IN MEMORIAM

John Alexander Colquhoun, B.D.S., Ph.D.
4 January 1924 – 23 March 1999
Editor of Fluoride 1991-1998

To all who knew him, Dr. John Colquhoun, our late Editor, was an extraordinary individual. Although small in stature, he walked tall. Energetic, yet modest and unselfish in service to others, he was also exceptionally gifted intellectually and outstanding in personal achievement. His dental patients, colleagues, staff personnel, and other associates all had the highest regard for him and the quality of his work and deeply appreciated his uncompromising commitment to their best interests.

While holding elective offices and professional appointments, his unfailing performance in them invariably earned him the enduring gratitude and admiration of all who served with or under him. In 1991, he generously agreed to take on the demanding but unsalaried work of editing and publishing Fluoride while also becoming Treasurer of the ISFR. In the years that followed the Journal rapidly increased in size and quality as he expanded its scope and coverage.

Through his research and extensive critical reading, he sometimes found himself at odds with widely held views. Thus, in the early 1980s, when his own careful investigations and critical examination of available data indicated that water fluoridation in New Zealand was showing essentially no dental benefit but was clearly causing harm, he did not hesitate to oppose official policy even though it cost him his prestigious position as Auckland’s Principal Dental Officer.

After Dr. Colquhoun’s premature death earlier this year, there was an outpouring of praise and tributes from his friends and others who only had professional contacts with him. From these heartfelt testimonials published in this issue, readers will readily understand why he was held in such high esteem and why his loss has created a void that will never be filled.

Albert W. Burgstahler
TRIBUTE TO JOHN COLQUHOUN

John Alexander Colquhoun, Bachelor of Dental Surgery (Otago), Diploma in Education (Sydney), Master of Philosophy (First Class), PhD (Auckland) died peacefully at his home in Auckland, New Zealand on March 23 1999.

The members of the International Society for Fluoride Research are deeply saddened by his passing. Although he was aged 75 years, his death feels untimely. He remained intellectually vigorous until almost the last moment.

Following John’s retirement in 1984, at the age of 60 years, as Principal Dental Officer in the Department of Health in Auckland, he embarked on research and was awarded in 1987 a Doctorate in Philosophy by the University of Auckland. In 1991, at age 67, he commenced service as the Treasurer for the International Society for Fluoride Research and as Editor for Fluoride, the quarterly journal of the Society. The journal flourished under the eight years of his editorship, and he handed over the reins as Managing Editor less than one month from when he departed from us. Taking on these tasks was a major commitment for John and his wife Joy, but with typical courage and disregard for personal costs, he undertook the unpaid task so that a format allowing free intellectual debate on issues related to fluoride could be preserved. He feared that a level intellectual playing field might be lost if control of the journal went to others who might have more financial resources but less willingness to allow both sides of the various issues be expressed. He saw himself continuing “the battle with Titans” commenced by the Journal founder, the late George L Waldbott, who wrote A Struggle with Titans.

John was courageous in speaking out for what he saw to be true. He was not afraid to change his mind. While serving as a Glen Eden (Auckland) Borough Councillor between 1955 and 1958, he persuaded the Mayor and the majority of his fellow councillors to agree to fluoridation of the water supply. With subsequent regret, he poured scorn on another Council member, a lay person who had heard and accepted the case against fluoridation. A few years later, as the city’s Principal Dental Officer, he published a paper reporting how children’s tooth decay had declined in the city following fluoridation of its water with the greatest benefit appearing in the low-income areas. The decline was attributed to fluoride. He was so articulate and successful in his support of water fluoridation that his public service superiors in Wellington asked him to make fluoridation the subject of a world study tour in 1980, after which he became the Department of Health expert on fluoridation. For a short time, he then led a campaign to promote fluoridation in those parts of New Zealand which had resisted having fluoride put into their drinking water. However, further information from New Zealand and overseas indicated that tooth decay was declining just as much in the nonfluoridated areas as in the fluoridated ones.

The doubts these incongruous reports gave rise to were settled with reassurances from fluoridationists around the world and he was duly appointed chairman of a national “Fluoridation Promotion Committee”. His instructions were to inform the public, and his fellow professionals, that water fluoridation
resulted in better teeth for children, when compared with places with no fluoridation.

