



Brain Aging

Bulletin

University of California, Irvine

SPRING 2007

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Brain Aging is the newsletter of the Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia, a non-profit Institute dedicated to improving the lives of those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease through research and education.

Aging Through the Centuries: Alzheimer's Disease at 100 Years

By: Shirley Sirivong and Malcolm Dick, Ph.D.

Alzheimer's disease (AD), which is the most common neurological disorder of mid-and late life and the eighth-leading cause of death in Southern California, officially celebrates its 100th birthday this year. A century ago, Dr. Alois Alzheimer, a German psychiatrist, first described this disorder in a 51 year-old woman known as Augusta D. Despite her young age, Augusta was showing profound problems with recent memory, language, and visual-spatial functioning and was suffering from hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, and outbursts of aggressive behavior. After she passed away, Dr. Alzheimer had the opportunity to study her brain tissue and found an abundance of microscopic changes including amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles which he boldly asserted were the underlying cause of Augusta's clinical symptoms. During the 100 years since Dr. Alzheimer's discovery, what more have we learned about this disease and how close are we to finding effective treatments, preventions, or cures?



Photograph taken of Alois Alzheimer, German psychiatrist, who first described the disease in Augusta.

AD increase from approximately 1 in 10 chances at age 65 to 1 in 2 chances by age 85. As the projected number of people age 65 and older in the United States is expected to more than double to 71 million by 2030, we can expect to see a corresponding increase in the number of individuals with AD. The number of individuals with AD in this country will likely increase from the current 4.5 million to between 12 and 16 million by 2050 unless some cure or prevention is found.

WHAT WE DO KNOW

AD is an age-dependent disorder. As we age, the chances of having

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UCI Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia

2006 Alzheimer's Disease Conference: *Caregiver Stress, Inflammation, and Treatment Options*

The much anticipated 2006 Regional Alzheimer's Disease Research Conference was held on September 28th and 29th, and was hosted by the UCI Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia, in conjunction with the Alzheimer's Association of Orange County



and Adult Day Services of Orange County. Aptly titled "Caregiver Stress, Inflammation and Treatment Options," presentations focused on a spectrum of issues pertinent to the Alzheimer's disease community.

Guest speakers from University of Washington, Harvard University, the California Institute of Technology, and numerous other highly regarded institutions graced our stage at the Irvine Hilton, and educated our distinguished audience

of researchers, caregivers, and patients about the newest frontiers in AD-related research. Topics ranged from stress management in minority caregiver populations to identifying elder abuse, and highlights included two panels of experts focusing on caregiver issues and treatment options. In addition, audiences were given public policy updates about the steps that the state and federal governments are taking (or not taking) to advocate in the

battle against Alzheimer's disease, and what we can do to make a difference.

With over 400 people in attendance, the 2006 Alzheimer's Disease Research conference proved to be a great success.

Having visitors from all over California and even out of state participate in our conference was a great delight. We were able to share experiences and perspectives with common purpose of creating unity and hope. We are already working on the 2007 Alzheimer's Disease Research Conference. The dates have been set, so be sure to mark September 20-21 in your calendars for the 2007 conference, which will be held once again at the Irvine Hilton!

Augmentation Budget Passes!

Thanks to the efforts of many, many advocates up and down the state, the \$2 million dollar augmentation budget for the ten Alzheimer's Research Centers of California (ARCCs) was voted into the budget by



the Assembly Budget Subcommittee in May 2006, and approved by the Governor for inclusion in the 2006-07 budget. This increase, the first since the 1998-1999 budget, will enhance the ability of the centers to provide state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment services, offer caregiving training and support services, and evaluate highly complex cases of dementia and Alzheimer's-related disorders.

What exactly do the ARCC's do?

