

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Founder

I am honored to speak to the Elder Justice Coordinating Council today about World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. My name is Betty F. Malks, and I am here to present the creation of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

In 2005 I was attending the United Nations In New York. The discussion centered around the Missing Voices project outcome, by the World Health Organization (WHO) and how to move forward. Several professionals were in attendance. I had the amazing opportunity to sit next to Dr.Elizabeth Podnieks. She was a professor at Toronto's Ryerson University and did several pieces of research on elder abuse in different countries. Elizabeth created the groundbreaking National Survey on Abuse of the Elderly in Canada in 1991. It was the first of its kind to be national in scale, which was a significant step in determining the breadth of the elder abuse issue in Canada and increasing public awareness of it. She served as the executive of the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, ONPEA, the Canadian Network for the Prevention of elder abuse, and the International Network for the Prevention of elder abuse.

At this UN event, Elizabeth leaned over towards me and said, "Why don't we create a World Day, for elder abuse awareness? and I said ok but how do we do it? She decided we start with a small group of like-minded professionals. She decided it was like a Tea Party, but it wound up as a worldwide movement. There was no pressure involved, no stress- just caring, brilliant professionals who wanted to share issues together in groups and to make global changes. At this moment in time, I did not realize how much I would learn from Dr. Podnieks. She became a mentor and great friend. Elizabeth created the ideas and together we made the ideas come to life.

Fast forward to June 2015, NAPSA convened the First ever Global Summit. The U.S. Securities Exchange Commission was working with NAPSA on voluntary projects together. When we informed them about creating the first WEAAD Day Summit in June 2015, they offered their facility; and that generosity began their involvement in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The SEC's Office of Investor Education and Advocacy began co-hosting the annual conference at the SEC's headquarters. The SEC created a large group of professionals to help NAPSA to continue to create the WEAAD Annual Event in Washington, D.C. Due to the large numbers of presenters from all over the world and the U.S; the large number of registrants, the SEC's "focus on doing whatever it takes to make it work" became a reality. The SEC Chairs annually gave scintillating presentations and supported WEAAD every year and spoke about efforts the SEC makes to safeguard older investors and enforce the securities laws against fraudsters who prey on elders. Every event became a huge success.

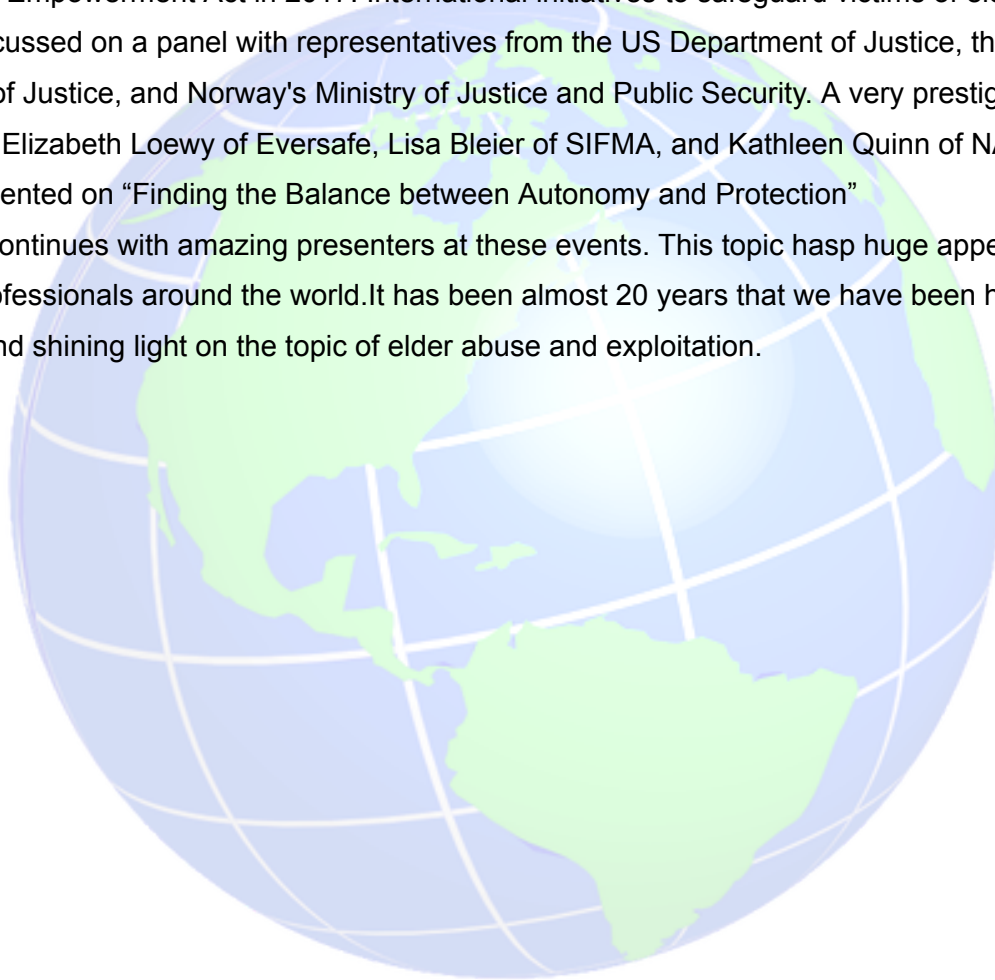
We were fortunate to have international Keynote speakers such as the SEC Chair Mary Jo White; Dr. Elizabeth Podnieks, NCPEA Chair, ONPEA Chair Canada; Silvia Perel-Levin, UN Representative, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance Chair, UN NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva; Elaine Draper, Director, Inclusion and Accessibility, Barclays United Kingdom; Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging, ACL; Dominique Predali, French Author, Journalist and Elder Abuse Activist, France; Nora Dowd Eisenhower, Director, US Office of Financial Protection for Older Americans, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Mai Fernandez, Executive Director, National Center for Victims of Crime, Philip Marshall, and Ian Devine, grandson and family of financial exploitation victims-Brooke Astor and Huguette Clark. In addition, Bill Benson, former US Assistant Secretary for Aging and NAPS Policy Director presented recommendations on developing an action plan.

