

Jules C. Stein Bust Unveiling
National Eye Institute, January 7, 2014

American Leaders and the National Institutes of Health Mission

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Introduction by Dr. Paul Sieving:

If I could just take a moment to set the stage for this. Katrina and Bill and Brian, thank you so much for coming. The event today is an unveiling, which will happen in just a few moments, of a bust of Dr. Jules Stein. Jules Stein is a name that really needs no introduction to the people in this room, particularly to some such as Ed McManus, who knew him well, and others who were here early in the creation of the National Eye Institute.

The Eye Institute was created in 1968 by signature of President Johnson after, as I understand it from Ambassador Vanden Heuvel, something like eight years of Jules Stein organizing and advocating that an eye institute be created out of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness. On August 16, 1968, Johnson's signature created this institute. Consequently, when Brian and, I believe, Katrina suggested that we unveil this bust of Dr. Stein and keep it on display here, we were very enthusiastic about it. That is the occasion we are here for today.

In the spirit of considering what it takes to conduct medical research in this country, and the fact that each of the institutes has had a constituency that has advocated for it to the American people and Congress, I ask that Dr. Larry Tabak give us a few words on what it means to have an NIH in the American context. Larry, thank you.

Remarks by Lawrence A. Tabak:

Thank you. I really do appreciate the opportunity to share in this very important day with you. I think all of you would agree that, in speaking about Dr. Stein, the word Renaissance Man would not be inappropriate. A musician, a surgeon, an entrepreneur, a financier, certainly a visionary, and a philanthropist. That qualifies as a Renaissance Man. No doubt throughout the program you will hear more details.

I apologize for not being able to stay for the whole program, but I did want to come over to be part of this celebration and provide some context for Dr. Stein's enormous contributions to advancing the NIH's overall mission, his commitment to establishing the NEI, and his dedication to funding medical research.

When UCLA's Jules Stein Eye Institute was dedicated in the mid-60s, *The New York Times* noted a key sentiment expressed by Dr. Stein, and I quote: "Movements to advance science and medicine need the time, the effort, and the ability of those men and women who have learned to move the immovable mountain." When you live in this area of the country, immovable mountains could break you all the time. No one, I believe, could have better described Dr. Stein's role in the life of the NIH and the NEI.

The National Eye Institute was still a couple of years away from becoming a reality, but already medical research, in general, and vision science and blindness prevention, specifically, were garnering countless benefits from the foresight of Dr. Stein. Of course, many people have been involved over the decades in promoting the overall NIH mission to enhance health, to lengthen life, to reduce illness and disabilities through research. Our intramural and extramural scientists together play roles in advancing this mission, as well as the many scientific administrators.

You really do have to recognize in a special way the vital role of people and organizations who advocate for NIH. People like Jules Stein who so persuasively moved that mountain to make the case for the creation of the National Eye Institute, which, as you know, began in 1968. As you look back through the history of health advocacy and NIH and in general, Dr. Stein was a member of an august group.

The name Jules Stein is often mentioned with that of Mary Woodard Lasker who established the Lasker Foundation in 1942; former Connecticut Senator Lowell Weicker and Edwin "Jack" Whitehead who formed Research!America in 1989; and Victor McKusick who co-founded the Genetic Alliance in 1986 and who was one of the champions of the launch of the Human Genome Project. These are giants. These people and the organizations that they founded and represented, created ... they are essential to building a public support, which in turn provides the support in the Congress for biomedical research. As the decades have passed since these institutions and foundations were formed, the public advocacy for medical research has only grown more crucial.

I have to say, even among the unique, Dr. Stein was unique. Like Lasker, he had a specific vision to benefit public health on a very grand scale. Like Weicker and Whitehead, he argued eloquently to elected officials to put their money where their mouths were. By being terribly generous with his own funds, he in fact did put his money where his mouth was. Like McKusick, he was a physician and a scientist. This is a quadruple threat we have here. That in itself would be remarkable, but Dr. Stein alone among these individuals combined a business savvy and success with all these

other qualities to create this unique package. He was the consummate NIH partner. I have to say, we could use a lot more partners like this to move some of those immovable mountains.

On behalf of all of NIH, I want to thank the family members and the close colleagues who have journeyed here today to be with us in recognizing Dr. Stein's very important contributions to NIH overall and to the Eye Institute in particular. Rest assured that we do not let legacies of this type be forgotten, nor the mountains that he moved for medical research. I would like to thank Research to Prevent Blindness for keeping this fine legacy alive through the continued support of vision research and the ongoing interests in collaborating with the NEI.

Again, I do apologize for parachuting in and out, but I did want to be part of this very special day. Thank you. It was so very nice to meet you.