For over twenty years, the centers have:

- Provided high-quality diagnostic and treatment services to individuals affected by dementia and
- "Augmentation Budget Passes!" cont. on Page 9*

UCI Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia

2006 Donor Spotlight

Several notable gifts to the Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia were received from community members in the year 2006. Donations of this nature enable the Institute to continue to grow and progress while maintaining its current standard of excellence in the advancement of the ongoing investigation into the cause(s) and cure for Alzheimer's disease. We are grateful to the following individuals for their generous contributions to critical studies on brain aging and dementia currently being conducted by researchers at our Institute.

Rick Muth, President and CEO, ORCO Block, recently contributed \$250,000 to our cause. Rick's father, Peter Muth, was diagnosed and treated at our Alzheimer's Disease Research Center several years ago, and Rick has been involved in the Alliance Against Alzheimer donor circle for the past three years. After reviewing several projects in need of funding, Rick chose to support the effects of physical activity and cognitive enrichment on maintaining the integrity and revitalizing the cognitive structure of the brain.

Long-time supporter, Suzanne Melin, gave a \$100,000 gift, in memory of her husband, "Spud" Melin. Suzi is also an Alliance donor, and a control subject in the Institute's Successful Aging Program. Ms. Melin's contribution, given early in 2006, was used to offset costs of a new pilot project for the center.

The Institute also received two charitable gift annuities this year from donors who prefer to remain anonymous. Gifts of this nature are critical as they will help to ensure the future sustainability of our mission. For information about how to make a deferred gift which can provide an income stream for you now, please visit our website at <http://www.alz.uci.edu>, and click on "Supporting the Institute."

We sincerely thank the contributors above as well as all of the other members of our growing private donor

program. For more information about donating to Alzheimer research, please contact Kim Bailey, Director of Community Development, by telephoning (949) 824-3251 or by emailing kbailey@uci.edu.



The Institute's Development Director, Kim Bailey, receives donation from Rick Muth, President/CEO of ORCO Block Co., Inc.

Have you Considered Joining the Alliance? YOU are needed.

The Alliance Against Alzheimer's Disease is made up of donors who give annual gifts of \$1000 or more. All of these funds go directly to support the critical research being conducted here at the UCI Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia. The Alliance is actively recruiting new membership and we welcome your involvement! Benefits include invitations to bi-annual receptions, research updates, and other activities. The biggest benefit, however, is the satisfaction that comes with knowing that you are actively supporting our investigation into the mechanisms for successful aging and our ongoing search for the cure for Alzheimer's disease.

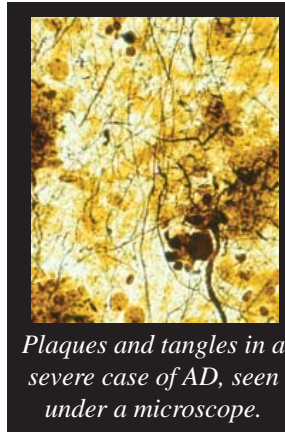
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“Alzheimer’s Disease at 100 Years” Continued from Page 1

Genetics play a role but are not the sole cause of this disorder. Although most cases of AD are “sporadic” without a strong family history, there are at least 6 different genetic mutations that have been associated with this disorder. The most common of the “familial” forms of AD is called Presenilin 1 and accounts for most cases where the onset is in the early 40s and 50s. In individuals age 65 and older, a particular variant of a gene we all carry, namely apolipoprotein E (ApoE), has been associated with an increased risk of developing AD.

Better understanding of the brain changes in AD. Although genetics may play a role, the exact cause of AD remains unclear. Researchers have made great strides during the past 25 years, however, in understanding the structural, biochemi-

