

## In Memory of James S. Turner, Esq. 1940 - 2022



**Washington, D.C.** - James S. (Jim) Turner, 81, a principal in the Washington, D.C. law firm Swankin & Turner and renowned legal and political strategist who worked for decades in support of public health and consumer interests, died unexpectedly on January 25, 2021.

Jim Turner's brilliance, focus, commitment, courage, generosity, and pioneering advocacy in the service of personal and social wellbeing will live on within the many people whose lives and work he impacted and inspired.

In 1973, Mr. Turner co-founded Swankin & Turner, a Washington, DC law firm, with David A. Swankin, Esq. former director of the Bureau of Labor Standards, deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor and the first executive director of the White House Office of Consumer Affairs under the leadership of consumer interest pioneer [Esther Peterson](#). He remained an active principal in Swankin & Turner until his death, representing individual consumers, consumer groups, and businesses in a wide variety of regulatory matters concerning food, drug, health, environmental and product-safety matters.

Mr. Turner served as special counsel to the Senate Select Committee on Food, Nutrition, and Health, and to the Senate Government Operations Subcommittee on Government Research. He appeared before every major consumer regulatory agency, including the Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Agriculture, and the National Institutes of Health, as well as serving as a policy consultant for many years to major corporations in the food, pharmaceutical, and telecommunications industries. In every forum, he argued that successful social and economic policies must be grounded in the rights of consumers to safety, information, choice and redress. He coined the phrase, "Consumers are to economics what voters are to politics."

With long-time law partner Betsy Lehrfeld, Mr. Turner advised companies in the natural products and health care industries, and worked with advocacy

organizations seeking to protect consumers from unsafe food additives, including cyclamates, aspartame, sucralose, and high fructose corn syrup; defend consumer access to dietary supplements and organic foods; educate policymakers on risks of genetically-modified (GMO) foods; protect consumer rights to homeopathic medicines; remove dangerous drugs from the market; allow dentists to inform patients about safer materials than mercury amalgams; advance understanding of the risks to humans and the ecosystem from the radiofrequency radiation emitted by wireless devices and infrastructure, including satellites, and educate about alternatives; and defend citizens' rights to informed consent and personal choice on a wide range of health and environmental health issues.

Mr. Turner began his public advocacy career in the first group of "[\[Ralph\] Nader's Raiders](#)." In the late 1960s, he wrote the influential and best-selling exposé of food regulation, [The Chemical Feast — The Nader Report on the Food and Drug Administration](#), of which Time Magazine wrote, "[It] may well be the most devastating critique of a U.S. Government agency ever issued."

He also co-authored [Making Your Own Baby Food](#), an exposé of the food industry which sold over a million copies. Mr. Turner established his reputation as an activist attorney when he fought to have the artificial sweetener cyclamate taken off the FDA's Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) list, ultimately leading to cyclamate's removal from the market in 1970.

In the early 1970s, at the request of [John Gardner](#), then-former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW, now HHS) and founder of [Common Cause](#), Mr. Turner looked into the issue of vaccine regulation. He subsequently represented a respected National Institutes of Health (NIH) vaccine researcher, J. Anthony Morris, PhD, who was questioning the safety of some vaccines and the effectiveness of others, especially of flu vaccines. The NIH took away Morris's support staff and laboratory space, killing his animals and cutting off his supplies, and leaving him with a small office and a telephone. Turner represented Morris through the grievance process and the accusations led to a General Accounting Office investigation and to Senate hearings, which in turn led to a major shakeup in the vaccine regulatory agency. The Bureau of Biologics was revamped and transferred from NIH to the FDA, and in 1972 a grievance panel reinstated Morris and censured the agency for harassing him.

In 1975, Mr. Turner represented a coalition that blocked a U.S. government effort to ban the words "organic," "natural," and "health food" from commerce. In 1990,

he lobbied successfully—with many others—for passage of the Organic Food Production Act of 1990. In 1994, he worked with [Citizens for Health](#) to pass the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA), rescuing dietary supplements from being defined as unapproved food additives and establishing a regulatory system for the industry. Congress received one and a half million comments supporting DSHEA, overwhelmingly from consumers.

Mr. Turner was also the lead attorney on a successful petition to the FDA to reclassify acupuncture needles from Class III to Class II medical devices, permitting their legal importation and distribution, and setting the stage for insurance coverage of acupuncture. He served for 10 years as a public member of the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine and for several years as the Board Chair of an acupuncture school.

Mr. Turner represented dentists ordered by state licensing boards to withhold information from their patients about the effects of mercury in dental amalgam fillings, including risks to patients, dental workers, and the environment. His original advocacy was ultimately vindicated by a Food and Drug Administration Safety Communication on dental amalgam in 2020. In 1996, he helped start [Consumers for Dental Choice](#), which in turn led an international coalition of environmental, dental, and consumer groups to gain adoption of an anti-amalgam provision in the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

In 1978, Mr. Turner founded The National Institute for Science, Law and Public Policy (NISLAPP) to bridge the gap between scientific uncertainties and the need for laws protecting public health and safety. Rather than attempting to impose predetermined resolutions of such issues, Mr. Turner's approach focused on encouraging honest interplay to help bring practitioners of science and law together to develop intelligent policy that best serves all interested parties in a given controversy. To this end, NISLAPP and Turner have been a source of enlightenment to the consumer movement, industry and public policymakers alike. In 1992, he took a leadership role in Citizens for Health, “the consumer voice of the natural health community,” serving as its Chairman and President for many years until the time of his death

