Is It All In The Genes?

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Research on the genome, the complete set of DNA that makes us who we are, is fascinating. Most diseases have a genetic component; exactly how much is genetic and the specific genes involved in disease is still being unraveled. Coronary artery disease has a genetic component, but genetics isn’t destiny. Genes for coronary disease aren’t a fixed trait, like eye color, but rather the genes interact with the environment to either raise or lower the risk of getting the disease.

Too often though, I hear people blame everything on their genes and not take control of lifestyle factors that play a major role in keeping us healthy. One of my first jobs was as a cardiac rehabilitation dietitian at Georgia Baptist Hospital (currently Well Star Atlanta Medical Center). Lifestyle education, including healthy eating, exercise, stress reduction, and smoking cessation, was part of a comprehensive program to keep patients at high risk of heart disease healthy. But, with the advent of statins (cholesterol-lowering drugs) and the frequency of heart procedures to bypass blocked arteries, many people, including physicians and surgeons, overlook the importance of lifestyle in disease management.

I remember being in the waiting room with my sister as her husband had quadruple bypass surgery. When the surgeon came out to talk to the family he told us that he could only bypass two of the four blocked arteries and medication would be needed to stabilize the disease. I asked him if dietary changes would be needed and he just nodded and said “sure.” But, it was never mentioned again and to this day my sister thinks that her husband’s disease was totally related to genetics and makes no attempt to adopt a healthy diet (as many know, family rarely listens to your advice).

Because this story isn’t rare, I was pleased to read a 2016 article in the New England Journal of Medicine on genetic risk, adherence to a healthy lifestyle, and coronary disease. Studying over 55,000 men and women and evaluating their genetic risk from more than 50 gene snippets that are related to coronary disease, the researchers also looked at four healthy lifestyle factors: no smoking, no obesity, physical activity at least once a week, and eating healthfully (i.e., fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and dairy and less processed meats, red meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, unhealthy fats and sodium). The study end points were heart attack, coronary bypass surgery, or death from heart disease. The researchers found that there was 46 percent lower risk of disease for those in the high genetic risk group when healthy lifestyle factors were present. They concluded that “within any genetic risk category, adherence to a healthy lifestyle was associated with a significantly decreased risk of clinical coronary events.”

This study tells me that even if we didn’t choose our parents carefully we can modify our environment to push the odds in our favor. Each year, more than 370,000 people die from
The Joy of Traveling

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Ever since high school I have found traveling an exhilarating experience, when my parents took me and my sister to New York. Even today, I can envision the excitement of the city. During college days at Florida State University in Tallahassee, we fled the town at least once a term for Atlanta or New York, where I saw the premieres of some of Steven Sondheim’s musicals and some of James Levine’s early opera production. Joyful times.

I didn’t make it to Europe until 1985 when I accompanied the School of Music choir to France and Belgium. I’ll never forget the dearkment from that jet and entering the terminal where I knew I had found a special place. I not only made new friends, such as Pat and Jack Sartain, but delighted in experiencing the delicious food and great coffee-something I had never had before. And a half carafe of wine for two francs—about fifty cents! Incredible. Whenever I could since then I have escaped to France in the company of my dear friend, Clay Duggan. One strong memory is our time in Aix-en-Chappell, a marvelously beautiful place in a wondrously beautiful country.

Retirement from the School of Music faculty at Georgia State four years ago enabled me to indulge my love of travel more consistently. That first Christmas we met up in Paris for Christmas—Clay had taken a teaching job in Casablanca—then took the fast train to Nice for New Year’s. Most years we end up spending some time in Paris (”a moveable feast” as Hemingway called it). I have always had a strangely moving affinity for Paris, something that has proved difficult to explain, no matter how many times I visit. I always tear up at the end of watching Casablanca when Rick assures Elsa at the end, “we’ll always have Paris.”

Now Paris seems like a welcoming old friend each time I visit there, almost as comfortable as my life here in Atlanta. Not long ago we made it to Scandinavia—Copenhagen and Oslo—which proved refreshing and elegant. What struck both of us the most was the enviable mass transportation systems, where you could go nearly everywhere in town on a bus or a subway and with ease. The people were uniformly welcoming and the food was enjoyable, though rather expensive. Notable here was the impressive Oslo opera house with its flaring sides and dramatic approach. The summer palace in Stockholm was impressive with its thoroughly preserved eighteenth-century theater.

Last summer we made it to Austria, Prague, and Germany. Austria remains the fairy-tale city it always was. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the city drew in upon itself and became a virtual museum, which I found enchanting. It’s not very large and easy to maneuver around, with its monumental buildings and countless cafés. Prague continues to be a tourist magnet as well with its beckoning square and friendly atmosphere. Berlin is a different experience as following the Second War Berlin had to reinvent itself and become a twentieth-century city, which it has done very successfully. It still impresses with its shiny brightness and straddling the past and the present.

