

The Journal of Medical Activism

Volume 12 Number 1

November 1997

McGovern Foundation Lends Support



The John P. McGovern Foundation in Houston, Texas has long been supporting DOC's many activities. We are most thankful for Dr. McGovern's recent contribution to support DOC's efforts to transform its tobacco archive into a national tobacco museum.

Dr. McGovern graduated medical school from Duke University in 1945. His philosophy and purpose in medicine was perhaps best summarized during his interview for admission to Duke Medical School when he told the admissions committee: "I like people and science and I want to put the two together in service as a physician."

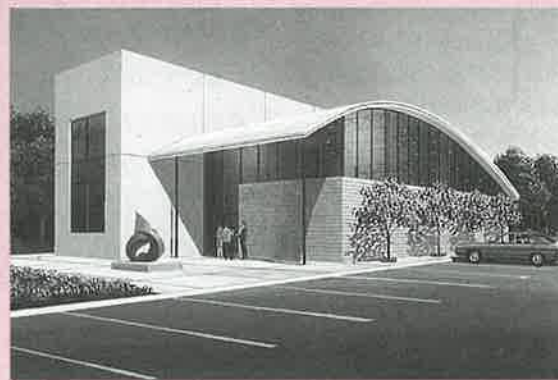
Dr. McGovern went on to Yale Medical School as an intern in

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DOC Celebrates 20th Anniversary, Announces Plans for National Tobacco Museum



A rendering of one possible 10,000 sq. ft. building, done by Kirksey & Partners Architects of Houston.

While DOC was not formally recognized as a non-profit organization until September, 1977, the groundwork had begun nearly fifteen years earlier when the first Surgeon General's Report on *Smoking and Health* was released in 1964.

At that time, DOC's founder, Dr. Alan Blum, was in high school. As editor of his school newspaper he wrote a commentary entitled "Childish Habit" in which he referred to an editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. "Reduction of cigarette smoking can be achieved only if today's non-smokers never start," noted the *JAMA* editorial, to which Blum added, "While teenagers on the whole acknowledge cigarette smoking to be a serious health hazard, they are being duped by the continuous flood of advertising without realizing that the diseases caused by smoking can actually affect them."

It was Blum's late father, a general practitioner for nearly forty years until his death in 1969, who had pointed out the *JAMA* editorial. Blum's father also suggested that he tape record all those delightful TV and radio jingles for cigarettes, such as "Winston tastes good like a cigarette should" and "Happiness is Kent" which were played over and over each night on prime-time family, sports, and news programs.

"One day, my father predicted, society will look back on our era of supposedly great scientific advances and laugh: imagine a race of people who would thus continue to advertise a lethal product and offer tremendous financial incentives to devise new promotional propaganda which would ultimately negate much of the progress the medical profession has accomplished for the world," recalls Blum.

While Blum's father provided the initial motivation to begin exploring the tobacco issue, other motivating factors led Blum to begin organizing health

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A Publication of

Doc

Doctors Ought to Care

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professionals into taking action. As a medical student at Emory University in 1974, Blum was asked to present information on smoking for a television series organized by Emory entitled, "The Killer Habits: Smoking, Drinking, Over-eating." He showed the usual shocking slides of lung cancer, emphysema, and coronary artery disease, but his primary focus was getting the audience to make the connection between these diseases and the promotional strategies of tobacco companies. Blum illustrated how the tobacco industry had responded to the early reports in the medical literature documenting the health problems associated with smoking—"More Doctors Smoke Camels Than Any Other Cigarette," "Many Leading Nose and Throat Specialists Suggest Change to Philip Morris," and "L & M, Just What the Doctor Ordered." Those were the examples of cigarette advertisements Blum had found in medical journals, which led him to make the statement that tobacco companies were in fact our leading health educators.

The Journal of Medical Activism is a publication of Doctors Ought to Care. DOC is a coalition of health professionals and other concerned individuals helping to educate the public, especially young people, about the major preventable causes of poor health and high medical costs. Our focus is the "killer habits" with a particular emphasis on counteracting the promotion of tobacco and alcohol. DOC's professional aim is to tap the highest possible level of commitment and involvement in their communities from physicians, medical students, other health professionals, business leaders and all other citizens. DOC is unique among health organizations in being solely concerned with health promotion, and has pioneered the concept of paid advertising aimed at reducing lethal lifestyles. For more information write:

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"One day, my father predicted, society will look back on our era of supposedly great scientific advances and laugh: imagine a race of people who would thus continue to advertise a lethal product and offer tremendous financial incentives to devise new promotional propaganda which would ultimately negate much of the progress the medical profession has accomplished for the world,"

