

Climbing Trees at 112

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by Dr. Vernon Coleman

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It is now usual to put 'Do Not Resuscitate' notices on the medical notes of patients over the age of 65. In some areas DNR notices are routinely put on patients as young as 45. The authorities seem to assume that everyone over these ages is worthless. Junior doctors and nurses are now allowed to decide which patients have reached their sell-by-date – and that their lives can, therefore, be terminated.

This is, of course, all part of the depopulation plan proposed by the Agenda 21 fanatics.

And it is utterly outrageous, inhumane and wicked.

All lives are of value and ageism is as unforgiveable as racism and sexism.

Here, for example, are details of some of the inspirational achievements of people over the age of 90. Older people can, and do, make tremendous contributions to human life in many ways.

Duncan MacLean – born 1884, Gourock, Scotland, was an athlete and coach who began his life appearing in music halls as a singer and general entertainer. He appeared on stage as 'Dan O'Scott', dressed in an all-white outfit, including a kilt. He wrote many of the songs he sang. In 1931, he helped to form the Veterans' Athletic Club. At the age of 90, he ran 200 metres in 44 seconds. A year later, he ran 100 metres in 21.27 seconds.

Leopold Stokowski – recorded 20 albums during his 90th year

and conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in a concert which he had first conducted 60 years earlier.

P.G.Wodehouse – born 1881, Guildford, England, was a novelist, short story writer, lyricist and playwright. He lived much of his adult life in France and the U.S. He is best known as the creator of Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves. Wodehouse is credited with having created an entirely fictional world of his own. Wodehouse wrote more than 90 books and 20 film scripts and collaborated with musicians such as Jerome Kern in writing musical comedies. Wodehouse wrote the last Jeeves and Wooster book at the age of 90 but carried on writing other novels.

Marc Chagall – was still painting at the age of 90, Chagall became the first living artist to be exhibited at the Louvre museum. He died in 1985.

Pablo Picasso – born 1881, Malaga Spain, was a sculptor, printmaker, stage designer and ceramicist. He moved to Paris in 1904. His so-called 'blue period' lasted from 1901 to 1904 and was followed by his 'rose period'. Between 1909 and 1912, he worked closely with George Braque with whom he developed what was later known as 'cubism'. The Spanish Civil War inspired his best-known work, the vast 'Guernica', which was completed in 1937. He was still drawing and engraving at the age of 90.

Albert Schweitzer – was, at 90 years of age, still caring for patients at his hospital in Gabon.

Eamon de Valera – born 1882, New York, US, was President of the Republic of Ireland. De Valera's political career lasted from 1917 to 1973 and he served several terms as head of government and head of state. De Valera was made President of the Republic of Ireland in 1959 and was re-elected in 1966 when he was 84-years-old. He retired in 1973 when he was 90-years-old. He was then the oldest head of state in the world.

Baron Alexander von Humboldt – born 1769, Berlin, Germany was a naturalist and explorer. In 1792, he established a technical school for miners and from 1799 onwards, he explored Central and South America. He discovered the connection between the Amazon and Orinoco rivers and surmised that altitude sickness was caused by a lack of oxygen. His work helped found the science of climatology and he studied the relationships between a region's geography and its flora and fauna. At the age of 65, he began writing Kosmos, an account of the structure of the universe as it was then known, and he finished this just before he reached the age of 90.

Thomas Hobbes – born 1588, Westport, England, Hobbes was an English philosopher and political theorist. Hobbes travelled in Europe (where he talked with Galileo) but in England, his support for absolutism resulted in him being endangered by rising antiroyalist sentiment. Hobbes fled to Paris in 1640 where he taught the future King Charles II of England. In Paris, he wrote Leviathan in 1651. The thesis of the book was that the sovereign should have absolute power on the basis of a social contract in which individuals protect themselves by obeying the sovereign in all matters. Hobbes returned to England in 1651. In 1666, when Hobbes was 78-years-old, Parliament threatened to investigate him as an atheist. Charles II protected Hobbes and gave him a pension of £100 a year. The result of Parliament's intervention was that Hobbes could no longer publish anything in England and his work was subsequently printed in Amsterdam. In 1672, at the age of 84, Hobbes published an autobiography in Latin verse and in 1675, at the age of 87, he published complete translations of both Iliad and Odyssey. He was still writing books at the age of 91.

