

Eulogy in memory of Dr Albert Sabin
DA Henderson
Arlington Natl Cemetery
Ft Myer VA
8 Mar 1993

SABIN MEMORIAL

ARLINGTON CEMETERY

March 8, 1993

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Among Albert Sabin's epochal achievements, the one for which
he is best known is the development of the oral polio vaccine.

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gratitude, not only for a vaccine which prevents each,
individually, from contracting the dreaded infantile paralysis
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but for a vaccine with the capacity to eliminate wild poliovirus
itself -- from a country, a continent and indeed the world.]

Over time, many have forgotten [or perhaps have never
Among Albert Sabin's epochal achievements, the one for which
appreciated] what difficult and complex problems he faced and
he is best known in the development of the oral polio vaccine.
painstakingly resolved in developing the vaccine. Likewise
Countless millions today have cause to express personal
inadequately appreciated, is the impact which this unique vaccine
gratitude, not only for a vaccine which prevents each,
had on the concepts and practice of immunization -- nor his
individually, from contracting the dreaded infantile paralysis
personal role in translating the promise of the vaccine into
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practical utility. By any standards, it was a tour de force.

He began his work with the concept that protection conferred by actual infection with an attenuated, non-virulent strain of polio should produce better and more durable protection [than a vaccine prepared simply by killing the virus with chemicals and innoculating it.]

And so he began the painstaking, arduous task of screening large numbers of polio isolates obtained from healthy children and mutant isolates obtained by special manipulation in the laboratory. He devised the difficult but elegant tests in which polio should produce better and more durable protection than a vaccine prepared simply by killing the virus with chemicals and identified for human tests. [By this means, the least pathogenic strains could be innoculating it.]

When others feared to test the live vaccines in human populations lest the virus mutate, spread and perhaps itself cause epidemics, he courageously progressed step by step, backed by elegant laboratory research, to demonstrate that this was not a problem. [Indeed, as was found, the vaccine virus did spread to monkeys which, as he demonstrated, correlated with pathogenicity in humans. By this means, the least pathogenic strains could be identified for human tests.]

close contacts but this in itself proved an advantage in extending immunity throughout a population.

He foresaw the potential of mass campaigns which, if adequately conducted, could, in theory, displace completely the wild strains. Traditionalists who believed that vaccine should only be given in a doctor's office objected. But in our own

country, voluntary and service groups supported the program and so it was introduced in programs called -- S.O.S. --Sabin on Sunday.

Medical training was hardly requisite for placing two drops of vaccine on a lump of sugar and so millions flocked to vaccination centers.

He foresaw the potential of mass campaigns which, if adequately conducted, could, in theory, displace completely the wild strains. Traditionalists who believed that vaccine should only be given in a doctor's office objected. But in our own laboratory scientist carried his crusade to public health staff country, voluntary and service groups supported the program and and politicians alike throughout the world. Never at a loss for words, he argued for the vaccination of an entire country, not by the traditional utilization of health clinics and hospitals over vaccine on a lump of sugar and so millions flocked to vaccination period of years but by employing volunteers who could vaccinate centers,

But Albert was not content. His vision was not the control of polio. He sought its eradication. And so the consummate

at special collecting points and by house to house visit over a period of days. Many countries heeded his call and, indeed, the strategy worked.

Today, fully 18 months have elapsed since the last wild poliovirus was discovered in the whole of the Western Hemisphere and now a full-scale global eradication campaign is in progress.

I am confident that the memory of Albert's life-long commitment and dedication will continue to serve as the stimulus to fulfill at special collecting points and by house to house visit over a Albert's vision. And never again will there be a need for period of days, Many countries heeded his call and, indeed, the respirators, wheel chairs and crutches for those who have been afflicted with the poliovirus.

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