

## **ILC USA**

Any report on the activities of and plans for International Longevity Center-USA for the year 2010 must be marked by the death of our founder and president, Dr. Robert N. Butler, who died on July 4, 2010 in the midst of plans to relocate the ILC-USA from its quarters on the Upper East Side of Manhattan to the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia. This was long Dr. Butler's dream and he lived to see contracts signed and regulatory authority granted to make this happen. The ILC-USA "move" will occur at the end of February 2011 and will be initially led there by interim co-directors Drs. Linda Fried, dean of the Mailman School, and an expert on aging; and Dr. John Rowe, also an international authority on aging and a member of ILC's founding board as the then CEO of Mount Sinai Medical Center.

The ILC at Columbia will especially be concerned with aging and society in an international context. In the months following Dr. Butler's death until the handover date in February, the remaining staff of the ILC is completing all projects, including several that have been part of the ILC's signature programs for several years.

As this report is written, it should be said that Dr. Butler revered the International Partnership of ILCs, its leading lights (the directors and presidents), the projects that it pursued and the promise it holds for better public understanding of aging and longevity as well as the impact its work can have on people everywhere. He regarded the leadership of this body as family—and always spoke glowingly of the annual meetings and other contact during the year. He was enthusiastic about the October meeting in Capetown that he had planned to attend. The International Partnership was a true achievement, he believed, and augured well for the future in an aging society and world.

### **Transition to Columbia**

Plans to consider moving the ILC to Columbia began more than five years ago when Drs. Butler and Dennis initiated a series of meetings with the provost of Columbia University who encouraged the discussion and commissioned an internal report at Columbia that eventually encouraged the transition. Beginning late in 2008 it became clear that the ILC was not sustainable as an independent, non-profit organization as it lacked a robust endowment and was too dependent on unstable corporate and foundation giving. It was determined that the ILC's greatest fiscal asset—its building—could be leveraged to create an endowment. Columbia University agreed to accept the gifting of the building in return for an endowment derived from the results of the proposed sale. Originally, Dr. Butler had planned to serve as founding director of the reconstituted center at Columbia. From late 2008 forward in the midst of a global recession, the ILC began reducing its workforce and financial obligations so that any transition could be made without undue obligations.

Thus, plans called for a small workforce to go to Columbia with Dr. Butler to make the transfer and restart operations. That plan is now modified, of course, as Columbia begins

to recruit for a new director—and to find ways to fully staff ILC research and policy objectives. They are committed to continue Dr. Butler’s vision for the mission of the ILC and have expressed special interest in strengthen the international operations.

### **The Year to Date**

As always, the ILC-USA’s work in 2010 was a mix of continuity and change. Organizationally and intellectually, all ILC activity lives in three realms, often overlapping and converging. Those are advancing (a) healthy aging and (b) productive engagement and (c) combating ageism and enhancing quality of life. During 2010 several projects continued to evolve and develop, including such signature programs as these longstanding and more recent programs:

- Age Boom Academy**, a weeklong immersion seminar for select journalists;
- World Cities Project**, a joint venture with New York University and the Hastings Center and involving New York, Tokyo, London, Paris and now, Hong Kong;
- The Caregiving Project**, and especially the ILC-MetLife Community College caregiving initiative and the Brookdale Foundation family caregiving initiative, designed to enhance the supply and quality of caregivers for older persons;
- Alzheimer's global initiative**—an effort to build support for continuing research and policy initiatives on Alzheimer’s disease in a broader public health perspective;
- Independent Living Project**—with consensus conferences and research efforts to better gauge and address independent congregate living arrangements, including a study of life satisfaction;
- Knowledge Gap Project**—an effort to bridge the gap between and among the various aging/longevity discipline and professionals (and related ones) to better integrate knowledge for pragmatic use; and
- Reinventing Senior Centers Project**—a small pilot project to assess the capacity of senior centers to become more health-centric was initiated and plans were in place with the collaboration of the New York Council of Senior Centers and New York University to accelerate this work.

In addition, the ILC is taking part in the **Philips Livable Cities Award Program**, now underway. Dr. Butler was also involved as co-chair of the task force on aging for the World Economic Forum and various other boards and advisory councils. His leadership in all these organizations will be greatly missed.

The ILC continues to maintain its website and to publish various reports and documents related to the projects above.

Copies of the ILC’s 2009 annual report, published in summer 2010 put the work of the ILC in a broader context. Readers may also consult the report of our 2010 Age Boom Academy, which Dr. Butler declared, “the best ever.”

