



# **Elder Care Journey: A View from the Front Lines (SUNY series in New Political Science)**

*Laura Katz Olson*

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*Combining expert knowledge and first-hand experience, a noted elder care researcher confronts the long-distance care of her own mother.*

For millions of Americans caregiving is the “new normal.” For Laura Katz Olson, a respected researcher of long-term care for the aging, *Elder Care Journey* chronicles the disruption of her world and how it is upended by the ever-increasing long-distance needs of her own mother.

A healthy, Senior Olympics medal winner, Olson’s mother is slowly and steadily incapacitated by Parkinson’s disease and a gradual loss of vision. Thrust into a long-distance caregiving role, Olson finds her previous academic notions about assisting a frail parent increasingly at odds with the reality of the lived experience. In a narrative full of “ah-ha!” moments, tears, sighs, and outrage that will be familiar to many, Olson opens a window into the nursing home and home care industries that consume much in the way of taxpayer dollars, but often fail to deliver quality care. Olson’s personal story vividly demonstrates not only the overwhelming bureaucratic barriers faced by care-dependent seniors but also their beleaguered adult children’s attempts to ensure their parents’ health, safety, and well-being.

Laura Katz Olson is Professor of Political Science at Lehigh University and the author and editor of many books, including *The Politics of Medicaid* and *The Not-So-Golden Years: Caregiving, the Frail Elderly, and the Long-Term Care Establishment*. She lives in Wind Gap, Pennsylvania.

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