

50+Living our best lives now and in the future!

Recognizing Her Passion and Embracing What She Loves

One of the secrets to living your best life is to do what you love. For English Professor Dr. Jillanne (Jill) Michell, teaching literature classes and Shakespeare is part of who she is. “I still sometimes have to pinch myself that I ended up in a career where I get to focus on and keep learning about something I love so much and that I get to share that passion with my students.”



Discovering Her Passion

“I always loved to read, and I thank my amazing mother for that. She was a teacher and an avid reader herself, and she would tirelessly read stories to my brother and me when we were little.”

Jill’s mother made sure she had plenty of books to read. “I can’t count how many times I read Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *A Secret Garden* and *A little Princess* and C.S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*. Those were my favorites, leading me to fall in love with England and all things English.”

“When I was 12 or 13, my mother took me to the movie theatre to see Franco Zeffirelli’s *Romeo and Juliet*, a gorgeous film. I was enchanted—especially with Michael York as Tybalt—my first movie star crush.” Drawn into the drama, Jill memorized Juliet’s “O Happy Dagger” speech and then practiced “dying dramatically” all over her house.

Circling Back

After high school, Jill attended Umpqua Community College (UCC) for a year while studying theatre. Then she transferred to the University of Oregon and lasted two terms before dropping out. “I didn’t have the drive or discipline to succeed in college the first time, and it would be ten years before I returned to UCC, this time as a non-traditional student with much more focus and determination.”

“After taking several literature classes at UCC, I realized that my passion was literature all along. When I transferred to the University of Oregon again, this time as an English major, I had already

made up my mind that I wanted to pursue my Ph.D. My dream was to teach at UCC.”

Engaging Hearts and Minds



While she was still completing her doctorate, Jill was offered a full-time position at UCC.

“As a former UCC student, I feel a special connection with my students, who continually impress me with their willingness to engage with

challenging material and their excitement as they begin to understand and appreciate Shakespeare.”

For many years Jill would take her literature students to Ashland, Oregon, to experience a play at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She also arranged to take students to see five plays and participate in a backstage tour during special summer classes. “The professionalism of the actors—along with the fantastic sets, costumes, music, and special effects—makes a deep impression on students. The immersive experience of the summer class has been a powerful learning opportunity, both for students and for me.”

Experiencing Her Dream

After several years of teaching, Jill took a sabbatical and headed to London. “My trip to England was a trip of a lifetime. It felt a bit like a capstone to all the knowledge and experience I’ve gained through my education and career. I’ll never forget flying into London and seeing Tower



Bridge for the first time from the air as our plane neared the airport.”

While in England, Jill saw plays at the Globe Theatre and at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Jill also visited as many museums, palaces, and other sites to capture as much of her experience as

possible. “I took over 8,000 pictures in the three weeks I was in England, no exaggeration!”

Encouraging Older Adults to Enjoy Shakespeare

“Shakespeare was a great storyteller, and the plays are full of intriguing stories of all kinds, from playful and comic to violent and tragic. There really is something to appeal to everybody. I also think that older adults, because they have more life experience, are usually better equipped than younger people to appreciate Shakespeare. This is especially true of the tragedies since, by the time someone gets old, they have likely experienced a few themselves.”

For anyone interested in enjoying Shakespeare’s



plays, Jill suggests starting with plot summaries like SparkNotes. “SparkNotes is an online website that provides study guides, including character lists, brief general summaries of the plays, and more detailed scene-by-scene summaries.”

Adapting During the Pandemic and Planning Ahead

Because of the Pandemic, Jill has been teaching online since September. As a self-described “social person,” she is adapting as we all are. “Honestly, the pandemic has made me feel like I’m just hanging on these days, waiting for better times ahead. Still, I’m attempting to take care of my physical and mental health, trying to eat right and exercise—trying not to be like Sir Toby Belch from *Twelfth Night*, who loved his “cakes and ale.”

Even though she loves teaching, Jill does plan to retire at some point in the coming decade. She would like to return to England at some point and travel to other parts of the world. When she was younger, she loved other artistic pursuits, including sketching, drawing, and painting. “I would love to someday revisit some of these earlier artistic interests.”

Drama, Shakespeare and Brain Health?

Based on a synthesis of research, authors of a 2012 *Psychology* [article](#) concluded that “Drama creates positive feelings while strengthening the temporal lobe which has been shown to be associated with slow cognitive decline in some cases and a healthier brain is thus maintained for a longer amount of time.”

