

Beloved naturopath, herbal pioneer, and organic farmer Dr. Ed Alstat died on Friday, January 26, 2018, at age 71. Ed was a larger-than-life personality, and it will be a dimmer world without him.

Ed will be remembered for his involvement in the naturopathic and herbal communities. Ed had a fascination and affinity for the great Eclectic pharmacist John Uri Lloyd. And like Lloyd, Ed began his career as a pharmacist. While working as a pharmacist in California in the 1970s, Ed developed an interest in the promotion of health and healing through nature, and then trekked to Oregon to study naturopathic medicine. Ed was a good fit for the focus and spirit of the naturopathic community, and he thrived in Portland at NUNM, eventually founding the Eclectic Institute in NUNM's on-campus medicinary in 1982.

Ed's Eclectic Institute herbal products were popular with naturopaths and herb enthusiasts, and the enterprise quickly outgrew the space at NUNM. Ed moved the Eclectic Institute toward Mt Hood, eventually buying a large organic farm and sprawling rural campus in Sandy. Ed regularly opened the Eclectic farm and campus for naturopaths and others to further their study of herbs and natural remedies. Each summer Ed set up teepees, wood-burning hot tubs, ice baths, and mud soaks for groups to enjoy while relishing the natural beauty and tranquility of the Eclectic herb farm and experiencing first hand the healing power of nature.

Ed contributed financially to NUNM at a critical juncture in the 1980s, helping to keep the institution thriving for students and the community. Through the years, Ed provided many naturopathic doctors and students with employment and additional training in herbalism at Eclectic, and he mentored many students on and off the Eclectic campus.

Ed was a true trailblazer. Studying the original texts of the early Eclectic physicians, Ed discovered and was the first to re-introduce many original herbal formulas cited there. Also, Ed was the first to market grain-free organic alcohol extracts, alcohol-free extracts, and freeze-dried herbal capsules and powders. In keeping with his passion for healthy farming, Ed was one of the first to have his Oregon farm certified organic by the Oregon Tilth.

Ed's contributions were repeatedly acknowledged by his peers in professional organizations. The AANP awarded Ed with a Presidential Citation recognizing Ed "for outstanding leadership in providing substantial and ongoing contributions to the profession, the AANP, and the naturopathic medical colleges." Ed was presented with a prestigious NUNM President's Medallion award for contribution to the school and the profession, and he was inducted into the NUNM Hall of Fame for his role in the advancement of natural medicine's reputation.

Ed was born in Illinois. Ed's roots in farming and love of plants and herbs grew out of the time he spent on his grandparents' Illinois farm. He spent his last years on a gorgeous farm in Sandy, Oregon, with a view of Mt Hood and regular visits by local wildlife including elk, coyote, deer, skunk, and beaver. Ed was gratified that his life was bookended by farm life. Ed is survived by his wife and partner, Christine Alstat; his children, Nick, Katy, Bobby, and Edwin; and his sister, Karen.

Ed's professional contributions are evident, but just as important are his personal interactions, and what will be missed most is his openness to sharing the beauty and simple pleasures in life with all of those he encountered on his journey.