

He returned some years later to give a further lecture to those who had missed the earlier lectures and wished to hear him speak.

Despite being a distinguished figure in fluoride research with a worldwide reputation, he remained a very friendly and approachable person and was very complimentary in his remarks about the Japanese people.

His visits gave satisfaction to those opposed to the dental use of fluoride but less comfort to those wishing to proceed with water fluoridation. His comprehensive knowledge of the issues made a deep impression on us, but the most important attribute that we respected was his commitment to walk the path of a faithful scientist even when this involved re-evaluating his position on fluoridation.

The Japanese Society for Fluoride Research led by its founder the late Professor Fumiyosi Yanagisawa and Dr Kosei Takahashi, have been conscious of the difficulties Chinese scientists had in publishing their work. They were grateful for the support given by Dr Colquhoun, as Editor of *Fluoride*, in publishing papers from China. This broadened the scope of the journal which gained markedly in stature as additional quality papers appeared. An example of the result of his endeavors was the publication of a paper¹ from China which reported that a lower IQ was associated with fluoride toxicity.

Dr Colquhoun was undeterred by the difficulties he faced and never stopped challenging the problems posed by fluoridation. Right until his death, he continued to be faithful to what he found to be right.

He was a true scientist.

Tohru Murakami,
Former President of the JSFR,
Maebashishi, Gunmaken, Japan

REFERENCE

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AN EXTRAORDINARY ISFR MEMBER AND COLLEAGUE

My colleagues and I are deeply saddened by the passing of Dr John Colquhoun and we wish to express our deepest sympathy to his family.

It was during the 19th Conference of the ISFR in Kyoto, when I was President of the Society in 1992, that I first met Dr Colquhoun. Although I knew of his professional accomplishments, I was profoundly impressed by his sincerity and modesty.

After Dr Colquhoun assumed the responsibility as Editor of *Fluoride* in 1991, changes in the cover, size, and quality of the journal appeared almost immediately and reflected his enthusiasm for his new responsibilities. He worked hard for *Fluoride* and was able to publish original work from an increased number of countries together with abstracts which appeared in other journals. It was especially noteworthy that he did these things despite uncertainties at the time about the financing of the journal. His efforts and dedication were indeed commendable.

My last meeting with Dr Colquhoun occurred at ISFR's 22nd Conference in Bellingham. At the business meeting, we accepted his need to step down as Editor for health reasons. However, we did not expect that he would pass away so soon.

My memory of Dr Colquhoun is still fresh as he was one of the three recipients, who received service awards at the Conference, together with Professor Emeritus Gene Miller and myself. Although I had not expected it, I felt that it was a great honor to receive the

award with Dr Colquhoun and Professor Miller who I thought richly deserved the recognition because of their distinguished service to the society.

I have since placed the plaque on my desk, cherishing and appreciating the honor. Every time I see the shining plaque, I can not help but think of Dr Colquhoun, an extraordinary ISFR member and colleague.

I pray that he rests in peace in heaven.

Humio Tsunoda,
Iwate Medical University,
Iwate, Uchimaru, Morioka, Japan.

MY FATHER

I find it difficult to write about my father, to convey the love I and my two sisters Sarah and Rachel felt for him and the admiration we had for all that he achieved in his life. He was a wonderful father but also a great and supportive friend. We loved him very much and were very glad we were all able to be together with him during the last few weeks of his life.

One thing we were always proud to be part of were the various campaigns and causes John and Joy were involved in. Fluoridation issues became John's major cause and interest in later life but he was always actively involved in other social issues as well. I remember marching with him on anti-nuclear bomb demonstrations when I was very young, and we were all active too in protests against apartheid in South Africa and the war in Vietnam. John was a committed socialist throughout his life, committed to the idea that the resources of the world can be shared more fairly. He was never dogmatic about his beliefs and he always encouraged us to discuss and debate issues, and question the status quo. He certainly did that all his life. As we got older we disagreed sometimes but I think we have come back to share John's views and values on most things.

