

# National Library of Medicine Acquires Mikuriya Archive

By Mary Jane Mikuriya

Tod Mikuriya, MD, had very few items in his estate worth more than \$100 in a sidewalk sale. Besides his papers and books, Tod had 500 ties, a collection of bumper stickers, pins, posters and patches, and a large selection of hats for playing a fool in the king's court, for different professions or historic figures, for different cultural groups in the USA and abroad, and even a solar-fan cooling helmet. He had boxes and bags of tee-shirts memorializing marijuana events in different states. He loved to cut out apt political cartoons and had boxes and binders of them.

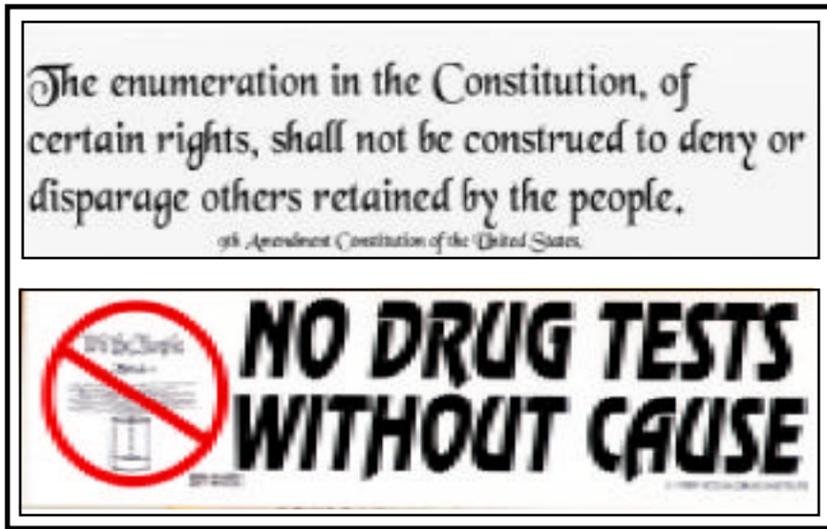
So what goes into the archives? What is worth saving for public view? These were questions my sister Beverly and I, as Tod's trustees, had to answer. And how to find the appropriate place for them to reside?

After describing Tod's material on an archivists' listserve, we were contacted by five institutions. We narrowed it down to two, the National Institute of Health's (NIH) National Library of Medicine (NLM) in Bethesda, Maryland, and an academic institution in Manhattan.

We liked the idea of having Tod's archives in New York, where they would be accessible. As it turned out, the N.Y. organization wanted only the research papers, published materials and correspondence with other famous drug experts. Since Tod was the opposite of an elitist, we looked to the Library of Medicine.

Tod had spent many productive hours at the NLM reading and copying historic texts, including the massive Indian Hemp Commission when he was doing research for another branch of the NIH in the mid-'60s. But NIH had asked him to leave, and we wondered whether those making the offer to house his papers knew of the earlier rift.

Tod's honesty and innovativeness led to clashes with the bureaucrats. In one instance he recruited some well known New York City radio disc jockeys to warn the listening audience about heroin and other drugs proliferating on the streets. The open discussion of side ef-



BUMPER STICKERS CREATED BY TOD MIKURIYA, MD, are among the thousands of archive items acquired by the National Library of Medicine.

fects and addiction was unprecedented on talk radio. What was Tod trying to do, embarrass NIH?

When it was learned that Tod had not sought approval for the radio project, Tod was viewed as a loose cannon. NIH strongly encouraged him to find work elsewhere and to leave quietly. That is when he decided to go to California. NIH happily provided all Tod's moving expenses. When we told the archivists at the NLM that Tod had been an employee of NIH over 40 years ago and asked to leave, they said that was not a problem. They would still like to have his archives.

It was John Rees who had seen the announcement on the archivist website and contacted us. His special areas of interest as a collector include "grassroots medicine," "socio-political aspects of medicine," and "herbal and alternative medicine." Reese understood that the field of medical marijuana is going to be of increasing interest to scholars, and that the Mikuriya collection would be uniquely valuable.

After we visited Reese at NLM, he came out to Berkeley to view the collection before finalizing our arrangement. He said NLM would take everything from Tod's archive except current books. Did he really mean everything? Did NLM want posters? bumper stick-

ers? Political buttons? Marijuana tee-shirts? Why yes! "We classify them as 'ephemera,'" he explained, "and they are of great interest to the public."

Tod's papers filled 108 banker boxes. Did NLM really want the seven boxes relating to the Medical Board of California prosecution seeking to remove his medical license? Yes. Its importance will be understood when marijuana becomes legal again.

How about the photos, audio and video tapes and trophies/awards for Tod as a singer, an auto enthusiast, an engaged active citizen running for politi-

cal office and as a family man? We were surprised to learn that NLM was interested in the whole person, warts and all.

