

Easy to get males

From the Science and Technology Desk

OTTAWA (CUP) — Strenuous and regulated exercise can reverse the biological clock in older men,

a Dalhousie University researcher has found.

Physiologist Lydia Makrides tested the endurance of both young and old men of bicycles

and treadmills. She said she was surprised to find that after the test the old men, aged 60 to 70, had reached the level of the 20- to 30-year-olds in physical work capacity.

"The striking thing was their mean physical capacity increased so that they resembled the young men. We didn't expect that at all. It was quite an eye-opener," she said.

"With enough activity, you can in effect be 20 years of age, but actually be 60 chronologically, and I suppose vice versa," she said.

Makrides said all of her test subjects resembled one another in

size, most were non-smokers, and all had a sedentary, or inactive, lifestyle before the tests began. She said her findings counter many assumptions about activity and senior citizens.

"I think it's a sociological thing. When you retire, you're told to lie back and take it easy. The older people found it strange they had to train so intensively," she said. Participants, a dozen in each age group, exercised three times a week throughout the duration.

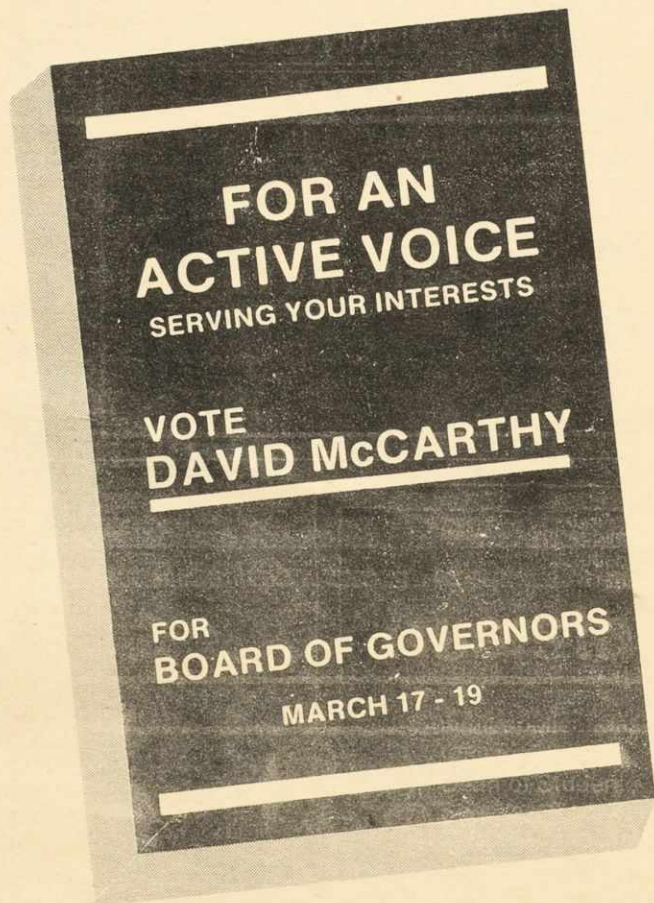
Makrides, whose research won an award at a Toronto sports medicine symposium last summer, said the bodies of the

young men she studied appeared to be much older.

"We had some young men who were computer operators, but had no leisure activities. They were out of shape — their physical ability was similar to 45-year-olds who exercised a little," she said.

Makrides said she studied only men because "I think it's just tradition that it's easier to get males to participate in this sort of thing. Frankly I guess I just played the game. As a woman, I should've looked for other women." She said she "surmised" the results would apply to women as well.

Makrides is using her findings in her current research on cardiac patients.



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