



Annual Report

2025-2026

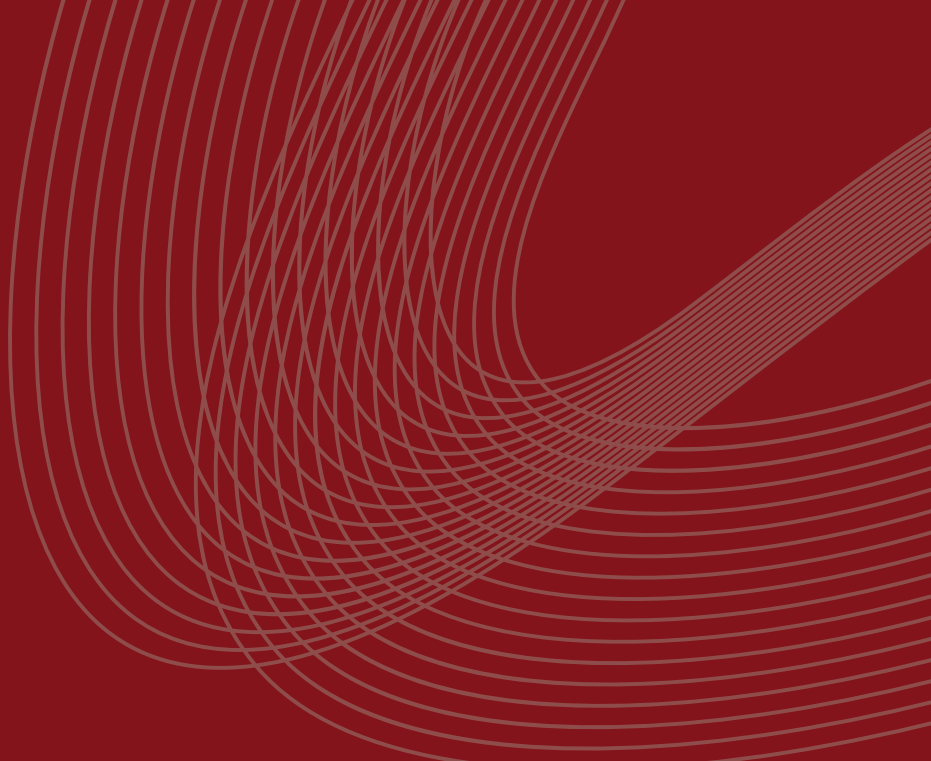


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ABOUT THE GEORGIA GERONTOLOGY SOCIETY

About

Since 1955, the Georgia Gerontology Society, Incorporated (GGS) has been a tradition for professionals in aging as a membership organization of people with a common interest in the field of aging. GGS is the largest state organization of multidisciplinary professionals in the field of aging.

Through collaborations, GGS gives voice and guidance to aging issues at the state and national levels.

By providing quality education and training opportunities, GGS enhances professional and personal development. GGS supports students pursuing careers in gerontology through networking, mentoring, and scholarships.

Board of Directors

GGS has a Board of Directors that directs the business of the organization. The GGS board is elected by the membership and comprises the officers, past president, sections and chapter representatives, if applicable, and members at large.

Mission

GGS is a statewide multidisciplinary professional network that educates, serves, and advocates for older adults and their families.

Vision

GGS will be the principal network of educators, professionals, and businesses that serve older adults in Georgia.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

PERIOD OF REPORT: AUGUST 1, 2025 - JULY 16, 2026

Income

Annual Conference	\$41,714.01
Scholarship Fund	\$1,791.00
Membership Dues	\$6,337.33
Other Income	\$361.26
Total Income	\$50,203.60

Expenses

Annual Conference	
Hotel Charges	\$51,975.64
Deposits/Payments Made	(\$66,993.44)
Hotel Credit/Refund	(\$15,017.80)
Payroll Expenses	\$0.00
Consulting Fees	\$24,226.26
Administration	\$3,707.04
Committee Expenses	\$1,250.00
Community Foundation Admin	\$5,872.90
Total Expenses	\$25,795.74

Community Foundation Fund* **\$414,946.46**

*The Community Foundation Fund is used exclusively for scholarships

**Available assets include checking/savings accounts, money market accounts, PayPal, future conference deposits, and Community Foundation assets

***Following final reconciliation of the 2025 Annual Conference with Château Élan, GGS received a \$15,017.80 credit/refund because deposits and payments exceeded the final hotel charges. This credit reduced conference expenses reflected in the reporting period.

