

What ISEE has meant to me professionally

The first ISEE conference I attended was the second ever, held in Berkeley in 1990, and I have been a "regular" since then. Thus, the ISEE annual meeting is a consistent element in my professional life. Likely I was recruited to help out at the second meeting by our Health Department boss and mentor, Dr. Raymond Neutra, and having just received my doctorate the prior year, it was a great entrée into joining professionals with similar interests. I had already worked in the field a few years in reproductive health, another area similar to environmental health in being somewhat neglected in typical epidemiology meetings, so it was important to find those compatriots. Within a few years (1993), I became the second Secretary-Treasurer of ISEE, probably also with Dr. Neutra's support or encouragement. This was before the permanent Secretariat, so we were operating on a shoestring with a part-time assistant, Connie, out of my cubicle. This brought many opportunities to be introduced to and get to know some of the leading figures in environmental epidemiology. I initially enjoyed working with Drs. Pat Buffler and Allan Smith as presidents of ISEE during my tenure. It was exciting to be in on this new society that was greatly expanding and really making the effort to include international coverage, an interest of mine since having worked in Norway. ISEE had very active local chapters that the council stayed engaged with, and international officers, so I was able to observe what types of environmental epidemiology work was being conducted in many locales. Furthermore, the meetings were small enough that you really got to establish relationships with other professionals to share information. During this time, we also linked with *Epidemiology* as our society journal, further expanding our potential impact.

I followed my tenure as Secretary-Treasurer as a councilor (1996-99), so was able to continue contributing to and following ISEE's work throughout that first decade. Attending meetings in places like Germany, Taiwan, Sweden, and Poland, as well as more recently in Korea, provided further insights into the variety of work being done and how it has changed over the years. Early on, I and several others kept trying to maintain reproductive health in the mix, so it is quite satisfying to see how many papers in this area, and the related one of children's health, appear in current ISEE conference programs. Those closely involved in ISEE clearly held strong public and environmental health values on improving the lives of community members and supporting students, as well as new researchers from less-resource-wealthy areas to pursue this field. The long-standing Ethics Committee influences us to act to the highest standards in our own work. For many years I studied the effects of tobacco smoke exposure, which was not a favorite of big industry, so it was helpful to know of the work of the whistle-blower sub-committee and other environmental health professionals who held out against much stronger forces. Through ISEE, we also established a circle of epidemiologists working on the issues of water chlorination by-product contamination, when that exposure gained visibility, allowing the most to be made of our efforts. Thus ISEE has provided strong examples of important work, being done for the right reasons, to me throughout my career and allowed me to establish long-term relationships with collaborators, colleagues and friends.

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