

## Introduction to the Special Section: Papers of the 2022 Meeting of the International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice

Juliette Shellman, Guest Editor  
University of Connecticut

In August of 1995, the National Reminiscence and Life Review Society held its first conference in Superior, Wisconsin under the direction of John A. Kunz. The conference featured speakers such as Robert Butler, Barbara Haight, Jeffrey Webster, and John Kunz among other notable reminiscence scholars and practitioners. With each biennial conference, interest in reminiscence and life review grew and eventually included participants from around the world. Over the years, the biennial conferences have been the pinnacle event for the International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review where innovative life story ideas developed, collaborations and friendships formed, and the latest advances in the field were presented. Historically, the International Institute of Reminiscence and Life Review (IIRLR) at the University of Wisconsin-Superior welcomed students to the conferences, inviting them to present their work which was oftentimes their first participation in a scholarly conference.

The International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP) at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing is proud to continue the traditions started by the IIRLR. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> in 2022, we hosted our first biennial conference, *The Healing Power of Storytelling*. Due to the ramifications of the COVID pandemic, the conference was held virtually, which was a first for our membership. Over eighty participants representing the United States and other countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Australia, Canada, Belgium, and the Netherlands attended the conference. The program included presentations from leaders in the field of life story work such as Dr. Annie Brewster from Harvard Medical School and Dr. Jonathan Alder from Olin College. Their presentation about their research and Health Story Collaborative was well-received by our attendees. UConn School of Nursing was well-represented with a qualitative methods workshop conducted by Dr. Cheryl Beck and Dr. Tom Long as well as a paper presentation from Dr. Michelle Cole and STARR, our student reminiscence research group.

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### Author Notes:

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Another highlight of the conference was the presentation of awards. Nominated by peers, the following awards were presented at the reception:

**The Robert Butler and Myrna Lewis  
Exemplar Research Award**

Alison Kris, Ph.D., RN  
Fairfield University, Connecticut

**The James and Betty Birren  
Exemplar Practice Award**

Wendy Bancroft, MA  
Simon Fraser University, Canada

**The Florence Gray-Soltys Graduate Student  
Award for Exemplary Research or Practice in the  
Field of Reminiscence and Life Review**

Deniz Pamuk, MSc, Ph.D. candidate,  
Akdeniz University, Dept of Gerontology, Turkey

**The John A. Kunz Award for Distinguished  
Service to the International Center for  
Life Story Innovations and Practice**

Juliette Shellman, Ph.D., RN  
University of Connecticut

We are pleased to present this special section of The International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review highlighting poster and paper presentations from our 2022 Biennial Conference, *The Healing Power of Storytelling*. The seven articles and book review describe innovative life story approaches that have a positive impact on depression, cognitive functioning, and social engagement. Moreover, the findings reflect the healing power of storytelling.

I would like to thank the authors and reviewers for their contributions to this issue. Special appreciation to Tom Pierce for his assistance in making this special section possible.