2025-2026

A YEAR IN REVIEW

MEMBERSHIP

Individual Memberships

General: 50

Student: 27

Lifetime: 19

Retiree: 5

Organizational Memberships

For-Profit Organizations: 1

Non-Profit/Governmental Organization: 12

Membership Under an Organization: 34

Total Memberships: 148



COMMITTEE WORK

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY

In In 2025-2026, the Advocacy and Public Policy committee continued to support the Georgia Council on Aging GCOA and Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly (Co-Age). Though the work of the committee did not progress as expected due to a vacancy in the chair position, board members engaged in the Co-Age planning process and collaborated with Co-Age leadership to advance critical policy priorities affecting older Georgians. In 2026, the policy priorities included the following:

1. Perennial Budget Request: Funding for Non-Medicaid Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS): Co-Age requested increased state funding for non-Medicaid HCBS that help older adults remain at home, including services like meals, transportation, and personal care. In 2026, Co-Age focused especially on programs affected by federal funding reductions and requested state support to enable those programs to continue to be provided to Georgia's older adults.
2. Funding for Behavioral Health Coaches in Affordable Housing: Co-Age sought \$510,000 in FY 2027 funding for three statewide behavioral health coaching programs. Behavioral Health Coaching, developed by the Atlanta Regional Commission, aims to reduce eviction risk among older adults and people with disabilities residing in publicly subsidized housing through individualized coaching services that link residents with unmet behavioral health needs to treatment and supportive services.

AWARDS

GGs annually acknowledges the outstanding achievements of individuals in the fields of gerontology and aging through the presentation of awards during its annual meeting and conference. GGS established an early tradition of recognizing significant achievements and contributions to the field of aging and, since 1966, has included an awards ceremony as a highlight during the annual meeting.

Over time, GGS awards have been renamed for individuals who have been significant to GGS, gerontology, and other aging fields in the state of Georgia. In 2025, as part of GGS's ongoing efforts to ensure its awards remain inclusive and meaningful to all members of the community, the awards committee decided to return to the GGS tradition of using award names that describe the nature and purpose of each award. This change was made with deep respect for the GGS legacies after whom the awards were previously named, and their contributions continue to be honored through the values embodied in each award. The impact of these forebearers remains foundational, and their influence is acknowledged through efforts to ensure the awards are accessible and relatable to all members.

The awards include:

The GGS Legacy Award

The Care Partner Luminary Award

The Change Agent Award

The Direct Impact Award

The Distinguished Professional in Aging Award

The Educator Aurora Award

The Pioneer in Positive Aging Award

The Public Service Champion for Aging Award

Certificate of Merit

To read eligibility and criteria for the awards, visit the awards page of the GGS website.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Committee coordinates internal and external communications for GGS, with oversight of the Society's website, social media, newsletters, email communications, and public relations efforts. The committee promotes membership, raises awareness of aging-related issues, supports Society initiatives, preserves the history of GGS, and contributes to the publication of the Annual Report.

During the past year, the committee focused on strengthening GGS's communications and expanding member engagement. A comprehensive website content audit was initiated and will continue to improve the accuracy, organization, usability, and accessibility of the website, with updates continuing throughout the year. The committee launched quarterly newsletters, increased targeted email communications, and maintained an active social media presence to promote educational programs, conference registration, scholarship opportunities, advocacy efforts, member accomplishments, and Society news.

The committee also developed communication templates, forms, and resources to improve consistency and efficiency across committees. These efforts enhanced communication with members and partners while increasing the visibility of GGS and its mission throughout Georgia.

