

ciation; president of ASTDD (1971); president of the AAPHD (1968); and president of the ABDPH (1967).

He was a clinical examiner or investigator in 18 field tests of cariostatic agents, and has published many papers on fluoride and its therapeutic benefits during 1957–70. Because John

could not be with us today, he has graciously donated the \$1,000 that accompanies this award to be used to further dental public health. I have suggested that this donation be used for the association's new fund to support dental public health education. Although John is not here, we do have

with us two individuals who know John much better on a personal and professional basis than me. Herschel Horowitz and Kathy Mangskau have agreed to share some brief anecdotes, after which Dr. Horowitz will receive the Distinguished Service Award on behalf of Dr. Peterson.

Tribute to John K. Peterson Upon His Receiving AAPHD's Distinguished Service Award

Herschel S. Horowitz, DDS, MPH

It gives me great pleasure to have been asked to make a few remarks in connection with John Peterson's being given the 1998 Distinguished Service Award from the American Association of Public Health Dentistry. I respect John Peterson's accomplishments in dental research and public health and consider him a close colleague and friend.

I know John best as an epidemiologist and clinical field investigator who practiced during the halcyon days of clinical studies of dental caries prevention from the late 1950s to about 1980 (1). John built a reputation as a sober, reliable investigator and his services were sought by many industrial groups and government agencies to conduct studies on their behalf. He was a productive researcher, having done many studies of dental caries prevention using various fluoride dentifrices, prophylaxis pastes, professional applications, and phosphate additives to breakfast cereals.

John has excellent organizational and administrative skills and his studies always ran smoothly without hitches. He was innovative in improving field examination techniques, and was among the first, if not *the* first, clinical investigator in the United States to use a fiber optic light attached to a mouth mirror to provide transillumination of approximal tooth surfaces and a head lamp to provide general lighting of subjects' mouths.

I worked jointly with John on two studies. One was a study of examiner variability and the use of radiographs in determining the efficacy of community water fluoridation (2) and the



John K. Peterson

other was a two-year evaluation of an acidulated phosphate-fluoride prophylaxis paste (3). We always got along well together and, during those studies, we had many intellectually stimulating discussions on dental research and dental public health topics.

One of our studies was done in the adjoining cities of Moorhead, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota. The annual examinations were scheduled sometime during the winter and boy, was it cold! Although I was born and reared in a northern climate (Detroit), Fargo-Moorhead in winter taught me what cold really meant. I recall bundling up in all the warm clothing I had brought with me, and on clear, cold nights going for long walks and waiting for the mucous membranes of my nasal passages to crackle in the cold. The examining teams from Minnesota and North Dakota usually had dinner together and often met for preprandial libations in someone's hotel

or motel room (the usual dental public health procedure for "cocktails" during that time, largely because of minuscule per diem rates). One night, John hosted the cocktail hour in his motel room. I was a very unsophisticated early thirty-something-year-old at the time, relatively unused to drinking. After a couple of drinks, I proceeded to sing loudly while jumping up and down on John's motel bed and generally using it as a trampoline. My antics really must have impressed John because, to this day, whenever he sees or talks to Alice or me, he invariably brings up my performance that night.

John has had an interesting and productive career. He is a native Minnesotan and after his formal education all done in Minnesota, in 1950, he became assistant chief, Section of Dental Health, Minnesota State Department of Health, working under Dr. William A. Jordan. Dr. Jordan served as Minnesota's state dental director for many years and conducted a host of important research studies and demonstration projects. He was recognized by the Oral Health Section of the American Public Health Association by receiving its prestigious John W. Knutson Award in 1988. John's experience in working with Bill Jordan undoubtedly was valuable to his future. In 1957 John became director, Division of Dental Health, North Dakota State Department of Health, a position he held until his retirement.

John was very active in various dental public health organizations. He served as a member of the American Board of Dental Public Health from 1963–67. He was president of AAPHD

in 1968 and of both the North Dakota Public Health Association and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors in 1971.

John consulted regularly for various councils of the American Dental Association. He took part in several important workshops and conferences on fluorides and diagnostic criteria for caries studies. We both were part of a few of these convocations. Unlike some of us, who chattered excessively in attempts to make our points, John

generally was quiet until he had something important to say, and then his comments usually were right on the mark. John may be perceived as quiet and has a serious mien, but he possesses a wry and witty sense of humor.

John Peterson is a worthy recipient of AAPHD's Distinguished Service Award. I regret only that he was not able to attend this 1998 Awards Luncheon so that he personally could receive this recognition.

References

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3. Peterson JK, Horowitz HS, Jordan WA, Pugnier V. Effectiveness of an acidulated phosphate fluoride-pumice prophylaxis paste: a two-year report. *J Dent Res* 1969;48:346-50.

Tribute to John K. Peterson Upon His Receiving AAPHD's Distinguished Service Award

Kathleen A. Mangskau, RDH, MPA

I am extremely proud to see Dr. John Peterson named as a recipient of the 1998 AAPHD Distinguished Service Award. When I arrived at the North Dakota Department of Health in 1985 after John's retirement, evidence of his accomplishments were everywhere. There were files of reports on research studies he conducted on various caries preventive methods and agents—including pre- and postfluoridation studies in North Dakota communities, studies of fluoride dentifrices, and studies of school-based sealant applications. In 1985, 92 percent of North Dakota's population on public water systems was receiving fluoridated water—an accomplishment achieved primarily through John's efforts.

John was a dedicated and skilled researcher whose efforts impacted not only North Dakotans, but many Americans. In 1986, when North Da-

kota was celebrating their centennial, John was asked to reflect on changes in oral health. He said, "... overall oral health has improved dramatically. The use of fluoride dentifrice is almost universal. I think this was a major public health accomplishment, and I am proud to have been a contributor to it."

John also is a man of strong conviction. In the early 1980s the Environmental Protection Agency began requiring communities to post public notice advising consumers that the fluoride water content exceeded federal standards, and then to repeat the notice every three months as long as the noncompliance continued. Dr. Peterson sent letters to communities informing them of the new rule, but stating that he did not agree with it. He knew compliance would be no easy task for the 27 small communities he notified. He said it would be "financial suicide" for these small communities to lower the natural fluoride content in

their water. Even finding another water source would be an expensive alternative and would not always result in a better water supply. Across the state headlines in North Dakota newspapers read, "EPA, Health Department Clash on Fluoride Issue."

John didn't give up. He wrote letters to the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Dental Association, and the United States Public Health Service expressing his concern for these small communities. He wrote letters to the EPA requesting exemptions for North Dakota communities, which eventually were granted. These exemptions allowed communities a legal remedy while allowing more time to seek solutions.

I am pleased to take this award back to Dr. Peterson, an individual who has contributed a great deal to dental public health. On his behalf, thank you for this honor.

Written Remarks on Receiving the Distinguished Service Award

John K. Peterson, DDS, MPH

I am amazed to receive this honor 14 years after my retirement and with virtually no contact with AAPHD and

the member friends that I can still remember. I am grateful and especially want to thank Herschel and Alice

Horowitz for not forgetting working with me on several caries and plaque control studies.