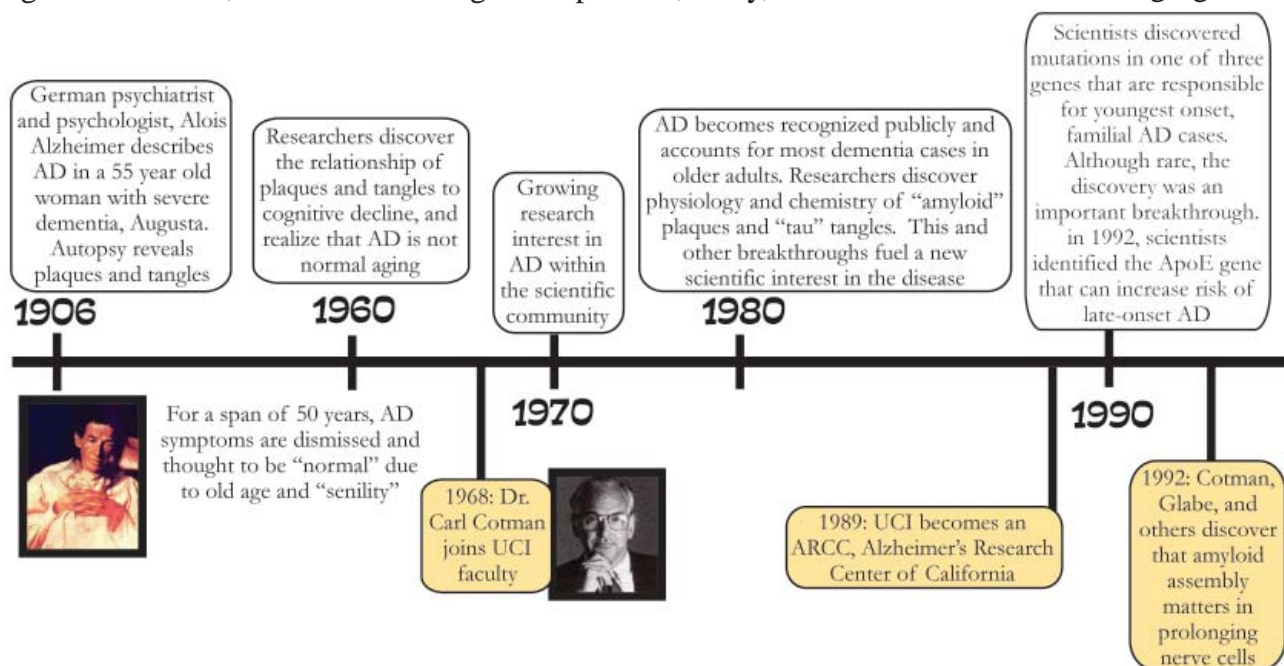
cal, and metabolic changes occurring in the brains of AD patients. The groundbreaking studies by Dr. Carl Cotman, who directs the UCI Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia (IBAD), on the role of amyloid in plaque formation have helped improve scientists’ understanding of the disease and have guided treatment strategies. With the advent of the transgenic mouse model of AD by Dr. Frank LaFerla, associate director of IBAD, scientists now have a way to test possible causal factors and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to prevent, delay, or slow



Plaques and tangles in a severe case of AD, seen under a microscope.

the progression of AD.

Diagnostic accuracy has improved steadily with the advent of better tools. Through a comprehensive testing process, a clinical diagnosis of “Probable/Possible” Alzheimer’s disease can be made today with 85-90% accuracy. However, only through a pathological examination of brain tissue at autopsy, can the diagnosis of AD be made with 100% accuracy. With the development of more sophisticated neuropsychological and brain imaging techniques, clinicians can now better track the progression of this disease and also help identify people earlier. For example, non-demented individuals with problems in recent memory or other cognitive abilities may have Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). Research suggests that MCI may be a transitional stage between normal aging and AD as



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we know that individuals with MCI are at an increased risk for subsequently developing dementia. During the past 10 years, researchers have turned their attention toward the growing number of older individuals with MCI, studying how dementia develops and more importantly how it might be prevented.

HOW CLOSE TO A CURE ARE WE?