What I remember when I think back over all that is how hard and selflessly John worked, and how effective he was in getting things done without any frayed tempers, and how much he enjoyed getting us involved. Joy, of course, was just as committed to their various causes and with her different strengths. They were a great partnership.

His commitment to making a better world never meant that John did not enjoy life. He and Joy lived simply but well. He was very much a thinker but he enjoyed working with his hands as well. He loved building things, and had real ability as a designer. I know if he had had his life over again he would have much preferred to be an architect rather than a dentist.

Above all, he was always a kind, loving, supportive father, encouraging us in all our interests, whatever they were. In my case that even extended to feigning an interest in sport. When I was young I became a keen soccer player. I remember John supportively ferrying me to season after season of junior soccer and standing on the sidelines taking what seemed like an interest. I was certainly pleased he was there to see me in action. But I realise now that this was a good daydreaming time. He told me much later of his sense of panic when he was the only parent there and the other side asked him to referee one half. He refused. Despite attending most games for several seasons he still had absolutely no idea of the rules!

John was a quiet person, certainly not an extrovert, but never dull or humorless. He was great company, and he always enjoyed meeting new people, and taking in new ideas and experiences. This enjoyment in meeting new people served him very well in the world travels he undertook later in life. He would set off for another journey to a fluoride conference or campaign in Japan, or Canada or Europe armed with one small overnight bag and his youth hostel membership card. He always had interesting stories of other cultures to tell on his return. He thrived on these experiences and made some great friends on these travels.

During his last days the warm and concerned letters and communications from all his colleagues were a great support and pleasure to him and my sisters, and I would like to thank all those people for their support at that time.

David Colquhoun,
Auckland, New Zealand

A SCHOLAR AND A GENTLEMAN

After finding that the evidence did not support the systemic ingestion of fluoride through the fluoridation of water supplies, John had the courage to change his mind and work towards a wider understanding of the truth. John was a true scholar in following the motto of his first university, the University of Otago, *Sapere Aude*. This has been translated as to dare to be wise, to have the courage of one's convictions and being prepared to speak out what one sees to be the truth despite the presence of criticisms or doubts in others. Forces exist which tend to produce intellectual suppression and a tendency not to rock the boat of the current scientific paradigm. John was a Titan in courteously resisting such pressures. Even in death, he remains an inspiration.

In his opening quotation from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, for his book *A Struggle with Titans*, George Waldbott might well have had John in mind when he noted: "In an age of conformism and 'team-work', where compromise and harmony are offered as the watchwords of human activity, being critical may be considered antisocial. But science without criticality is unthinkable, for the only route to scientific objectivity is to question, not to 'accept'."

John will be sorely missed.

Bruce Spittle,
Dunedin, New Zealand.

A GREAT TEACHER

In 1995, I was approached by friends, to help in a campaign to put the case against fluoride in the forthcoming referendum. The vote was to decide on the continuation of water fluoridation in North Shore City, New Zealand. At that time, I knew nothing about fluoride, so I had to do some rapid research on the subject before agreeing to help. Dr Colquhoun's name appeared so often in the literature, that I was determined to make the acquaintance of this famous scholar.

John invited me to his home after accepting my offer of help in the production of the journal. I was truly astonished to see his "office." It was less than three meters square on a landing on the first floor of his home. It was fortunate that he had space in his garage for his photocopier. During the next three years, despite having major operations and the loss of his wife Joy, he continued to edit the journal. I never heard a word of complaint, though he must have been in pain, both mental and physical, during this period.

I was happy to help with photocopying and mailing out the journal for this gentle considerate man. John encouraged me to read more about the fluoride question and pressed me to review some articles. I did this, but it was John who whipped my prose into shape in his own quiet way. He always had time for a beer and a chat after our efforts.

I miss him.

Bill Wilson, North Shore City, New Zealand

A PERSON OF CHURCHILLIAN STATURE

With the death of John Colquhoun, a flood of memories came up in my mind. He was a

member of that nearly extinct species in our barbarous 20th century: the scientist with integrity. John was not for sale.

