

PREFACE

For years, media managers have clung to the erroneous notion that advertising sales are primarily driven by millennials, holding the mistaken belief that older consumers on fixed incomes are less receptive to purchasing new products. As a result, these media outlets—whether print or digital, broadcast, or podcast—have often provided insufficient coverage on issues relevant to our aging population. Age bias still exists in newspapers, electronic media and the internet.

Yet, with the undeniable graying of America, the increasing number of older adults including Boomers and their older siblings in the Silent Generation with the first Gen Xers now reaching their 60s, and they continue to rely on reading newspapers to better understand the complex and evolving landscape of aging.

However, recent shifts have occurred as reporters and editors, many of whom are themselves midlife caregivers for aging parents or in-laws, including this writer, have uncovered the vast, underreported stories on aging. Personal experiences have given them the insight and understanding necessary to address these topics with greater depth and balance.

Like my fellow “age beat” writers/reporters, along with being over age 70 years old, gives me a perspective on what and how issues might be covered for the benefit of older readers. Through my writings I strive to stand among the more well-informed journalists covering the age beat, who know and write better, and are better able to inform my readers about the Longevity Revolution, with all of its challenges and implications, both positive and negative.

Over 24 years ago, my Age Beat weekly columns appeared in the *Pawtucket Times* and explored a broad range of topics crucial to our aging population—politics, ethics, long-term care, consumer issues, spirituality, pop culture, health care, and economics. This endeavor continued until 2004 and resumed in July 2012, underscoring my commitment to this vital subject.

Over the years, I have strived to bring my personal experience with eldercare in a nuanced and balanced perspective into my articles. In this third volume of *Taking Charge*, like the two previous ones (*Taking Charge: Collected Stories on Aging Boldly* and *Taking Charge: Vol.2, More Stories on Aging Boldly*), I

have compiled a selection of my most impactful columns, spanning a variety of aging-related subjects. Each article, listing the date it was published, drawn from my work published in RINewsToday, a state-wide news site, provides practical insights and advice for those over age 50. These articles also appeared in the Pawtucket Times and later the Woonsocket Call (merged into one newspaper, the Blackstone Valley Call & Times), and Senior Digest, a monthly senior publication and sometimes picked up by the Warwick Beacon and Cranston Herald, and Johnston Sunrise (and their Prime Time supplement on aging topics). These pieces cover topics from caregiving and retirement planning to spirituality and end-of-life issues, offering readers valuable guidance for navigating the later stages of life.

Although some of the content may reflect aging issues, research results and legislative policy debates from years past, the insights remain relevant and informative. The stories, while often localized to Rhode Island, contain universal truths applicable across the nation. They reflect the experiences of individuals over 50 who share their wisdom on various aspects of aging, from health and finances to relationships and personal fulfillment.

As we continue to advance in age, the opportunities to enhance our lives are more abundant and accessible than ever before. This collection of articles aim to empower readers to take charge of their aging process, embracing the challenges and opportunities it presents with confidence and grace.

For over 44 years, I have been committed to advocating for seniors and providing the most relevant, informative coverage of aging issues. Through my “bully pulpit” in weekly columns and continued efforts, I hope to continue contributing to a greater understanding and appreciation of the richness and diversity of aging.

Thank you for joining me on this journey. May the insights in this book inspire and support you as you navigate your own path to a fulfilling and vibrant later life.

Herb Weiss, LRI '12

FOREWORD

By John O'Connor

When I was just starting out in trade journalism in 1990, I had the good fortune to meet Herb Weiss. At the time, he was a freelance writer based in Washington, DC. Whether it was serendipity or sheer luck, that encounter proved to be a pivotal moment in my career. .

I soon discovered that Herb had an encyclopedic knowledge of aging-related issues, combined with a genuinely kind demeanor. He didn't just know all the players; he knew what they were playing for. His prolific writing and deep understanding of the field quickly earned my utmost respect.

Over the years, Herb's articles frequently appeared in *McKnight's Long-Term Care News*. We even sent him to Washington, DC, to cover the policy recommendations unveiled at the 1995 White House Conference on Aging. This once-in-a-decade event, sponsored by the executive office of the president, provides policy recommendations to the president and Congress on issues affecting the aging population.

Herb served on our editorial advisory board from 1992 to 2000, offering valuable insights into the evolving long-term care sector.

In 1997, Herb was selected by *McKnight's LTC News* to be one of its "100 Most Influential People in Long-Term Care," recognizing his coverage of aging, health care, and medical issues.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce Herb's latest work, *Taking Charge, Volume 3: Even More Stories on Aging Boldly*. His passion for the subject matter is palpable on every page of this exceptional volume. Herb has a rare gift for making complex topics accessible and engaging, which is evident throughout this book.

Taking Charge, Volume 3: Even More Stories on Aging Boldly is a testament to Herb's remarkable skill and dedication to covering the "age beat." It provides a thorough exploration of crucial topics, from caregiving policies to the effects of COVID-19 and evolving retirement trends. Herb's insightful analysis not only highlights the challenges we face today but also offers hope and practical

guidance to the reader.

I invite you to settle into a comfortable chair, perhaps with a favorite beverage, and immerse yourself in this delightful read. Taking Charge, Volume 3 is more than just a book; it is an essential resource for understanding and navigating the complexities of our times.

John O'Connor is editorial director at McKnight's LTC News, a national business news magazine serving the institutional long-term care field.

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