

THE HERSCHEL S. HOROWITZ MEMORIAL SYMPOSIUM
National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD, December 17, 2003

Opening Comments

Dushanka V. Kleinman, DDS, MScD

On behalf of Alice Horowitz and family, I welcome you to the Herschel S. Horowitz Memorial Symposium. Today is a celebration, a celebration of the science and legacy of Dr. Herschel Horowitz—"Hersh," as most knew him. We are here to mark Hersh's scientific contributions and to look at the scientific, policy, and programmatic public health challenges he laid out for us to address in the years to come. We also are here to reminisce and recall the Hersh each of us knew—the scientist, the public health expert and advocate, the art collector, the musician, and so much more.

For so many, here and abroad, Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz was a hero, a legend, a treasure, a leader, and a mentor. For Alice Horowitz, Hersh was a loving husband, a kindred spirit, a collaborator, and a cheerleader.

This afternoon we will learn about the incredible dimensions of this man, his extensive contributions to clinical trials, epidemiology, public health, and ethics and more. We also will hear and learn from organizations such as the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, American Dental Association, and the American Association of Public Health Dentistry; we will learn about Hersh's domestic and global contributions; and we will hear personal reflections. We will be enriched as we experience the multiple dimensions of Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz. We will laugh, we will cry, and we will be energized to continue his work. Hersh would expect that of us.

Before we have the speakers begin, I would like to highlight excerpts from letters sent from those who were unable to join us today, but who wanted to have their voices heard.

From Joanne B. Clovis, president, Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry, remembrances are offered:

Canadians, especially those of us who are committed to public health, are indebted to Dr. Horowitz for his scientific expertise, his contributions to the literature on fluoride, his role modeling as an ethical researcher, and his wholehearted advocacy for public health.

Everyone associated Dr. Horowitz with all things fluoride. He had a remarkable impact on students of dental public health and on public health staff, especially those of us who were struggling with the changing understanding of the mechanisms of action of fluoride and the impact of fluoride on caries prevention. For his personal and professional commitment to dental public health, and his mentorship to so many, we are truly grateful.

Excerpts from direct personal quotes from members of the Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry include:

"Public health dentistry is most interesting and most challenging—thankfully we have had mentors and champions like Dr. Horowitz!"

"I remember that he always answered letters that I wrote to him ... even though I was an unknown public health worker in a location that was likely not known to him."

"He amazed me—that he actually came to Alberta, to a rural and unknown location, to share his knowledge of fluoride with those of us who were doing our best to understand its magic ... He was exemplary in his willingness to share his understanding and to guide others in their journeys."

From Dr. Ernest Newbrun, professor emeritus, University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry:

I have known Hersh since he came to San Francisco as Chief of the Epidemiology Branch at the Dental Health Center in 1966. He was an esteemed colleague, a renowned researcher, a dedicated teacher, and a beloved friend ... Hersh enriched all our lives enormously, and all those who knew him will cherish his memory.

From Dr. John Greene, former chief dental officer, US Public Health Service and former dean, University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry:

Hersh was a real treasure in so many ways and I have lost a valued friend and colleague. His research and scientific articles were so elegant they could almost be described as works of art. Not abstract art but precise and realistic. His contributions to the scientific literature are a great legacy and have had an impact on the oral health worldwide....

From Ms. Jane Forsberg Jasek, manager, Access and Community Health, American Dental Association:

What I adored about Hersh is that he was the "Real Deal." Hersh was brilliant and also completely genuine ... Hersh was always accessible when I needed his counsel. He knew this simple fact—what good were all those valuable data stored in his head if they were not readily shared?

These and other comments resonate with the same accolades of Hersh's marvelous characteristics, his passion, and his contributions to individuals, organizations, and to public health.

This memorial symposium is a celebration of his science and his legacy.

We are delighted to have in our audience family, friends, and colleagues. Let me introduce the family members who have come from California and Michigan—Alice and Hersh's home states, respectively. On Alice's side of the family we are honored to have her granddaughters, children, and sister: Alice's sister, Dee Littrell; Alice's daughter, Jan Coulter, and Jan's daughter, Kyla; Alice's son,

Robert Johnson, and his daughters, Monica and Alissa. Also we are honored to have Hersh's niece, Susan Levin and her husband, Howard, and Hersh's nephew, Larry Bliss, join us.

We also have individuals who did not have the opportunity to know Hersh, but are here because of his work. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the residents of the NIDCR Dental Public Health Residency Program, a program launched by Hersh many years ago. In addition, Alice, yesterday Surgeon General

Richard Carmona asked me to convey his salutations to you and your family on this occasion. He is extremely appreciative of all the work you are doing on health literacy, an area that is a cross-cutting theme of his tenure as surgeon general.

On behalf of Alice, I would like to express our appreciation to all who have traveled so far to come to today's symposium and to all who made this symposium possible. Let us begin this celebration.