We had a great adventure together. On May 17, 1989, we were both invited to warn against fluoridation of water supplies in the United Kingdom. There we were in one of the rooms of the House of Commons. When I say room, that is an understatement. It was more like a Gothic church. There were a lot of Members of Parliament from both Houses, and of course there was the grim-looking proponent who looked as if he had taken an overdose of his own fluoride.

It was on this occasion that I saw who John really was. I myself am a man of the sweeping statement and quick repartee, but you can trip me up with details. John, however, was really splendid. He had an answer for every nasty question, and, moreover, his answers were mostly not taken from the work of other researchers but from work he had done himself. Original work on fluoridation is extremely rare, but John had done it. Damning statistics flowed from his mouth like honey from the comb, and all the time he had that courteous little smile as if apologizing for his devastating facts. He crushed his opponent with a soft, warm voice.

On that occasion he reminded me of Winston Churchill, who wrote a courteous letter to the Japanese ambassador telling him that the U.K. on October 9, 1941, was at war with Japan. Some of his friends asked Churchill if it was necessary to be so polite, and he gave the immortal answer: "But, after all, when you have to kill a man it costs nothing to be polite."

When I saw John destroying his opponent with hard facts, I knew that he was worthy to stand in the same hall where Churchill gave his great speeches during the war. John's name shall not be forgotten, and when the fluoridation folly has long been history, he will be remembered as one of those who opposed it with honour.

Hans C. Moolenburgh,
Oranjeplein, Haarlem,
The Netherlands

A REMARKABLE PERSON

All of us who knew John found him a soft-spoken man of deep sincerity and dedication, with a sensitive awareness of the needs of others, especially the under-privileged. He would persist in a cause he believed to be right and just, even to his own detriment. One classic example of this persistence was his conviction that fluoridation should be reassessed and subsequently, after examining the true facts, that fluoridation should be discontinued worldwide.

During his active lifetime, he involved himself in a wide variety of interests both within the profession and the community. He excelled as a clinician, an academic and an administrator.

He was politically adept, focussed on the subject under discussion, kept calm and summarized honestly and fairly. He was always prepared to listen, was sympathetic to the opinions of others, and was open to reason and change. He firmly believed that it was better to be right than consistent.

The first time I met John was in May, 1985 when he came to England to address a meeting at The House of Commons. The meeting was attended by several proponents of fluoridation whom he had first met during his official 1980 study tour. During this same visit, he spoke at length at the Annual General Meeting of the National Pure Water Association.

Prior to this he assisted us in the preparation of a leaflet about dental fluorosis for which he provided suitable color photographs.

In addition he, together with Dr Hans Moolenburgh, were the speakers at a Leicester public meeting.

The last time John came to the U.K. was during September 1996 when he spoke at a public meeting in Scotland followed by a public meeting in Birmingham, the heart of fluoridated England.

I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to meet John again, and to share a room with him during the August 1998 International Society for Fluoride Research Conference in Bellingham, U.S.A. He was determined to make the long journey to Washington State to meet his many friends and colleagues in spite of having undergone two serious operations in the previous 20 months.

He was a truly remarkable person.

Nic Brugge,
Eye, Leominster,
United Kingdom

SWEET VOICE OF REASON

While I know death is inevitable, there are some deaths that are more sorrowful than others. In John's case, my personal feeling is oh, darn, what a shame to lose someone like that. His absence leaves a big hole in a rather small list of really good people I know.

The phrase that came to mind when I think of John Colquhoun is Sweet Voice of Reason.

He was a Scottish Romantic in the sense that the search for truth is more important than whether battles are won or lost.

He was a Realist in the sense that he knew that money and power may dominate temporarily. Humans are fallible and susceptible to influence unrelated to truth or honor.

His opponents were not enemies to him but, rather, were friends yet to embrace solid science and common sense.