DEVELOPMENT

The development committee coordinates fundraising activities and resource development and assists with the implementation of strategic plan goals and objectives approved by the board of directors. The development committee is the lifeblood of GGS. By ensuring GGS' economic growth and seizing new opportunities for development, the committee leads efforts to provide for the longevity of GGS.

During the 2025-2026 year, the development committee could not meet regularly or advance initiatives as expected due to a vacancy in the committee chair position. However, members of other committees and the board at large pursued development efforts to support the annual conference, including applying for grant funding and securing donations. Efforts are currently underway to identify and appoint a new chair to ensure the committee can resume its critical work and make meaningful progress moving forward.

ACCESS AND BELONGING

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This year, the executive committee continued to lead the work of the board with support from two independent contractors, a virtual assistant and a bookkeeper. This structure, which was established in 2024, is a departure from GGS's previous structure, under which an executive director helped to coordinate much of the business and many activities of the board. The executive committee has continued to support the board in navigating and adapting to this new structure.

The executive committee also sought to expand the impact of GGS through several new initiatives, including hosting a State of Aging Forum in partnership with CoAge. The forum will occur ahead of the annual conference opening and focus on opportunities for collaboration under the direction of a multi-sector plan on aging. The event is sponsored in part by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and approximately 200 participants are scheduled to attend. Additionally, the immediate past president worked with the Nominating Committee to identify new leaders and partnerships to strengthen GGS and its impact in the state. The committee undertook a process to collaboratively consider and conduct outreach to individuals and sectors not represented in GGS, advancing efforts to expand and sustain GGS's work.

This year, the president also continued efforts to hold board members accountable and ensure active participation in board meetings and on committees.

MEMBERSHIP

GGG is a membership-based organization. The membership committee is the steward of GGS's most precious asset: its membership. The committee promotes the benefits of GGS membership, recruits new and renewed memberships, and seeks input from members regarding opportunities to make GGS membership more rewarding.

NOMINATING

GGG is led by a 30-member board of directors. The nominating committee ensures that the GGS board comprises bright, resourceful, and committed leaders.

The committee recruits GGS members to serve in the positions of officers, board members, and the next nominating committee. The committee employs surveys to identify gaps in leadership and recruits potential board members who offer professional, geographic, and identity diversity.

This year's committee was chaired by immediate past president Aimee Stowe, and members were Andrew Hales, Jennifer Craft Morgan, Melanie McNeil, Kim McRae, and Natasha Patrick.

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

The research, education, and training (RET) committee promotes professional development, expands awareness of issues important in gerontology and aging, and supports research beneficial to older adults.

In January 2026, the RET Committee hosted a webinar with over 40 registrations on the "Live Well Gardens" at Forsyth County Senior Services and . The speaker shared how successful partnerships, grant funds, and the contributions of older adults yielded a thriving outdoor garden space. In April 2026, the RET Committee hosted a second webinar with over 20 registrations on Dementia Friends with the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services. This session brought together attendees to learn how to create dementia-friendly communities and improve the lives of people living with dementia.

The RET Committee has one more webinar scheduled for August 17th from 11-12pm that will take a deep dive into the "Future of Senior Centers" and discuss how things may change for the next generation of seniors. This panel style webinar will bring together three aging professionals to speak on their experience and expertise and answer audience questions.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The scholarship fund committee oversees the development and distribution of the scholarship fund based on criteria approved by the GGS board of directors. Scholarship funds are administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, Inc.

Currently, GGS offers three annual scholarships: the Robert P. Wray undergraduate scholarship, the Virginia M. Smyth graduate scholarship, and the Lois Ricci scholarship for older adults.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

The annual conference requires year-round planning. Conference committees exist to ensure GGS offers quality sessions at the conference, gains financial support for the conference through sponsorships, and delivers a welcoming and engaging conference experience. As a professional network that values education, professional development, and mentoring future generations of professionals in the fields of aging and gerontology, the annual conference serves as the centerpiece of GGS's activities.