Although the discovery of AD is celebrating its 100th birthday, it was only 10 years ago that the first effective pharmacological treatments became available to the public. Since 1996, four drugs have been marketed for the treatment of AD. The three cholinesterase inhibitors, Aricept, Exelon, and Razadyne, provide a modest benefit to patients in the mild to moderate stages of the disease, while Namenda which works on a different neurotransmitter, glutamate, has been approved for the treatment of individuals with moderate to severe AD. Although the four currently available drugs are helpful for treating the cognitive and behavioral symptoms of AD, they do not address the underlying changes in the brain. Researchers using the transgenic animal models and amyloid precursor protein mutations are better able to study the pathophysiology of AD which will hopefully lead to the development of potential disease modifying agents. For example, a number of new treatment strategies and clinical trials are

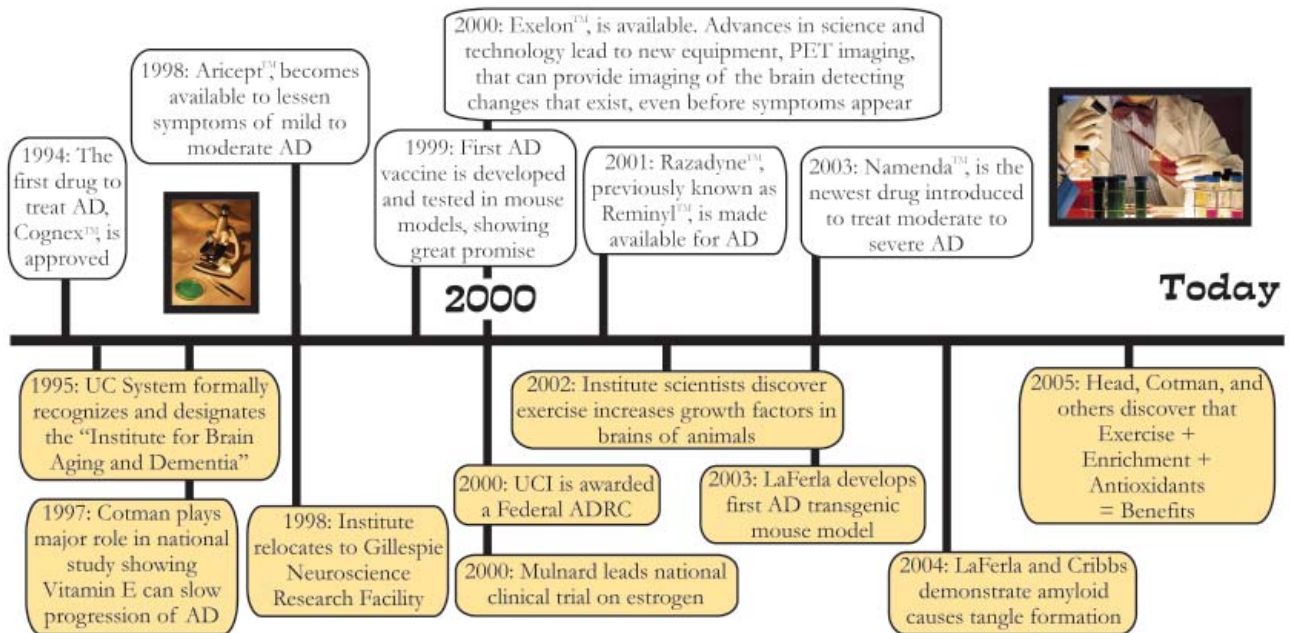
directed at physically removing or preventing the formation of amyloid deposits (plaques) through either drugs or antibodies via vaccinations. Paralleling the development of more effective treatments is the need to identify people at an earlier stage, such as those with MCI, who are at increased risk of developing the disease.



DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Scientists and researchers realize that perhaps the key to ridding the world of AD may be in early detection and prevention. Ongoing research is looking at links and risk factors between AD and other medical conditions such as cardiovascular problems and diabetes. Many recent studies have shown that diet and exercise are key components to a healthy body and brain, and it is never too late to begin eating a healthier diet or taking on a healthier lifestyle including physical activity and exercise.