Before complying, however, he looked at the statistics from Auckland and found that fewer fillings were required in children attending dental clinics in the nonfluoridated part of Auckland than in the fluoridated areas. Similar results were found in other parts of New Zealand, the United States of America, Australia, Britain, Canada, Sri Lanka, Greece, Malta, Spain, Hungary and India. John did not carry out his instructions to tell people that teeth were better in the fluoridated areas. Instead, he studied in detail the studies that appeared to show benefit. He found flaws in the “Hastings Fluoridation Experiment”, an early fluoridation study carried out in New Zealand. After obtaining official papers under the Freedom of Information Act, he found that, in effect, the trial had been “rigged” with the school dentists in the area of the experiment being instructed to change their method of diagnosing tooth decay so that they recorded much less decay after fluoridation.

Voicing the view that fluoridation was harmful rather than beneficial was not popular and attracted criticism. John’s clarity of vision, however, meant that such criticisms were like water off a duck’s back, and he was unrelenting in his efforts to tell people the truth about fluoridation, both within New Zealand and internationally. His submissions, in 1997, to the Lord Mayor’s Taskforce on Fluoridation in Brisbane, Australia were influential in the community representatives coming down clearly against the fluoridation of Brisbane’s water.

John’s contribution to the International Society of Fluoride Research were recognized by the Society with a formal presentation to him of a plaque recording his meritorious service at the 22nd Conference of the Society, in Bellingham, Washington, USA in August 1998.

Many other things could be noted about John. His community service included holding office with the Kelston High Schools’ Board of Governors, the Auckland Workers’ Educational Association, the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, the New Zealand Association for Community Education, the University of Auckland Committee for Continuing Education, the New Zealand Workers’ Educational Association and the Auckland Workers’ Educational Association. Other professional appointments included Dental Officer of the Hokianga Mobile School Dental Clinic, which allowed proximity to his future wife, Joy Child; Supervisor of the Clinical Course, School for Dental Nurses, Wellington; Supervisor of Basic (Human Biology) Course, School for Dental Nurses, Auckland; President of the New Zealand Society of Dentistry for Children, Tutor in History of Education, University of Auckland; and, at the time of his death, Honorary Research Fellow, University of Auckland.

In an appreciation written at the time of his retirement as Principal Dental Officer in 1984, it was noted that John was a soft-spoken man of deep sincerity and dedication with a sensitive awareness to the needs and wants of others, especially the underprivileged. After retirement he devoted two days a week to improving the educational standards of those most in need which included many Polynesians. He persisted with a cause which he believed to be right and
just, even to his own detriment. He fulfilled the adage that “People only throw stones at trees with fruit on them”. An example of his persistence was borrowing a set of scalers to take to the annual meetings of the Principal Dental Officers in Wellington year after year in an effort to influence a decision to have more efficient scalers supplied to School Dental Nurses. His conviction that fluoridation should be reassessed was also noted in 1984. He was politically adept, able to focus on the subject under discussion, and had the abilities to remain calm and summarise honestly and fairly. He listened sympathetically to the opinions of others and was open to reason and change. He believed it was “better to be right than consistent”. He was held in very high regard by his staff. During his farewell function many nurses spoke sincerely and enthusiastically about his caring attitude towards them and their patients. He had a very high standard in his clinical judgement and technical treatment. While his retirement was regretted, in view of the knowledge and skill that he possessed, it was easier to accept as he intended to redirect his talents to serve others, especially those most in need of his help.

How much he gave was deeply appreciated by the members of the International Society for Fluoride Research.

John was predeceased by Joy’s death on September 27, 1997. Our heartfelt condolences go to his surviving family, his brother Neil, son David, daughters Sara and Rachel and son-in-law Gerard.

We might do worse than to ponder on the words from a poem *Wanderer’s Night Song* by Franz Schubert, with which Waldbott concludes his book:

Above all summits there is peace,
Above all tree tops one
Senses scarcely a breath.
The birds are silent in the woods;
Wait, oh wait – you, too, will soon be at rest.

Bruce Spittle
Managing Editor, *Fluoride*.

