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Department of Epidemiology – Chronology and Notes

This document is the resource document for G:\EPID-SPH-UNC\SPH-History\EPID-History\DraftAndOutlineInProgress-20140825.docx

Potential informants: Martha Monnett, Steve Couch, John Hatch

Elizabeth Semler

Abigail Neely

Andy Olshan

Bert Kaplan (interviewed)

Gerardo Heiss (interviewed)

Wayne Rosamond

Kelly Evenson

Kathryn Rose

Phyllis Johnson

Myra Carpenter

Barbara Hulka (interviewed)

Michel Ibrahim (interviewed)

David Savitz (interviewed)

Carl Shy (interviewed)

Steve Wing (interviewed)

Steve Zyzanski (interview pending)

**Epidemiology Chairs**

Edward McGavran - while dean, I believe he was also chair of Epidemiology (check Dreaming of a Time and memoranda at http://www.unc.edu/~vschoenb/EPIDhistory/EPIDhx-

CarlShyPhotopiesFromSPHannualReports/ - online )

Sidney Kark – He was here for 1-3 years and was chair, I believe (see Dreaming of a Time)

John Cassel, 1958-– brought in by Sidney Kark, John was the first permanent chair of the Epidemiology Department (see Dreaming of a Time)

Michael Ibrahim, 1976?-1983 – served following John’s untimely death (in 1976?)

Barbara Hulka, 1983-1993 – appointed following Michel’s ascent to the dean ship (1983) serving until 1993 (10 year term)

Carl Shy, 1993-1996 – appointed at the end of Barbara’s term when search was unsuccessful (leading candidates withdrew – Moyses Szklo had to withdraw due to his father’s illness?, Tom Koepsell was appointed chair at Univ of Washington, Louise Brinton was in advanced stage of pregnancy)

David Savitz, 1996-2005 – appointed after Carl’s 3-year term following an internal search and served 9.5 years

Dana Loomis, 2006 (Jan-June) interim – David left for Mount Sinai Medical School in December or January in his 9th year as chair; Dana Loomis was made acting chair while the search was conducted. I think that Dana served for 6 months

Andrew Olshan, 2006- – current

**John Cassel**

http://www.epidemiolog.net/epid160/history/JohnCassel/ Michel Ibrahim and Bert Kaplan were the first two (and the only surviving) authors of the AJE commentary on John Cassel’s legacy: <http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/content/112/1/1.extract> (the full text is at http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/content/112/1/1.full.pdf+html).

From Sherman James (preparatory to his John Cassel Memorial Lecture at SER in 2012, Spring 2012 SER Newsletter, <http://epiresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Spring-2012.pdf>). (Note – this differs somewhat from the version in his 2014 interview, which Vic is going with, but it might be good to ask if he would like to reconcile the minor differences, since this is published):

“John Cassel: An Appreciation and Some Brief Reflections

It seems like just a few years ago, rather than an astounding 39 years, that I first met John Cassel. In early 1973, he was the renowned Chairman of the Department of Epidemiology at the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill, and I was an "ABD" (all but dissertation) graduate student in psychology at Washington University in St. Louis. On a lark, I had accepted the invitation from a search committee, appointed by Cassel, to interview for the "psychologist" faculty position that had opened up the previous year due to the departure of David Jenkins (of Type A Behavior fame) to Boston University. My meeting with Cassel took place at the end of the first day of my two day visit.

When I walked into his office around 4pm, mentally exhausted after a long day of trying to understand what virologists, parasitologists, health services researchers, cardiovascular and cancer epidemiologists were talking about, I had already concluded that, under no circumstances, would I accept this job even if they were foolish enough to offer it to me. Fiddling with his pipe, Cassel sat in a chair behind his book-cluttered desk and warmly invited me to sit in a chair directly facing him. After an exchange of pleasantries, but before I could signal my nonchalance, he began talking about the field of epidemiology, and more specifically about social epidemiology, and why I - a budding social scientist and son of the American South (where, he emphasized, racial health disparities abounded) - should be interested in a field like epidemiology where a love of science and a commitment to social justice are mutually reinforcing. With that, he got my full attention, and kept it for the next hour as he explained the interdisciplinary character of epidemiology, the department's teaching and research programs, and how I might fit into their plans for the future- if offered the job. To my later surprise and delight, they did offer me the job. And, beyond that, because of Cassel's remarkable capacity to mentor junior faculty and graduate students alike, my transformation from psychologist to social epidemiologist went more smoothly than it might have otherwise.

Cassel died in 1976, at age 55; I was his last faculty hire. Many of the students and junior faculty he mentored, directly, are now approaching retirement, but there is every reason to believe that they passed on to their students Cassel's inspiring vision of what the science of epidemiology - at its best - could be.

John Cassel was one of the Founders of SER, which was created 44 years ago explicitly to foster meaningful, extended dialogue between young and more senior epidemiologists on an annual basis. By almost any metric, SER has fulfilled this mission, spectacularly. In 2007-2008, I was privileged to serve as SER president, a role I thoroughly enjoyed. …”

* John Hatch anecdote in interview

George Kaplan on John Cassel’s contribution to Social Epid:  
(George A. Kaplan, Part III Summary: What is the role of the social environment in understanding inequalities in health?

