



## **Balderson Lifetime Public Health Leadership Award**

Each year the Network honors a public health leader who has made significant academic and/or practice contributions in public health throughout a long career. This individual has had national impact in the areas of public health and public health leadership and exemplifies the qualities of Tom Balderson (dedicated, patient, ethical, positive, attentive, passionate, loyal, and motivating). The first award was presented posthumously to Tom Balderson in April of 2002.

### **HUGH TILSON, MD, MPH, DrPH University of North Carolina, School of Public Health 2005 Balderson Lifetime Public Health Leadership Award**

Hugh Tilson and Tom Balderson both have been consistent, strong voices for public health and public health leadership, sharing many paths, but each walking them in his own inimitable, effective leadership style. Here are a few of the similarities that Hugh shares with Tom:

Like Tom...Hugh spent a fair amount of time working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); he was a leader on the model standards for community preventive health services group and in workforce research among other things. He and Tom were founding members of the Public Health Leadership Institute (PHLI) steering committee in 1991 and served for many years on that committee.

Like Tom...Hugh has been a great friend and supporter of public health leadership institutes, presenting at many regional institutes, and has a consistent favorite presenter at PHLI.

Like Tom...Hugh has been instrumental in pressing forward and promoting the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine reports regarding public health leadership. You might say they were an All-Star tag team with Hugh being the more out front public meeting promotional voice and Tom being the equally important, more behind the scenes, patient persuader.

In looking at some of Hugh's characteristics, one can certainly see the reflection of Tom.

- An irrepressible, positive, persistent, presence
- A hard worker unafraid to travel and travel and travel when needed
- A devoted family man
- Not afraid to voice his opinion
- Passionate, genuine, smart, positive, loyal, easy to get along with
- Listens to you like you're the only person in the room
- Consistently positive and never discouraging
- Optimistic even when facing difficult odds
- Able to lead both with and without authority
- Respected, strong yet gentle
- Far more humble than his accomplishments would allow
- A people person and story teller
- Self aware and able to go with his strengths to accomplish grand goals
- A great partner, inclusive
- Passionate, bright, opinion leader
- Empathetic, fun, a friend
- A voice of reason, wisdom, clarity, truth-he gives you voice
- Showing patience, guidance, caring, perseverance, affirmation, discernment
- Practical, reasonable, pragmatic when necessary

Although Tom is no longer with us physically, he would be proud to see that the spirit and ethos he demonstrated lives on in many public health workers. One of the best examples of these is certainly Hugh Tilson who, like all of us, we hope, successfully intermixes his own unique out-front leadership style with many of the deep, foundational qualities Tom epitomized in order to be a great public health leader befitting the Balderson Award. It is our desire that through this Award, future public health leaders will know what Tom Balderson was like and "want to be like Tom" and Hugh- great public health leaders doing their part to improve the health and happiness of their communities.

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