REFERENCE

AN INSPIRING LEGACY

As the spokesperson on water fluoridation for the Australian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine on the Lord Mayor of Brisbane’s Task Force on Fluoridation, I wish to pay personal, collective and profound homage to the memory of Dr. John Colquhoun.

Without John’s dedication, integrity, and self-sacrificing help, Brisbane would not have been able to retain its democratic right of “Freedom of Choice”. At the time when fluoridation was proposed by a mayoral candidate, the plan was that compulsory fluoridation should be imposed upon every citizen, without their consent or even reference to the will of the people through a referendum. John’s vibrant lecture to the members of the Taskforce, together with his stoical, forthright contribution at the public debate at the City Hall resulted in an overwhelming victory for democracy.

Not many of us on Planet Earth can be assured of leaving a perpetual legacy such as John Colquhoun has bequeathed to us. By his pursuit of honesty in scientific reporting, John’s footprints in the sands of time have paved the way for campaigners to build an edifice to truth which will be a far greater monument to him than any headstone which might grace his final resting place.

The Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Jim Soorley, joins with me in the search for those elusive words which would do justice to his memory. Vale, John. Your inspiration adds a special dimension to the efforts of those who pledge to build on the ethical tenets which you have espoused and for which you sacrificed your health.

The Sword of Truth will not sleep in our hands, nor shall we rest until the evil of compulsory fluoridation has been vanquished.

Fred Clutterbuck,
Wynnum, Queensland, Australia.

A MENTOR, FRIEND AND FELLOW WARRIOR

During World War II, I, like many Canadian servicemen, spent a brief leave in Scotland. This included a visit to a quiet village at the foot of the highlands that proudly announced on an archway over the road, “The home of the Colquhoun”. It was not until 1992, in Kyoto, that I was privileged to meet a descendant of this proud clan, John Colquhoun, then Editor of Fluoride. Subsequently, via telephone, facsimile and the post, John became a mentor and an acquaintance whom my wife, Anne and I were to meet again in Beijing (1994), Budapest (1996) and Bellingham (1998).

John was a man of integrity, devoted to social justice who fiercely took action against the scientific fraud behind fluoridation. In this battle, John suffered defeats and personal tragedy. But, he returned to fight again. It is not
difficult for me to imagine him on these occasions quoting John Dryden’s Johnnie Armstrong:

Fight on, my merry men all,
I’m a little wounded, but I am not slain;
I will lay me down for to bleed a while,
Then I’ll rise and fight with you again.

John has now left the field. But, his shadow remains long, disproportionate to his physical stature. He in his writings in Fluoride and other journals, especially his autobiographical “Why I Changed My Mind About Water Fluoridation” will continue to fight with us even though the author has returned home.

Richard G. Foulkes,
Abbotsford, British Columbia,
Canada

REFERENCE

India

A SUPPORTER OF RESEARCH

I had the good fortune of knowing Dr. John Colquhoun for several years through the correspondence that our group of authors had with him in his position as Editor of Fluoride. Our telephone conversations were always a pleasure. He was most encouraging to us in our work.

I remember one such incident very vividly. Our group had contributed a paper on a study, “Sister chromatid exchanges in fluorotic individuals of North Gujarat”, for publication in Fluoride. It was sent for review to referees who had returned their comments. Meanwhile, the paper was shown to Dr. George Stookey at the 1994 ISFR conference in Beijing for his comments. He immediately recommended its publication on a priority basis as it was the first paper of its kind dealing with studies on fluorotic individuals. On his return to New Zealand, Dr. John Colquhoun promptly sent us a fax informing us of these developments, and the paper was published in Fluoride 1994;27:215-9. I will always be grateful to Dr. Colquhoun for this kind gesture.

It was indeed a pleasure to meet Dr. Colquhoun at the XXIInd Conference of the International Society for Fluoride Research at Bellingham, Washington in August 1998.

May his good soul rest in eternal peace.

N.J. Chinoy,
Gujarat University,
Ahmedabad, India

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Japan

A MOST FAITHFUL FRIEND

Dr. John Colquhoun was an exemplary teacher, investigator, and, yes, a true philosopher – a man who faithfully sought after truth. He was a person we all admired greatly.

