



# Smarter, Healthier Way to Go

*Maxwell's new research center was founded by Syracuse University alumnus, ad man, and later-life fitness enthusiast Sid Lerner, who views good health as a product of good policy, enhanced with good PR.*

## DATELINE MAXWELL

*The people and programs of Maxwell today*

**S**id Lerner is fed up with what he calls “suicide eating,” the gluttonous diets that lead to obesity, diabetes, and so many other health problems in the United States. Lerner points to statistics that predict one in three children will develop diabetes in their lifetime, while other data ties poor diets to heart disease and high blood pressure.

“Look how great it would be to prevent the whole darn thing with a regimen of saner eating,” said Lerner, a 1953 Syracuse University alumnus (English and advertising). “I think prevention is the only way out of the health crisis.”

Lerner is not a doctor, but he has nonetheless charged himself with the task of preventing chronic disease and improving public health. After a bout with high cholesterol in the early 2000s, Lerner, a marketing guru who helped create the “Please Don’t Squeeze the Charmin”

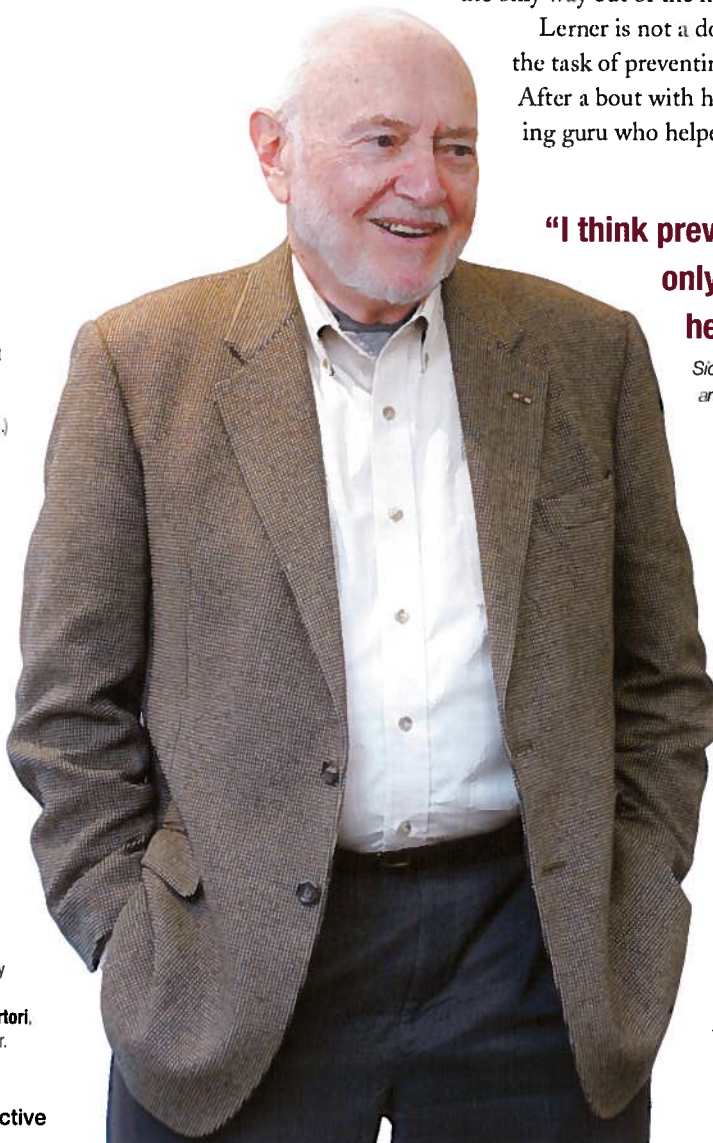
ad campaign, learned that the typical American consumes 15 percent more meat than recommended by the FDA and USDA. The discovery spurred Lerner to create, in 2003, the Healthy Mondays campaign,

which promotes Monday as the day to establish healthy habits for the rest of the week. The Healthy Mondays campaign has spread across the United States and taken root in more than 20 countries.

Now, Lerner wants to expand his vision of a healthy society by using research and science to guide public health policy and community health initiatives. Lerner and his wife Helaine turned to the Maxwell School, creating and funding the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion. In its inaugural year, it is directed by Tom Dennison, a professor of practice in public administration and international affairs who teaches and oversees Maxwell’s programs in health policy and management. He serves as advisor for the School’s certificate program in health services

**“I think prevention is the only way out of the health crisis.”**

*Sid Lerner, center founder and benefactor*



**Greg Duggan** is a current MPA student and former editor of the *Williston (Vt.) Observer* and *Charlotte (Vt.) Citizen*.

**Kathleen Haley** is a writer/editor in SU’s Office of Publications and a graduate of SU’s Newhouse School of Public Communications and College of Arts and Sciences.