The authors also cited research that specifically suggested learning Shakespeare could be beneficial for our brain health as we age. “Shakespeare’s way of “...throwing odd words into seemingly normal sentences surprises the brain and catches it off guard in a manner that produces a sudden burst of activity...”

Can “Brain-Boosting” Supplements Help Improve Memory?

It is true that as we age, we are more likely to have “tip of the tongue” memory challenges. We may also start having more difficulty focusing—especially when attempting to multi-task.

When we see advertisements for products that could improve our memories, it might be tempting to order some of these supplements. One of the more frequently advertised brands is currently selling an extra-strength, 30-day supply for \$59.95 on Amazon.



For those who are hoping brain supplements might rejuvenate their brains, think again. A 2019 [Mayo Clinic Minute](#) article citing The Global Council on Brain Health reported that dietary supplements don’t improve brain health or reduce the risk of dementia.

The good news is that there are lifestyle habits that help support a healthier brain. Three mentioned in the Mayo Clinic article include: (1) getting moderate exercise (brisk walking, jogging, swimming, etc.) for about 150 minutes a week.

(2) engaging in regular intellectual activity, and (3) following a healthy diet such as the Mediterranean Diet—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, fish, poultry, and eggs, but very little meat.

If you aren’t already doing so, make it a priority in this new year to take good care of yourself—there is no substitute for good living.

“No legacy is so rich as honesty.”
–William Shakespeare

What Your Family Needs to Know

If something suddenly happened to you, would your family have the necessary information that they need, and you might want them to know? If you’re not sure, Elevate Wealth Advisors is offering a free one-hour webinar on **January 27, 2021, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.** that will address this question.



The webinar speaker is Cheri Brooks, CPA. She will discuss **The Family Love Letter**© process. President of Elevate Wealth Advisors, Ben James, CFA, CFP, will be moderating the discussion. Ben noted, “This topic hits close to home for all of us and helps us make sure we get the most out of the Playbook by addressing things to make it easy on our loved ones.”

You can register for this free webinar [online](#) by calling (1)503-607-0809 or by emailing Kay Lang: Kay.lang@lpl.com.

Are You Really Ready for Retirement?

Featured in our November [newsletter](#), Mike Drak is the co-author of [Victory Lap Retirement](#). Mike’s second book, *Retirement Heaven or Hell: Which Will You Choose* (with Susan Williams and Rob Morrison) has just been published.

In this recently published book, Mike and his co-authors offer a “step-by-step process for how people can design and transition to an optimal retirement lifestyle for themselves based on their own needs and wants.” You’ll be guided through nine retirement principles that can help prepare you for what could be the best years ahead.



While I’ve read numerous books on aging and retirement, I appreciate how this book's authors explain concepts in new ways and support insights with research. Chapter Ten, about how we use time in retirement, challenged me. Chapter Eleven about attitude was also one of my favorites.

If you plan to retire within the next few years or have already entered that strange new world we still call “retirement,” then I suggest you start preparing yourself for what’s ahead. *Retirement Heaven or Hell: Which Will You Choose?* is available through Amazon.

Cybersecurity & the Gig Economy

Whether concerned about making ends meet or wanting more flexibility, the “gig” or freelance economy has grown in popularity among older adults. Maybe becoming an Uber driver or a dog sitter might not be your thing and likely won’t generate much income. However, other freelance areas could be more lucrative.

With appropriate training and skill, cybersecurity work may offer good pay, interesting work, and the flexibility that some older workers seek.

John Blackwood, an associate professor of computer information services at Umpqua Community College (UCC), believes cybersecurity could be a good field for older workers who want flexibility or part-time work. Older workers and retirees “bring in a lifetime of people and problem-solving skills that are keys to success...”

The UCC cybersecurity degree program was developed in partnership with Mount Hood Community College; the MHCC cybersecurity program is recognized by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security as a Center of Academic Excellence.

To learn more about the program at UCC, click [here](#).

Helen Laurence wrote this hope-filled poem and has given permission to share it in this newsletter.



mid-winter

in the season of primrose, ice, and crocus,

snowdrops surprise us

swelling graceful buds

below the black limbs

of oak in her lichen cloak,

and we see:

frost has its reasons

Rootworks 2/11/00

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