It was a fundamental tenet of our approach that good science should dictate public policy on health issues. It was therefore essential that policy makers, as well as the general public, know what science told us.

Suave Dr. Selikoff

Essentially the only side of the issue being reported in the press at that time was Dr. Selikoff's, who had over the years developed excellent media relationships. He had perfected the two essentials necessary to becoming an effective spokesperson for his cause: he always provided interesting, frequently controversial copy and he was always accessible. There was never any: "Let me think that over and I'll get back to you." He was always ready with an answer or an opinion. He understood deadlines and what constituted a "good" story, and was always patient, never condescending, to reporters who were having difficulty understanding his interpretation of the science. He perfected almost to an art form a technique that I now refer to as the "white coat approach." Whenever he appeared on television or was entertaining reporters at Mount Sinai, he never failed to appear in a white lab coat, as if he had just emerged from examining a patient or performing some experiment. While a standard technique today for conveying scientific credibility, in the late 1960s it was new and fresh and never failed to impress. As his staff at Mount Sinai grew, he taught them his techniques so that in time he had an entire cadre of scientists at his disposal who were also adept in media relations. And he possessed that most critical of all assets: since he had no apparent "cause" other than the health of asbestos industry workers around the world, he was exceedingly credible — a sort of Walter Cronkite of the scientific community. It was a tough act to handle.

Two things he did always drove us crazy. He always referred to the insulation workers as "asbestos workers," which was nearly always reported as meaning people who worked in asbestos mines and mills, which they, of course, did not. In later years, when J-M was involved in a joint program at Mount Sinai to develop new methodologies for reducing the asbestos exposure of the insulation workers, he was continually urged to change the misleading terminology when referring to the insulation workers. He promised many times to do so, but never did. I believe it served his purposes better to continue using a term that implies he represented the interests of a far larger segment of the industry than he actually did and that the problem was universal in the asbestos industry, which it was not.

The other thing he did that gave us fits was his insistence on extrapolating the health experience of the insulation workers, which was admittedly terrible, to any and all asbestos workers everywhere, regardless of their level of exposure. As the