He was a small gentle man but such a giant of integrity that even his opponents could not help but acknowledge it.

It was an honor and a pleasure to have known him. He will be missed greatly.

John R. Lee,
Sebastopol, California, USA

A PILLAR OF STRENGTH

The passing of our colleague, Dr John Colquhoun is very sad, and he will be missed as a friend, editor, researcher, and stalwart critic of questionable dental practices.

John has been a pillar of strength in fluoride research, as the Editor of *Fluoride* and in expressing his views to the public and his peers. He was responsible for taking *Fluoride* and improving its professional stature. As a scientist he was honest in his research and statements to those around him. He was soft-spoken, humble, and well-liked by his Fluoride colleagues. John has left his mark on the world and will be missed. Those influenced by him will continue his efforts and mission.

There will be a void whenever we come together at an international conference. His honest straightforward and detailed reporting about the finances of our Society, papers to

be published, and insight as to important issues cannot be replaced. His courageous stand for the protection against fluoride excesses has influenced many of us.

Gene W. Miller,
Utah State University,
Utah, USA

A KINDRED SPIRIT

Although I knew John Colquhoun was seriously ill despite his surgery, I nonetheless was shocked to learn of his death. I always felt a kindred spirit in John and enjoyed his company, his wit, and his unswerving hewing to the truth. His death will leave an emptiness in all of us who knew him and loved him.

James Presley,
Texarkana, Texas, USA

A COURAGEOUS FRIEND

In 1979 I was invited by his Worship, Sir Dove-Meyer Robinson, Mayor of Auckland, to come to New Zealand and speak against fluoridation. Mayor Robinson attempted to have me meet the Principal Dental Officer of Auckland, Dr John Colquhoun. But Dr Colquhoun refused to meet with me because, he said, he had been told of my reputation as an opponent of fluoridation.

One year later, Dr Colquhoun made a worldwide fact-finding tour on behalf of the Fluoridation Society. Upon his return, he decided that since New Zealand provided socialized dental care to all children up to the age of 12-13, he could prove how well fluoridation worked. When he did his study, it showed no significant difference in tooth decay as a result of fluoridation, but it did show that fluoridation resulted in dental fluorosis in 25% of the children. Concerned about this, he told his superiors at the national level that he was going to publish his results. He was told that if he did, he would be forced into early retirement at a substantially lower retirement income.

He published his results anyway and his superiors kept their word. Since that time John and I became good friends, meeting at ISFR meetings and serving as debating partners over a national BBC radio program called "You and Yours."

It's nice to be always right; however, I have never met anyone who is. Second best is to have the honesty coupled with the courage to admit you are wrong, regardless of the consequences to your person. John was such a man. Now that he has passed to the other side, he will reap the rewards of his uncompromisingly honest character.

I'll miss you on this side, John. God bless you.

John Yiamouyiannis,
Delaware, Ohio, USA

A HIGHLY DEDICATED COLLEAGUE

Dr Colquhoun worked untiringly during the past eight years for the International Society for Fluoride Research (ISFR) after accepting, in 1991, the responsibilities of Editor and Publisher of Fluoride. Later on, he also assumed the position of Treasurer for the Society.

I remember Dr Colquhoun as a man of integrity, courage, and dedication. Through his

devoted efforts, the Journal was published regularly on schedule throughout his Editorship despite the adversities of the death of his wife, Joy, and his developing physical weakness as a result of illness and surgical treatment. His dedication to work on behalf of the ISFR was truly commendable.

The sincere and warm manner in which Dr Colquhoun interacted with us will be long remembered. It was particularly wonderful that he was able to participate in the 22nd ISFR Conference, held in Bellingham last August. Although he was concerned about his state of health following recent surgery, he came to the conference and participated fully and cheerfully in his duties as an officer of the Society. We never thought that it would be the last ISFR conference that he would be able to attend.

Our Society has lost a highly dedicated colleague and a warm and kind friend.

Ming-Ho Yu,
Western Washington University,
Bellingham, Washington, USA

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