

In the 1950s, the country was at a crossroads. Many Americans were living the good life, but it came at a price... a price to our health...that we didn't comprehend.

Scene 2

Then, in 1962, one book changed everything.

****pause****

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* painted a picture of a world so poisoned by pesticides that no birds remained in the spring. The book sold 6 million copies in 30 languages and it was a call to action for the environmental movement worldwide.

Scene 3

The following January, North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford announced that a new environmental health center would be located in Research Triangle Park.

Three years later, on November 1st 1966, the Division of Environmental Health Sciences was established in R-T-P by the National Institutes of Health.

Scene 4

Cancer researcher, Dr. Paul Kotin, was named the division's first director. Over the next five years, Kotin and Dr. Hans Faulk worked with their small team to build a strong foundation for research success. This included several university partnerships that remain active today.

Scene 5

Scene 6

Scene 7

The division gained institute status on January 12, 1969. Its charge was to reduce human illness by understanding how the environment causes disease.

Seven years after *Silent Spring*, environmental health was firmly established as a national research priority.

Scene 8

Dr. David Rall became director on March 1st, 1971.

[2 David Rall audio segments:]

“Here was an opportunity to build an institute that is really very rare: to do research that not only is at the cutting edge, but that provides practical answers to important problems.... We’re seeing in a way that we only dimly saw before, that environmental health is an international problem.”

Scene 9

...an international problem that needed an international voice. So in 1972, the Institute published the first edition of *Environmental Health Perspectives* --a monthly, peer-reviewed, scientific journal that became a trusted source for environment and health research, worldwide.

Scene 10

Under Rall's leadership, the 1970s were a time of important scientific progress. Research found evidence that the environment **does** influence people's health. Exposure to lead was with linked to lower I-Q, and the pregnancy drug, D-E-S, was linked to cancer.

Scene 11

Then came Love Canal. In 1978, hundreds of people living near a chemical dump in Love Canal, New York reported serious health problems.

President Jimmy Carter declared a federal health emergency, and David Rall pushed to synchronize the government's toxicology research.

From that time forward, Rall, and every institute director after him, would wear two hats—director of the NIEHS, and director of the National Toxicology Program.

Scene 12

Congress mandated that NTP would produce bi-annual reports on chemicals that cause cancer. The first “Report on Carcinogens,” was published in July of 1980.

Scene 13**Scene 14**

In 1987, the Superfund Research Program was established to address waste dumps, contamination and safe clean-up.

Scene 15

Scene 16

On June 18, 1991, Dr. Kenneth Olden began his 14-year tenure as director. Under his leadership, basic research continued to thrive, and environmental justice took center stage.

Scene 17

The Six Cities Study was an early success for Olden. It found a strong association between fine particulate pollution and mortality.

Scene 18

In 1994, institute researchers had a medical triumph when they discovered that a defective BRCA-1 gene can cause breast cancer, and ovarian cancer. This was a huge step forward for diagnosis and treatment.

Scene 19

[Pause for image to lead in.] A month later, former scientific director Martin Rodbell won the 1994 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine. He confirmed the existence of G proteins, which regulate cell communication.

Scene 20

September 11, 2001.... The World Trade Center is attacked. That devastating event raised enormous public health concerns. The institute responded immediately. Experts were sent to ground zero to collect dust samples for toxicology studies.

Scene 21

In 2002, the institute recruited more than 50,000 sisters of women with breast cancer. The *Sister Study* set out on a long-term research journey to identify the environmental and genetic factors that increase breast cancer risk.

Scene 22

Dr. David Schwartz, a physician specializing in environmental lung disease, became the fourth institute director in May of 2005.

Dr. Schwartz led the Institute toward cutting-edge science including epigenetics and exposure phenotyping. He started the Exposure Biology Program and supported development of new technologies for sensor devices. Swartz valued and emphasized disease research, and he planned a new clinical research unit for the North Carolina campus.

Scene 23

Dr. Linda Birnbaum took over in January, 2009. She was the first female scientist, and first toxicologist, to head the Institute and the National Toxicology Program. Under her leadership, learning about chemicals that disrupt the endocrine system became a research priority.

Scene 24

[Pause to let images lead in.]

On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 workers.

The Institute launched the Gulf Long-term Follow-up Study, the largest study ever conducted on the health effects of oil spills.

Scene 25

Scene 26

Later, when 10,000 gallons of chemicals spilled into West Virginia's Elk River, the National Toxicology Program jumped into action. In record time, it analyzed the chemicals—allowing public health officials to determine if drinking water was safe for thousands of residents.

Scene 27

In 2015, another member of the institute family won a Nobel Prize. Grantee Dr. Aziz Sancar (pronounced "San-ger") shared the Prize in Chemistry for his work on DNA mismatch repair, a process that corrects damage caused by exposure to ultraviolet radiation, air pollution, cigarette smoke and other environmental agents.

Scene 28

Now in 2016, NIEHS is celebrating its golden anniversary—celebrating its past, but also looking to the future.

What will the next 50 years bring? How will the institute's research actually help people live healthier lives? The answers are there...waiting to be discovered. Because as we ***all*** know...our environment ***is*** our health.