

# SENIOR LIVING

*The Dallas Morning News*

A GUIDE TO THE NEXT STAGE

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## Blazing a trail to fulfillment

**B**ack in 1978, when Helen Harkness founded a career coaching and counseling firm, not many women-owned businesses.

And not many people her age — she was 50 then — started businesses late in life as they do now.

But Harkness has never been one to follow societal norms. She tells the story of visiting a lawyer to talk about her professional future. The man advised her to take her assets to the bank and retire. Instead, Harkness got him to incorporate Career Design Associates in Garland.

Now 85, she still helps many workers find new careers or discover their passions using career assessments she developed over the years. An author of career-transition books, Harkness wrote her

doctoral dissertation on establishing career centers.

“I don’t sweat my chronological age. Forget the clock. Focus on your functional age,” Harkness likes to say.

Amid economic uncertainty in recent years, Harkness has been seeing more clients who have been laid off or who are unhappy in their jobs.

She also sees firsthand the trend of many older workers turning to entrepreneurship as she did many years ago. Now Harkness helps evaluate her clients’ appetite and risk tolerance for starting a business.

“I’m totally motivated to find work for people that has meaning and value for them,” she said. “At my age, if I did not have meaningful work ... I would not be able to get out of bed.”



**Helen Harkness (right)**, owner of Career Design Associates in Garland, consults with Jane Crane.

**Helen Harkness, Ph.D.** is the founder of Garland-based Career Design Associates, Inc. Dr. Harkness provides career coaching and counseling for those seeking to change or redefine their work lives.

Clients include entrepreneurs, career changers, small business owners and executives, as well as high school and college students seeking educational and career direction and focus.

Dr. Harkness is the author of several career books and teaches continuing education courses in Dallas at Southern Methodist University (SMU).

**Books by Helen Harkness, Ph.D.**  
Career Counselor & Author

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