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SPECIAL HEALTH & INNOVATION ISSUE



Jo Ann Jenkins CEO of AARP

Renowned Visionary
Extraordinary Leader
Passionate “Disrupter”

Inside:
Younger Next Year
Reducing Loneliness With Robots
Is Telehealth the Future?
Staying Sharp After 50

Jo Ann Jenkins

CEO of AARP

Age: 59

Family: Husband Frank Jenkins, two children

Honorary Degrees & Education:

- Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL, 2016
- Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Washington College, Chestertown, MD, 2014
- Executive Program, Stanford Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 1998
- Bachelor of Science, Political Science, Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL, 1980

Occupation: CEO, AARP (2014 – present)
First permanent female chief executive in AARP's history

Residence: Northern Virginia

Career Highlights

- More than 25 years in public service, serving in U.S. Departments of Agriculture; Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development
- Previous to AARP, served as COO of Library of Congress, leading 4,000+-person staff
- Became President of AARP Foundation in 2010; named COO of AARP in 2013 and CEO in 2014

Honors & Recognition

- Ebony Magazine, Power 100 Annual List of Influencers, 2017
- Black Enterprise Magazine, Most Powerful Women in Business, 2017
- Power 100 – Washington's Most Influential People, Washington Life Magazine, 2015 and 2016
- Non-Profit Influencer of the Year, 2015
- SmartCEO BRAVA Award honoring top female CEOs, 2015
- Named one of the Non-Profit Times Power and Influence Top 50 for 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
- Peace Corps Director's Award, 2014
- Malcolm Baldrige Fellow, 2013
- Recipient, Distinguished Service Award, Library of Congress, 2010
- Delegate, U.S. Japan Leadership Program, 2000 – 2001
- Author: *Disrupt Aging: A Bold New Path to Living Your Best Life at Every Age*



Jo Ann Jenkins: Renowned Visionary, Extraordinary Leader and Passionate 'Disrupter'

By Marsha B. Felton

MBF: What a privilege to interview Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP...as you read and get to know more about Jo Ann, you will be wonderfully inspired... she's an amazing woman!

MBF: *As a young girl growing up in Alabama, what did you want to be or dream about becoming?*

JAJ: It changed, almost weekly, as I kept getting interested in different things but, over time, an interest in history and government really came to the fore. I majored in Political Science in college and my studies led me to Washington D.C. where I've been for 35-plus years.



Jo Ann — First Grade

MBF: *What do you most appreciate from your family in your life's direction?*

JAJ: I grew up in a close-knit family surrounded by my parents, my brothers and my sister with lots of cousins and other relatives nearby. You knew just about everyone you'd see. My mom and dad were very focused on the importance of education and they instilled in us a belief in its value.

MBF: *What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess and what is one of the biggest challenges facing leaders today?*

JAJ: Leaders are called upon to be strong communicators but I think it's even more important to be a good listener. You can learn a lot that way. As far as the challenges that leaders face, I think one of them is the sheer volume of information that circulates in our world...and the speed at which it travels. It can lead to situations where people are tempted to emphasize speed over judgment in their decision-making process.

MBF: *Who has had a significant impact on you and how did this person impact your life and as a leader?*

JAJ: I couldn't limit it to just one person – there have been many — but there's no question that some of my teachers in Mobile County Public Schools and at Theodore High School inspired me in important ways.

MBF: *What are you most proud of in your career?*

JAJ: This one's easy: my work at AARP! We're focused on strengthening communities and advocating around the issues that matter most to people age 50 and up such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment – not just for our members but for everyone age 50-plus and their families. It's a big, constantly evolving mission...I look forward to coming to work every day.

MBF: *How did you get your start at AARP?*

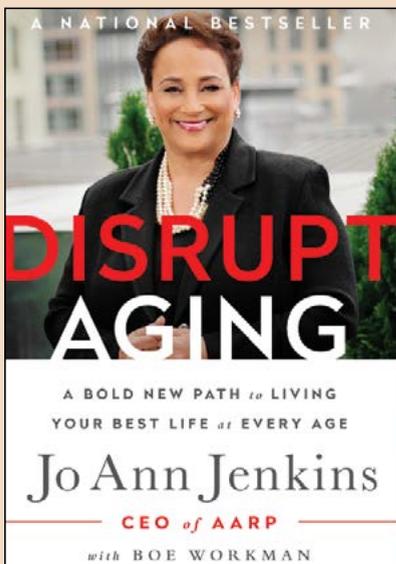
JAJ: In June 2010, after working in public service with the U.S. Federal Government for 25 years, I became President of AARP Foundation which is focused on assisting millions of older, vulnerable, low-income people, especially around issues of hunger, housing and isolation. In 2014, I was named CEO of AARP.