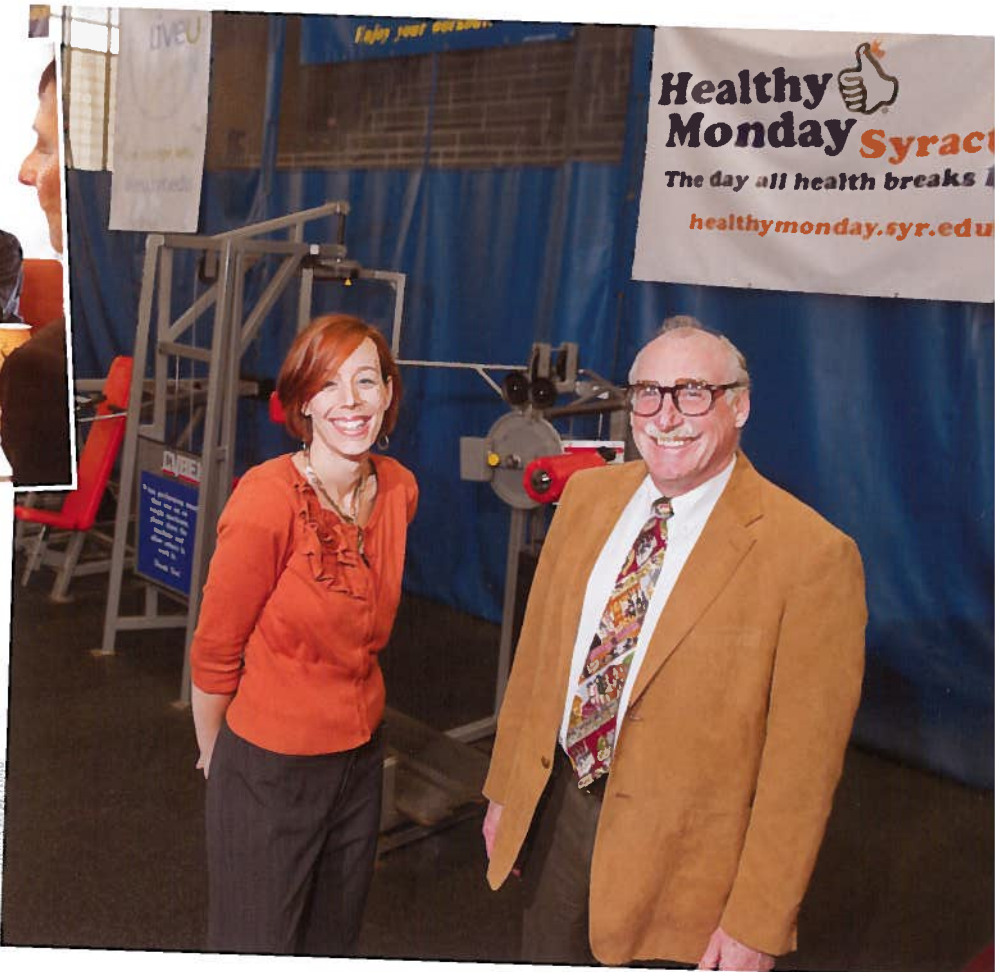
**Renée Gearhart Levy** is a freelance writer, specializing in higher education, based in Fayetteville, N.Y.

**Martin Walls** is a freelance writer, communications consultant, and author of three books of poems.

Miscellaneous photography courtesy of SU Photo and Imaging Center. **Steve Sartori**, manager and photographer.



Tom Dennison (far right) and Rebecca Bostwick, director and program director of the Lerner Center, in the University's Archbold Gym fitness center, where Healthy Mondays and other pilot programs are under way. Ultimately, such programs will be adapted to the city and surrounding community. Shown above is one of the student-facilitated community-needs forums being conducted by the Lerner Center.



management and policy and is associate director of the Central New York Master of Public Health (MPH) program, a graduate degree program conducted with SUNY Upstate Medical University.

Founded and funded by the Lerner Center, the new center will support research and academics in the field of public health. It will also reach out to the Central New York community to learn what types of public health programs can be supported and implemented in the region.

"The health promotion initiatives the Lerner Center is advancing are a part of a much larger national movement to begin to address the issues of chronic diseases," says Dennison.

With the center, Lerner is also funding a new, full-time faculty position, the Lerner Chair for Public Health Promotion. The chairholder is expected to join the center next academic year, and will share responsibilities with Dennison. The two will work with junior faculty and graduate students on public health research and oversee the combination of research, academics, and outreach meant to address public health on campus and in the community.

Lerner chose Maxwell as the home for the center largely because of the School's reputation as a top public policy institution, where theory and research translate into action. To help implement theory-informed community engagement at the Lerner Center, Dennison and the incoming chairholder are joined by Program Director Rebecca Bostwick (former deputy director for SU's Center for Health and Behavior) and four graduate assistants, helping with the center's work on public health. Students have already bought into the goal of uniting academics with action.

"Right now, medicine is more focused on curative measures, and preventive health and healthcare are taking a backseat to that," says Matt MacDougall, an MPH

### Maxwell School and Falk College Collaborate on Aging Studies

*New institute will consolidate research and training on age-related issues.*

A new Aging Studies Institute (ASI) will open this fall at SU as a collaborative initiative of the Maxwell School and SU's David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics.