As we all know, Covid brought us to difficult choices and new creativity. We continued WEAAD by creative choices such as videotaped virtual events so everyone around the world could attend. Our first-ever virtual event in 2020 was very successful. We had more than 1171 attendees; and in 2021 we had 1400 attendees, and in 2022, 2800 attendees at the virtual event. New attendees registered throughout the world. Several attendees moved in and out of the screen, but due to time changes and different visual abilities; they came and went during the events. We never experienced this many people in attendance, and due to our growth, we continued to multiply exponentially. In June 2021, the WEAAD Keynote Speaker was Dr. Amanda Phelan, Professor in Ageing and Community Nursing School of Nursing and Midwifery, Dublin. During the first year of the COVID outbreak in 2020, the Keynote speaker was Roy Zur, Former Israeli Defense Forces Chief, who created his international company, Coronavirus, and Cybercrime-Helping Elders to Not Get Scammed. Other sessions were The Media Role in Elder Financial Exploitation with David Brancaccio, Host and Senior Editor PBS, Anna Werner, Consumer Investigative National Correspondent, CBS; and Peter Cook, EVP, and Chief Communications Officer, American Bankers Association and Identity Theft presented by Eva Velasquez Identity Theft Resource Center CEO and President. For the last year, 2022 we had more than 2800 attendees. This year we had Keynote speakers such as the well known prominent Dr. Karl Pillemer, (Hazel E. Reed Professor of Human Development; Professor of Gerontology in Medicine, Weill Cornell Medicine; Director, Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging) and Dr. David Burnes (Canada Research Chair in Older Adult Mistreatment Prevention, Associate Professor, Associate Dean, Academic at University of Toronto Factor-Inwentash Faculty Of Social Work; Affiliate Scientist, Rotman Research Institute) giving a

talk on “Elder Abuse Interventions: It’s time to address the elephant in the room.” We were extremely honored to present Dr. Jason Karlawish,(MD, University of Pennsylvania Penn Memory Center & P3MB, the Penn Program for Precision Medicine for the Brain) and Author of *The Problem of Alzheimer’s* and “Not (legally) Dead Yet, The Shocking History of Guardianship in America”

Other notable presenters such as US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand talked about the Senior Financial Empowerment Act in 2017. International initiatives to safeguard victims of elder abuse were discussed on a panel with representatives from the US Department of Justice, the UK Ministry of Justice, and Norway’s Ministry of Justice and Public Security. A very prestigious panel of Elizabeth Loewy of Eversafe, Lisa Bleier of SIFMA, and Kathleen Quinn of NAPSA who presented on “Finding the Balance between Autonomy and Protection”

The list continues with amazing presenters at these events. This topic has huge appeal to many professionals around the world. It has been almost 20 years that we have been holding events and shining light on the topic of elder abuse and exploitation.



Notes:

She came up with the idea for the World Elder Abuse Day in Cyberspace initiative and collaborated with local, national, and worldwide partners to use social media to spread awareness of elder abuse. She is a trailblazer in the fight against elder abuse in religious settings and in educating kids and teenagers about it.

For her contributions to the field of abuse prevention, Elizabeth Podnieks was awarded the Order of Canada. She also earned the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal on June 14, 2012, in honor of her lifetime of dedication and work. The United States National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse has chosen Elizabeth as an honorary director. Elizabeth was given the 2013 National Rosalie Wolf Award by the National Protective Services Association (NAPSA).