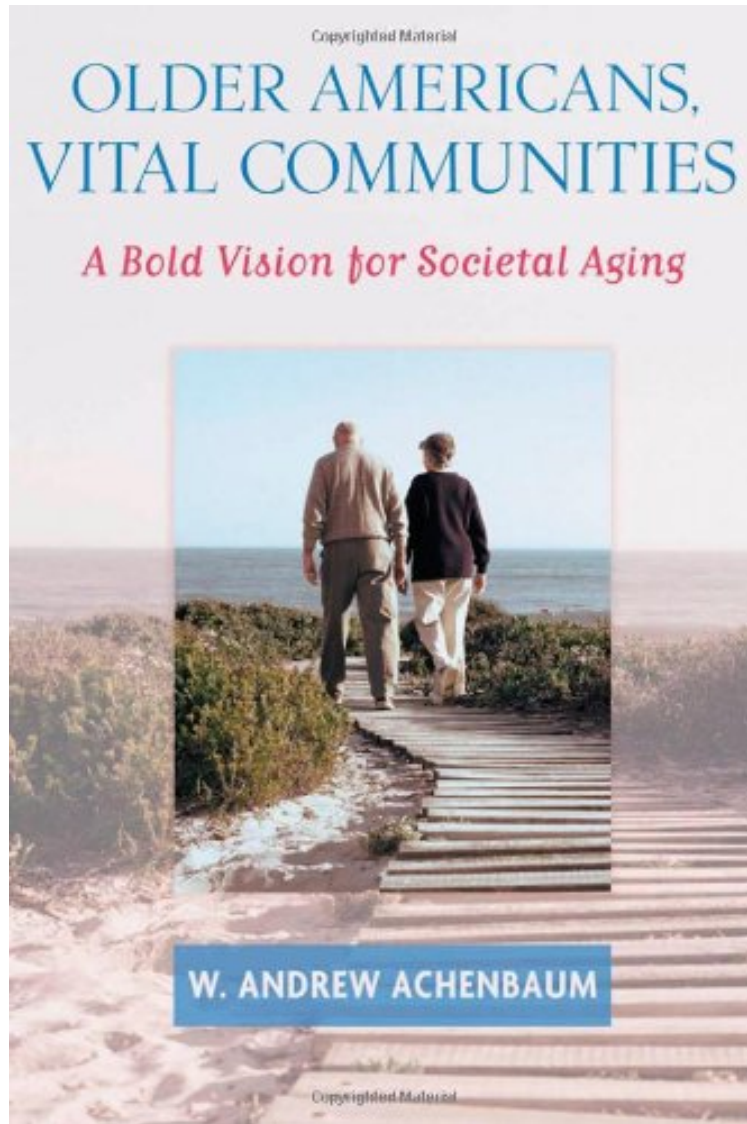


(Download) Older Americans, Vital Communities: A Bold Vision for Societal Aging

# Older Americans, Vital Communities: A Bold Vision for Societal Aging

W. Andrew Achenbaum

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This thought-provoking work grapples with the vast range of issues associated with the aging population and challenges people of all ages to think more boldly and more creatively about the relationship between older Americans and their communities. W. Andrew Achenbaum begins by exploring the demographics of our aging society and its effect on employment and markets, education, health care, religion, and political action. Drawing on history, literature, and philosophy, Achenbaum focuses on the way health care and increases in life expectancy have transformed late life from a phase characterized by illness, frailty, and debility to one of vitality, productivity, and spirituality. He shows how this transformation of aging is beginning to be felt in programs and policies for aging persons, as communities focus more effort on lifelong learning and extensive civic engagement. Concerned that his own undergraduate students are too focused on the immediate future, Achenbaum encourages young people to consider their place in life's social and chronological trajectory. He calls on baby boomers to create institutional structures that promote productive, vital growth for the common good, and he invites people of all ages to think more boldly about what they will do with the long lives ahead of them.

"Achenbaum brings a historians sensibility to his analysis... [His] treatment of religion, spirituality, and aging is one of the most informed and sophisticated that I have read." (Larry Polivka, Ph.D. The Gerontologist)"A well-referenced and clearly, engagingly written account." (Marshall B. Kapp, JD, MPH Care Management Journals)"Achenbaum's book makes a useful contribution to knowledge. His long experience in the field of aging allows him to provide important policy insights." (Sarah Ruiz Journal of Marriage and the Family)"A well-researched historical overview of trends in societal aging over the past century." (Allison Kabel Anthropology and Aging Quarterly)"If the six main chapters alone were not enough to recommend this book, the 30-page reference list that wraps up the volume certainly would be. As textbook or professional reference, Older Americans, Vital Communities would be a worthy investment." (Christina Butler The Older LEARNer)"Achenbaum's study provides a powerful and superbly written starting point for what will be a key area of research within gerontology over the next decade." (Chris Phillipson Ageing and Society)"Provides a stirring wake-up call for all who have been reluctant to see their lives whole, from youth to age. A distinguished and influential work on aging and society." (Robert Kastenbaum, Arizona State University)"Professor Achenbaum provides a uniquely historical and creative overview of societal aging that fires the imagination. The book's sensitivity to diversity and the complex issues facing older women, ethnic and minority aging, productive and spiritual aging, as well as the challenges of baby boomer leadership, make this is a must-read." (Fernando Torres-Gil, director, Center for Policy Research on Aging, UCLA; former assistant secretary for aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)"An impressive, fascinating analysis of our aging future. I could not put the book down." (Donna E. Shalala, president, University of Miami; former secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)"Through the historical perspective that threads throughout this book, Andrew Achenbaum has produced a fascinating, positive, and encouraging account of the aging of America which demonstrates clearly that it is not true anymore that 'old age is not interesting until one gets there' (Sarton). He points to the timelag between population aging and our ability to build structures and services as well as cultural and spiritual ties to cope with and benefit from this demographic revolution. Achenbaum shows that a long-term vision is needed for people of all ages to meet the future challenges through the whole of the life course. It is an academically rigorous but eminently readable book that gives a strong message to all societies across the globe." (Baroness Sally Greengross, chief executive, International Longevity Centre UK, and co-chair, Alliance on Health and the Future; member, House of Lords, London, United Kingdom)"By focusing on the history of age in America, Andrew Achenbaum has given us all a new way to imagine our futures. He also forces us to think about how to reinvent our institutions to meet human needs by enabling people to contribute to society throughout their lives." (William D. Novelli, Chief Executive Officer, AARP)"Achenbaum has created a detailed portrait of aging in America at the dawn of a new century. This book illuminates the critical distance between what is and what could be. Its optimistic message is carefully developed and worthy of serious attention." (William H. Thomas, M.D., President, The Eden Alternative, Author, What Are Old People For? How Elders Will Save the World)"Researchers, scholars, and graduate students will find that Achenbaum has written a useful, current overview of the literature and history for the field of aging." (Naomi Eden Educational Gerontology)From the Back CoverThis thought-provoking work grapples with the vast range of issues associated with the aging population and challenges people of all ages to think more boldly and more creatively about the relationship between older Americans and their communities. W. Andrew Achenbaum explores how the demographics of our aging society affect employment and markets, education, health care, religion, and political action. Drawing on history, literature, and philosophy, Achenbaum focuses on the way health care and increases in life expectancy have transformed late life from a phase characterized by illness, frailty, and debility to one of vitality, productivity, and spirituality.About the AuthorW. Andrew Achenbaum is a professor of history and social work at the University of

Houston.