

Obituary

John Slade (1949–2002)

Dr. John Slade, an expert on the treatment of alcohol, tobacco, and drug addiction, and a pioneering advocate for tobacco control, died in January 2002. Dr. Slade suffered a stroke in July 2001.

An internist who projected the quiet air and compassion of a family doctor, Dr. Slade had a deep, personal concern for people struggling with addiction, and he devoted his life's work to fighting that public health pandemic. He provided treatment to patients as director of the Program for Addictions at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) School of Public Health, and he worked arduously for global changes in smoking laws. He spoke out vigorously about the advertising and promotion of tobacco products, and his knack for collecting tobacco promotional items – from T-shirts to model cars – led to the creation of one of the largest repositories of its kind, which he dubbed Trinkets & Trash.

He was a member of the team that conducted the first scholarly analysis of previously secret documents from the Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company, which formed the basis for the film *The Insider*. Dr. Slade's analysis led to a landmark series of articles in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1995 as well as a book, *The Cigarette Papers*.

Self-effacing, Dr. Slade was nevertheless passionate about stopping the harm caused by tobacco use. He also had a wonderful sense of humor, a penchant for wearing bow ties, and a New Jersey license plate that read *No Cigs*. His groundbreaking research to prove that cigarettes are nicotine-delivery devices helped make it possible for the Food and Drug Administration to claim regulatory authority over tobacco products under then-FDA Commissioner Dr. David Kessler. In his recent book *A Question of Intent; A Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry*, Kessler credits Dr. Slade with playing a major role in influencing the FDA's fight against tobacco.

Author and health advocate Michael Pertshuck, former head of the Federal Trade Commission, said that Dr. Slade 'led the struggle and defied then-conventional wisdom to prove that nicotine was, indeed, among our most addictive drugs.'

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1949, Dr. Slade was a graduate of the Westminster Schools in Atlanta and a 1969 graduate of Oberlin College. After completing medical school at Emory University in 1974, he did postgraduate work in internal medicine, public health and

rheumatology at Rush-Presbyterian Medical Center in Chicago, at the New Jersey Department of Health as an Epidemic Intelligence Officer for the Centers for Disease Control, and at UMDNJ and St. Peter's Medical Centers in New Brunswick. There he developed a growing interest in addiction medicine and in addressing the devastating health aspects of tobacco addiction. Dr. Slade was appointed professor of medicine at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School of UMDNJ in 1998. He emerged as a leader in substance abuse prevention and tobacco control for the state of New Jersey through his teaching and clinical work as well as through his active involvement with the Medical Society of New Jersey and the New Jersey Public Health Association. He played a major role in helping New Jersey develop its tobacco prevention and treatment program, funded as part of the 1998 \$206 billion settlement with tobacco companies. Dr. George DiFerdinando, Jr., deputy commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, called Dr. Slade 'the godfather of our tobacco control community. He worked tirelessly for decades to prevent tobacco use among children, help smokers to quit, energize tobacco control advocates, and research the medical and psychosocial aspects of nicotine addiction.'

Dr. Slade was selected by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to direct two national programs in substance abuse leadership, to attract and inspire new leaders in the field, and to recognize and support leaders who have demonstrated outstanding achievement. Dr. Steven Schroeder, president and CEO of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, called Dr. Slade 'one of the authentic heroes in the anti-tobacco movement. Though quiet and self-effacing, he saved thousands of lives. We all owe him a great debt.'

An active church leader in his community, Dr. Slade was on the Vestry of All-Saints Episcopal Church in Princeton and served as president of the Council of Deacons of Grace Lutheran Church in Trenton. Dr. Slade, who resided in Skillman, New Jersey, is survived by his wife, Frances Fowler Slade, music director of Princeton Pro Musica; his parents, Dr. John de R. Slade and Dr. Helen Benedict Slade; two brothers and sisters-in-law: Stephen and Daniela Slade of Atlanta and Michael Slade and Amelia Pryor of San Francisco; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Dr. Slade was an outspoken champion for ensuring that treatment for nicotine addiction and other forms of substance abuse were available to all who needed help.

He has been listed since 1994 in *The Best Doctors in America*.

He co-edited the first major clinical textbook on nicotine addiction, founded the Committee on Nicotine Dependence of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) and, since 1988, directed a program in New Jersey to help treatment and addiction programs address tobacco and nicotine addiction that has become a national model.

Dr. Slade contributed to the US Surgeon General's reports on smoking and other landmark national reports. A widely published researcher, he was a founding member of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco and was honored with awards for his work in addiction medicine and tobacco control, including Emory University's Moore Award for outstanding con-

tributions to community health, The Koop Award of the New Jersey Group Against Smoking Pollution, the Award of the New Jersey Public Health Association, two leadership awards from the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and The Goethe Trophy from the German Medical Association for outstanding contributions in global tobacco control.

Memorial services for Dr. Slade were held in February. Memorial contributions may be made to Princeton Pro Musica, P.O. Box 1313, Princeton, NJ 08542, USA, or to All Saints Church, 16 All Saints Road, Princeton, NJ 08540, USA.

Source: Dr. John Slade, Distinguished Leader in Addiction Treatment and Tobacco Prevention. Retrieved 1 June 2002 from <http://www.tobaccoprogram.org/jobit.htm>