

## Dr. Frank A. Seixas, 72, an Expert on Alcoholism

By BRUCE LAMBERT

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### *Dr. Frank A. Seixas, 72, an Expert on Alcoholism*

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Dr. Frank A. Seixas, an expert on alcoholism and a leader in the effort to classify it as a medical illness, died on Friday at Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. He was 72 years old and lived in Hastings-on-Hudson.

He died of Alzheimer's disease, his family said.

Dr. Seixas campaigned for society and especially the medical profession to recognize and treat alcoholism as a major health problem rather than as a moral or behavioral lapse.

"Alcoholism has long been given by society in general, and by physicians and by psychiatrists, short shrift and a condoning nod," he said. He said alcoholism harmed far more people than drug addiction.

He organized 65 experts in 1972 and compiled their joint statement, "Criteria for the Diagnosis of Alcoholism." The new standard appeared in three medical journals in the United States and many foreign publications.

Dr. Seixas (pronounced SAY-shuss) studied many aspects of alcoholism:

### **A campaign to treat alcoholism as an illness, not a moral lapse.**

diagnosis, treatment, epidemiology, prevention and heredity; its role in violence and traffic accidents; its effect on fetuses, and its similarities to and differences from drug addiction.

#### **International Influence**

His work won several awards. He taught, lectured and wrote widely, convened six international conferences and founded and edited two journals and a physicians' newsletter.

For 10 years, he was the medical director and director for research and evaluation for the National Council on Alcoholism. He served on the boards of the American Medical Society on Alcoholism and of the International Council

of Alcohol and Addictions, which he represented at the United Nations. He was also in charge of alcoholism for the Pan American Medical Association.

He was born in Manhattan to a family that included Gershom Mendes Seixas, a leader of New York's Jews during the American Revolution; Benjamin Seixas, a founder of the New York Stock Exchange, and Moses Seixas, sexton of the first synagogue in the United States, whose letters won George Washington's pledge of security for Jews in the emerging nation.

A 1939 graduate of Cornell University, Dr. Seixas earned a master's degree in English from Columbia in 1940. He served in the Navy in the South Pacific for five years during World War II, reaching the rank of lieutenant commander.

He earned his medical degree at Columbia after the war and entered private practice. Several of his patients were recovering from alcoholism and piqued his interest in the illness.

Survivors include his wife of 45 years, the former Judith Sartorius; two sons, Noah, of Ann Arbor, Mich..



Frank A. Seixas

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and Peter, of Vancouver, Canada; a daughter, Abby Seixas Horowitz of Weston, Mass.; a sister, Jean Seixas Forster of Brookfield, Conn., and six grandchildren.