Jo Ann interviewed at OECD Paris

MBF: How do you ensure AARP and its activities are aligned with your 'core values'?

JAJ: I'm a big believer in the "Golden Rule"— treat others as you would like to be treated. In that same spirit, I want AARP to be the kind of organization that I would respect, value and want to be part of as a member.



Available from Amazon.com

MBF: What innovations are you most proud of that you have brought to AARP?

JAJ: One of them is Disrupt Aging, which is both the title of a book I wrote and the name of an emerging movement, spearheaded by AARP, that seeks to reframe the way people and institutions think about, talk about and represent aging—their own, that of others and aging in the abstract—into something positive and empowering.

MBF: With the country and Washington being so politically polarized these days, how are you working on major issues with both parties?

JAJ: AARP is, and always has been, fully non-partisan. We do not advocate for or against specific political candidates or office holders or parties. Nor do we make financial contributions to any political entities. Instead, we focus on issues and how they actually affect people.

Our 38 million-plus members come from all walks of life and every place on the political spectrum. There are some issues, healthcare for example,

where people's shared experience (we all get sick or know someone who has; many of us are caregivers, or know that one day we will be), can create some much-needed common ground. Our job at AARP is to stay focused on solutions and advocating for the greater good for people 50-plus and their families.

MBF: Dr. Walter M. Bortz II, A050 columnist and Fall 2016 Cover Profile, is a prominent expert on wellness and longevity. His thesis: Exercise is the key to extending the human life span. What are key initiatives you'd like to see AARP do to promote healthy and sustaining-healthy lifestyles?

JAJ: Through our monthly AARP magazine, which has more than 38 million readers, our newsletters, our web properties and via our state offices, we do a lot to promote easy, "doable" ways for people to take control of their diet, exercise and activity levels in ways to raise their overall level of wellness.

"It can be easy to feel that your health is sort of "out of your hands" but research shows that fully 60 percent of wellness is determined by your own decisions (chiefly around diet, exercise and smoking), 20 percent is healthcare and 20 percent is genetics. It's never too late to decide you want to have a say in what that 60 percent looks like!"—Jo Ann Jenkins

MBF: What is the impact of social networking and Web 2.0 on AARP?

JAJ: Probably the same as everyone else. The Internet revolutionized the world. There's no question social networking is an important tool in



Jo Ann at 2017 Hawaii Book & Music Festival

fighting senior isolation and its many ill effects. However, I don't think online connections are a replacement for in-person ones. They're more like a (very useful) conduit for bringing people together.

MBF: You are leading AARP in a global direction. What do you hope to achieve by being more internationally involved?

JAJ: Aging is truly borderless and the challenges and opportunities created by massive growth of older populations all around the world spans all nations and cultures. We want to help convene and stimulate ongoing conversations that lead to knowledge sharing and the exchange of ideas.

MBF: AARP was part of a comprehensive 12-country study concerning the massive growth of the world's aging populations. Its findings include: women have it tougher than men in just about every nation, the U.S. is a leader in only one sector, technological engagement, and a laggard in healthcare & wellness. What is AARP doing for the

commonality that older populations prefer to "age in place"?

JAJ: I think there's a lot of value from information sharing between nations, regions and communities. The world is aging – just about everywhere and in big numbers. Studies from the World Bank, the United Nations and the U.S. Census Bureau, among others, show that in the U.S. and in most places

"In short, in barely more than 30 years, for every one person age 60-plus in your workplace, neighborhood or standing next to you in line, there will be two. That's a profound change... with massive implications around healthcare, economics and the workplace, housing, transportation and more. The findings of the study are in AARP's Aging Readiness and Competitiveness (ARC) Report." —Jo Ann Jenkins

around the world, the age-60-plus population is going to double over roughly the next generation, by 2050.

MBF: How you have dealt with some challenges of being a woman and African-American CEO?

JAJ: Whatever your gender or heritage, I'm a big believer in having clear goals, working hard, finding mentors (and being one, too), and — most of all — keeping your focus on your destination, not the obstacles you face along the way. If you focus too much on the obstacles, you may lose sight of your destination.

MBF: What do you do for relaxation?

JAJ: I travel a lot for work so I'm tempted to say sleep! I also love walking, hanging out with family and friends, and reading.

MBF: What's a fun fact people might not know about you?

JAJ: People might be surprised to know that I collect teacups from all over the world. It's something I've been doing for more than 30 years.

MBF: What are your proudest personal moments?

JAJ: My husband and I raised two great kids so I'll put that at the top of the list!



ABOUT MARSHA B. FELTON

"I'm on the 'inspiring and motivating' beat. I cover exciting people and uplifting endeavors."

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