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/51521/Kaplan%20GA,%20Part%20III%20Summary,%202000.pdf;jsessionid=3A1F03B20A9435407823D8B8B15269A0?sequence=1> [“… During the last quarter of a century, the discussion of the social environment broadened with John Cassel’s paper ‘The Contribution of the Social Environment to Host Resistance’ being a sentinel marker of this change. In this paper, …” p116

**Students**

(From Steve Couch) The first two EPID degrees were MPH degrees granted in 1947 to Alejandro Cruz Blandon (Miami) and Domingos B. Carvalhedo (Brazil). The next two PhD degrees granted were: Consorcia Gamboa Bautista 1951 and Travis J. Northcutt Jr. 1959 (now deceased).

From 1961 there is an uninterrupted stream of degrees to the present day.

Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) – see notes in spring 2012 newsletter. Also, UNC was the local host for the 1985 SER meeting (Carolina Becker was the local faculty member who took the lead – see her folder for a scan of the folder with the meeting logo)

**Major contributions (originally from Andy Olshan)**

         Integration of psychological, social and cultural factors into conceptual scheme for epidemiologic research and teaching (Cassel, 1960-1975 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=ibrahim+m+kaplan+b>)

         Publication of major epidemiologic methods textbook (Keinbaum, Kupper, and Morgenstern, Epidemiologic Research: Principles and Quantitative Methods, 1982). Department’s important contributions to epidemiologic theory and practice continued with Poole, Richardson, Kaufman, Cole, Brookhart, Westreich, Powers, and Sturmer.

         Sherman James conducts first studies of “John Henryism” hypothesis to explain chronic stress and hypertension among African-Americans (1983; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/6663614>)

         Investigation of disparities and determinants in the incidence of preterm birth (PIN study; Savitz, Siega-Riz, Evenson, Herring; 2002-  <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/pin>)

         Dr. Ralph Baric’s laboratory develops novel approaches to creating vaccines for viruses of global significance including dengue, coronaviruses such as SARS, and Norwalk virus (2003- [Dengue virus envelope protein domain I/II hinge determines long-lived serotype-specific dengue immunity](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24385585)   [A live, impaired-fidelity coronavirus vaccine protects in an aged, immunocompromised mouse model of lethal disease](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23142821)   [Human susceptibility and resistance to Norwalk virus infection](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12692541)  )

         Analysis of tumor subtype data with the Carolina Breast Cancer Study revealed differences in the prevalence of subtypes between African-Americans and whites and helped explain disparities in mortality (Millikan, 2006; transdisciplinary research with CBCS continues  <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17578664>  <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16757721> <http://cbcs.web.unc.edu/> )

         Dr. Gerardo Heiss’ leadership within the Women’s Health Initiative trial has yielded several important findings including the health risks and benefits after stopping estrogen and progestin treatment (Heiss, 2008  <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18319414>)

         Professor Mike Cohen’s research on the early initiation of antiretroviral therapy created a paradigm shift in the way HIV and AIDS patients are treated worldwide and was featured on the cover of Science magazine in 2011 for [“Breakthrough of the Year.”](http://www.sciencemag.org/site/special/btoy2011/)  <http://www.sciencemag.org/site/special/btoy2011/> Recently recruited faculty member, Kim Powers, conducted HIV transmission modeling and determined that early infection plays an important part in HIV transmission in this sub-Saharan African (Powers, 2011  <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21684591>).

         Our cardiovascular disease program’s longstanding leadership in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study has provided important data on the risk factors and burden of cardiovascular disease in the U.S. including trends in incidence (Rosamond, Heiss, 2012 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22420957>).

         Dr. Steve Meshnick conducted a double-blind RCT of tick bite prevention. The study of outdoor workers from North Carolina indicated that long-lasting permethrin impregnated uniforms are highly effective for at least 1 year in deterring tick bites (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24745637>).

**Courses, especially Methods**

EPID160 – Cassel, Abdel Omran, majors course (Michel Ibrahim, Gerardo Heiss, Carl Shy, VJS), non-majors (Abdel Omran, HAT/Carl/Bert, Carl, Carl/Lorraine, Vic, Karin/Lorraine), off-campus course (Ralph Patrick?, Carolyn Becker, Bert Kaplan), Internet (Carl/Lorraine, Vic/Lorraine, Vic).

EPID168, EPID710 – Joellen Schildkraut, Wayne Rosamond, Jim Thomas, Steve Marshall, Daniel Westreich

 EPID268 - precursor (BIOS 271??), David Kleinbaum, Larry Kupper, Hal Morgenstern TA, their textbook, K&K, short courses, David Savitz?, Davis Strogatz? Who else?

Rachel Royce

EPID269 – David Kleinbaum

EPID271? –

Steve Cole

**Former faculty (moved on)**

J. Ed Hall, Dana Loomis, David Savitz, June Stevens (?),

**Emeriti faculty**

Bert, Barbara, Carl, Michel, Dick Seed, Frieda Behets

**Deceased faculty and key staff**

John Cassel

Ralph Patrick

Cecil Slome

Cecil Sheps

Marilyn Vine (2002)

Al Tyroler (2007)

Jessie Satia (2010)

Bob Millikan (2012)

Caroline Becker (2014)

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