



Selected Papers of William L. White

www.williamwhitepapers.com

Collected papers, interviews, video presentations, photos, and archival documents on the history of addiction treatment and recovery in America.

Citation: White, W. (2013). Fallen giants: The loss of addiction treatment and recovery pioneers in the United States. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 31(4), 495-502. Posted at www.williamwhitepapers.com

Commentary Fallen Giants: The Loss of Addiction Treatment and Recovery Pioneers in the United States

William L. White

Emeritus Senior Research Consultant
Chestnut Health Systems
bwhite@chestnut.org

If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

--Isaac Newton, 1675

The recent death of Griffith Edwards, MD (1928-2012), psychiatrist, addiction specialist, and long-standing editor of *Addiction*, forced me to pause to reflect on the many modern pioneers of addiction treatment who have died over the span of my career. Based in the UK, Griffith Edwards made innumerable contributions to the study of addiction. His conceptualization of alcohol dependence exerted a profound influence on modern diagnostic schemas for substance use disorders and he was a commanding presence on the international drug policy front for more than four decades. But equally important was the mentoring that he offered to many addiction specialists throughout the world, including this author. He and other giants of the addiction field are deeply missed.

The rise of addiction as a modern specialty field of knowledge and practice over the course of the past half century was forged through intersecting social and professional movements. These movements were led by pioneers in the arenas of mutual aid, public education and advocacy, social policy, scientific research, primary and secondary prevention, clinical practice, professional education, and program management and administration. It is fitting that we pause as a field and acknowledge the contributions of such pioneers. This short essay will focus on a few such pioneers from the United States.

Anyone with substantial tenure in the modern addictions field has witnessed the passing of leaders whose lives exerted an enormous influence on the evolution of addiction treatment and recovery in the U.S. We have seen the passing of leaders from major addiction recovery mutual aid societies, including Alcoholics Anonymous

co-founder Bill Wilson, 1895-1971, Al-Anon co-founder Lois Wilson, 1891-1988, Narcotics Anonymous co-founder Jimmy Kinnon, 1911-1985, and Women for Sobriety founder Jean Kirkpatrick, 1923-2000. There are the prominent celebrities, such as Lillian Roth, 1910-1980, and Jason Robards, 1922-2000, who challenged prevailing stereotypes about addiction and addiction recovery through public disclosure of their own recovery stories. There are the policy advocates who politically nurtured the birth and evolution of modern addiction treatment (e.g., Marty Mann, 1904-1980, Senator Harold Hughes, 1922-1996, Senator Paul Wellstone, 1944-2002). There are those whose philanthropy supported the drive for such policy changes (e.g., Brinkley Smithers, 1907-1994; Joan Kroc, 1928-2003).

Those with long tenure in the field have witnessed the passing of early pioneers of occupational alcoholism programming (Dr. John Norris, 1900-1985; Dr. Luther Cloud, 1921-1991), those who contributed to our understanding of the sociology of addiction (e.g., Dr. Selden Bacon, 1908-1992; Dr. Alfred Lindesmith, 1905-1991; Don Cahalan, 1912-1992; Dr. David Pittman, 1928-2002), and perhaps the first modern addiction information specialist (Mark Keller, 1907-1995). We have seen the passing of early addiction medicine specialists (e.g., Dr. Ruth Fox, 1896-1989; Dr. Marvin Block, 1903-1989; Dr. Frank Seixas, 1920-1992) and addiction psychiatrists (e.g., Dr. Harry Tiebout, 1896-1966; Dr. Norman Zinberg, 1922-1989). We have lost the early generation of alcoholism educators (e.g., Raymond McCarthy, 1901-1964; Father James Royce, S.J. 1915-1996; Reverend Joseph Kellerman, 1910-1933). We have witnessed the passing of leaders who championed new intervention techniques (e.g., Reverend Vernon Johnson, 1920-1999) and led the development and evolution of new treatment models, (e.g., Dr. Dan Anderson, 1921-2003; Dr. Nelson Bradley, 1917-1983; Richard Caron, 1914-1975; Charles Dederich, 1913-1997; Geraldine Delaney, 1907-1998; Sister Mary Ignatia Gavin, 1889-

1966; and Dr. Marie Nyswander, 1919-1986). The field has also witnessed the loss of modern addiction research pioneers (e.g., Dr. Sidney Cohen, 1911-1987; E.M. Jellinek, 1890-1963; Dr. Lawrence Kolb, 1881-1972). And we have witnessed the passing of iconic drug enforcement figures (i.e., Harry Anslinger, 1892-1975).

