

APPENDIX D

TEXT OF THE LASKER AWARD

The American Public Health Association presents a Lasker Award for 1951 to Alcoholics Anonymous in recognition of its unique and highly successful approach to that age-old public health and social problem, alcoholism.

Since its founding sixteen years ago, Alcoholics Anonymous has brought recovery to more than 120,000 chronic drinkers formerly thought hopeless. Today this world fellowship of 4,000 groups, resident in 38 countries, is rehabilitating 25,000 additional persons yearly. In emphasizing alcoholism as an illness, the social stigma associated with this condition is being blotted out.

Alcoholics Anonymous works upon the novel principle that a recovered alcoholic can reach and treat a fellow sufferer as no one else can. In so doing, the recovered alcoholic maintains his own sobriety; the man he treats soon becomes a physician to the next new applicant, thus creating an ever expanding chain reaction of liberation, with patients welded together by bonds of common suffering, common understanding, and stimulating action in a great cause.

This is not a reform movement, nor is it operated by professionals who are concerned with the problem. It is financed by voluntary contributions of its members, all of whom remain anonymous. There are no dues, no paid therapists, no paid professional workers. It enjoys the good will and often the warm endorsement of many medical and scientific groups no mean achievement in itself for any organization run entirely by laymen.

Historians may one day point to Alcoholics Anonymous as a society which did far more than achieve a considerable measure of success with alcoholism and its stigma; they may recognize Alcoholics Anonymous to have been a great venture in social pioneering which forged a new instrument for social action; a new therapy based on the kinship of common suffering; one having a vast potential for the myriad other ills of mankind.