Alan Blum, MD

Having succeeded in shifting the focus of this issue away from simply individuals who smoke and onto the cigarette manufacturers and their blitzkrieg of advertising and promotion, Blum also realized that the problem didn't lie solely within the tobacco industry. Part of the impetus for DOC was the fact that very little was being done to counteract the nation's leading health problem. Blum had been challenging health organizations, government agencies, and the medical profession to do something about the tobacco issue, aside from producing pamphlets about the dangers of smoking. In 1977, the year DOC was founded, at least one local American Cancer Society division was still benefiting from the Virginia Slims Tennis Tournament, and the American Medical Association was just wrapping up a 14-year-long collaborative research program with six tobacco companies who had donated \$18 million to fund the project.

Despite being shunned initially by the medical profession, DOC began to grow and, more importantly, began to be heard. Shortly after founding DOC, Blum was joined by two physicians, Dr. Rick Richards and Dr. Tom Houston, who helped DOC spread into other communities. During the past twenty years, DOC has established more than 150 chapters in 27 countries.

While DOC is perhaps best known for its activist strategies, specifically counter-advertising and

"housecalls" (protests) made at tobacco-sponsored sports and cultural events, there is an academic side to DOC that few know about. The individuals who have made up DOC's Board of Directors account for more than 250 publications on the subject of smoking in peer-reviewed journals—more than 70 of those by Blum alone. DOC has had a major presence at the past six World Conferences on Smoking and Health (held every three years), and at more than 3,000 local, state, and national conferences addressing the tobacco issue.

More than twelve years ago, after more than two decades of studying the tobacco industry like a parasitic disease—monitoring, documenting, and saving every bit of information—the organization established the DOC Tobacco Archive and International Resource Center. This vast collection of materials—documenting the history of tobacco use, the influence of tobacco advertising on society, and the efforts to counteract the tobacco industry—was reorganized in 1994, thanks to generous gifts made by the Everett Foundation and Dr. Richard Sugden. These contributions assisted DOC in organizing materials to better serve as an international

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resource and research center for individuals and organizations working on the tobacco issue.

This socio-cultural resource on the tobacco issue is, in effect, a continuous laboratory, monitoring the issue from all vantage points. Covering a period of more than a century the collection makes possible the kind of research that would otherwise be practically impossible.

The materials naturally serve the establishment of a museum, and in October, 1996, DOC's Board of Directors set the goal of a national tobacco museum by the year 2,000. In April, 1997 DOC launched its "Millennium Campaign" to raise the funds needed for the museum.

This will not be the first tobacco museum. Indeed, there are many scattered throughout the world (supported largely by the tobacco industry) that explore the history of tobacco and the diversity of cultures that have shaped and have been shaped by tobacco trade. For example, the Museum of Tobacco Art and History in Nashville, Tennessee, supported by United States Tobacco (UST), features a unique collection of pipes and other artifacts from every part of the world and traces "the history of tobacco dating from pre-Columbian times." The Swedish Tobacco Museum (in Gubbyllan, Skansen), supported by Svenska Tobaks S. A. (Swedish Tobacco Company) documents the "prosperity for the tobacco industry" in Europe and tobacco's contributions to governments and militaries. In Tokyo, Japan the Tobacco and Salt Museum opened its doors in 1978 and traces the early history of tobacco use and trade in European and Asian countries, celebrating the growing use and industry of tobacco that would reach Japan sometime between 1570 and 1595.

In not a single tobacco-industry museum is there an accurate reference to the devastating health and economic toll taken by tobacco use, nor an account of the public health efforts during the past century to counteract tobacco use.

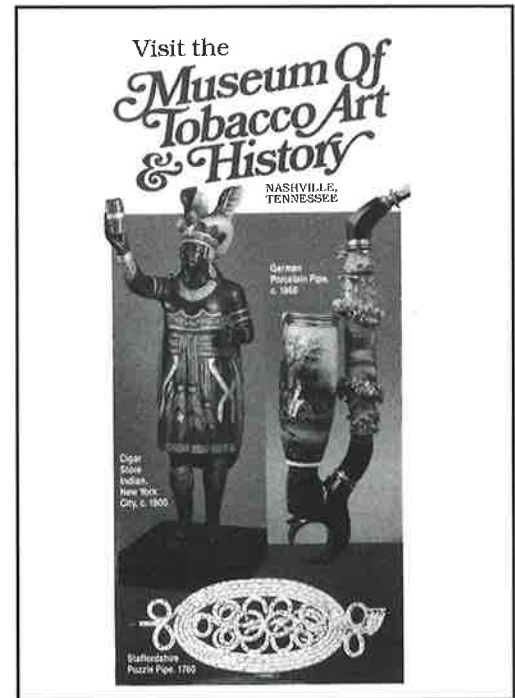
One of DOC's primary objectives in establishing a museum is to provide a true and better understanding of the tobacco issue and make it available to the public. During the past decade, several traveling exhibits have been developed and have been featured in museums, libraries, and at medical meetings and conferences. Most recently, DOC developed an exhibit focusing on the historical role of organized medicine in the tobacco issue which was displayed earlier this year at the Houston Academy of Medicine, Texas Medical Center Library. While these efforts have brought information to the public in a unique setting, there must be a home for these exhibitions that will appeal to a diverse audience.