Continued on Page 7



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A Super-Successful Aging Story

By Tatiana Jimenez

The year is 1893 when New Zealand becomes the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote and in Brooklyn, New York, Thomas Edison demonstrates his awe-inspiring kinetoscope. Also during this monumental year an incredible woman is born, Marion Bigelow Higgins. Living to experience 112 years and 249 days, Marion Bigelow Higgins is authenticated as the longest living Californian, just recently leaving us this past year due to heart failure to embark on her next journey (d. 03/02/06).

From the switch of kerosene lamps to electricity and the arrival of indoor plumbing, the past 112 years have witnessed an astounding amount of changes in lifestyle, culture and economics. After growing up in a rural setting Marion went on to achieve a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics from Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington in 1917. Having completed college she returned to her home in Idaho to teach in a one room school house, and shortly thereafter met John Higgins, an engineer, at a dance. They were married in 1918. The family then decided to move to Pomona, California in 1927.

After settling in to the small town of Pomona (at the time) as the second world war was underway, Marion began working at the BF Goodrich plant assembling B-17 bombers. After her husband's death in 1949, she never remarried, but remained in the Ontario, California

area until 1989 when her family decided she should move to Leisure World in Seal Beach, CA.

At the age of 110, Marion Higgins reached a very exclusive sub-population of people, known as the supercentenarians. Currently there are 77 officially documented supercentenarians in the world, 68 of which are women, and 9 men according to the Gerontology Research Group website: www.grg.org. Gerontology studies have shown that these people live so long because of their good genes (her father lived to age 101 and her mother to 92), optimistic nature, stress-free personality, and the ability to learn new skills. Patterns of not going to see a doctor until the age of 90, and ability to stay within healthy weight range are also noted. Marion has mentioned how she "never had enough money to engage in riotous living;" therefore her simple long life proved to be a priceless experience that money could not buy. The interminable activity, such as her love for quilt-making and working for the Los Angeles County Assessors office until being forced to retire at the age of 70 kept her mind sharp enough to remember detailed stories from 100 years past.

At the age of 102, she ambitiously wrote a self-published autobiography as part of a Leisure World writing class. What began as an afternoon activity blossomed into a memoir of her life entitled *Ripples on a Stream* that has sold over 800 copies.

In addition to quilt-making (donating most of her pieces to the poor) and writing, Marion also participated in several memory walks put on by the Alzheimer's Association in Orange County, CA. In an attempt to benefit mankind in trying to uncover the secrets of



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super-longevity, Marion also participated in UC Irvine's Successful Aging Program which studies the lifestyles and patterns seen in those

who live longer than the average older adult. Having participated in the program for 3 years, Marion's contributions to Successful Aging research have proven invaluable.

In the years preceding her death, Marion kept relatives close by, and tried to stay informed about the world. She attended the Assembly of God Christian Center every Sunday, as well as the Salvation Army Home League on Monday evenings. She was highlighted as a guest speaker at

the Kiwanis Club and the Impaired Vision Club as well as receiving the Golden Cassette Award for library services at the Braille Institute of Los Angeles.

Fond memories and a happy demeanor proved to help Marion live her 112 years so gracefully. Mrs. Higgins once recalled, "In fifth

grade, I got a tablet and sat down to write a book. I was very excited. But I couldn't write anything because I hadn't lived much yet. So I waited 'til I was 102. Writing makes me feel so alive."

Her simple life proved to be a priceless experience that money could not buy.



Above: (Left to right) Henry (Brother, age 5), Marion (age 1), Fern (sister, age 3), 1894
Left: Taken in 1910, Marion at age 17



Marion (Age 24) in 1917, graduated from the College of Puget Sound

"Alzheimer's Disease at 100 Years" Continued from Page 5

A number of various new therapies are in development from brain repair, reducing inflammation, gene therapies and even promising research in the area of vaccinations and finding ways to increase immunity against the disease.

Work continues to improve tools for accurate and early diagnosis, to help facilitate early intervention and education. Meanwhile strategies to find new ways to improve quality of dementia care are ongoing.

