

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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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.