A number of institutions, including the University of Texas, Center for American History and the Hagley Museum of Business and Advertising, have already expressed their desire to serve as host for DOC's materials. The problem lies in that the materials must be donated, thus DOC would lose control of how the materials are used.

"The last thing we want to do is turn all this over to some bureaucracy to be stored in some back room while they try to figure out exactly what it is that they have in the collection," commented DOC executive director Eric Solberg. "It would take years for anyone looking through the millions of items to understand the context in which each item was saved, let alone try to organize it in some meaningful way. The rich and unique history of the tobacco issue, combined with the present-day discussions in Congress and in the courts, demand that this material be made publicly available as soon as possible."

The time-line for establishing a national tobacco museum, complete with a physical structure, depends on the willingness of individuals, foundations, and other organizations to realize the importance of this project and contribute. DOC recently invited its members to join the Founder's 500, a capital campaign designed to identify 500 individuals willing to donate at least \$1,000 for construction of the museum.

While several individuals have signed on to the Founder's 500, work has already begun in another area—a "Museum in Cyberspace." The traveling exhibits and other feature items from the collection will be available on CD ROM and the Internet long before the museum doors open.



The Museum of Tobacco Art and History in Nashville, Tennessee is supported by United States Tobacco (UST).

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Dr. McGovern, from page 1

Dedication of The John P. McGovern Oral History Project

"In the early 1950's, Dr. Alton Ochsner was coming to give a lecture to our medical school class at the University of Michigan. We thought we'd play the wise guys. So as soon as he was introduced, we all lit up cigarettes. But Ochsner never batted an eyelash. On the contrary, within only a few minutes of listening to him and seeing his vivid slides and x-rays of patients who died from lung cancer, not a soul was still smoking. And I doubt very many of us ever smoked again after that. I know I didn't."

This story, just one of many examples held in the collection of the Dr. John P. McGovern Oral History Project, was told by a physician who had just heard Dr. Ochsner, at the age of 84, deliver one of the major scientific addresses at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Family Physicians in 1980; the listener had found his presentation on the same topic as dynamic and compelling as it was 30 years before. Dr. Ochsner, who died on September 24, 1981, was among the first physicians, along with his colleague Dr. Michael DeBaakey, to make the connection between smoking and lung cancer, something they had written about in the medical literature in 1936. Many of Dr. Ochsner's early experiences are included on tape recordings held in the collection.

Last month, Dr. John McGovern helped to preserve and better organize the unique information held on oral history tapes that are part of DOC's tobacco archive. Dr. McGovern's support of this project exemplifies the importance of the true history of the tobacco issue, and this section of the archive has been named the Dr. John P. McGovern Oral History Project. Quoting Sir William Osler, Dr. McGovern reminds us all that "in the continual remembrance of a glorious past, individuals and nations find their noblest inspiration."

Such inspiration fills this oral history project which was started by Dr. Alan Blum more than thirty years ago when he first began recording and saving cigarette commercials from radio and television. Later, Blum began to interview some of the pioneers that made up early efforts to counteract tobacco use and its promotion. This unique collection of stories and reminiscences captures the accounts and experiences of many scholars, researchers, and activists who have worked on the tobacco issue during the past six decades.

While the project began with spontaneous recordings at national meetings and world conferences, recent interviews have been recorded to fill some of the gaps found in written records. One of the best known interviews held in the collection, recorded in February, 1983, documents Dr. C. Everett Koop's frustrations when, as Surgeon General, he took on the tobacco issue. The text of that interview was published in the *New York State Journal of Medicine* theme issue on the "World Tobacco Pandemic" in December, 1983.

