

Two former Society honorees turn 100

Sep. 2002

The father of fluoride

David Ast, another New Yorker and a dentist, joined the New York State Department of Health in 1938 as an assistant commissioner for medical case evaluation and eventually director of the dental health program. He remained with the state health department until 1966.

In 1944, he initiated the Newburgh-Kingston Caries-Fluorine Study to determine if sodium fluoride in the drinking water would mean fewer cavities for kids in New York State. The success of the study resulted in the fluoridation of drinking water which in turn improved the dental health of people in the state and around the nation.

In 1946, he was chief dental officer for the American Joint Distribution Committee, which established dental health care programs for displaced persons in camps in Europe.

He retired in 1971 and came to Leisure World in 1973 where he helped organize the Community Association and served as president of Common Cause and a member of the Golden Rain Foundation maintenance, health and welfare and capital improvements committees and GRF subcommittee on health



Dr. David Ast

and medical care delivery..

He also helped organize and served as president of the Leisure World Laguna Hills Region of the Orange County Jewish Federation, and was a member of the Academians and Temple Judea.

Ast and his wife Isabel, still live in the manor they bought when they first moved here.

Like Lederer, Ast too had received numerous awards and was honored with a special citation "for his contributions to his fellow man" from the former governor of New York, Mario Cuomo, and an honorary doctorate in science from Georgetown University.