

IN MEMORIAM

**Chris Kochtitzky**

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) was saddened to learn that Chris Kochtitzky, MSP, passed away on May 3, 2020. He was one of the founders of the field of built environment and health at the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) where he worked for over two decades. He grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. He received a bachelor's

degree in political science from Millsaps College in 1989 and earned a master's degree in planning with a focus on urban and regional planning from Florida State University in 1992.

Kochtitzky started at CDC in 1992 and worked for several years as a policy analyst in the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. In 1997, he moved to the National Center for Environmental Health's (NCEH) Office of Policy, Evaluation, and Legislation where he served as its deputy director. In 2003, after serving for 2 years as the associate director of policy for the Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services, he served 1 year as the branch chief of the Disability and Health Branch, and later became the deputy director of the Division of Human Development and Disability.

From 2009–2017, Kochtitzky served as the associate director for program development for the NCEH Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services before joining the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity as a senior advisor. In this position he served as an expert on the development of evidence-based guidelines and recommendations to increase physical activity across the country. Kochtitzky provided technical and subject-matter expertise to state and community programs in the areas of policy, systems, and environmental interventions designed to promote active living.

Throughout his career, Kochtitzky worked tirelessly as a bridge between the fields of planning and public health. In 2010, he served as an adjunct professor at Emory University and taught a course on public health and the built environment. He was known for the strength of the partnerships he developed and maintained. His networks allowed for the spread and scale of science and implementation of programs across federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private and nonprofit sectors.

Kochtitzky contributed to the planning and public health fields through several influential articles, book chapters, and numerous presentations given throughout the U.S. He was recognized by CDC in 2018 as a Public Health Agent of Change. Furthermore, he helped organize CDC's Built Environment and Health Group in 2008 and was a key contributor to the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable

Communities in 2015. Most recently, he was a driving force in organizing the Transportation Research Board's conference on active transportation and health. He also was an active member of NEHA since 2002.

The following quotes provide further insight into Kochtitzky's character and passion, as well as his impact.

"The character, generosity, and presence of Chris was boundless, timeless, and transcendent. He asked for nothing in return. He was a voice in a generation characterized by echoes. He was not a mirror of who we are but a mold of who we should be. He inherently understood and taught me that knowledge and understanding are not synonymous. For that Chris, I am eternally grateful," Dr. David Dyjack, NEHA executive director.

"Chris was my project officer on my first grant from CDC/NCEH. We quickly became friends and stayed in touch. He always had a mission and gave his all to his missions. Given to him by his father, his mantra in life was, 'You must comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.' He lived by those words," Doug Farquhar, NEHA Government Affairs director

"Chris was a member and friend of NEHA who believed in our vision and mission. He would go out of his way to lend support to NEHA. Like many, I was fortunate to have worked with Chris while at CDC. Chris would occasionally challenge me on my assumptions about environmental health and tell me to get out of 'my box.' While it may not be meaningful to many, I enjoyed having lunch with Chris in the 106 Cafeteria on the NCEH campus. I will miss that," Vince Radke, NEHA past president.

"My relationship with Chris shaped my professional career. He had a great passion for developing and elevating the environmental health workforce. Chris was very generous with his time and expertise. He was the most honest provider of feedback I have ever worked with but it never felt like criticism. The thing that is important in any memorial about Chris is to provide a call to action for the environmental health workforce to take up his call to work across the professions to address upstream prevention," Dr. Sandra Whitehead, professor and interim program director.

A memorial fund for Kochtitzky has been set up by the CDC Foundation and will focus on building the bridge between urban planning and public health. To learn more, please visit <https://give.cdcfoundation.org/give/285616/#!/donation/checkout>. Furthermore, a Caring Bridge website has been created to share information and help friends, family, and colleagues communicate during this difficult time (www.caringbridge.org/visit/chriskochtitzky/journal/view/id/5eb5b2281c4e7b1f45590b5).

NEHA extends its deepest sympathies to Kochtitzky's family, friends, and colleagues. He was a generous and caring person and a tenacious public health professional who pursued his life and work with passion, wisdom, and intelligence. He will be greatly missed.

IN MEMORIAM

Bailus Walker, Jr.

