

Newaging

They've discovered the fountain of youth

**MEET FIVE SENIORS WHO WILL SHATTER
YOUR STEREOTYPES OF OLD AGE**

By Dawn Swann

HER DAY BEGINS AT 4, before the sun rises, before the robin sings, before the paperboy slings the newspaper across the driveway of the split-level home in Framingham where she spends the warmer months of the year. If it's nice out she'll jog for an hour or so. If the weather is bad she'll head to the YMCA to burn 200 calories on the elliptical machine, 300 on the treadmill, go through her weights routine twice, and swim 24 laps in the pool. She rakes and bags all her own leaves in the fall. In the winter, she mows all four acres of her estate in Georgia. Not impressed yet? Consider the fact that Juanita Garnett is a 73-year-old widow. How about now?

At the turn of this century, the average American lived to the age of 77. The US Census Bureau projects the average life expectancy of an American to reach an all-time high of 79.2 by the year 2015, which works out to about an extra nine months for each year that passes. We found five residents of a certain age, who are anything but average, when it comes to their approach to living long. In addition to Garnett, you'll meet a pair of sweethearts who help keep Needham seniors in shape, a former butcher, and an original Boston Patriot. Here are their stories.

Garnett has stuck by the principles of hard work she learned as the eldest of 10 children raised on a farm in Georgia. She's all of 5 feet tall with a smattering of freckles over her light brown skin and a mass of tiny gray curls on her head. The morning I interviewed her she flung the front door open with arms wide. I breathed in the scent of oatmeal and green tea, which along with freshly juiced carrots and spinach are staples in Garnett's diet. She credits her vitamin-rich, whole-food diet for her longevity and vigor.

There's a print on Garnett's wall, just inside the living room. Titled *Black Scholar*, it depicts an African-American man striding forward in cap and gown. The picture, just to the side of one of the many packed bookshelves in her home, reflects another aspect of her life. For

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