ACSH Fights For Enstrom

By ACSH Staff — August 18, 2010

ACSH staffers have been troubled over the unjust termination of our trustee Dr. James Enstrom from his professorship at UCLA’s School of Public Health, where he has served for the past 34 years. Dr. Michael Siegel, a Boston University School of Public Health professor and ACSH advisor, comes to Dr. Enstrom’s defense, arguing [1] he was fired solely because his research findings did not align with the university’s political agenda and environmental ideologies:

Apparently, the problem with Dr. Enstrom’s research is not the nature of the research, which obviously aligns perfectly with the mission of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences. Instead, the problem appears to be the direction of his research findings. Dr. Enstrom happened to find that there was no significant relationship between [tiny airborne particles known as] PM2.5 and overall mortality, at least during the time period 1983-2002. [The California Air Resource Board has pending regulations to reduce PM2.5 that will devastate the state’s trucking and construction fleets].

The nature of his research aligns perfectly, coinciding closely with the work of several other faculty members and coinciding perfectly with a major center housed in the Department. But apparently, the direction of his findings does not align with the Department’s mission.

Dr. Geoffrey Kabat of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, also an ACSH advisor and co-author of a 2003 British Medical Journal publication on environmental tobacco smoke with Dr. Enstrom, highlights the illegitimacy [2] regarding Dr. Enstrom’s termination:

“It is abundantly clear that Enstrom is being sacked not for his scientific work, which is impeccable, but for actually taking the results seriously and having the courage to speak up on issues, where, given the considerable vested interests of many researchers in his area, his unpopular position is to be silenced at all costs. UCLA’s treatment of an honest and accomplished researcher, who has been at the institution for 34 years, will leave a blot on the school’s reputation.