The pace at which we are losing the modern pioneers of addiction treatment and recovery in the U.S. has quickened in recent years, particularly the leaders who shaped the field's coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s and went on to devote their lives to this field. Here are brief profiles of some of the distinguished leaders we have lost in the past decade.

Nathan Azrin, PhD (1931-2013), conducted landmark studies on the application of behavior principles to the treatment of alcoholism following his training at Harvard under the tutelage of B.F. Skinner. His studies at Anna State Hospital in Illinois led to the development of the community reinforcement approach (CRA) to the treatment of addiction.

LeClair Bissell, MD (1928-2008), was an influential leader in the rebirth of addiction medicine in the United States. She was an early advocate of specialized treatment for women, conducted pioneering studies on alcoholism among professionals, and co-authored the groundbreaking *Ethics for Addiction Professionals*. For decades, she was a leading voice on alcoholism treatment policies and practices.

Alex Brumbaugh (1942-2013), was director of Project Recovery and a prominent recovery advocate. His recovery advocacy activities included participation in the history making 2001 Recovery Summit that launched the new addiction recovery advocacy movement and authoring two notable books—*Transformation and Recovery* and his about-to-be-released *Praxis of Recovery*.

Morris Chafetz, MD (1924-2011), was a vocal advocate in the late 1960s for creating the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and served as NIAAA's first Director. He was

responsible for forging the federal-state-local partnership through which local alcoholism programs rose across the American landscape. Under his leadership, federal resources devoted to alcoholism treatment grew exponentially, and the foundation was laid for the modern era of alcoholism research. Dr. Chafetz authored more than 200 articles and 14 books on alcoholism, including *The Alcoholic Patient: Diagnosis and Management*.

John Chappel, MD (1931-2011), was a notable figure within modern addiction medicine. He crossed ideological divides within the field by simultaneously championing methadone maintenance treatment and the role of spirituality and 12-Step participation in long-term addiction recovery. He was a strong advocate of addiction training for physicians and in the early 1980s led development of the first certification exam for addiction medicine specialists.

Herman Diesenhaus, PhD (1938-2006), is best known for his role as a senior public health analyst at the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. While serving as the Associate Director of the Institute for Medicine, Dr. Diesenhaus helped draft and edit the highly influential report, *Broadening the Base of Treatment for Alcohol Problems*.

Vincent Dole, MD (1913-2006), in collaboration with Drs. Marie Nyswander and Mary Jeanne Kreek, pioneered the use of methadone maintenance in the treatment of opioid addiction. He also served as a non-alcoholic trustee on the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Dole advocated treating addiction on par with diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic medical disorders.

Kaye Middleton Fillmore, PhD (1941-2013), conducted landmark studies on changes in drinking patterns over the life course that added important new insights into the natural remission of alcohol problems. Her longitudinal studies of drinking practices conducted through the Alcohol Research Group, the University of California at San Francisco, and the Institute for Scientific Analysis exerted significant and

sustained influences on the international field of alcohol research.

Mrs. Betty Ford (1918-2011) and former President Gerald Ford announced to the nation in April 1978 that Mrs. Ford had been treated and was recovering from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. Four years later, the Betty Ford Center opened and went on to become an American cultural institution—a symbol of hope and healing for those seeking recovery from addiction. Mrs. Ford's openness about her addiction exerted a profound influence on the history of recovery in the U.S., particularly the public perception of women in recovery.

Avram Goldstein, MD (1919-2012), through his work at Stanford University and the Addiction Research Foundation, conducted pioneering work on the neurobiology of addiction. His research included collaborations that led to the discovery of endogenous opioid peptides and opioid receptor sites. He was an early advocate of addiction as a brain disease that merited and warranted competent and compassionate treatment rather than punishment. His landmark works include *Addiction: From Biology to Drug Policy*.

Bill Iron Moccasin, Lakota (1921-2004), served as an honored member of the Council of Elders that guided the birth and development of the modern Native American Wellbriety Movement. His sage advice and teachings helped lay the foundation of a vibrant movement that continues to promote and celebrate sobriety, health, wholeness, and cultural revitalization within Indian communities.

James Kemper, Jr. (1914-2002) served as chief executive and chairman of Kemper Insurance Companies between 1969 and 1979. He used his own recovery from alcoholism as a platform for pioneering an employee assistance program and a framework for insurance coverage for the treatment of alcoholism that became national models.

Allen "Skip" Land (1942-2012) was the Chief Operating Officer of Chicago's A Safe Haven and Cofounder of the Illinois Association of Extended Care. His greatest passions were housing and recovery support

services for addicted persons who were homeless or re-entering the community from prison. His advocacy for people seeking recovery in the Midwest and nationally was so effective, he was often introduced with warm affection as “Mr. Recovery.”

