

NPT Launches New Public Affairs Series on Aging with ‘End of Life.’”

Contributed by Joe Pagetta
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Grammy® and CMA® Award-winning singer-songwriter and advocate Kathy Mattea to host series

NASHVILLE, Tennessee -- August 30, 2013 -- Most Americans say they prefer to die at home. However, 70% of deaths occur in a hospital, nursing home or long term care facility. “NPT Reports: Aging Matters: End of Life,” premiering Thursday, September 12 at 8:00 p.m. on NPT-Channel 8, weaves personal stories of families alongside interviews with scholars, doctors, and medical ethicists to explore the complicated experience of dying, and why so few live the death they say they want. The episode will also be available online at wnpt.org/agingmatters the next day.

Produced and presented by Nashville Public Television (NPT), the program explores how the culture of death and dying in America has been radically transformed by medical science, how the medical system reinforces our culture-wide unwillingness to face death, as well as efforts to change how Americans understand and talk about dying. Among the topics addressed in “Aging Matters” are the roles of advance directives, palliative care and hospice in an end-of-life strategy. Kathy Mattea, the Grammy® and CMA® Award-winning singer-songwriter and advocate for a number of causes, including AIDS awareness and research, global warming and Appalachian mining practices, hosts the show.

Following in the footsteps of NPT’s previous multi-year, socially engaged and Emmy® Award-winning projects, “Next Door Neighbors” and “Children’s Health Crisis,” “Aging Matters” is a major multi-year initiative designed to open a community-based conversation about what older citizens need to optimize their quality of life and what the community needs to do to prepare for a coming explosion in our aging population.

“Since they were born, members of the Baby Boomer generation have played a big role in shaping American culture,” said the documentary’s producer Mary Makley (“American Experience: The Carter Family,” “Southern Belle”). “In 2011, the first of the boomers turned 65. As they age, the vast number of people entering their senior years will undoubtedly have an impact on how our communities understand and respond to the needs of older citizens.”

Mattea introduces and closes the documentary, providing context from a trusted voice, and from someone who herself has had experience with caring for the elderly. Her late mother Ruth and two of her aunts had Alzheimer’s. It’s that personal connection that led Mattea to lend her name, voice and image to the Alzheimer’s Association and to Abe’s Garden, a non-profit Alzheimer’s and dementia care facility planned in Nashville. Her song “Where’ve You Been,” co-written by her husband Jon Vezner, earned her a Grammy in 1990 for Best Female Country Vocal Performance. The song has become a source of strength for families of loved ones with Alzheimer’s.

“I have had firsthand experience with loving someone while they walk through the stages of Alzheimer’s,” said Mattea. “I’m honored to be part of NPT’s thoughtful and timely coverage of this and other issues surrounding our aging population.”

Twice named Female Vocalist of the Year by the Country Music Association, West Virginia-native Mattea carved out a role for herself in the late 1980s and 1990s as a sensitive yet energetic artist at ease both with country tradition and free-ranging innovation. With close to thirty Top 40 country hits, including 15 Top 10s and 4 Number Ones, five gold albums and a platinum-selling greatest hits compilation, she is among the most successful women in the genre’s history. Her latest release, “Calling Me Home,” an exploration of the music of her native Appalachia and a follow up to 2008’s critically acclaimed “Coal,” was released in the fall of 2012 on Sugar Hill Records.

“NPT Reports: Aging Matters: End of Life” is made possible in part through the generous support of Cigna-HealthSpring, West End Home Foundation, Jeanette Travis Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

More information is available at wnpt.org/agingmatters.

About Nashville Public Television:

Nashville Public Television, Nashville’s PBS station, is available free and over-the-air to nearly 2.4 million people throughout the Middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky viewing area, through its main NPT and secondary NPT2

channels, and to anyone in the world through its stable of NPT Digital services, including wnpt.org, YouTube and the PBS video app. The mission of NPT is to provide, through the power of traditional television and interactive digital communications, high quality educational, cultural and civic experiences that address issues and concerns of the people of the Nashville region, and which thereby help improve the lives of those we serve.

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