

Forward

Dr. Robert Neil Butler who was president & CEO of the ILC-USA and founding father of the ILC Global Alliance passed away of acute leukemia on July 4, 2010 at the age of 83.

Until some three days before his death, Dr. Butler kept regular office hours and indeed was himself an example of productive aging which is the concept he devoted his life toward.

Though well known as the 'Father of Gerontology', he was also a specialist in psychiatry and proposed the 'Life Review and Reminiscence Therapy,' and created the word 'Ageism' to signify discrimination against the elderly.

Dr. Butler was active in many aspects of this field and ceaselessly fought against discrimination and unfairness to the elderly, and continually advocated that the extended life of an individual and an aging population are a precious resource to society.

The fact that his wonderful grandparents were the driving force for this work is touched upon in the preface to his book, "Why Survive? Being Old in America" which won the Pulitzer Prize.

By the time he was in his forties, Dr. Butler was already a symbol of gerontology and was a major worldwide authority and influence. Not content to stop there he energetically continued his global work, towards furthering his advanced vision of our society.

At the age of 60, he launched a research and instructional institute for spreading his concepts on dealing with the problems of old age on a level binding together with the various countries of the world by creating the International Longevity Center (ILC) centering at first on Japan and the USA.

Over the next 20 years, the ILC gradually spread to some 12 countries around the world.

Even in countries that have achieved man's long cherished wish for a long life and even in countries on the road to that dream there are currently various lessons to learn and many efforts are being made to bring the benefits of an abundant elderly society to all generations.

Dr. Butler proves the concept that "old age is a blessing and creates abundance in societies where the elderly can lead active and healthy lives", and he continually preached that concept and philosophy.

He sought to change the world by persistently dealing carefully and thoroughly with immediate obstacles and problems one at a time while maintaining a long-term, optimistic point of view. He also taught us through his entire life that knowledge is the necessary tool to eliminate those problems.

While studying the lifelong path of Dr. Robert Butler who was always at the forefront in reaching for a world where everyone can live a long life and everyone can enjoy that life, we must also again recognize the fervor and strong will seen in his life and work.