Charles Lieber, MD (1931-2009), conducted landmark studies on the metabolism of alcohol and the biological aspects of alcoholism, including the first studies confirming alcohol as a liver toxin. He published more than 900 papers and 15 books over the course of his career and was the driving force behind the creation of one of the leading addiction journals, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

George Mann, MD (1923-2012), was founder, Executive Director, and Medical Director of St. Mary’s Hospital Chemical Dependency Program and founder of The Retreat. He was an influential figure in the evolution of the Minnesota Model of treatment and a beloved teacher at Rutgers Summer School of Alcohol Studies and at the University of Minnesota.

Ira Marion (1945-2013) was a methadone maintenance patient who went on to administer Albert Einstein College of Medicine’s methadone maintenance program. He was a tireless advocate for patient-centered medication-assisted treatment of opioid addiction. Long known as a leading advocate of methadone patient rights, he served on the board of NAMA-Recovery and supported the development of the Medication Assisted Recovery Support (MARS) project—a collaborative effort between NAMA-Recovery and Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Alan Marlatt, PhD (1941-2011), conducted pioneering research on the use of cognitive-behavioral therapy in the treatment of addiction. His classic works spanned the arenas of relapse prevention, moderation goals, and self-control skills for non-dependent drinkers, harm reduction strategies for people who choose to continue alcohol and other drug use, and mindfulness meditation as a tool in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

Father Joseph C. Martin (1924-2009), following his own treatment for

alcoholism at Guest House in 1958, became an indefatigable speaker on alcoholism. He is perhaps best known for his “Chalk Talk on Alcoholism,” which when released in 1972, went on to become perhaps the most widely viewed film ever produced on alcoholism. Father Martin was a central figure in the rise of modern alcoholism treatment and later, with Mrs. Mae Abraham, founded Father Martin’s Ashley, a non-profit addiction treatment program in Havre de Grace, Maryland.

Mercedes McCambridge (1916-2004) used her status as an award-winning actress and recovering alcoholic to advocate for the treatment of alcoholism as a medical condition. Her public story of recovery inspired many women to seek help for alcoholism. She offered influential Senate testimony in 1969 in support of legislation that a year later laid the foundation for modern community-based alcoholism treatment.

Monsignor Ignatius McDermott (1909-2004), known affectionately as “Father Mac” and the “Skid Row Priest,” co-founded Haymarket Center—the first social setting detoxification program in Illinois that later evolved into a comprehensive addiction treatment program. Father Mac regularly drew inspiration from and often recited in his speeches the words of St. Vincent DePaul: “When you no longer burn with love, others will die of the cold.”

Jack Mendelson, MD (1929-2007), played a significant role in the rise of modern addiction treatment as an administrator (Chief, National Center for Prevention and Control of Alcoholism; Director, McLean Hospital’s Clinical Research on Substance Abuse), educator (Harvard University Department of Psychiatry), and research scientist (e.g., early investigations into the effects of buprenorphine on heroin self-administration). Dr. Mendelson championed the study and treatment of alcoholism and other addictions as a medical disorder.

Lonnie Mitchell, PhD (1927-1997), led the efforts of the newly created National Institute on Drug Abuse to recruit and prepare the nation’s addiction treatment workforce. He and his state and local

partners forged a system of education, training, and credentialing of what was at the time a primarily “paraprofessional ex-addict” workforce while at the same time recruiting and training physicians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers to collaborate with the “new profession” of addiction counseling in newly created addiction treatment programs.

Harold (Hal) Mulford, Jr, PhD (1922-2012), was an iconoclastic sociologist from the University of Iowa’s Department of Psychiatry who conducted early studies on public attitudes toward alcoholism. He went on to pioneer a unique community response to alcohol problems that relied on community alcoholism consultants who worked to enhance natural recovery. This model served as an early alternative to the disease model of alcoholism treatment).

David Musto, MD (1936-2010), served for most of his career as professor of the history of medicine at Yale School of Medicine. He also served as a drug policy advisor under Presidents Nixon and Carter. Dr. Musto published his classic text, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*, in 1983 and went on to become the most renowned scholar on American drug policy. His sophisticated scholarship and his gracious personality made him one of the few people widely respected from all corners of the often highly vitriolic debates about U.S. drug policy. *The American Disease* remains must reading for anyone working in the addictions field.

Nancy Moyer Olson, (1930-2005), served as the legislative aide to Senator Harold Hughes and played a key role in drafting the legislation that established the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Her experiences during this critical turning point in the history of alcoholism treatment in the U.S. are recounted in her book, *With a Lot of Help from our Friends: The Politics of Alcoholism*.