For the past 100 years, there has been a lot of research conducted in the study and understanding of Alzheimer's disease. As we all continue to age, and modern medicine improves, there is promise for new studies and findings that will lead us to discover answers in ridding the world of this devastating illness.

Join the Successful Aging Program

If you are a healthy adult age 65 or older, free of cognitive impairment, and interested in joining our Successful Aging program, we could use your help.

For more information, please call (949) 824-2382.

Help us find answers.



Bright-eyed Marion on her 107th Birthday

UCI Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia

On the Forefront: An Update on Clinical Trials Current and Upcoming Clinical Studies Seeking Participants



For more information, please call Beatriz Yanez at (949) 824-5733 or visit our website at:

www.alz.uci.edu/clinicaltrials/

Subjects must have a “study partner” - a friend or relative who can accompany the participant to all clinic visits and answer questions about him/her.

Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) Neuroimaging Initiative

- This study is recruiting three groups of participants: 1) men and women **55-90** who have no memory complaints (normal); 2) men and women 55-90 who have been diagnosed with a mild cognitive impairment (MCI); and 3) men and women 55-90 who have been diagnosed with mild Alzheimer’s disease
- A non-treatment study designed to look at the usefulness of imaging studies (MRI and PET scans), biomarker tests, and paper and pencil memory testing to aid in the identification and treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease at an early stage
- The study lasts for 36 months for normal and MCI participants, and 24 months for participants with mild AD

Antioxidant Treatment Study for AD

- Double-blind, 4-month study of a combination of dietary supplements or an antioxidant to test the safety, tolerability, and effect on cerebrospinal fluid and blood biomarkers in individuals with Alzheimer’s disease
- For men and women **60-85** who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease
- Participants may be on stable doses of cholinesterase inhibitors and/or Namenda

Rozerem Treatment Study for Sleep Problems in Alzheimer’s Disease

- Double-blind, 8-week study of **Rozerem** to evaluate change in nighttime total sleep in individuals with Alzheimer’s disease
- For men and women **55+** who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and are sleep-disturbed

Neuropsychological Test Battery (NTB Study) for Alzheimer’s Disease

- 19-month, non-treatment study designed to evaluate the cognitive and functional abilities of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease using the **Neuropsychological Test Battery (NTB)**
- For men and women **50-85** who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease

Huperzine Treatment Study for AD

- Double-blind, 24-week treatment study of **Huperzine A** to improve memory and cognition in Alzheimer’s disease
- Huperzine A is a naturally-occurring cholinesterase inhibitor being tested for its ability to treat Alzheimer’s disease
- For men and women **55+** who have been diagnosed with AD and are not taking a cholinesterase inhibitor (Aricept, Exelon, Reminyl)
- Participants may be on a stable dose of Namenda (memantine)

Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) Study for AD

- Randomized, placebo-controlled 18-month study of **DHA** (omega 3, also known as fish oil) to slow progression of Alzheimer’s disease
- For men and women age 50-85 years who consume less than 200mg DHA daily in their diet for prior two months

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“Augmentation Budget Passes!” cont. from Page 2

their families

- Been a major source of training for physicians and other health care professionals, offering scientific lectures, meetings, and conferences for the community affected by Alzheimer’s disease
- Conducted ground-breaking research into the cause(s) and cure for Alzheimer’s disease and related neurological impairments

At your UC Irvine ARCC, we are extremely proud of the high standard of excellence we have maintained throughout the years in the community we serve. For more information, please contact our clinic at (949) 824-2382, or our administrative offices at (949) 824-5847.

On behalf of the entire team of researchers and clinicians here at the Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia, we would like to extend special thanks to all who supported this critical legislation, including Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, First Lady Maria Shriver, Senator Dick Ackerman, Assemblyman Kevin McCarthy, Assemblywoman Mimi Walters, and Assemblyman George Plescia.

A special thank you to all of the donors who have contributed to the UCI Institute for Brain Aging Research at the University of California, Irvine.