2025 CONFERENCE

GGS hosted its 70th annual conference at Chateau Elan in Braselton, Georgia, from July 14-16, 2025. The conference theme was "70 Years of Service: Empowering Professionals and Championing Aging." XX attendees participated in the event, which included 31 sessions. The silent auction raised \$XX for the scholarship fund.

Sponsors included: Reckon Branding, Georgia Health Initiative, Northwest Georgia Area Agency on Aging, AARP Georgia, Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia Area Agency on Aging, Georgia State University Gerontology Institute, Amramp Accessibility of Georgia, Diversified Resources, Food Fitness First, Inc., Love Feeds, Inc., and Southern Georgia Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging.

Exhibitors: Blue Summit Hospice & Palliative Care, CenterWell Senior Primary Care, CNA Virtual Skills Evaluation Program, Georgia Council on Aging, Georgia Senior Living Association, Georgia Senior Medicare Patrol, Greenleaf Behavioral Health Hospital, High Museum of Art

2026 Conference

Lanier Islands Resort in Buford, Georgia, will host the 2026 conference July 27-29th. The conference will offer XX sessions for some 150 attendees scheduled to participate. The theme is: "The Ripple Effect: Small actions. Big Impact. Major Change."

Thank you to our sponsors: Georgia Health Initiative, Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia Area Agency on Aging, Georgia State University Gerontology Institute, Food Fitness First, Inc., Legacy Link Area Agency on Aging, Coastal Care-Net, GSU Aging Well for Everyone Neuropsychology Lab, and Georgia Senior Medicare Patrol.

2025-2026 RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING WEBINAR OFFERINGS

Title: Connection with the Great Outdoors

Presenter: Courtney Fleming, Communications Coordinator, Forsyth Senior Services

Description: Since 2017, the Live Well Gardens at Sexton Hall has served as a model community gardens program. In this webinar, Courtney discussed how successful partnerships, grant funds, and the contributions of older adults yielded a thriving outdoor garden space. Attendees also considered the opportunities and challenges of replicating Live Well Gardens in their own communities.

Registrations: 41

Title: Dementia Friends Georgia

Presenter: Francis Yelton

Description: Dementia Friends is a social action movement that aims to improve society's understanding of dementia. In this webinar, Francis discussed five key messages about dementia, what it is like to live with dementia, and practical actions individuals can take to support people affected by dementia.

Registrations: 23

GGs AWARDS

2025 Winners

The **Distinguished Professional in Aging Award** is given to an outstanding professional in gerontology with a minimum of 15 years of service. The award was first given in 1970 as the Professional Award and was renamed in honor of Elsie Alvis in 1980. This designation honors a professional who embodies the qualities of Elsie Avis, an early GGS member who received the Individual Award in 1966, the first year GGS made awards. Elsie served as the Director of the Governor's Commission on Aging, later the State Commission on Aging, beginning in 1960. She served well past the age of 70 and directed a statewide study to develop Georgia's Story of Her Aging, published as the official Georgia report to the 1961 White House Conference on Aging.

2025 Recipient: Eve Anthony

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2025 Recipient: Eve Anthony

The **Pioneer Award** is given to an older individual in Georgia who exemplifies a positive role model of outstanding achievement in the field of aging. The award was presented to Dr. John Tyler Mauldin in 1967 as the First Annual Outstanding Achievement Award and was renamed to honor its first recipient the following year before it was again renamed in 2025. Dr. Mauldin, a prominent Atlanta surgeon and early GGS activist, was appointed in 1959 to chair the newly established Governor's Commission on Aging, later the State Commission. He directed the planning of Georgia's participation in the 1961 White House Conference on Aging.

2025 Recipient: Vicky Pilgrim

The **Care Partner Luminary Award**, established in 2025, recognizes a current or former care partner to an older adult who has shone as a beacon to other care partners.

2025 Recipient: Kim McRae

The **GGS Legacy Award**, established in 2025, recognizes a member of the Georgia Gerontology Society who has shown exceptional dedication and service to the organization. This award honors an individual whose contributions, leadership, and efforts have significantly advanced GGS' mission and vision, as well as its continued success and endurance throughout its 70 years.