Finally, I have been to England a number of times, once with the Georgia State choir, where we sang in a number of churches. Other times Clay and I have entrained to Edenborough from London for the summer music festive. This Christmas we are meeting in London and staying with my niece in her apartment for a very British Christmas. Bon voyage!
Senior Kashif Molwani was named a Marshall Scholar finalist and a Schwartzman Scholar semi-finalist. The Marshall is widely recognized as one of the most prestigious and competitive scholarships awarded to American undergraduates and supports one to two years of graduate study at any university in the United Kingdom. The esteemed Schwarzman Scholars Program supports one year of graduate study at Tsinghua University in China. Molwani, a finance major, is involved on campus serving as both the president of the Ascend Pan-Asian Leaders and Beta Gamma Sigma National Honor Society. He also serves as the recruitment chair for Panthers on Wall Street, and his outstanding commitment to community service has included serving as one of four in-reach ambassadors for the Ismaili Professionals Network helping 15 million people around the globe connect with each other. Molwani was also the recipient of around $108,000 in scholarship funding from the Coca Cola Global Ambassador Scholarship, John Dyer First-Generation Finance Scholarship, Watson and Brown Foundation Scholarship and the Nita Robinson Scholarship.

Kalif Robinson, a senior studying economics with a minor in Arabic, is one of 30 undergraduate students from across the United States selected to receive the prestigious Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Graduate Fellowship. Robinson is a past Gilman Scholar and Rangel Scholar. The Rangel Fellowship covers up to $47,500 annually towards tuition, room, board, books and mandatory fees for the completion of two-year master’s degrees. “I am so honored; this is a surreal feeling to be named a Rangel Fellow. This experience has made me reflect on all of the pieces of my story that have added up to this moment. From taking Latin in high school, to living in the Global Living community my freshman and sophomore years to serving as a cultural competency ambassador—all of these experiences have gotten me to this accomplishment,” said Robinson, a first-generation college student.

Ten freshman entered the Honors College this fall as Presidential Scholars. The Presidential Scholarship is among the top awards an incoming Georgia State student can receive. In addition to covering full tuition, fees and on-campus housing for four years, it provides stipends for living expenses and study-abroad programs. Feature stories on each of the Presidential Scholars can be found at honors.gsu.edu. As you read about each of the recipients, you will see that they earned the Presidential Scholarship with more than just good grades and test scores. Their diverse interests, independent ideas and dedication to service are great assets with the potential to make a real impact—not only on Georgia State’s campus but throughout the Atlanta community.

SAVE THE DATE!
Authors Series with Jonathan Todres, March 1 at 11:00 a.m.


Peter Rabbit, Harry Potter and other children’s literature give messages to children about their own rights under the law. Professor Todres will discuss questions of child well-being by examining human rights law and children’s literature. Join us for an enlightening examination of law, literary theory, and human rights education. The talk will be held in the Georgia State College of Law, Room 345, 85 Park Place NE, Atlanta, GA 30303.

The Authors Series features Georgia State faculty writers and is sponsored by the University Library and the Emeriti Association.
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coronary disease and 735,000 people in the U.S. will have a heart attack; anything we can do to lower those numbers is worth it.

We can eat more fruits and vegetables, include whole grain foods, eat more seafood, and eat less processed meats, sugar, and salt. We can be active every day, work to manage stress, and quit smoking. It doesn’t have to be complicated, you can take control of your health.

Chris Rosenbloom, Ph.D., RDN, is a nutrition professor emerita and a registered dietitian nutritionist. She taught in the Georgia State Department of Nutrition for 30 years. Currently, she consults with organizations, industry, and trade groups on food and nutrition issues. Her book, *Food and Fitness After 50* (with co-author Bob Murray) will be published in 2017 by Eatright Press of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. For more information, visit her website at chrisrosenbloom.com.
**2017 Upcoming Events**

**FEBRUARY**

**Valentine’s Day Luncheon**  
Friday, Feb. 10 • 11:30 a.m.  
Rialto Center for the Arts  
80 Forsyth St NW, Atlanta, GA 30303

With Valentine's Day comes Georgia State’s traditional gift of the Valentine’s Day luncheon for members. Each year the university treats us to a reception where we meet friends, former colleagues, current deans and other administrators. This time of fellowship and catching up is followed by an elegant lunch on beautifully decorated tables and includes an update on developments at the university. To RSVP, please visit http://emeriti.gsu.edu/2017valentines.

**2017 Economic Forecasting Conference:**  
**Trumpism Meets Real Estate Reality**  
Wednesday, Feb. 22 • 8 a.m.  
GSU Student Center East Building  
Speaker’s Auditorium  
55 Gilmer Street SE, Atlanta, GA 30303

Rajeev Dhawan, director of Georgia State’s Economic Forecasting Center, will deliver his annual keynote presentation on the economic outlook of the United States, Georgia and the Atlanta metro region for 2017. He will discuss, in particular, the implications for residential and commercial real estate in the Atlanta metro region. Douglas Duncan, senior vice president and chief economist at Fannie Mae, will speak about national housing trends followed by John Hunt (president of MarketNSight and ViaSearch Inc.) and Frank Norton Jr. (CEO and chairman of Norton Holdings), who will speak on local housing issues. A light lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m. To RSVP, please visit http://emeriti.gsu.edu/2017forecast.

