

# A Panel Honoring Octogenarians

Opening General Session Mon 4/25 @ 9 AM



**Sandy Markwood**  
Moderator

The Opening Session will inspire you to live your best life, no matter what age you are! Sandy Markwood, CEO of USAging, kicks off this year's Optimal Aging Conference by sharing highlights on the state of the aging network and facilitating a discussion among Octogenarians about what inspires and reinvigorates them as they age and how they have persevered through the pandemic.

## Panelists:



**Tom Burch: State Representative**

Tom Burch, 90, is currently the longest serving state legislator in the Kentucky General Assembly. Tom wrote and passed landmark legislation for early childhood education, abandoned infants, and organ donations, among others.



**Father Jim Flynn**

Father Jim Flynn, 92, left for the seminary after 8th grade to study to become a priest and has spent more than 60 years standing in solidarity with the poor and the dispossessed. He has remained faithful to the causes of social justice, even when criticized.



**Mattie Jones**

The name Mattie Jones, is synonymous with Civil Rights in Louisville. At 88 years old, Mattie Jones is an icon to many and continues to fight for equal rights, saying, "Racism is not born in a person. Racism is taught."



**Marie Clay**

Marie Clay, 88, has received a wide range of recognition and honors for her compassionate nature and civic engagement and is only the second African American woman since 1924 to receive the "Woman of Distinction" award through the Jefferson Club.



**Marie Vessels**

Each year, Marie Vessels, 96, knits and donates over 400 hats to various local charities, church members and family. Marie knits to honor the memory of her daughter, who lost her fight with cancer in 2015.