2025 Recipient: Amanda James

The **Educator Aurora Award**, established in 1993 is given to an individual with demonstrated ability to educate para-professionals, professionals, and other persons working with older adults; proven leadership and vision in gerontology with the development and expansion educational programs and services; and recognized ability to touch as well as to teach learners. The award was formerly named for Marietta Suhart, Gerontology Specialist at the University of Georgia Continuing Education Program and long-time GGS board member, hardworking committee member, and enthusiastic educator who fit the description of the award established in her name.

2025 Recipient: Jennifer Craft Morgan

The **Direct Impact Award** is presented to the person who has shown excellence in the profession of care management and who exhibits leadership in the profession by providing exceptional direct services, training fellow care managers, and advocating for improvements in care management. The award was established in 1998 and first presented in 1999 in memory of Dan Hickman, who was the Community Care Services Program Manager with the Georgia Division of Aging Services. He helped to define care management as a profession in Georgia, and he exhibited great spirit, zest, and integrity in support of the profession.

2025 Recipient: Angela Chavous

The **Change Agent Award**, established in 2017, is awarded to an individual who is a driving force in creating change that improves the lives of older adults in Georgia. The award was formerly named for Kay Hind, who provided 49 years of exemplary service to Georgia's aging population. Her vision, persistence, patience, expertise, advocacy, and collaborations cemented the foundation for change in southwest Georgia and beyond.

2025 Recipient: William Johnson

GGS SCHOLARSHIPS

GGS provides scholarship opportunities to outstanding graduate and undergraduate students who are committed to pursuing a career in the field of aging.

GGS awards two scholarships each year to promote students' interest in aging-related issues and professional development in gerontology. The Robert P. Wray Scholarship of up to \$8,500 is awarded to one undergraduate student, and the Virginia M. Smyth Scholarship of up to \$10,000 is awarded to one graduate student.

In addition to student scholarships, one older adult is awarded the Lois Ricci Scholarship for Older Adults, which allows GGS to acknowledge and celebrate their dedication and contribution to aging-related services.

The Robert P. Wray Undergraduate Scholarship

Robert P. Wray was an active GGS member, a founder of numerous service programs in Pennsylvania and Georgia, and the first director of the University of Georgia's Gerontology Center. He was first posthumously honored in 1989 through the creation of the Wray Legislative Award. However, GGS members quickly realized that renaming the annual gerontology scholarship award after him would better honor his memory.

2026 Recipient: Robert (Eli) McConnell

Virginia M. Smyth Graduate Scholarship

The Virginia M. Smyth Scholarship is presented annually to offer financial support to persons seeking to advance their careers in aging-related studies. The fund, established in 1998, provides scholarships for graduate study in gerontology and other aging-related fields and promotes leadership development in aging to support a broad knowledge base, strong organizational skills, and a vision for the future. The scholarship was first awarded in 2004 and named for Virginia Smyth, a founding member of GGS and the spirit behind the establishment and endowment of the GGS Scholarship Fund.

2026 Recipient: Kexin (Carrie) Ma

Lois Ricci Scholarship for Older Adults

As a network that educates, serves, and advocates for older adults and their families, GGS sponsors an annual gerontology scholarship award program for older adults. This program provides a scholarship opportunity to attend the GGS Annual Conference for older adults in Georgia. It was first awarded in 2018 and was renamed in 2023 to honor the memory of Lois Ricci, a past president and lifelong advocate for older adults. By sponsoring this award, we aim to promote continued interest and involvement in aging-related issues across the lifespan.

2026 Recipient: Cherry Bowen

Leadership: GGS Officers, Board Members at Large, and Nominating Committee

Terms of Office

Executive Committee Officers

One year, beginning at the annual meeting and ending at the next annual meeting. Officers may serve up to two consecutive terms.

Members at Large

Three years, beginning October 1 of the year of election and ending on September 30 of the third year. Members at large may serve up to two consecutive terms.