Don Ottenberg, MD (1919-2004), through his prolonged leadership at Eagleville Hospital, was a pioneer in the integrated treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction at a time these were isolated and

competing fields. He was an influential figure in the early therapeutic community movement and the larger arena of residential addiction treatment. Following his retirement from Eagleville, Dr. Ottenberg and his wife Martha trained addiction counselors in Europe and Africa.

Riley Regan (1935-2012) embodied numerous aspects of the modern alcoholism movement by comfortably wearing his recovery status and serving as the founding director of the New Jersey Division of Alcoholism and in his subsequent positions as long-time faculty member at the Rutgers Center for Alcohol Studies, Director of the Maryland Alcoholism Control Administration, Deputy Director of the National Center for Alcohol Education, and five-year member of the National Advisory Council of NIAAA.

Ann Richards (1933-2006), best known as the outspoken Governor of Texas, championed numerous causes during her long political career all the while living openly as a person in long-term recovery from alcoholism—26 years of sobriety at the time of her death. Her candor about her recovery challenged the prolonged stigma attached to women and alcoholism. While Governor, she visited the prison- and community-based treatment programs she had politically supported and simply introduced herself as, “My name is Ann, and I’m an alcoholic.”

Lee Robins, PhD (1922-2010), led the Epidemiologic Catchment Area studies that laid the foundation for modern longitudinal studies of the prevalence of substance use disorders. Her classic study of Vietnam veterans returning home after having been addicted to narcotics during their military service sparked growing interest in the phenomena of “natural recovery”—the resolution of addiction without professional treatment.

Bruce Rounsaville, MD (1949-2011), served as Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Research—Substance Abuse Division at the Yale School of Medicine, Director of the VA Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, and Director of the Psychotherapy Development Research Center and Clinical Scientist

Training Program in Substance Abuse. His most widely recognized contributions were reflected in the publication of more than 350 papers/chapters and six books, including *Diagnostic Source Book on Drug Abuse Research and Treatment*.

Mel Schulstad (1918-2012), following his retirement from the U.S. Air Force and the beginning of his own recovery from alcoholism, became a central figure in the professionalization of addiction counseling in the United States. He was the founding president of NAADAC: The Association for Addiction Professionals and worked tirelessly into his 90s to elevate the quality of addiction treatment. One of his final contributions to the field was co-authorship of *Beyond the Influence: Understanding and Defeating Alcoholism*. At the time of his death, he had 46 years of continuous sobriety.

Charles Robert Schuster, PhD (1930-2011), was a pioneer in the field of behavioral pharmacology. He held academic positions at the University of Michigan, the University of Maryland, the University of Chicago, Wayne State University, and Loyola University. He served as Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) from 1986-1992. His work on the underlying principles that governed addictive behavior set the stage for later work on addiction as a brain disease and for non-punitive responses to drug addiction.

Harold "Harry" Swift, MSW (1937-2013), joined the staff of Hazelden in 1966 and became a leading advocate for family programming within addiction treatment. After his appointment as CEO in 1986, he led numerous Hazelden expansion efforts.

Lisa Mojer Torres, JD (1957-2011), was a methadone maintenance patient who became a civil rights lawyer and unrelenting patient advocate through her role as Consumer and Recovery Advocate for the New Jersey Division of Addiction Services. Widely viewed as the "Rosa Parks of medication-assisted treatment," she served on numerous national drug policy advisory committees and was the founding President of the Board of Faces and Voices of Recovery—the leading recovery advocacy

organization in the United States. She co-authored the monograph *Recovery-Oriented Methadone Maintenance*.

James West, MD (1914-2012), was co-founder of Haymarket Center in Chicago and the first Medical Director of the Betty Ford Center. He was one of the modern pioneers of addiction medicine. Quite open about his own recovery from alcoholism, he went on to create clinical breakthroughs in alcoholism detoxification and treatment. His most noted publication, *The Betty Ford Center Book of Answers*, grew out of a regular question and answer column, *Sober Days*, written for the *Desert Sun Newspaper* in Palm Springs, CA. He remained active in the field until his death at age 98.

Several things distinguish the individuals profiled in this article: a willingness to question prevailing beliefs and practices; the ability to articulate seminal and profoundly influential ideas via publications and presentations; a passion for integrating the worlds of scientific research, clinical practice, and recovery support; a deep interest in and willingness to support the work of others; a high level of personal integrity and ethical sensitivity; and a level of humility that belies their enormous accomplishments. To these pioneers who have passed, we pause to acknowledge again: Your commitment and competence helped shape the future of addiction treatment and recovery in America. A grateful field and those it is dedicated to serve thank you for your service. We who have been blessed by your presence in the world must now carry forward your legacies.