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Course: Ethical Leadership BUS434

Assignment #3: Famous Whistleblowers

The whistleblower or the man who followed his ethical values that I like to acknowledge is Peter Buxton, who is also known by the last name Buxton. a white male born in Prague Czechoslovakia, now known as the Czech Republic, was a twenty-seven-year-old man working for the United States department of health when he uncovered that a group of a black male coming for syphilis treatment was not getting the medicine instead, they were being lied too to test the results of the effects of long-term syphilis on humans' health.

Peter, following his ethical value regardless of race, ethnicity, or creed, alerted the necessary authorities about what was happening to the African American participants at the clinic. His efforts helped end the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. At the time of the investigation, Peter was a social worker, and epidemiologist in San Francisco hired to interview patients with sexually transmitted diseases. Peter learned about the Tuskegee experiment from co-workers. When Peter first reported the complaint to the disciplinary board known as Service's Division of Venereal Diseases the effort became futile because they responded that the experiment was not in its completion stage. Even a second attempt during the time after Dr. Martin Luther king's death did not help stop the Tuskegee study. What became helpful was when he leaked the story to the Washington Star newspaper. The media played an essential role in exposing government officials who were sworn in by oath to protect the people of this law from harm; instead, it was the media which became the protector for a specific group of men who are African Americans, the last part of original America. Race prevented the group of board members from making an ethical decision, and race prevented them from behaving in an ethical manner. Congressman Edward Kennedy had to call a congressional hearing to finally get the study terminated.

On November 4, 2019, Buxton was inducted as an honorary member of delta omega, which is an honorary society in public for this effort to stop the Tuskegee study.

At the time of the study syphilis had a higher rate of infection than the other sexually transmitted disease at the time. The man chosen for the study was from a small town in Alabama called Macon County, a rural county. The idea that public health officials choose to use the poor for experimentation is a questionable decision of how people from lower socioeconomic status harm because of a fair use ethical and moral principle that our health department could have applied to help protect our citizens (Thomas & Quinn, 2000).

The alarming thing is that this study lasted for forty years. This is how vital Peter is in the whistleblowing world of people with ethical principles following their moral values. The fact that so many public health officials refuse to act in an ethical manner to protect our citizens is extremely alarming and shocking, even though Alabama state law requires that all citizens get the medicine. The study group did not receive their medicine and even the army's effort to help them was denied by the public health research team (Thomas & Quinn, 2000).

Peter would always be a champion whistleblower to me because of his efforts to stand by his moral principles and his refusal to give up on getting the study to stop and getting the necessary action needed to protect others from harm. Peter, a special congratulation to you for taking a stand to protect humans from being harmed.

## References

- Barrett, L. A. (2019). Tuskegee Syphilis Study of 1932–1973 and the rise of bioethics as shown through government documents and actions. *DttP: Documents to the People*, 47(4), 11–16. <https://doi.org/10.5860/dttp.v47i4.7213>
- Thomas, S. B., & Quinn, S. C. (2000). Public health then and now: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study, 1932 to 1972. *Worlds of Difference: Inequality in the Aging Experience*, 297–298. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483328539.n41>