loss and declining health. Instead, what he learned upended most notions of aging, revealing that the late stages of life are unexpectedly rich, and the elderly are incomparably wise. His latest book, *Happiness is a Choice You Make: Lessons from a Year Among the Oldest Old* (2018) is his reflection on how to "live better" from those who have mastered the art.



Rabbi Michael Lerner, Ph.D.

Editor: Tikkun and Author: Spirit Matters, Berkeley, CA

Rabbi Lerner is the country's preeminent liberal Jewish intellectual and editor of "Tikkun," perhaps the most respected intellectual/cultural magazine in the Jewish world. Rabbi Lerner's *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation* is potentially one of the most important Jewish books of our times, in the great tradition of the works of Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. *Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul* is a blueprint for the return of spiritual meaning to contemporary life.



Harry R. Moody, Ph.D.

Retired VP and Director of Academic Affairs for AARP, Washington, DC

Dr. Moody's recent book, *The Five Stages of the Soul*, interweaves psychology, religion, myth, and literature, and charts the passages of countless individuals across the country who have journeyed the path of spiritual awakening common to almost all of us. It has been translated into seven languages worldwide. His monthly newsletter, "Human Values in Aging," reaches 10,000 subscribers. In 2011, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society on Aging.



Thomas Moore, Ph.D.

Author: Care of the Soul and Ageless Soul: the Lifelong Journey toward Meaning and Joy

Dr. Moore, world-renowned author of *The Care of the Soul*, is a pioneer explorer of the sacred art of soulful living, sacredness of the ordinary and lifelong journey toward meaning and joy. He explores the dilemma of many today who are either bewildered by the array of spiritual choices, or dulled by materialism of Western culture. Author also of *Ageless Soul* and *The Care of the Soul in Medicine*, he offers a new vision of how seekers can fashion their own connection to the sacred out of materials of ancient faiths and everyday life.



William T. Randall, Ph.D.

Professor of Gerontology, St. Thomas University, New Brunswick, Canada

Dr. Randall is a leading authority on the subject of narrative in relation to aging, community building, and care. His work shows how narrative psychology is integral to everyday life. In *The Narrative Complexity of Ordinary Life: Tales from the Coffee Shop* and *The Stories We Are: An Essay on Self-Creation*, he writes that we function as narrative psychologists by continually storying our lives in memory and imagination. In doing so, he draws on a variety of fields: psychology, psychotherapy, theology, philosophy, feminist theory, and literary theory.



John C. Robinson, Ph.D.

Psychologist, Seattle, WA

Dr. Robinson is a clinical psychologist and holds a second doctorate in ministry. He is intentional in the integration process of psychotherapy with the universal search for meaning, wholeness and transcendence. He asserts the importance of creativity and spirituality of aging, healing and growth. His major works include *But Where Is God: Psychotherapy and the Religious Search; Finding Heaven Here; The Divine Human: Final Transformation of Sacred Aging*. He leads talks and conducts workshops at conscious aging conferences nationwide.