

Archives

Steven P. Geiermann, DDS

Obituaries

Dr. Lawrence H. Meskin, DDS, MSD, MPH, PhD, dental educator, researcher, and clinician who served as the editor of *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) throughout the 1990s, died on June 26, 2007. He was 71 years old, having just retired from the University of Colorado barely 2 weeks before his death.

Dr. Meskin received his dental degree from the University of Detroit in 1961, later moving to the University of Minnesota, where he taught for 20 years and earned three more degrees: master of science in oral pathology, master of public health, and doctor of epidemiology. In 1981, he was named dean of the University of Colorado School of Dentistry, serving in that post through 1987. He remained at Colorado thereafter, holding a number of other staff positions, including vice president for academic affairs and research and dean of the dental school's continuing education program. He was a

professor in the University of Colorado Medical School, Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics.

Dr. Meskin was named editor of JADA in 1990 and held the post until December 2001. Dr. Meskin was a member of the American Dental Association (ADA). "We have lost a stalwart of American dentistry," said Dr. Kathleen Roth, ADA president. "Dr. Meskin represented the very best of our profession. He was a caring, thoughtful man, a monumental figure, and a genuinely good person." Although not officially an AAPHD member, Dr. Meskin was a friend of the dental public health community. (*Some information reprinted from the August 2007 edition of JADA with permission from the editor.*)

Dr. George Dudley, DDS, MPH, former state dental director for North Carolina, died on July 22, 2007. He worked for the North Carolina Oral Health Section for many years, first as a field dentist, later as deputy section chief, and finally as section chief from 1979 to 1988, when he retired and

moved to Tennessee to be near his family. Dr. Dudley was a passionate advocate of improved oral health for all North Carolinians, especially children. One of his favorite quotes was "No disease was ever eradicated by a treatment program alone . . . prevention, prevention, prevention." Dr. Dudley was the program chair of the first National Oral Health Conference, which was held in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Dr. Duncan Clark, MD, a public health expert who became a persuasive advocate for adding fluoride to New York City's water supply in the early 1960s, when opponents claimed the health risks far outweighed the rewards, died on August 5, 2007. He was 96.

A specialist in preventive medicine, Dr. Clark raised a learned voice for the benefits to teeth and general health obtained by adding a minute amount of fluoride to the public water. From 1951 to 1978, he was chairman of the department of environmental medicine and community health at the State University of New York's (SUNY) Downstate campus in Brooklyn.

In New York State, there had been experiments with fluoridation as early as the 1940s, most notably in Newburgh. Long-term studies of Newburgh's children showed a decline in cavities of 60–70 percent, without indications of increased rates of cancer, heart disease, or other harmful effects. Even so, opponents delayed fluoridation of New York City's water until 1965.

In 1959 and 1960, Dr. Clark weighed in to argue that fluoridation would be neither unsafe nor too expensive. He cited a 1950s study of children in Philadelphia that demonstrated a 50 percent decline in rates of tooth decay. He also estimated the annual cost of treating cavities at \$2



Dr. Lawrence H. Meskin, DDS, MSD, MPH, PhD



Dr. George Dudley, DDS, MPH

billion, “making teeth the most costly part of the human body.” “For 10 cents or less per person per year,” Dr. Clark told *The New York Times* in 1960, “a large part of this universal disorder could be wiped out.”

Duncan William Clark was born in New York City. He graduated from Fordham University and earned his medical degree from the Long Island College of Medicine in 1936. The college is now part of SUNY Downstate. Dr. Clark was a dean at the Long Island College of Medicine before joining Downstate in 1951. He became a professor emeritus in 1982.

Retirement

Captain Scott M. Presson, DDS, MPH, retired from the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service (PHS) on August 1, 2007, after 30 years of dedicated service. After graduating summa cum laude from the Ohio State University School of Dentistry, he entered the PHS, with assignment to the Indian Health Service (IHS) at the Osage Health Center in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. He then served as dental program chief of one of the first tribally managed health centers in Keshena, Wisconsin. In 1980, Dr. Presson began an Advanced General Practice Residency at the Gallup (NM) Indian Medical Center. Upon completing his residency, he stayed



Captain Scott M. Presson, DDS, MPH

to direct the residency program for 2 years. These community-level experiences helped prepare him to guide 29 tribal programs in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin out of the Bemidji IHS area office.

After receiving a master of public health degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completing a dental public health residency at the IHS Headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, Dr. Presson worked with 23 tribal programs in 11 states out of the Nashville IHS area

office for 10 years. During this time, he served as chair of the IHS Oral Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Committee and as a member of the planning team for two national IHS oral health surveys. In 1998, CDC called Dr. Presson to extend his guidance of disease prevention programs beyond those serving American Indian communities by becoming the leader of the program services team at the Division of Oral Health in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

During the past 9 years, Dr. Presson developed programs to address the challenges faced by state programs in their efforts to improve the nation's oral health. He also guided his CDC team through improvements in service and program development. He has represented the CDC on the ADA National Fluoridation Advisory Committee and its Council on Access, Prevention, and Interprofessional Relations. He also contributed in several capacities to the production of the Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in 2000, planning for the associated workshop and conference, and implementing the 2003 Call to Action. Dr. Presson is chair-elect of the oral health section of the American Public Health Association and intends to remain active in disease prevention and health promotion efforts.

Copyright of Journal of Public Health Dentistry is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.