



Global Aging Forum

The Ethical Challenges of an Aging Society

—Speaker's Biography—

LEON R. KASS

**Chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics,
Professor at the University of Chicago, and
Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute**

Leon R. Kass, M.D., Ph.D., is the Addie Clark Harding Professor in the Committee on Social Thought and the College at the University of Chicago and Hertog Fellow in Social Thought at the American Enterprise Institute. He was chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics from 2001 to 2005.

A native of Chicago, Dr. Kass was educated at the University of Chicago where he earned his B.S. and M.D. degrees (1958; 1962) and at Harvard where he took a Ph.D. in biochemistry (1967). Afterwards, he did research in molecular biology at the National Institutes of Health, while serving in the United States Public Health Service.

Shifting directions from doing science to thinking about its human meaning, he has been engaged for more than 30 years with ethical and philosophical issues raised by biomedical advance, and, more recently, with broader moral and cultural issues. From 1970-72, Dr. Kass served as Executive Secretary of the Committee on the Life Sciences and Social Policy of the National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences, whose report, *Assessing Biomedical Technologies*, provided one of the first overviews of the emerging moral and social questions posed by biomedical advance.

He taught at St. John's College, Annapolis, MD, and served as Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., Research Professor in Bioethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, before returning in 1976 to the University of Chicago, where he has been an award-winning teacher deeply involved in undergraduate education and committed to the study of classic texts.

His numerous articles and books include: *Toward a More Natural Science: Biology and Human Affairs* (1984); *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature* (1994); *The Ethics of Human Cloning* (1998, with James Q. Wilson); *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying* (2000, with Amy A. Kass); *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics* (2002); and *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (2003).

His widely reprinted essays in biomedical ethics have dealt with issues raised by in vitro fertilization, cloning, genetic screening and genetic technology, organ transplantation, aging research, euthanasia and assisted suicide, and the moral nature of the medical profession.