Frank Lloyd Wright – was almost 92-years-old when his Guggenheim Museum in New York was completed. The Guggenheim has no separate floor levels but uses a spiral ramp instead of staircases. Wright is often considered America's greatest

architect. He is remembered most for popularising the idea that buildings should be in harmony with their environment and with the people who will use them.

Adolph Zukor – born 1873, Ricse, Austria-Hungary, was an American filmmaker and the founder of Paramount Pictures. In the late 1920s, Zukor was producing 60 feature films a year. He pioneered the concept of the distributor charging the exhibitor a percentage of the box office receipts. He was still chairman of Paramount Pictures when he died at the age of 103.

Antonio Stradivari – born 1644, Cremona, Milan was a maker of musical instruments. He established his own business in his home town and made many instruments including harps, lutes, mandolins and guitars. However, after 1680, he concentrated on making violins. In 1690, he invented the 'long strad'. He devised the modern form of the violin bridge and his proportions for the violin are still used. Violinists believe that the shallower body as devised by Stradivari gives a more powerful tone than was previously available. Stradivari was at his peak between 1700 and 1720 and was still making violins at the age of 93, shortly before his death.

George Bernard Shaw – wrote his play *Why She Would Not* in seven days, just before his 94th birthday – he died at the age of 94 of injuries which he sustained after falling out of a tree in his garden which he was pruning.

George Burns – the comedian, was still performing at the age of 94. He performed in Schenectady, New York, 63 years after his first performance there. He died at the age of 100.

Bertrand Russell – was still campaigning for peace and he was in his 94th year when he set up the International War Crimes Tribunal in Stockholm.

Eli Wallach – born 1915 New York, US had a career which spanned six decades. He made over 90 films and was one of the

greatest character actors of all time. His movies included The Magnificent Seven, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, The Two Jakes and The Godfather Part III. At the age of 95, he acted in Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps and The Ghost Writer.

Martin Miller – born 1892, Indiana, US, was still working fulltime as a lobbyist in his 90s. He was campaigning for more rights and better benefits for older people at the age of 97. He testified at hearings and meetings of the legislature and at various boards and commissions, throughout the year – representing the interests of senior citizens.

Fred Streeter – born 1879, Pulborough, England, was Britain's best-known gardener. He worked in a number of gardens, becoming a head gardener while still in his 20s. In 1901, he met his wife, Hilda. The couple were married until her death in 1966. Streeter, who worked on both radio and television, was still broadcasting on the BBC radio at the age of 98, with his final broadcast transmitted on the day he died. He never used a script.

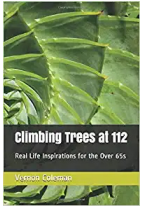
Beatrice Wood – born 1893, San Francisco, US, was an artist and potter, actress and sculptor. She was known as the 'Mama of Dada' because of her involvement in the Avant Garde movement. She also became a leading ceramicist. At the age of 90, Wood became a writer (after encouragement from Anais Nin). When asked for the secret of her longevity she said: 'I owe it all to chocolate and young men.' She was still working and exhibiting her latest work at the age of 99. She lived to be 105.

Teiichi Igarishi – climbed Mount Fuji at the age of 100, though he did carry a cane. He wore thick socks but no shoes.

And, finally, I must mention Charles Smith who was born, in 1842, in Liberia. He was taken to the US as a slave and sold in New Orleans to a man called Smith (hence his name). Mr Smith was forced to retire from a job on a citrus farm in

1955, at the age of 113, because he was officially considered too old to climb trees. I applaud the official who apparently considered 112 to be an acceptable age for climbing trees.

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