

From the Archives

by Patricia A. Carlton

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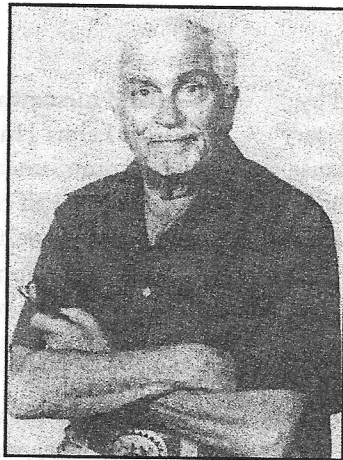
Remembering Dr. Allan Hurst

It is timely to remember the contributions of Dr. Allan P. Hurst to the Society. At the Annual Meeting in June, the Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst Award will be presented to a person who has rendered outstanding service to the Society and to New Mexico Jewish history. Allan and Leona Hurst played an active role in the early years of NMJHS, moving to Santa Fe in 1983, where Allan served in 1986 as one of the founders of the Society.

The excerpt that follows recounts Dr. Hurst's early years in New York City. It first appeared in a 1989 issue of *Legacy*.

Allan Hurst was born in New York City on August 23, 1909, the fifth of six children. When he was just six years old, his father died, leaving his mother to raise the children.

Young Hurst had a keen intelligence and inquiring mind; he especially loved history, literature, and the theater. Active in school dramatics, he frequently was cast in female roles in school productions because of his small stature and high voice. This caused problem with playground bullies, which he solved by befriending the school athletes. He tutored them; they protected him.



Dr. Allan P. Hurst.
Courtesy NMJHS Archives.

Despite the family's hardships, Hurst's mother, Fanny, recognized the value of a good education and worked along with her children to provide for their educations. Allan really wanted to be a history teacher; he loved books and history. But a cousin of his had become a doctor and there was a lot of competition between his mother and her sister. His mother came home one day and asked Hurst, "How would you like to be a doctor?" He thought for a minute, then replied, "Oh I guess I don't mind. But we can't afford it. How are we going to do it?" and she said, "Don't worry about it; we'll make it."

His mother worked as a baker at a resort in the Borscht Belt. She also owned a mink cape and a diamond ring. During the summer, she would make enough money as a baker for the children's support and education. Then, at the end of the summer, she would get her mink cape and diamond ring out of hock. When the money was used up, back into hock they would go. So the diamond ring and the mink cape kept going in and out of hock until Hurst and his brother had finished their schooling. It was a tough period, but his mother was determined and Allan felt a responsibility to her.

He graduated in 1932 with honors from Long Island College of Medicine, became a member of the medical honorary society, and, according to his wife Leona, was "just bright and determined." He developed a devotion to medicine that remained with him throughout his career.

Following his residency at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, Dr. Hurst became Director of Outpatient Clinics in New York City. Then from 1945 through 1952, he was

medical director at Denver's National Jewish Hospital. In the early 1950s, he also served as medical director of the Ex-Patients' Tubercular Home and the National Jewish Home for Asthmatic Children in Denver.

While serving the National Jewish Hospital, Dr. Hurst published more than 50 articles, papers, and book chapters on all aspects of tuberculosis treatment. Working with other pioneering surgeons and physicians, he helped develop advanced surgical techniques for treating tuberculosis.

In 1952 Dr. Hurst entered private practice in Denver, specializing in allergies and diseases of the chest. Until his retirement he was on the staff of Rose Medical Center where he founded and headed the Department of Inhalation Therapy. He was a nationally recognized expert in black lung disease, and in 1950, at the invitation of the Israeli government, he toured that country to

Heart and Soil

NMJHS archives thanks Yetta Bidegain of the T4 ranch near Tucumcari for her donation of *Heart and Soil* a large, beautiful leather-bound volume about the Kohn family and its descendants in eastern New Mexico. Sharon Fried researched and wrote the text, incorporating numerous photographs, maps, newspaper clippings, personal letters, and accounts.

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