

A Personal Appreciation

MAX SHAIN, M.P.H.*

We mourn the loss of E. Richard Weinerman who, together with his wife Shirley, was a tragic victim of the destruction of a Swiss airliner on February 21, 1970.

I was one of Weinerman's small group of students at the University of California in 1951 and 1952. A brief summary of our relationship will tell much about the man.

He had joined the faculty of the University in 1949 after a short period of employment in the farm security program of the Public Health Service. He had found that federal service was being closed to people who, like him, had been active in the struggles against poverty and fascism before World War II. He had therefore left the government rather than be a party to the loyalty investigations instituted in the Truman era.

His tenure at the University was cut short, however, when the state legislature required a "loyalty oath" of all college teachers. Refusal to sign the oath cost him his position as an associate professor. He would not, however, abandon the small group of students he had recruited and the research he had organized, and the School of Public Health made special arrangements to retain him as a part-time lecturer.

Although himself a victim of political harassment, Weinerman found places in the school for a number of young people who were losing their jobs in the McCarthy terror. He made it possible for men with families to enroll, finding them scholarships and research assistant appointments. In one case, he arranged for a student in such circumstances to enroll three weeks after a semester had begun, a rare triumph indeed over the Berkeley bureaucracy.

He insisted to those of us who doubted whether they should return to school that it was our duty and special opportunity to use our enforced political furloughs to sharpen our skills and acquire new skills. He set us an example during the twelve-year period when, to the shame of the American university system, he was unable to secure

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a faculty appointment. He took advantage of opportunities for refresher training in internal medicine and entered clinical practice in the Berkeley area. As a family physician (here I speak from direct experience) he displayed the same warmth and understanding which characterized all of his professional relationships. It was as a clinician that he assumed the leadership of the outpatient department of Herrick Memorial Hospital in Berkeley, developing innovations in outpatient service which laid the basis for his work at Yale, where he finally received a faculty appointment in 1962.

The period in Berkeley was one of extraordinary productivity. With Lester Breslow and Jacob Yerushalmy, Weinerman undertook a series of health record studies and household surveys, devising many of the techniques which were later developed into the National Health Survey. He participated in setting up one of the first major multiphasic screening projects among the San Francisco longshoremen. He travelled widely, advising the retail clerks union in Los Angeles, the longshoremen's union in Hawaii, and the A.F.of L. central labor council in San Francisco on organizing new forms of medical service, so that they might secure more effective use of their health insurance dollars. He undertook a major survey of group practice among California physicians, and he studied the operations of health systems in Europe for the World Health Organization, making one of a series of international studies which he continued throughout his career. He trained a number of research assistants who remain active in the medical care field, including Charlotte Muller, Anne Waybur, George Goldstein, Glenn Lamson, Sandra Howell, and myself.

It is therefore with a special feeling that we who were inspired and trained and goaded by Richard Weinerman remember him. We will have to undertake to carry on his tragically interrupted work — we who were his students, together with our students.