

International Longevity Center Begins A New Chapter at the Mailman School -

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Linda Fried, MD, MPH, and John (Jack) Rowe, MD, will serve as interim co-directors of the longevity center.

Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and the International Longevity Center (ILC) announced today that the ILC, founded in 1990 by world-renowned gerontologist Robert N. Butler, is beginning an important new chapter in its history. Honoring the wishes of the late Dr. Butler and in keeping with his longstanding commitment and generosity to the University, the mission, work, and the assets of the ILC will become the foundation for an interdisciplinary center on aging at Columbia University, anchored at the Mailman School of Public Health.

The new center will grow to serve as a research and educational hub for exploring issues in science and practice related to healthy aging, training a new generation of thought leaders in these issues, while also developing knowledge to inform aging-related public health policy in New York City, the U.S., and globally.

"Never in the history of humankind have people enjoyed the life expectancy beyond age 80 that is becoming commonplace in countries all around the world," said the Mailman School's Dean Linda P. Fried, MD, MPH. "With these extra years come many challenges to ensure that we are living not only longer lives, but rich lives filled with purpose and good health that benefit all generations and society at large. Bob Butler helped

us all to understand this potential and work towards it. We are grateful and honored to have the opportunity to build on Bob's legacy here at the Mailman School. To do so, we plan to draw on the intellectual strength of faculty across many fields, building bridges throughout the University, and galvanizing innovative and interdisciplinary research."

"Longer life expectancies require more than strategies for ensuring good health. There needs to be a serious and sustained consideration of the best ways for older generations to enrich society," said Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger. "With the Mailman School's international and interdisciplinary reach, Columbia's new center on longevity will be able to help us understand one of the most significant issues facing society today."

Dean Fried is a global leader in the fields of epidemiology and geriatrics and has dedicated her career to the science of healthy aging and exploring the opportunities of an aging society. Dr. John (Jack) Rowe, Chairman of the Mailman School's Board of Overseers, is a geriatrician and leading scholar on successful aging. They will serve as interim co-directors of the new University-wide center while an international search for a permanent executive director is underway. (*See Drs. Fried and Rowe discuss an aging society on PBS's Richard Heffner's Open Mind.*)



The late Dr. Robert Butler, founder of the ILC.

Dr. Butler, who led the ILC for 20 years, was previously the first director of the National Institute on Aging, as well as a Pulitzer Prize-winning author of several books on aging and longevity. He died suddenly in July 2010 even as discussions were being completed to bring the ILC to

Columbia, where he had completed his undergraduate and medical education and been an active and honored alumnus.

Under Dr. Butler's leadership, the New York-based ILC has long been part of a multinational consortium of ILC centers in the U.S., Japan, Great Britain, France, Dominican Republic, India, South Africa, Argentina, the Netherlands, Israel, Czech Republic and Singapore. From the vantage point of their national experience, each of these ILC centers studies how greater life expectancy and the growing percentage of older persons in a population impact the culture, the economy, and the social fabric, and advocates for improved societal policies for an aging world.

Conducting research and programs in more than 100 countries, the Mailman School of Public Health has a well-established presence in global public health. "The presence of twelve ILC affiliates, based in countries spanning the globe, provides an exceptional opportunity for collaboration with global leaders in aging and an unprecedented capacity for comparative cross-national studies," noted Dr. Rowe. "We look forward to being a very active participant in this productive research consortium."

Alexandra Butler, one of Dr. Butler's four daughters, expressed the family's enthusiasm for the new chapter opening up for ILC at the University. "Our father credited his beloved Columbia College for helping him to think broadly across disciplines. We see the ILC's move to Columbia as a natural progression—a return to the beginnings of our father's long and outstanding career. We are grateful to all who support our father's work and who helped lead us to this day."

The Mailman School of Public Health will be embarking on a fundraising campaign to establish an endowment for the new center, with the goal of naming it in honor of Dr. Butler. The endowment campaign will be co-chaired by two members of the Mailman School's Board of Overseers: William Zabel, partner at Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP and a longtime member of the ILC Board of Directors, and Nancy Turett, global president, health, at Edelman.

"As his friend and longtime lawyer, I know it was one of Bob Butler's lifelong goals to see the ILC continue its mission at Columbia," said Mr. Zabel. "It would be a fitting tribute to Bob's extraordinary work to secure an endowment that allows us to name the center in his honor. I am delighted to be part of this."

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