I first met Dr. Colquhoun in 1994 at the 20th Conference of the International Society for Fluoride Research in Beijing, China. I immediately saw that he was a very benign, gentle, keen-minded individual who had just turned 70.

Earlier I had been in contact with Dr. Colquhoun and was deeply impressed and greatly encouraged by the fact that, even while still a dental public health officer charged with promoting water fluoridation, he had made an independent investigation of the available evidence and openly concluded that he could no longer support or advocate the procedure.

After the Beijing conference, our Japanese Society for Fluoride Research (JSFR) arranged for Dr. Colquhoun to give a much-appreciated seminar on his research concerning fluoride. At that time, he also brought an anti-nuclear weapons message from citizens of New Zealand to residents of Hiroshima for which they were most grateful.

After attending his last ISFR conference in 1998 in Bellingham, Washington, despite growing illness, Dr. Colquhoun went to the trouble of sending me some back issues of Fluoride that we have been able to place in university libraries in Tokyo to help complete their sets of this valuable journal.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. John Colquhoun – a most faithful friend to us all.

Kenji Akiniwa, Editor
Fluoride Research, J of the JSFR,
Tokyo, Japan

Japan

A TRUE SCIENTIST

After the 19th conference of the ISFR held in Kyoto, Japan in 1992, in response to an invitation from the Japanese Society for Fluoride Research, Dr. Colquhoun gave two lectures which made a deep impression on the audiences. I had the honour of working closely with him at this time, and a friendship began that continued until his death.

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 paper\(^1\) 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


Japan

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.

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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.

New Zealand

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

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 ac-
tivity, 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.

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

The Netherlands

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
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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

United Kingdom

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

United States

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

United States

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
PUBLICATIONS OF JOHN COLQUHOUN

26 The end of a period [editorial]. Fluoride 1991;24:120.
30 Fluorides and the decline in tooth decay in New Zealand. Fluoride 1993;26:125-34.
38 Brain damage from fluoride. Soil and Health 1996;55:46.

LETTERS & COMMENTS

49 Disfiguring dental fluorosis in Auckland, New Zealand. Auckland: J Colquhoun, 1987 [Postscript and Rejoinder, see reference # 6].

ARCHIVING OF JOHN COLQUHOUN’S PAPERS

Dr. Colquhoun's extensive collection of papers will be lodged in the Alexander Turnbull Research Library, the national library of New Zealand in Wellington. The documents, which include his PhD thesis, correspondence, research notes, etc. are freely available to researchers.
FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT: XXIIIrd ISFR CONFERENCE

The XXIIIrd World Conference of the International Society for Fluoride Research will be held in Szczecin, Poland, June 11-14, 2000.

Hosted by Professor Zygmunt Machoy and the Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry of the Pomeranian Medical Academy, the meeting will emphasize recent studies on diverse biological effects of fluoride and their implications for industrial, agricultural, medical, environmental, and other concerns and activities.

Szczecin, the conference site, is a beautiful, historic, Baltic Sea port city of 450,000 residents in northwest Poland; it is served by rail and the Szczecin Goleniow airport. Special leisure tours of the area and interesting social events have been planned.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Second Announcement will include the list of invited speakers, the overall conference program, directions for preparing abstracts, and information about accommodations. Requests for the Second Announcement should be received by October 31, 1999. Those interested in attending the conference who wish to present a paper should indicate the type of presentation (platform, poster, or no preference) they would like to make. Send requests for the Second Announcement to:

Prof. Dr. Zygmunt Machoy
Chairman, XXIIIrd ISFR World Conference
Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry
Pomeranian Medical Academy
72 Powstańców Wlkp. Street
70-111 Szczecin, Poland
Phone/fax: (+ 48 91) 482-4057
Secretary General: Prof. Dariusz Chlubek (same address).

NOTICE TO AUTHORS

In this issue of Fluoride, we have adopted the international biomedical journal style for references as recommended in the New England Journal of Medicine 1997;336:309-15. Authors are asked to format references in future papers to conform to the directions in that special report. Although a more detailed announcement on the new style will be forthcoming in the next issue, two examples are as follows:

  Note: Please use the accepted abbreviations for journals (no italics) and list the first six authors followed by et al if there are more.