



Over 50, Underestimated: The Grandfluencers Redefining Age on Social Media

By VANESSA WOJTUSIAK

In a world where scrolling endlessly through Gen Z dances, GRWM (“get ready with me”) videos and product hauls have become second nature across social media, a bold and inspiring shift is quietly taking over our feeds.

Meet the “grandfluencers,” a growing wave of creators over the age of 50 who are showing that personal style, life advice and internet fame are not reserved for the young. Right here in Connecticut, three remarkable women are at the forefront of this movement, offering not just content but connection. Their stories are as unique as their voices, yet together they illustrate a shared truth: social media isn’t only for kids.

Through laughter, fashion, food and fearless self-expression, Grandma Droniak, Debbie Allen Wright and Robin Selden have built digital platforms that



Lillian Droniak

entertain, empower and inspire audiences of all ages. In doing so, they’ve shattered outdated ideas about aging and proven that personality is the most powerful filter of all.

At 95 years old, Lillian Droniak, better known as Grandma Droniak, has captivated nearly 15 million TikTok followers with her signature blend of blunt wisdom and bold lipstick. A lifelong Stratford, Conn. resident, Droniak spent her early years working on assembly lines at GE and Sikorsky Aircraft before stepping into the spotlight as a viral sensation. Her videos, which began as a playful project with her grandson to capture her magnetic personality, have since blossomed into a heartfelt and hilarious digital diary. Known for her no-nonsense “funeral rules,” candid dating advice and an uncanny ability to make viewers feel like part of her family, Grandma Droniak has become a beloved figure



At 95 years old, Lillian Droniak captures her social media followers with videos on her takes on dating, getting older and more hilariousness.



across generations. “People just want someone to tell it like it is,” she says. “I remind them that they’re never too old to start something new.”

Beneath her signature fashion and dry wit lies a woman who has witnessed nearly a century of change and chosen to share her voice with unfiltered honesty and unapologetic flair. “I think me being a celebrity online helps people realize your dreams can come true late in life. It’s never too late to become famous,” she says with the matter-of-fact charm only a lifetime of experience can bring.

Though she never set out to become an internet icon, Grandma Droniak’s collaboration with her grandson Kevin sparked a digital legacy that continues to grow. While many of her clips riff on trending sounds or deliver sharp dating commentary, the heart of her content is rooted in personal truth. “I speak from my heart and my own life, and I find everything funny, so I just try and make light of life.” It’s this blend of humor and honesty that has endeared her to a diverse fan base, many of whom reach out calling her their “internet grandma.” “It makes me very happy. I love my fans like

my own grandchildren,” she shares warmly.

Despite her celebrity, Droniak remains refreshingly grounded. She films only when the mood strikes, enjoys online shopping and still holds her own at bingo night. Her personal style, which she describes as “classy, but fun,” reflects a confidence that has only grown brighter with age, marked by vibrant colors and daring



Debbie Allen Wright

choices. When asked what she hopes younger influencers can learn from older creators like herself, her answer is simple and powerful: “To slay every day and not worry about anyone but yourself.”

Though she jokes about death and dating, Grandma Droniak’s content carries deeper messages of resilience, joy and embracing every chapter of life fully. “Life is not as short as people say. It’s long, so make the most of it.” And for anyone thinking about starting their own social media journey? “It might take time to get fans but don’t give up and have fun.”

Debbie Allen Wright, age 58, brings style, soul and genuine warmth to the digital world with thousands of followers on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. As a fashion expert and lifestyle consultant, her vibrant content uplifts local designers, champions personal expression, and encourages women to see themselves with both grace and boldness. What began as simple “closet reinvention” projects—turning existing wardrobes into fresh, inspired outfits—quickly grew into a personal mission to empower others. Through her joyful reels and authentic storytelling, Wright has sparked confidence in first-time models, transformed strangers into friends, and opened doors to teaching roles and fashion show invitations; they are proof of the real connections social media can foster. “I thrive on turning online community into real-life connection,” she says. “People are craving authenticity. That’s what they remember. That’s what sticks.”