During his visit in November 2008, Rees asked if the University of California had sought Tod's archives. He said there is an unwritten rule that NLM not seek archives that might rightly be sought by a state institution. NLM did not want to be accused of using its national stature to take Tod's archives from the University of California. We said not to worry, the University of California preferred to be on the good side of the DEA. Or is it ICE? Tod was too much of a political lightning rod for UC and therefore he was shunned by them.

Of course Beverly and I were concerned about the patient-specific information in Tod's research files, and that incriminating statements might be found on the video interviews. Being a part of NIH, the archivists are aware of the HIPPA confidentiality rules. All researchers will be required to sign a statement guaranteeing no copying or photographing of certain archives.

We feel we have found a good home for Tod's archives documenting his fight to have marijuana recognized as a legal medication once again. We know Tod would be pleased that his archives will be used to educate and encourage others to stand up for what they know is right.

**Ed. note: As we go to press...**

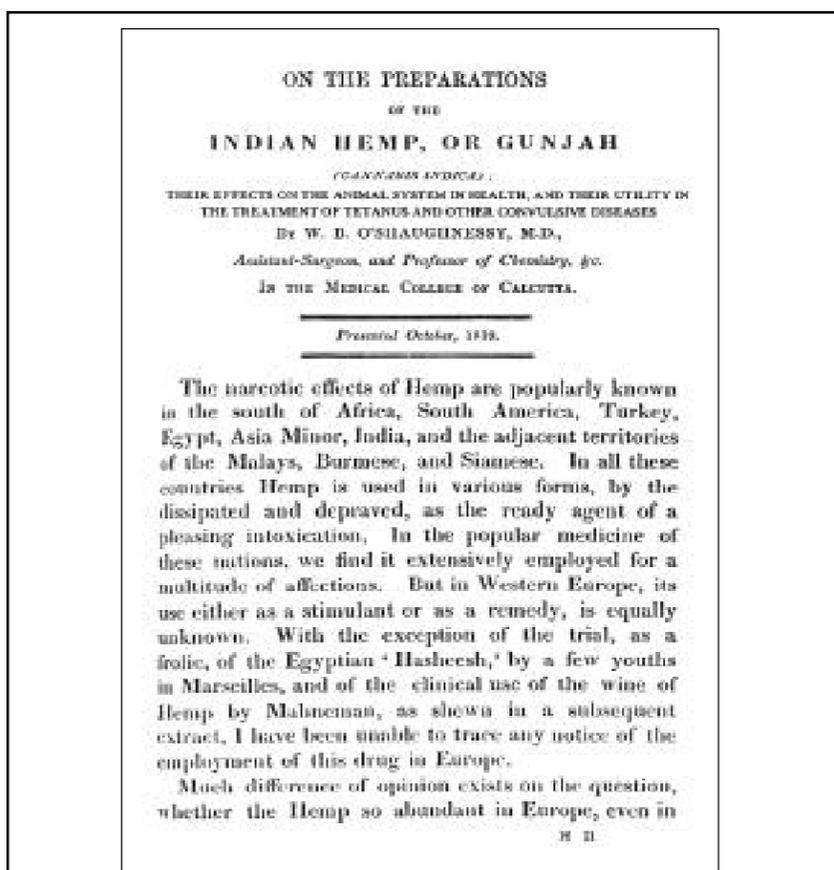
John Rees reports that the Mikuriya

papers are still being processed—placed into acid-free folders and boxes—and catalogued. A full-time and part-time employee have been working on the project since February. By July material will be available for viewing, on request. It won't be on display, although "an exhibition someday is a possibility," according to Reese.

One scholarly visit in a generation is NLM's basic standard of a successful acquisition. One "external scholar" has already requested access, Reese says. We told him to expect at least five in a decade as the book publishers stir from alcoholic slumber and historians and biographers discover the significance of the medical marijuana movement and the indispensable role played by Tod Mikuriya, MD.



TOD MIKURIYA, MD, AND VALERIE CORRAL at the 2002 International Cannabinoid Research Society meeting at Asilomar.



W.B. O'SHAUGHNESSY'S PAPER in the *Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society of Bengal, 1838-1840*, brought cannabis to the attention of European physicians. It was reprinted in *Marijuana Medical Papers, 1839-1972*, an anthology compiled by Tod Mikuriya, MD, that sustained awareness in the darkest years of Prohibition.

## O'Shaughnessy's

### The Journal of Cannabis in Clinical Practice

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Special thanks to Danielle Schumacher, Chad Rea, Richard Lee, Brenda Grantland, David Moore, Patrick Clark, Swords Into Plowshares, Al Byrne, MaryLynn Mathre, John Trapp, Beverly Mikuriya, Steve D.

online at [www.PCMD4U.org](http://www.PCMD4U.org)



William Brooke O'Shaughnessy is the Irish-born, Scottish-educated doctor who introduced cannabis to Western medicine.