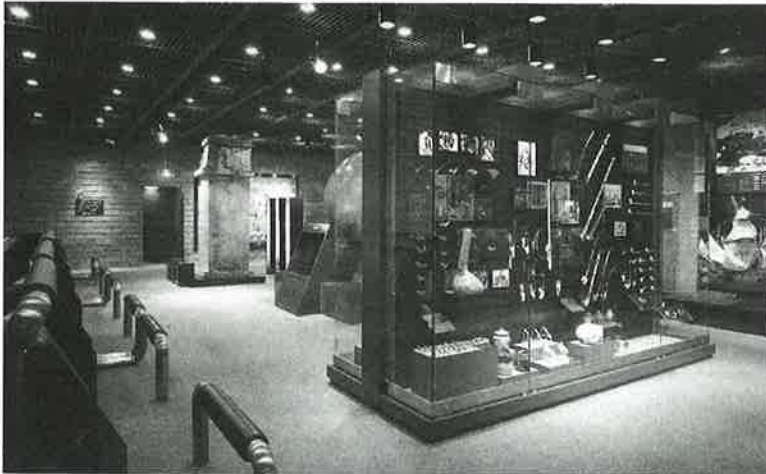
Additional interviews have been scheduled to complete the project, and portions of the Dr. John P. McGovern Oral History Project will be made available as part of the CD ROM to be produced from the archive.

pediatrics, and later returned to Duke to complete his residency after his duty in the Army as Assistant Director for Physical Medicine Service. After continuing his post-graduate studies in pediatrics in England and France, he became Instructor of Pediatrics, George Washington University School of Medicine and Chief of the George Washington University Pediatrics Division. Early in his medical career, Dr. McGovern specialized in allergy research, and later settled in Houston, Texas where he initiated and was made chief of a new teaching allergy clinic for indigent patients at Texas Children's Hospital. In addition to laboratory research, he has been involved in a number of clinical and clinical-laboratory studies being carried out at the McGovern Allergy Clinic, the Texas Allergy Research Foundation, and various institutions of the Texas Medical Center. His editorial appointments include more than a dozen academic journals, and he has served on the faculty for numerous universities, medical schools, and teaching hospitals.

As a dedicated student of Sir William Osler, Dr. McGovern is quick to acknowledge the adoption of Osler's philosophy and practice of science and humanism in medicine. He has always maintained an holistic approach to the understanding of health and disease, and has always rated the "art of medicine" of equal importance with the "science of medicine."

With a keen interest in medical history, combined with his support of medical libraries throughout the country including the National Library of Medicine and the Texas Medical Center Library, his support of DOC is yet another example of his generous philanthropic spirit. Thank you, Dr. McGovern. doc

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This exhibit from Japan's Tobacco and Salt Museum displays a collection of Meerschaum ("sea foam" stone) pipes from the early eighteenth century.

"We've had so many people ask us why we haven't just put the archive on a Web site," Solberg remarked. "It's not until they actually see the archive and the enormous size of the collection that they realize it is not 'virtually' possible without substantial resources. Certainly, some of the collection will make its way to the Internet, but a CD ROM will provide a much greater resource."

The ideas surrounding DOC's museum effort have generated only positive response thus far. A recent letter from former Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop provided encouragement: "It seems you are finally on the verge of making a dream become reality. Your efforts to transform your tobacco archive into a national museum will at last make your treasures more available to the public. The materials naturally serve the establishment of a museum; one that will be truly unique." (Dr. Koop, upon completing his tenure as Surgeon General, donated much of his own work on the tobacco issue to DOC).

Seeing is believing—something one understands after visiting the archive. After his recent visit, the Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Health and Human Services, E. Ripley Forbes wrote: "What a delight to finally visit DOC headquarters and see firsthand the wealth of information you've collected over so many decades. The potential research applications are enormous. The DOC archive provides evidence that tobacco control is as much about social, political and economic history as it is about public health policy. Only through a clear understanding of this industry's history can we be confident that future negotiations, settlements, or legislation will achieve the desired public health goals." DOC



DOC's national tobacco museum includes plans for an Audio - Visual Hall for lectures by visiting scholars, meetings, and viewing films and video. (DOC's archive holds more than 20,000 hours of film and video including news programs, documentaries, and more than seven hours of original cigarette commercials from television.)



THE BIG APPALL

A new traveling exhibit from DOC is in the works entitled "When Editorial Cartoonists Took Up Smoking," a collection of original editorial cartoons donated to DOC. (This is one of more than 60 donated by syndicated cartoonist Wayne Stayskal. It was commissioned in 1983 for the New York State Journal of Medicine's first theme issue on tobacco.)