2024-2025

Executive Committee

August 24, 2024-July 16, 2025

Temitope Walker, President

Shawn Taylor, Vice President

Alice Boughrum, Secretary

Nancy Pitra, Treasurer

Aimee Stowe, Immediate Past President

Members at Large

October 1, 2022-September 30, 2025

Aisha Adkins (resigned January 14, 2025)

Alima Anderson

Carol Jacobs

Shawanda Jackson (filled a vacant position October 1, 2024)

Kay McCurdy (filled a vacant position October 1, 2024)

Tamala Williams (filled a vacant position October 1, 2024; resigned March 2, 2025)

October 1, 2023-September 30, 2026

Mariama Battle Chisolm

Erin Beasley
Susie Fussell
Bryan Hay
Kimberly Mathis
Anna Thomas (resigned May 22, 2025)
April-Spring Wood
Michelle Zelaya

October 1, 2024-September 30, 2027

Scott Courson
Ajene Hall
Carrie Harris
Yulisa Hernandez
Yolanda Mendoza-Miller
Megan Passineau
Audrey Price
Amy Riedesel
Nicola Williams
Tori Windsor-Foisy
Jessica Zagarella

Nominating Committee

Aimee Stowe, Chair
Babs Hall (resigned February 1, 2025)
Victoria Helmly
Megan Stadnisky (appointed January 10, 2025)
April-Spring Wood

2025-2026

Executive Committee

Temitope Walker, President

Shawn Taylor, Vice President

Alice Boughrum, Secretary

Nancy Pitra, Treasurer (resigned April 18, 2025)

Susan Morgan, Treasurer (February 9, 2026)

Aimee Stowe, Immediate Past President

Members at Large

October 1, 2023-September 30, 2026

Mariama Chisolm

Erin Beasley (resigned April 2026)

Susie Fussell

Bryan Hay

Kimberly Mathis

Anna Thomas (resigned May 22, 2025)

April-Spring Wood

Michelle Zelaya (dismissed October 4, 2025)

October 1, 2024-September 30, 2027

Scott Courson

Ajene Hall

Carrie Harris

Yulisa Hernandez

Yolanda Mendoza-Miller

Megan Passineau

Audrey Price

Amy Riedesel (resigned XX)

Nicola Williams

Tori Windsor-Foisy

Jessica Zagarella

October 1, 2025-September 30, 2028

Alima Anderson
Christina (Tina) Cifuentes
Libby Dunahoo (resigned January 2026)
Shawanda Jackson
Carol Jacobs
Kelley Napier
Ladisa Onyiliogwu (resigned April 2026)
Emily Rogers
Donovan Stephens
Aimee Stowe

Nominating Committee

Jennifer Craft Morgan
Andrew Hale
Melanie McNeil
Kim McRae
Natasha Patrick

2026-2027

Executive Committee

Mariama Chisolm, President
Jessica Zagarella, Vice President
Shawnda Jackson, Secretary
Khadijah Griffin, Treasurer
Temitope Walker, Immediate Past President

Members at Large

October 1, 2024-September 30, 2027
Scott Courson
Ajene Hall
Carrie Harris
Yolanda Mendoza-Miller
Megan Passineau

Audrey Price
Amy Riedesel
Nicola Williams
Tori Windsor-Foisy
Jessica Zagarella

October 1, 2025-September 30, 2028

Alima Anderson
Christina (Tina) Cifuentes
Shawanda Jackson
Carol Jacobs
Kelley Napier
Ladisa Onyiliogwu
Emily Rogers
Donovan Stephens
Aimee Stowe

October 1, 2026-September 30, 2029

Morgan Alexander
Laurie Bryant
Renaë Jones
Catherine Kesterson
Sarah Kozicki
Charlotte Kay McCurdy
Megan Passineau
Nancy Y. Treaster

Nominating Committee

Employees and Independent Contractors

Administrative coordinator, contracted through Belay Solutions, May 2024-Present: Lisa Billingsley

Independent contractor for bookkeeping and website and membership database maintenance:
Amanda James