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) was saddened to learn that Bailus Walker, Jr., MPH, PhD, passed away on April 11, 2020. Dr. Walker was a distinguished researcher, teacher, and environmental and public health professional. He was a retired professor of environmental and occupational medicine and toxicology in the College of Medicine at Howard University. He received his undergraduate degree in biology and chemistry from Kentucky University. He went on to earn a Master of Public Health from the University of Michigan and a doctorate in occupational and environmental health from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Walker's career spanned several decades across academia and state and federal health agencies. From 1979–1981, he was director of the Occupational Health Standards Division within the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. He was the first nonphysician to be appointed commissioner of public health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and chairman of the Massachusetts Public Health Council. Prior to that he was appointed state director of public health for Michigan. From 1988–1990, Dr. Walker was a professor of public health policy at the State University of New York at Albany. He then went on to be appointed dean of the College of Public Health at the Health Sciences Center of the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, from 1990–1994.

Dr. Walker was actively involved in the environmental and public health profession. He was a National Institutes of Health advisor on environmental and community health aspects of bio-defense research. He was a senior science advisor for environmental health to the National Library of Medicine. Dr. Walker was also elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences in 1989 and served on numerous commissions and committees.

Professional development and the value of professional associations were important to Dr. Walker. He was a past president of the American Public Health Association, a distinguished fellow of the Royal Society of Health, and a distinguished fellow of the American College of Epidemiology. Dr. Walker was also an active NEHA member for over 50 years. He provided further impact to the profession through publication of over 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals on environmental and occupational health.

Throughout Dr. Walker's career, he was the recipient of many awards and accolades including the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Michigan (UM) School of Public Health and the UM Department of Environmental Health Sciences Award. In 1984, Dr. Walker was the recipient of the Walter S. Mangold Award, NEHA's highest honor.

The following quotes from colleagues and friends showcase his contributions and dedication to environmental and public health, as well as the lasting impact he had on many individuals and the profession.

"Dr. Walker was an outstanding individual with such a warm and outgoing personality. I feel very blessed to have had the oppor-

tunity to meet him. My thoughts and prayers for his family," Sue Beck, wife of the late Professor Joe Beck.

"As we celebrate the life of Dr. Walker, my memories of him began when I was a graduate student. He interviewed me for a position with the newly forming Consumer Product Safety Commission. Having previously met with Dr. Walker when he was in consideration for commissioner of that organization, I became impressed with his demeanor and his genuine interest in environmental health. I stayed in touch with Bailus throughout my careers, often seeking his counsel and valuable advice. He quickly became an inspirational figure in my career offering guidance, encouragement, and praise that found me at times when I needed it the most," Gary Coleman, NEHA past president.

"Dr. Walker taught the first environmental health course at the New York State Department of Health in Albany. He believed that schools of public health should be located in governmental public health institutions where students can see how public health policy emerges, programs are managed, and practices are applied. I was lucky enough to have taken that class. Many people are responsible for my turning to public health, he is responsible for my focus on environmental health. His environmental health class was the beginning of my career as an environmentalist that now spans nearly three decades," Dr. Larry Figgs, division chief.

"Dr. Bailus Walker, Jr. was a legend in public and environmental health. He deserves as many tributes as one can receive. He was a great leader, professor, researcher, administrator, consultant, writer, and champion in public and environmental health. Dr. Walker pushed strongly for diversity and the best in environmental health all of his career. He was an advisor to me and many others in the environmental, public health, and medical professions. I am thankful and grateful that he came my way and adopted me as a part of his circle of friends and professionals. We miss him," Dr. Priscilla Oliver, NEHA immediate past-president.

"Dr. Walker was one of my environmental health heroes and an inspirational figure," Vince Radke, NEHA past president.

NEHA extends its deepest sympathies to Dr. Walker's family, friends, and colleagues. His contributions to environmental and public health are numerous and will continue to influence our profession for many years. He will be greatly missed. 🙏

Editor's Note: We thank the individuals who provided quotes and information regarding the lives of Chris Kochtitzky and Dr. Bailus Walker, as well as the agencies and organizations that provided biographical information. If you would like to share information about the passing of an environmental health professional to be mentioned in a future In Memoriam, please contact Kristen Ruby-Cisneros at kruby@neha.org. The *Journal* will publish the In Memoriam section twice a year in the June and December issues, or in other issues as determined appropriate.