



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **AMDA Leaders Mourn the Passing of Robert Butler, MD**

*Columbia, MD* – Robert N. Butler, MD, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and psychiatrist who coined the term “ageism,” passed away July 4 in New York. Dr. Butler worked with Eric Tangalos, MD, CMD, and other AMDA leaders to promote quality care for the elderly during the 1995 White House Conference on Aging. Dr. Butler co-authored an article with Dr. Tangalos that appeared in AMDA’s journal at the time. Over the years, many AMDA members have worked with and known Dr. Butler, and they join others in mourning his passing.

“Dr. Butler and I were the two physicians appointed by President Clinton to the 1995 White House Conference on Aging Advisory Committee. I had the opportunity to work closely with him for 18 months and found the experience most gratifying,” says AMDA Public Policy Chair Eric Tangalos, MD, CMD, who also is a past president of the organization.

Current AMDA President Paul R. Katz, MD, CMD, notes, “Dr. Butler was one of those rare individuals who always listened carefully to new ideas and never judged prematurely. He inspired others to move beyond their comfort zones and ask the hard questions.” He adds, “He was a consummate professional who truly understood the challenges of growing older and the need for societal reform to address injustices. I am honored to have known him and know that he will be sorely missed.”

Even those who didn’t know him were touched by Dr. Butler’s work. For example, AMDA Immediate Past President David Brechtelsbauer, MD, CMD, says, “I always looked forward to his writings and what he had to say because of his great passion and knowledge. He had a real gift for saying things that rang true and to do so without mincing words.”

AMDA Executive Director Lorraine Tarnove added, “We are grateful for the many contributions Dr. Butler made to the field of aging and geriatrics. His early research at the National Institute of Mental Health led to many myths about aging being dispelled. For example, he helped document that senility is not an unavoidable consequence of aging and that psychiatric care has a real value for this population.” She further commented, “He also promoted the idea that older people are more content and tend to live longer and better when their lives have purpose and structure.”

The first director of the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute on Aging in the 1970s, Dr. Butler later established a geriatrics department at Mount Sinai. He is widely known as the co-author (with his wife, Myrna Lewis) of *Love and Sex after 60*, published in 1976. He also authored *Why Survive? Being Old in America*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction that same year. In addition to numerous articles, he penned other books, including *The Longevity Revolution: The Benefits and Challenges of Living a Long Life*. At the time of his death, he was president and chief executive of the International Longevity Center-USA, a nonprofit research organization he founded in 1990.

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The American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) is the national professional association of medical directors, attending physicians, and other professionals practicing long term care medicine committed to the continuous improvement of patient care. The organization provides education, advocacy, information, and professional development for medical directors and other practitioners from various disciplines working together to deliver quality long term care.

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