

Stockton Center on Successful Aging Receives \$25,000 Gift from Longtime Stockton Professor

Endowment Fund Honors Memory of Frances Leonilda Acerra Christopher

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Galloway Township, NJ – The Stockton Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA) recently received a \$25,000 endowment from longtime faculty member, Dr. Elizabeth Elmore, professor of Economics and Gerontology at Stockton. Dr. Elmore and her husband, Richard, established an endowment fund with the Stockton Foundation to support the activities of SCOSA. Dr. Elmore created the endowment in memory of her mother, Frances Leonilda Acerra Christopher.

Dr. Elmore's mother, affectionately known as "Babe," died peacefully on Jan. 5, 2015 while vacationing in Hawaii, less than three weeks before her 102nd birthday. Born into a first generation Italian-American family, she was one of 17 children raised in Long Branch, N.J. She lived a full, active life as a wife and mother, raising two daughters with her husband, Dominic, himself an Italian immigrant who came to the United States through Ellis Island. Her extended family was the focal point of her life, but after she was widowed at the age of 62, Babe joined her local Leisure Club and traveled often.

"Elizabeth's gift in memory of her remarkable mother is yet another expression of her steadfast support of gerontology instruction at Stockton that I've witnessed first-hand for over 30 years. She has always been there as an indispensable source of insight, hard work and moral support that sustained the gerontology program during times of limited resources, and that made the Stockton Center on Successful Aging a reality," said Dr. David Burdick, professor of Psychology and director of SCOSA.

Dr. Elmore joined the Stockton faculty in 1972, in the second cohort of faculty, as the third member of the Economics program. In 1977, she became involved in the establishment of Stockton's Gerontology topical concentration, which later became a supporting studies, then a certificate and now, a minor.

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She has served more than once as the coordinator of the Economics program and the Gerontology certificate, and has developed an “Economics of Aging” course in the area now called financial gerontology.

As a member of the K-12 Task Force of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), Dr. Elmore worked to establish the K-12 Book Award. Currently, she is an elected at-large member of the Executive Committee of the AGHE, and continues to serve on the K-12 Committee, the Public Policy Committee and the Business and Aging Committee. In spring 2015, she began a five-semester term as director of the Stockton Center for Economic & Financial Literacy.

The Stockton Center on Successful Aging promotes education, research and services to respond to local, regional and statewide needs related to population aging. The center’s core mission is to encourage older residents to “age successfully” through vital involvements and engagement in their community.

This is the second five-figure gift that SCOSA has received in the past year. Last May, the South Jersey Council on Issues of Aging also established an endowment in support of the center. To learn how you can support the endowment and other giving opportunities at Stockton, visit www.stockton.edu/give.

Photo Caption: Frances Leonilda Acerra Christopher, at age 101, and her daughter, Dr. Elizabeth Elmore, on a January 2014 trip to Hawaii. Photo Credit: Nathalie Walker for Oahu Publications’ Ola Magazine.

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