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## **BOOMERS READY TO LAUNCH: METLIFE MATURE MARKET INSTITUTE TAKES FIRST LOOK AT THE BABY BOOMERS TURNING 62**

**A PROFILE OF THEIR FINANCES, RETIREMENT PLANS, RELATIONSHIPS,  
POLITICAL LEANINGS AND MORE**

**Westport, CT – December 27, 2007** – The majority of baby boomers to turn 62 in 2008 report that they are retired or will be fully retired by age 65, that they'll collect Social Security by age 65, that they've been married only once and that they have 2.4 children on average. Of those who have children, 78% have grandchildren (66% of total). Conservatives outnumber liberals by two to one.

“Contrary to what most of us have believed about the baby boomers who came of age in the turbulent 1960s, the group is very much like the ‘Silent Generation’ that preceded them,” said Sandra Timmermann, Ed.D., director of the MetLife Mature Market Institute, which conducted “*Boomers Ready to Launch*,” a profile of the first baby boomers as they turn 62.”

“This is the first time that the oldest baby boomers, including their lifestyles, perceptions and plans have been examined in such detail,” said Timmermann. “Despite the social and political turbulence of their youth, these leading edge boomers have established very traditional lifestyle characteristics. They were married once, had two children and feel they've done a decent job of caring for their family, their community and themselves. They really are more like Ward and June Cleaver than we may have thought and they might be classified as ‘conventional.’ Just 2% say they attended the Woodstock Festival of 1969.”

“They're comfortable being identified as a baby boomer, and contrary to claims that they're not ready to retire, only 18% dislike the term ‘retirement’ to describe their next transition. They have not, however, lost their connection to the youth culture they ignited. On average, as far as they're concerned, they're not really going to be ‘old’ for another 17 years. All in all, this is a fairly affluent group who remain in good health with a lot more left to give.”

The survey reports that the majority (77%) of boomers born in 1946 say they are in good to excellent health; their net worth, (excluding home value) is an average of \$257,800 and their average annual income is approximately \$71,400. They are empty nesters; of those who have children very few have children living with them (fewer than one in five). Of those who have grandchildren, 8% have grandchildren living with them.

On average, the age at which they believe they'll be 'old' is 78, with their health status being a deciding factor. Those in excellent health say they'll be old at 83, while those in poor health put that number at 74. The most popular words they use to describe the best things about being 62 are 'retirement,' and 'not having to work,' and the words used to describe the worst things are 'old age' and 'health problems.' Forty-five percent like the term 'baby boomer' outright and another 38% are somewhat in favor of it; 17% don't like it. As for the term 'retirement,' 52% like it, 31% like it somewhat and 18% don't like it.

Politically, 44% of these baby boomers report that they were and remain conservative; 20% say they were more liberal when they were young, and have become more conservative since their 20's. Twenty-two percent say they have remained liberal, while 15% say they were more conservative and have become more liberal since their younger days.

As a group, these boomers feel they have done a good to excellent job contributing to their communities and 83% say they were good to excellent at providing for their spouses' and children's needs. Fifty-four percent acknowledge doing only a poor to fair job of ensuring that they have adequate coverage for their own long-term care needs.

As for education, 45% have an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.

Only 5% have both parents still living; 27% have one parent. The fact that the remaining sixty-eight percent have neither of their parents living indicates that caregiving for an older relative is no longer a responsibility. Eighty-seven percent say neither they nor their spouse are caregivers to elderly parents or relatives right now. Of the 14% who are caregivers, 16% of them are providing care for more than 20 hours a week – the average number of hours is 9.5. Thirty-eight percent are expecting an inheritance of an average of \$210,000. Thirty-five percent have already received an inheritance of an average of \$113,000.

When asked to use one word to explain the best aspect of being 62, respondents answered: retirement or being close to retirement, being alive, freedom, health, Social Security, wisdom and independence. As one person put it, "I'm glad to be on the planet, rather than in it."

As for the worst aspects, respondents answered: illness (overwhelmingly), disability, wrinkles, aches and pains, discrimination, under-appreciation, memory loss, mortality and generally getting older.

Members of the group who say they will take Social Security at age 62 reasoned that they feel they're entitled and would rather have the money than let the government have it. Respondents reported that they believe it's in their financial interest to take Social Security sooner. Other reasons reported were: they need the money right now and they fear there will be nothing left in the system if they wait.

#### **Additional data that *Boomers Ready to Launch* reports about boomers born in 1946:**

- Thirty-one percent plan to apply for Social Security when they turn 62 and 32% say they will wait until age 66 or beyond when they can receive full benefits.
- Sixty-eight percent say they have employee or retiree health insurance.
- Forty-seven percent are covered by a defined benefit plan, 50% have a 401K, 50% have an IRA.
- Thirty-eight percent have stocks and 38% have mutual funds.
- Twenty-two percent have long-term care insurance.

- Eighty-five percent own their own home.
- The average value of their homes is \$297,900.
- Sixteen percent would consider a reverse mortgage primarily to take care of their own long-term care needs and costs; 74% aware that they are eligible at age 62 to apply for a federally backed reverse mortgage.
- Twenty-five percent say they plan to move to another area for retirement.

A look at the group shows that those born in 1946 were 17 years old in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated and turned 18 the next year, the start of the conflict in Vietnam. Their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays were in 1967, the year of the ‘summer of love,’ and just before the political turmoil of 1968.

Well-known Americans born in 1946 are: President George W. Bush, First Lady Laura Bush, President Bill Clinton, Cher, Diane Keaton, Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, Liza Minnelli, Reggie Jackson, Sally Field, Sylvester Stallone, Donald Trump, Suzanne Somers, Susan Sarandon, Jimmy Buffett, presidential candidate Fred Thompson and the late Gilda Radner.

The MetLife Mature Market Institute survey, *Boomers Ready to Launch*, takes a first look at the leading edge of the baby boomer generation – the first 2.9 million representatives of the 77 million-boomer cohort as they arrive at their first opportunity to officially ‘retire.’ Age 62 is considered a ‘legislative birthday’ because it is the first milestone at which participants in the Social Security system can apply for regular retirement benefits.

*Boomers Ready to Launch* was conducted by GFK Custom Research North America on behalf of the MetLife Mature Market Institute during November 2007. The study consisted of a 15-minute telephone survey of 1,000 participants, from multiple survey panels, who were age 61 in 2007. The survey results were weighted to be representative of the population of 61 year olds in the United States. The margin of error was +/- 3%.

Staffed by gerontologists, The MetLife Mature Market Institute, part of the company’s Retirement Strategies Group, has been providing research, knowledge management, education, and policy support for over ten years to Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, its corporate customers, and business partners. MetLife is a subsidiary of MetLife, Inc. (NYSE: MET), a leading provider of insurance and financial services to individual and institutional customers.

For a summary of the *Boomers Ready to Launch*, please write to the MetLife Mature Market Institute, 57 Greens Farms Road, Westport, CT 06880, call (203) 221-6580 or e-mail: [MatureMarketInstitute@metlife.com](mailto:MatureMarketInstitute@metlife.com). The profile can also be accessed online at <http://www.maturemarketinstitute.com/> under ‘What’s New.’

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