In 2008, as a Democrat, he co-authored [Voice of the People: The Transpartisan Imperative in American Life](#) with Republican A. Lawrence Chickering, author of [Beyond Left and Right: Breaking the Political Stalemate](#), and was co-founder and co-editor of the online journal, [The Transpartisan Review](#). Together they presented an alternative perspective to the left-right dichotomy, incorporating where people stand with regard to 'Order' and 'Freedom'. He proposed the

creation of new approaches to allow the range of viewpoints in the four quadrants of the left-right, order-freedom matrix to be expressed, including those of the 137 million registered independent and non-registered potential voters today who do not feel either of the two parties meet their needs.

In 2009, Mr. Turner was part of a legal team representing New York medical workers in a lawsuit against government regulators regarding the Swine Flu vaccine mandate, in which his clients claimed the H1N1 vaccine had been rushed to the public without adequate testing for safety and efficacy. New York State ultimately suspended the requirement for health care workers to be vaccinated, citing shortages.

He was instrumental in the founding in 2010 of Voice for HOPE (Healers of Planet Earth), an organization of consumers, practitioners, and policy analysts seeking to make natural approaches to health, already engaged in by millions of Americans and involving thousands of practitioners, a recognized and valued part of national health policy. [Voice for HOPE](#) empowers healers, in their roles as citizens, to build relationships with their elected state and federal representatives to serve as a resource for those wanting to broaden policies to expand well-being and health options. Mr. Turner also recently advised a group developing a multi-state legislative initiative to support consumer access to and the right to practice energy healing modalities.

Over many decades, Mr. Turner advised pioneering scientists, practitioners, producers and retailers, professional and trade associations, research and educational institutions, and individuals and organizations in a wide range of health modalities, including acupuncture, chiropractic, EpiEnergetics, mind body medicine, frequency therapy, coherent energetic fields, sound, water, light and music therapeutics, and federally-recognized homeopathic medicine, used by 200 million people worldwide.

Recently, Mr. Turner was a founding member of [The Balance Group](#), a multi-disciplinary initiative seeking to balance the needs for technology with those of healthy ecosystems and a clean environment. In May 2021, The Balance Group filed a Notice of Appeal in the Federal Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit concerning the FCC's ruling to approve a major modification to the world's largest planned satellite network without an environmental impact assessment or reasonably sufficient safeguards concerning cybersecurity, insurance and other protections. In August 2021, it filed a joint legal brief challenging the FCC's approval of the launch of the largest satellite mega-constellation in human

history. Most recently, in December 2021, [Americans for Responsible Technology](#) and the Balance Group filed a Petition for Imminent Hazard Rulemaking with the FDA to establish whether the agency has properly adopted a policy on safety of radiofrequency radiation exposures from devices and infrastructure, on which other federal agencies claim to rely.

Mr. Turner was also a member of the BroadBand International Legal Action Network (BBILAN) and had been a core advisor to NISLAPP's EMF Education and Advocacy Project for over a decade. Whether discussing health, history, politics, new technologies, or the potential of blockchain as a transformative technology, Jim Turner looked at life through an energetic lens. He saw an energetic expansion unfolding globally, moving from centralized to distributed systems across many sectors, with power growing at the periphery. He viewed this as a natural, evolutionary process and expressed concerns about technological and legal impediments to its unfoldment, such as the proliferation of energetically disruptive (and biologically dangerous) electromagnetic fields.

James S. Turner was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. His father, James Turner, was a longtime newspaperman, and his mother, Mary Bryan (Hunter) Turner, was a social worker. Both were graduates of The Ohio State University, from which Mr. Turner graduated in 1962 with a B.A. in History-Political Science, and where he was a U.S. Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) midshipman on full scholarship.

From 1962 to 1966, Mr. Turner was a Lieutenant on active duty in the U.S. Navy, where he graduated with distinction from the Naval Justice School and served as a Nuclear Weapons Handling Officer and Gunnery Officer aboard the U.S.S. Purdy and the U.S.S. Austin. He served on the Cuban Missile quarantine in 1962 and participated in operations in conjunction with the Santo Domingo intervention in 1966.

Mr. Turner graduated from The Ohio State University College of Law (now Moritz College of Law) in 1970, where he was Chief Justice, Moot Court; editorial editor of the school's *Barrister* newspaper; Chair of the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council; and Chair of the Law School Young Democrats.

He is survived by his life, and law, partner of 45 years, Betsy E. Lehrfeld, Esq., his son Christopher B. Turner, Esq. of Washington, D.C. and daughter Victoria M. Turner of Cambridge, England. Mr. Turner's former wife, Mary Dustan Turner, and his sister, Elizabeth Fisher, predeceased him.

There will be a celebration of his life at some future date. An online archive of his speeches, presentations and writings is being planned.

Donations to carry on his work may be made to The National Institute for Science, Law and Public Policy, 5614 Connecticut Ave., NW #339, Washington, DC 20015 or online at [PayPal](#).

**Please share memories of Jim, and/or photos and videos, at Forever Missed <https://www.forevermissed.com/jimturner/about>**