

2022 National Conference on Tobacco or Health

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Primary Presenter

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Biography Since founding the first physicians' anti-smoking activist organization Doctors Ought to Care (DOC) in 1977, Dr. Blum has given over 2000 invited presentations on tobacco and has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles. As editor of the Medical Journal of Australia and the New York State Journal of Medicine, he produced the first theme issues on the world tobacco pandemic at any journal. In 1988 he received the Surgeon General's Medallion from Dr. C. Everett Koop, who wrote, "Dr. Blum has done more against smoking than anyone." In 2006 Amherst College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Science for his career-long effort to combat the tobacco industry. Since 1998, he has served as Professor of Family Medicine and Director of the Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society (csts.ua.edu), the most comprehensive archive of original documents and ephemera of the tobacco industry and the anti-smoking movement throughout the past century.

Have you ever been employed by or received any funding from the tobacco industry (including manufacturers of tobacco products, the Tobacco Institute, law firms, or other interests representing tobacco companies to conduct research or provide consultation), the pharmaceutical industry (including producers of smoking cessation products), or another for-profit healthcare company that sells products or conducts research relevant to tobacco control policies (including e-cigarette manufacturers or marketing companies)?: I have not received any funding from these entities.

Please provide additional detail explaining the funding received and your relationship with the entity. If your abstract is accepted, you will be required to complete and sign a disclosure of conflicts of interest form providing this detail and more of these relationships.:

Co-Presenter 1

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Bio Kevin Bailey has been the Collection Manager and Digital Archivist for the University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society since 2018. He has designed 20 digital exhibitions, catalogued more than 30 of the Center's themed collections on aspects of the world tobacco pandemic, overseen the Center's oral history recordings, and produced several educational videos.

Have you ever been employed by or received any funding from the tobacco industry (including manufacturers of tobacco products, the Tobacco Institute, law firms, or other interests representing tobacco companies to conduct research or provide consultation), the pharmaceutical industry (including producers of smoking cessation products), or another for-profit healthcare company that sells products or conducts research relevant to tobacco control policies (including e-cigarette manufacturers or marketing companies)?: I have not received any funding from these entities.

Please provide additional detail explaining the funding received and your relationship with the entity. If your abstract is accepted, you will be required to complete and sign a disclosure of conflicts of interest form providing this detail and more of these relationships.:

Session Information

Poster Session:

Panel Presentation (75 minutes): Yes

Individual Presentation (20 minutes):

Session Title: "Fault!" How Virginia Slims and the "Original 9" set back women's health

Session Abstract: please provide a brief (500 words or less) description of this proposed session. Please note that if your abstract is accepted this description may be published in meeting materials as is, or may be edited for clarity or brevity.: PURPOSE: 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of the Virginia Slims Women's Professional Tennis Circuit, the first sport to be named after a cigarette brand. This illustrated presentation traces the evolution of the adverse health impact of this lucrative tobacco sponsorship and the efforts by grassroots groups to throw cigarettes out of sports. BACKGROUND: In the early 20th century, tobacco companies capitalized on tennis' popularity by using images of leading players on trading cards that came with cigarette packs. From the 1910s to the 1990s, tennis was a theme used in advertising for several cigarette brands. In 1968, four years after the publication of the landmark Surgeon General's Report that indicted cigarette smoking as a principal cause of lung cancer and other diseases--and just as the first anti-smoking messages were beginning to appear on TV, Philip Morris introduced Virginia Slims cigarettes, marketed to women in a campaign that melded smoking, the budding feminist movement, and women's insecurity about their body image. The die was cast for devastating health consequences in women in ensuing decades. While smoking rates among men began declining in the 1970s, women's smoking rates rose. By 1987, lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer deaths among women. Although lung cancer rates among men have been declining for the past 20 years, lung cancer rates among women has not declined. By the late-1960s, in spite of the growing popularity of women's professional tennis, most tournaments offered far less prize money to women than to men. In 1970, Gladys Heldman, founder of World Tennis magazine, and her fellow Santa Fe, New Mexico resident Joe Cullman, chairman of the board of cigarette manufacturer Philip Morris, helped nine players organize a new professional women's tennis tour, sponsored by Philip Morris. The company knew it could circumvent Congress' 1971 ban on TV cigarette commercials through this title sponsorship. PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNITY RESPONSE: The fledgling anti-smoking movement—then focused on banning smoking in public places—did not react until 1978 when members of the University of Miami School of Medicine chapter of DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), made the first "house call" on the Virginia Slims Tennis Tournament in Hollywood, Florida. In the 1980s and 1990s, DOC, Smokefree Educational Services, Massachusetts GASP, and chapters of NOW (National Organization for Women) stepped up their protests. After the Slims tour ended in 1995, Philip Morris created the Virginia Slims Legends seniors tour featuring several of the original nine players including Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, and Martina Navratilova. Female entertainers Liza Minelli and Barbara Mandrell performed pre-Virginia Slims Legends event concerts. The beneficiary for some Legends events was AmFAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research). King, the most famous of the "Original 9," became America's leading female athlete role model. From 1999 to 2004, she also sat on the board of directors of Philip Morris. She has never expressed remorse over lending of her name to the promotion of cigarette smoking to women for the past fifty years.

Supporting session documentation (OPTIONAL): If you have additional documentation that you believe is critical for reviewers to have in order to evaluate your submission (i.e. journal article, poster design), you may choose to upload that document here. (Word, PDF, .jpeg, or Excel files may be uploaded.: 305038-2-80782-619bd6d0-d6d3-4bb6-b85b-805d6117667a.docx

Learning Objective #1: As a result of attending this presentation, participants will be able to describe the evolution of strategies used by tobacco companies to target women through sports sponsorship

Learning Objective #2: Participants will be able to list efforts to end tobacco sponsorship of women's professional tennis and its circumvention of the broadcast ban on cigarette advertising.

Learning Objective #3: Participants will be able to cite the association between the onset of Virginia Slims' sponsorship of women's professional tennis and the lag in the decline of cigarette smoking in women--and the concomitant rise in lung cancer among women.