

*Reflections on a career*

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Residents in Preventive Medicine

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**The road to public health**

- The challenge of administration
  - Oberlin College 1946-50
- Sage advice --making a diagnosis
  - Rochester Medical School 1950-54
- An introduction to epidemiology
  - The George Corner Prize
- Internal medicine
  - The Bassett Hospital, Cooperstown, New York

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**The launch of a career-1955**

- The draft – two years in a uniformed service
- CDC and the Epidemic Intelligence Service
  - Alexander Langmuir (the Hopkins tradition)
  - EIS founded in 1951 – recruited 25-30/year
  - Promotion comes rapidly
  - Influenza 1957
  - A new five year training program is created

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**Rationale for attending Hopkins-1959**

- “...one can think of the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the end of one of the most important social revolutions in history, the virtual elimination of the infectious diseases as a significant factor in social life.”

Nobel Laureate Sir Macfarlane Burnet -- 1962

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**Surveillance & International Health**

- CDC Chief of Surveillance Section 1960-65
  - A smallpox unit is formed
  - International initiatives
  - A good idea goes awry
- CDC Director for a new Smallpox Eradication/Measles Control Program– 1965-66
  - 20 countries in West and Central Africa

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**Exile in Geneva 1966-77**

- The World Health Assembly decides on a program for the global eradication of smallpox –May 1966
  - Goal – 10 years
- A new director is named – 18 month assignment
- Strategy
  - Vaccination
  - Surveillance and containment
  - Research
- Management
  - Quantifiable targets and quality control
  - Delegation
  - Communication

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## Adventures at Hopkins 1977-90

- The reluctant Dean
- New developments
  - AIDS, immunization, population, public health practice
  - The big H and the little h
- School doubles in size, faculty, students
- The Search and Find Committee

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## Bush I and Clinton I 1990-95

- Life Sciences Advisor to President Bush
  - A novice in the White House or how policy is really created
  - The perks of the office
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health under President Clinton

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## Concern about the unspeakable— biological weapons 1995-2001

- 1995 – A Watershed Year
  - Aum Shinrikyo, Soviet Union, Iraq
  - Presidential Decision Directive
  - The “first responder” strategy
- Biological weapons – a repugnant subject to public health and medicine
  - DOD and DOJ have full responsibility
- September 1997 – a beginning effort to bring health and medicine into the picture
- The Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies  
Now the Center for Health Security (U. of Pittsburgh)

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## A drought changes to a monsoon

- Dark Winter
- 9/11
- The new Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness
- A new phrase in Congress and the Executive
  - “Public health infrastructure”

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## The strategy

- What does one do with \$3 billion?
- Public health leadership in a community response to:
  - biological weapons
  - epidemic infectious diseases
  - catastrophic events
- State and local infrastructure is key

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## Reflections

- New challenges are stressful, anxiety provoking but stimulating
- There are more answers than there are questions
- An ability to listen is critical

*There is nothing so exciting as being engaged in a program with a clear goal which has enormous implications but no clear road map*

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## Coda

- Public health offers uniquely broad horizons for innovation:
  - Effective joining of public health and medicine
  - The integration of research and practice
  - The development of effective bridges in international cooperation
  - International security for the global village

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