



## The Walter F. Snyder Award for 1998

Presented to  
**CHRIS J. WIANT, Ph.D.**

In presenting the Walter F. Snyder Award for 1998 to Chris J. Wiant, we honor a unique individual who has a multitude of accomplishments in support of the environmental health field. Like Walter F. Snyder, Dr. Wiant believes that this world can, and must, be made a better place to live. Not only does he believe this, he has made it happen.

The citizens of the Tri-County Health Department are able to drink their water with less concern today. They know they have a strong friend and ally in their Executive Director, Dr. Chris J. Wiant. Explains a supporting colleague, "without a doubt, the most notable example of Dr. Wiant's ability to work with all interests in solving environmental problems was his facilitation of final clean up remedies for the most polluted place on earth, i.e., the Rocky Mountain Arsenal."

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal, established by the Department of Defense during World War II, was a chemical weapons manufacturing facility producing lewisite, mustard gas, and later sarin gas. In addition, after the war, private industry leased sections of the plant for producing agricultural pesticides. Left behind, in 1982 after all production ceased, was extensive soil contamination impacting private drinking water supplies and irrigation wells.

Led by his unwavering determination to find a resolution for clean up that would be protective, cost-effective and timely, Dr. Wiant organized a coalition of local stakeholders and formed a united front to demand a Record of Decision. First, Dr. Wiant, led the effort to educate each of the local community players on the study

results and clean-up alternatives. Next, he represented the coalition in negotiations with government regulatory agencies, Shell Oil Company, the U.S. Army and environmental groups and was instrumental in achieving consensus. "Without Dr. Wiant's direct intervention, the local community's input would have been fractional and ineffective," added the colleague. A Record of Decision for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal was signed on June 11, 1996. For his effort, Dr. Wiant was awarded the "Commander's Medal for Public Service" from the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Army.

Dr. Wiant was the primary architect of the Tri-County Health Department's changes in the Food Service Establishment Inspection Program leading to recognition by the Crumline Award Jury. The Department was awarded the Samuel J. Crumline Award in 1992. This prestigious award is given for excellence and continual improvement (3-5 years) in a comprehensive program of food protection at the local level.

Education and training, always a factor in Dr. Wiant's agenda, was the instrument for bringing together industry, academia and regulatory bodies to create a voluntary food service education program. This training program on food safety for food service workers represents a true partnership between the food service industry and regulatory authorities. An Advisory Committee from this representation was formed to provide ongoing oversight and guidance for this program. He carried this one-step further as he pulled stakeholders together to hammer out

words and support to make vital changes to state laws regarding food service and individual sewage disposal systems.

"Food safety will command greater attention in our food service establishments," corroborated a colleague.

Dr. Wiant's influence beyond Colorado and Illinois has been aided by his appointments to a wide variety of expert groups: the U.S. EPA Regulatory Negotiation on Disinfection By-Products in Drinking Water; the U.S. EPA National Drinking Water Advisory Council; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Council on Hazardous Substances Research and Training; and a Commissioned Investigator, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. He is a current member of the Chlorine Chemistry Council, Disinfection Issues Team and serves on the Public Health Advisory Board for the Chemical Manufacturers Association.

This Walter F. Snyder recipient also serves on the Council of Public Health Consultants for NSF International and was its 1995-1996 Chairman. A long-time member and strong supporter of NEHA, Dr. Wiant served as its President for the 1992-1993 term.

On the state/local level, Dr. Wiant has held his share of appointments both in Illinois and Colorado. He currently serves as Chairman, Colorado Pollution Prevention Advisory Board and was recently appointed to the Water Quality Control Commission.

Dr. Wiant earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Illinois State University in 1972, a Master of Arts

in Health Service Administration from Sangamon State University in 1978, and in 1979 he received a Master of Public Health in occupational and environmental medicine from the University of Illinois, Medical Center, School of Public Health. Later, in 1995, he was awarded his Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration from the University of Colorado, Denver.

Beginning his professional career in 1972 as Product Safety Program Administrator, Illinois Department of Public Health, Dr. Wiant has accumulated twenty-five years in public and environmental health services. Today, as Colorado's No. 2 public health professional, Dr. Wiant oversees 260 employees, helps to manage a \$14 million budget while serving a population of 868,000 in three counties.

Dr. Wiant and his wife, Cindy, are well-known in the Aurora community where they are raising their two children and participate in many civic activities. In his leisure time, he enjoys flying single engine airplanes and is a member of the Colorado Pilots Association.

NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association take great pleasure in awarding to Dr. Chris J. Wiant the 1998 Walter F. Snyder Award for Achievement in Attaining Environmental Quality. Dr. Wiant's intellect, integrity, and commitment to improving the quality of life through his work in environmental health has made a better world for all of us.

### Past Recipients of the Walter F. Snyder Award

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John G. Todd

Charles H. Gilham  
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William Anderson  
William G. Walter  
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