The institute will build on 40 years of research and training by SU's Gerontology Center, assuming the center's commitment to community practice, research, and teaching; its tradition of collaborative partnerships; and a curriculum allowing students from any college at SU to pursue a concentration in aging. ASI's thematic areas will include age-based public policy and well-being; population aging; health and functioning; family dynamics, care work, and intergenerational support; and aging design, engineering, and technology. The new institute also houses the Center for Aging and Policy Studies, one of 14 centers funded through the National Institute on Aging's Demography and Economics of Aging Centers.

**Janet Wilmoth**, professor of sociology and director of the Gerontology Center, has been named ASI's first director. She is an authority on issues related to aging, health, and demographic trends. ASI will be home to the new Marjorie Cantor Endowed Professor in Aging (see page 9).



Janet Wilmoth

## Maxwell To Fill Six Endowed Posts

*National recruiting effort targeted on prestigious chairs and professorships.*

The Maxwell School is conducting searches to fill six endowed faculty positions, notable for not only their prestige but also the range of disciplines they encompass. "The scholars who fill these posts," says Dean James B. Steinberg, "will embody Maxwell's commitment to intellectual excellence and public engagement."

The six faculty posts are: Howard G. and S. Louise Phanstiel Chair for Strategic Management and Leadership;

Paul A. Volcker Chair in Behavioral Economics;

Louis A. Bantle Chair in Business and Government Policy;

Lerner Chair for Public Health Promotion;

Marjorie Cantor Professorship in Aging (in cooperation with SU's Falk College); and

Jay and Debe Moscowitz Chair in U.S.-Mexico Affairs.

When filled, these will join

another seven endowed faculty positions at Maxwell: the Moynihan Professor of Public Affairs, Sawyer Chair of Constitutional Law and Politics, Chapple Family Professor of Citizenship and Democracy, Montgomery-Gruber Professor of History, DellPlain Professor of Latin American Geography, Ford-Maxwell Professor of South Asian Studies, and Maxwell Advisory Board Professor.

## Maxwell Welcomes Robertson Fellows

**Laura Alexander** of Tamarac, Florida, and **Nathan Strand** of Gaithersburg, Maryland, are pursuing MPA/IR degrees as Maxwell's second set of Robertson Fellows. Both plan to pursue careers in the federal government.

Maxwell is one of only five schools selected by the Robertson Foundation for Government to participate in the fellowships, through which graduate students are encouraged to pursue federal careers in foreign policy, national security, and interna-



**Laura Alexander**



**Nathan Strand**

Florida graduate who served in the Peace Corps (2008-10) in Tanzania and worked for the American Horticultural Society and ServeNext.org. Strand, a Wesleyan University graduate, worked on public health and international development issues for Management Sciences for Health and for the University Research Company.

## London, Wilmoth Among Veterans Institute Fellows

Nine scholars from across the country have been named inaugural fellows of Syracuse University's new Institute for Veterans and Military Families. Among them are Maxwell's **Andrew London** and **Janet Wilmoth**, both professors of sociology.

London and Wilmoth research questions of veterans' life-course, families, welfare, health, aging, etc. They have collaborated on studies pertaining to military service, aging, and health.

The institute, founded in partnership with JPMorgan Chase, is the first national center in higher education focused on social, economic, education, and policy issues affecting veterans and their families post-service.

student and one of the inaugural Lerner Fellows. "That's really the goal of public health: to prevent disease."

Before diving into preventive policy and action, however, the Lerner Center is working to identify the public health needs to which it should ultimately commit its resources. Dennison and his staff are assessing what the community wants and needs. This fall they hosted five community forums to generate ideas for improving public health in Onondaga County. By targeting business executives, non-profit and healthcare leaders, parents, teens, teachers, and other members of the community, the Lerner Center hopes to let feedback guide upcoming work.

Meanwhile, pilot initiatives are under way on campus, where the Lerner Center has expanded the existing Healthy Mondays campaign by providing free fruit and classes at fitness facilities. Programs such as this will lead toward the center's larger focus: improving health across Onondaga County.

While the community forums will foster ideas for public health projects, several efforts are already in progress. The Lerner Center has funded depression screenings for Syracuse University's Faculty and Staff Assistance Program, educated local refugees about nutrition, and spoken with area restaurants about offering Meatless Monday menus.

As the Lerner Center's research efforts grow, the center will continue to draw on its founder's background, using creative marketing to spread the science behind healthy living. In Sid Lerner's larger vision, research is a baseline.

"[Research] doesn't always have a counterpart in promotion and education," Lerner says. "It would be great if we could get more of that happening."

—Greg Duggan



**NGO Leaders.** In September, the Moynihan Institute for Global Affairs led a five-day, interdisciplinary leadership program for "second-tier" and mid-level NGO executives who are preparing for succession to eventual top leadership positions. Maxwell's TNGO Initiative organized the event, which drew 16 NGO leaders from around the world. Shown here are (foreground, from left) Michelle Higelin, World YWCA; Inge Wallage, of Greenpeace International; Anna Shapoval, AIDS Foundation East-West; and Lindsay Coates, InterAction.