



The Walter F. Snyder Award for 1984

presented to

WILLIAM NIX ANDERSON

In 1959, with a newly won BS in biology, William Nix Anderson began his scientific career in the Lubbock, Texas Health Department as a garbage and alley inspector.

In his determined presence, rats starved and maggots died by the millions. Thousands of violation tags bearing his signature were hung on garbage cans, doors, and fence posts. Yet, with patient explanations, he managed to make friends among alley residents.

His success on this basic frontier of public health led to his promotion as district sanitarian in Lubbock, and then to his employment in Wyoming as sanitarian with the Casper-Natrona County Health Department. When he took the job in 1962, the department consisted of a part-time director, a secretary, and a sanitarian charged with the inspection of bars and cafes. As a public health specialist, Nix saw immediately that the people of Casper and Natrona County were an endangered species. He began a problem-by-problem attack on sanitation risks which continues to this day.

He has developed and won activation for programs never before implemented in any county of Wyoming. Among them:

- *A sewage permit program* which required permits, design checks, and final inspection of all installations. When the program was in place, Natrona wells showed nine percent contamination versus 33 percent in other Wyoming counties.
- *An air pollution program* with ten sample stations visited at five-day intervals *before* Nix's regular working hours. This evolved into today's air pollution program in Natrona County and provided the background for Nix's successful efforts to win passage in 1967 of the Wyoming Clean Air Act.
- *A solid waste program* involving the establishment of a sanitary landfill which replaced the old burning dump.
- *A venereal disease program* instituted by Nix at a time when the department had no public health nurses on its staff. The program provided free interviewing, investigation, laboratory analysis, and treatment — all managed by Nix himself for the first ten years.

- *A mosquito control program* which Nix initiated by spraying and larvaciding during the mosquito season *after* his regular working hours. The service, which is free to the public, is now staffed and funded.

- *A food sampling program* with laboratory analysis of samples. Plates containing growth are taken back to the food processor to demonstrate strong and weak aspects of food sanitation. Foods in grocery stores, delicatessens, and meat markets are also examined. This program was nominated for the 1982 Crumbine Award.

- *A water pollution program* in which routine sampling of streams and rivers is conducted on an ongoing basis. The sampling is done to determine if non-point or point discharge is occurring and causing a pollution problem.

- *A routine inspection program* which involves not only Natrona bars and cafes, but now includes grocery stores, barber shops, beauty shops, schools, day care centers, nurseries, rest homes, bakeries, warehouses, and swimming pools.

In addition to these programs (staffed by six sanitarians and supported entirely with city and county funds) Nix has organized, and directs, an inspection team consisting of building, electrical, plumbing, and fire inspectors.

Approval of each member of the team is required before a builder can obtain a city health permit.

In 1983, Nix and his colleagues initiated a water primacy program on the county level. It is a pilot program, funded by the EPA, and never before undertaken in any other part of the United States.

Beyond his public health duties, Nix carries out all programs for the State Department of Agriculture within Natrona County — a grant of authority awarded to no other sanitarian in Wyoming.

The Public Health Nursing program of Natrona County was promoted by Nix who convinced the League of Women Voters to see that this vital public service was established.

One wonders how this zealous public servant also manages to be an ardent hunter and fisherman, but he is. What is more, in the course of an 8,760-hour year, he is a founding member and first president of the Wyoming Public Health Sanitarians Association, a director and former regional vice president of NEHA and a member of the NSF Council of Public Health Consultants from 1975 to 1983. In addition, he is a member of the APHA, the Air Pollution Control Association, the Casper Plumbing Board, and the Governor's (Wyoming) Council on Comprehensive Health Planning.

And there's something else.

Nix is not a nickname. It is a family surname, but in Wyoming it has a special meaning. Nix means *nix* to anything whatsoever that threatens the public health.

Past Recipients of the Walter F. Snyder Award

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Ralph C. Pickard
William A. Broadway, Jr.
James E. Jump
Charles L. Senn
Charles C. Johnson, Jr.*

*Larry J. Gordon
Ray B. Watts
John G. Todd
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