

Dementia expert to tackle disorder's complexities

By ELLEN GREENEY

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Older Americans Act, laying the groundwork for the Area Agencies on Aging and the National Aging Network. These entities were charged with improving the lives of senior citizens by focusing on social services to retain independence and supporting family caregivers.

The local Area Agency on

Aging Advisory Council representatives, Nina Stancil and Jay Scheumack, are hosting an educational Conference for Caregivers September 10. The free two-hour conference will begin at 11 a.m. in the Sun City Ballroom, 2 Texas Drive. To register call 512-916-6182.

Tam Cummings, Ph.D., is the keynote speaker. She is a gerontologist determined to untangle the complexities of dementia. Her passion is helping caregivers understand how

to work with persons with dementia.

Dr. Cummings is a nationally recognized dementia expert. She has written books including *Untangling Alzheimer's: The Guide for Families and Professionals* and *The Final Year ... The Final Moment: A Conversation in Caregiving*.

She is also an educator and has helped thousands of families throughout the United States, England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand under-

stand the stages of dementia and the biological process of the disease.

She has first-hand experience working in the dementia community for more than two decades: as the director of social work for a skilled nursing facility, program director for memory care communities, geriatric case manager for dementia patients and in private practice.

Family caregivers provide the majority of care for the

nation's aging population, the Capital Area Agency on Aging reported. About 40 million family caregivers devote 37 billion hours a year to help older adults.

The conference in Sun City will educate attendees on balancing caregiving responsibilities with everyday life and provide information on local resources.

Sun City's Women Helping Others will provide light refreshments and beverages.



Tam Cummings
Gerontologist