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Arthur “Spud” Melin Family Fund
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(In memory of Jack Roberts)
 David & Sandra Sage
 Joanne & Michael Spagle

Calendar of Upcoming Events...

Stay connected, visit: www.alz.uci.edu/calendar/

2007 Family Educational Series

Co-Sponsored by the UCI Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia, Alzheimer’s Association, Adult Day Services of Orange County, and the Orange Caregiver Resource Center. All sessions meet from 4:30-6:30pm at the University Club, UCI Campus. Call (949) 824-2382 for reservations and details.

- June 5: Pharmacological Interventions for Dementia**
- September 11: Non-Pharmacological Interventions for Dementia**
- December 11: Prevention Strategies for Dementia**

2007 Annual Alzheimer’s Disease Research Conference September 20-21, Irvine Hilton, Irvine **SAVE THE DATE!**

The UCI Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia, Alzheimer’s Association, and Adult Day Services of Orange County, are pleased to announce the annual Alzheimer’s Disease Research Conference. The conference features presentations by nationally recognized dementia experts. One-time special performance “Augusta’s File”, a play which commemorates the discovery of Alzheimer’s disease. For more information or to register for early bird rates, call (949) 757-3703.

Caring For a Loved One Series (offered throughout the year)

Four individual workshops designed to help caregivers better understand the aspects of caring for a loved one. Attendees may choose to attend one or all of the workshops. Note: Registration and refreshments for the first 1/2 hour. Call (949) 955-9000 to RSVP or for more information. **Classes offered several times throughout year in different parts of the county.**

UCI Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia

Paula Tannahill
Mickey & Helen Walker
Mary Ann Wishney
(In memory of Bernard Wishney)
Linda & Robert Yellin

SPECIAL FRIENDS

Patricia Beckman
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Clare & Mavis Strebler
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J. Grady Randle, P.C.

In Memory of Jay Bush
Barbara Messenger

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In Memory of Margot Guttman
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In Memory of Eve Moscovitch
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In Memory of Dorothy Watts
Jean Randall

Make a Contribution, and Help Make A Difference



1.) Checks should be made payable to **UC REGENTS** and in the Memo section, please write: **Alzheimer's Disease Research**

2.) If the donation is being made in memory/honor of someone, please include a note with information as to where the acknowledgements should be sent.

3.) Please mail all donations to:

*Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia
1113 Gillespie Neuroscience Research Facility
Irvine, CA 92697-4540*

There are many ways to support the clinical and basic science research activities at the UCI Institute for Brain Aging and Dementia. If you would like to receive more information on giving, please contact Kim Bailey at (949) 824-3251 or log on to:
<http://www.alz.uci.edu/donate.html>

UCI Institute for Brain Aging & Dementia

CALENDAR 2007

March 20, 2007

Family Educational
Series Workshop
*Alzheimer's Disease and Other
Dementias: What Does the
Diagnosis Mean?*

Feb 21-March 14

Caring For A Loved One Series
Wednesdays, 6:00-8:30 pm
Acacia Adult Day Services, Garden Grove

June 5, 2007

Family Educational
Series Workshop
*Dementia Medications:
Do They Make a Difference?*

June 2007

Caring For A Loved One Series
Wednesdays, 6:00-8:30 pm
Adult Day Services of Orange County



“Leaves” by Vincent

September 11, 2007

Family Educational
Series Workshop
*Behavioral Strategies and
Community Resources*

September 20-21, 2007

*2007 Regional Alzheimer's Disease
Research and Education Conference*
More information coming soon!


December 11, 2007

Family Educational
Series Workshop
*Reducing Risk for Alzheimer's
Disease: Lifestyle Changes and
More*

November 2007

*2007 Alzheimer's Association
Memory Walk*
Camp James, Irvine

Save the Date!
2007 Annual Alzheimer's
Disease Research and Education
Conference
September 20-21, 2007
Irvine Hilton, Irvine



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available, reserve your table today! For
more information or to register, please
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