

# Leyden Academy

ON VITALITY AND AGEING

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Invitation for the public lecture:

Making longevity: technology, policy and ethics in US health care



by: Sharon Kaufman, PhD.

Professor of Medical Anthropology

Institute for Health & Aging

University of California

19-10-2010, lecture 16:00-18:00

Informal reception 18:00-19:00

Poortgebouw congreszaal, Rijnsburgerweg 10, Leiden

An explosion in the varieties of life-extending interventions for older persons is changing medical knowledge and societal expectations about longevity, 'normal' old age and the time for death. Cultural assumptions and expectations about growing older are partly shaped by a new form of ethics, constituted by the routines and institutions that comprise ordinary clinical care. To be distinguished from bioethics, with its emphasis on clinical decision-making in individual situations, this new form of ethics can be characterized as an *ethical field* because it is exceptionally diffuse. It is 'located' in and shaped by health care policies, standard technologies and clinical evidence. It emerges in what physicians understand as standard care and in what patients and families come to need and want.

Sharon Kaufman, PhD., is a medical anthropologist and is researching the ways in which life-extending medical procedures and technologies in late life shape knowledge and practices surrounding normal ageing, lifespan, family and obligation. She is the author of several books focusing on ageing:

- 2005 Kaufman, S. *A time to die: how American Hospitals Shape the End of Life*, New York: Scribner. Winner of the Millennium Book Award awarded by the Society for Medical Anthropologists of the American Anthropology Association.
- 1993 Kaufman, S. *The Healer's Tale: Transforming Medicine and Culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- 1989 Kaufman, S. *The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning in Late Life*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Please email us at [info@leydenacademy.nl](mailto:info@leydenacademy.nl) if you intend to attend this lecture (for logistic reasons). For questions or comments please email Dr. Jolanda Lindenberg, [lindenberg@leydenacademy.nl](mailto:lindenberg@leydenacademy.nl) or call 071-5240960.

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