**APRIL**

**Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park Tour**  
Thursday, Apr. 20 • 10 a.m.  
900 Kennesaw Mountain Dr., Kennesaw, GA 30188

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is a 2,965-acre site that preserves a Civil War battleground of the Atlanta Campaign. Opposing forces maneuvered and fought here from June 19, 1864 until July 2, 1864. Although most famous as a Civil War battlefield, Kennesaw Mountain has a much richer story. The tour will be guided by Georgia State alumni Jay Haney. Invitation to follow in March; additional details will be posted to www.emeriti.gsu.edu.

**HOLIDAY RECEPTION**

More than 50 members of the Emeriti Association attended the annual holiday reception at Canterbury Court in December. The 2017 reception is scheduled tentatively for December 3.

**ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM**

**Cruise the Face of Europe**  
April 10-18, 2017  
Glide through thousands of years of European history as you travel the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers from Amsterdam to Budapest.

**London Immersion**  
August 9-17, 2017  
From a convenient base in the heart of the sophisticated borough of Kensington and Chelsea, join in this journey across the pond for a seven-night adventure in London.

**In a Tuscan Villa**  
September 5-13, 2017  
Toast to Tuscany, a region cherished the world over for its breathtaking natural beauty, magnificent Renaissance art, superb cuisine, delectable wines and rich cultural heritage.

**Dutch Waterways**  
April 10-18, 2017  
Experience the beauty, history and culture of Holland and Belgium on a unique river cruise.

**The Georgia State Alumni Association welcomes emeriti to join in on alumni travel programs. A number of European trips are scheduled this year. For more information, visit www.pantheralumni.com and click on the link for “Alumni Travel.”**
RECAP: AUTHOR SERIES
Anne Page Mosby, Librarian Associate Professor Emerita, University Library
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HARVEY NEWMAN
Andrew Young and the Making of Modern Atlanta

A
n enthusiastic audience of more than 80 people filled the University Library Special Collections and Archives space on November 16, 2016, to hear Professor Emeritus Harvey Newman discuss Andrew Young and the Making of Modern Atlanta, the book he co-authored with Andrew Young and his daughter, Andrea Young. Newman elaborated on the “Atlanta Way,” the decades-long process that changed a sleepy southern town into an impressive international city through relationship and coalition building among local government, business and community leaders. Andrew Young calls this action of public-private partnerships “public-purpose capitalism” that benefits all involved. Examples include the city’s hosting of the 1996 Olympics and the inclusion of minorities and women in city contracts under Mayor Maynard Jackson.

So many change-makers—Martin Luther King, Jr., Daddy King, William Hartsfield, John Wesley Dobbs, Ivan Allen, Robert Woodruff, Herman Russell, and more—are gone. However, many other “voices of Atlanta” were interviewed by the authors to document the re-structuring of opportunity in politics, the rise of minority businesses, transportation, communication, education and creative activity that continues to form Atlanta as a modern metropolis. Emma Darnell, the first woman to head a city cabinet agency, summed-up what the Atlanta Way is in her interview when she said that Atlanta has “an intangible something here that basically is something spiritual,” something that attracts people from far and wide, symbolized, especially, by the grave of Martin Luther King, Jr. on Auburn Avenue.

A key component of this “intangible something” is the practice of mentoring leaders, thus transmitting the culture of tolerance, inclusion and creative problem-solving. One chain of mentoring was from Chief Herbert Jenkins, the city’s long-time white police chief, to Chief Morris Redding, a white officer with civil rights ties, to Beverly Harvard, the first African-American female police chief of a major city. Alex Si-chi Wan, the first Asian-American member of the Atlanta City Council thinks of dreaming and thinking big and bold and “not being afraid to hope for things” when he considers the Atlanta Way. While poverty is still a very challenging issue to address, Stacey Abrams, minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives, says: “We have to lift up every member of our society and we have to do it together and harness our energies. We also have to recognize that we have creativity and a vision that can transform the South and, then, transform the nation.” This book reveals Atlanta as a model for other cities that can also develop a culture of tolerance and inclusion, building Dr. King’s “Beloved Community,” celebrating diversity in all forms.

RECAP: TOUR OF HARTSFIELD-JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
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n Sept. 7, 2016, fourteen members of the GSU Emeriti Association and their guests participated in a tour of Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Though all of us have used the airport for travel, few of us have seen “behind-the-scenes” operation of the airport. Our first stop was the E-tower over Concourse E, which involved a climb of more than 90 stairs. While not the main control tower operated by the FAA, operators in the E-tower control the planes’ movements on the ramps between the runways and the gates—both coming and going—and the planes’ boarding and unboarding services while at the gates adhering to strict time schedules. After the E-tower, we took a bus tour around the complete perimeter of the airport. In addition to its sheer size, the massive degree to which it has been constructed using fill dirt was evident. In particular, Stogner Hill, on which is located the airport’s radar facility, is completely man-made. We all climbed 50 feet up the hill for a panoramic view of the airport with planes continuously taking off and landing. Many of us stayed for a Chick-fil-A lunch. A future tour of the airport will take us behind the scenes in the customs area of the International Terminal.