Wright approaches social media not with rigid strategy but with a commitment to being true to herself. She celebrates creativity, confidence and the beauty of imperfection. “No one wants to see perfection or something that’s too polished on social media. It’s important to stay true to yourself,” she explains. Her journey began simply with a desire to share her passion for fashion, visiting clients’ homes, creating new outfits from what they already owned, and gradually building a community around accessible style and self-expression.



Credit: @LugLife and QVC



Robin Selden (Credit: Dennis Kwan Photography)

Though she may shy away from the label “influencer,” Wright’s impact speaks for itself. Her work has led to TV appearances on WFSB’s ‘Great Day Connecticut’, teaching opportunities and spontaneous collaborations, like a fashion show invitation that landed in her DMs recently. Proudly rooted in Connecticut, Wright’s content often reflects the region’s style and spirit, showcasing local designers and entrepreneurs and using her platform to uplift her community. “My content reflects Connecticut well. Fashion is part of the culture. I help spread awareness and bring this content to the forefront,” she shares.

Over time, Wright has shed the pressure to be scripted or polished, embracing a freer, more playful approach. Her advice to others? “Don’t take down posts just because they didn’t get enough likes. That’s not reflective of the authentic you.” Her biggest lesson: post with purpose but don’t lose yourself in the scroll. “In the earlier days, I was way more scripted. Now, I just want to be quirky and silly and let people see the real me.” For Wright, this journey isn’t about chasing trends; it’s about building genuine connection, showing up authentically and proving that confidence is always in style.

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Then there's Robin Selden, age 59, the celebrated executive chef and managing partner of Marcia Selden Catering with nearly 15,000 Instagram followers and thousands more in Facebook. The kitchen is her stage and her life is a vibrant celebration of joy and creativity. Selden didn't set out to be an influencer. She simply shares the moments that make her smile: dazzling desserts, elegant tablescapes, and the lively energy of running a woman-led and family-owned business in Stamford. Her Instagram feed isn't about chasing clout; it's curated with heart. Selden invites followers into the beautiful chaos of her daily life. "I'm a woman in my fifties with the energy of someone who just landed their dream job," she says. "Aging isn't something to hide. It's something to celebrate." She shares stories that sparkle with humor and heart, whether about a perfectly plated meal or a follower finding courage to chase their own passion.

Chef, entrepreneur, mom and creative force, Selden's Instagram is a masterclass in living fully and unapologetically. Her social media journey began not as a calculated business move but as a way to showcase the excitement and beauty of her work. From behind-the-scenes moments at spectacular events to candid family snapshots, her posts offer an honest, often hilarious and always heartfelt glimpse into her world. "I post what makes me smile or say, 'OMG, people have to see this,'" she explains.

Her digital presence has opened exciting doors; from Food Network collaborations to new client connections sparked by a single post. However, the real reward lies in the messages from followers who feel seen and inspired. "Someone once told me, 'I don't know you, but I feel like we'd be great friends.' That kind of connection is why I share what I share," Selden recalls.

Facing skepticism as a woman leading in both culinary and social media spheres, Selden meets



Marcia Selden Catering is a family-run catering company run by the Seldens: Marcia (middle), her daughter Robin (right) and her son Jeffrey (left). (Credit: Alexandra Szebenyik / The Sandra Effect)

challenges with humor, resilience and authenticity. "Don't chase trends; chase what lights you up. People connect with passion and honesty, not perfection." Her legacy, she hopes, will be one of joy, generosity and beautifully lived moments. "I want people to remember that I made things beautiful, made them feel something and made them hungry for more than just food—hungry for connection, celebration and a life well-lived."

Through it all, what unites these "grandfluencers" is not just their age but their intention. Their feeds aren't aspirational in the traditional sense; they're inspiring because they are real. They share what makes

them laugh, what makes them cry, and what fills their days and their dreams. And their fans respond with gratitude, admiration and joy. More than anything, they are proof that influence is not about followers or filters.

Because, if you ask them, the secret to staying young might just be this: keep showing up as yourself. With a wink. With a laugh. With fabulous shoes. And maybe a dance in the kitchen while you're at it. ❧

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