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Resp-Cook

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John T Connolly
Vice President
Science and Research Administration
American Heart Association
7320 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231

Dear Dr Connolly:

This is in response to your solicitation for a note on the occasion of Len Cook's retirement. First, I could rail against a policy of compulsory retirement for people who are so valuable to society - but nevermind! Then, one could eulogize extensively about the difference between Len Cook's administrative style and the style much more often encountered in established bureaucracies that inhibits creativity. There are a few people still around, unfortunately of "the old school" who regard service to a cause as an opportunity, a responsibility and a dedication. When this attitude is combined with genuine involvement in a mission, with a respect for people's strengths and tolerance for their weaknesses, and with the right amount of baiting and prodding, then we have a fortunate situation indeed.

Len Cook, a prime example of this helping style of administration, has been the heart and soul of the Council on Epidemiology since its inception. I don't know what criteria the Heart Association has for a successful council but certainly that one has maintained a visibility and identity, a contribution and vitality that speaks as strongly for its executive as for its voluntary component.

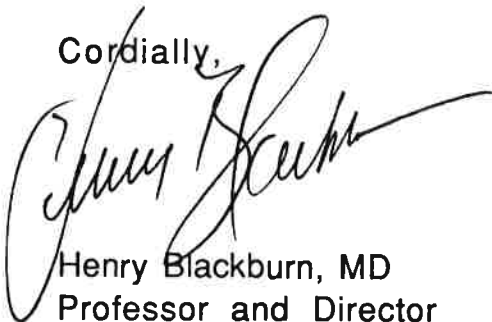
Len Cook has always responded to and contributed to the innovations of that Council, its separate annual scientific meeting, the third day add-on

conference, the Tahoe 10-day seminar, the International Newsletter. He has responded not with a bureaucratic sigh, but with "that's a good idea, let's give it a try".

His love and devotion to the Heart Association is manifest in his long service, his continuing role in the Epidemiology Council despite many inducements and encouragements to drop that function, his following the Heart Association to Dallas from his lifetime home in New York City, his consistence and persistence in the face of changes in the organization with which he did not always agree. As much as anything else, his devotion is manifest in the way that he has involved his family in the Heart Association. His wife, Irene, and his daughter, Karen, have substantially bolstered his function and that of the Association, at no cost of the Heart Association!

In general, and in specifics, I could go on at great length. All the anecdotes I think of quite simply involve Len's service "above and beyond the call". I hope that you have a marvelous evening celebrating Len's 33 years service to the Heart Association. I am hoping that he can remain available to the Council and to the Tahoe seminar as consultant and colleague. I am also hoping that the records of the Council on Epidemiology can be made available to him when and if we ever get plans off the ground to write a history of that Council. I am hoping that you have a pleasant evening in what must be a delightful task, to sing the praises of Len Cook!

Cordially,



Henry Blackburn, MD
Professor and Director
Professor of Medicine

bpc:

- ✓ Mary Jane Jesse
- ✓ Darwin Labarthe
- ✓ Len Cook