

## **We All Have a Historical Connection to Palmer Chiropractic, and a Stake in Keeping Our Profession Pure for the Future**

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At Palmer, we are proud of our status as "The Fountainhead" of the chiropractic profession. Because the profession began here, all chiropractors have a connection to Palmer.

Because D.D. Palmer made the first purposeful adjustment of a man in Davenport, Iowa on September 18, 1895, and because that man regained his hearing, a new health care philosophy, science and art was founded, and the profession's connection to a little Mississippi River town began. When D.D. started his school in Davenport, our profession took root and began to grow. Our connection to what has become Palmer chiropractic solidified as well.

The turn of the 20th century, the time when D.D. Palmer made his astounding discovery, was a unique period of experimentation and expansion in the healing arts. In the 1800s, American medicine was limited to practices designated as "heroic." Even at the end of the Civil War in 1865, common medical procedures included bleeding, purging, vomiting and blistering. Little was known about the drugs being used or about bacteria or antiseptics. Surgery was performed without anesthesia.

Onto this stage stepped the alternative healers of the late 1800s - some successful, some less so, but all offering hope of a less painful method of treating human suffering. One of the most popular was homeopathy: infinitesimal doses of minerals and botanicals that did no harm to the patient. By 1850, homeopathy was the largest medical sect.

Other alternative healing practices of the time were Thomsonianism, which included botanical medicine and steaming; hydropathy, whose practitioners introduced the "Water Cure Journal" in 1850; kinesotherapy, which was introduced in the United States in about 1860; osteopathy, instituted by Andrew Taylor Still in tiny Kirksville, Missouri; metaphysics, which spread through America through lyceums and chautauquas; and spiritualism, which was the subject of serious research societies (and whose proponents included both Andrew Taylor Still and D.D. Palmer).

Against this backdrop of revolution in thought and healing practices, D.D. Palmer introduced a new philosophy that grew in prominence and popularity over the next 100 years -- chiropractic.

D.D. Palmer's philosophy and the new, hands-on healing art he founded were truly revolutionary, both then and now. His theory that the body's innate ability to heal and maintain itself is more optimally expressed when the nervous system is free from interference due to subluxations was both unique and compelling. Its efficacy, painstakingly proven through 100 years of chiropractic practice and research, cannot be denied. Throughout the history of our profession, through oppression by the medical establishment and internal divisiveness, Palmer chiropractic has remained true to that founding philosophy.

The turn of the 21st century, like the turn of the previous century, is also a time of burgeoning

experimentation in the healing arts. It is no secret that health care consumers, especially in the United States, are turning to so-called "alternative health care" in rapidly increasing numbers. Disillusioned with the allopathic model, they are voting with their feet and turning to chiropractic, homeopathy, massage therapy, acupuncture and a host of other health care practices in search of a better way to health and wellness.

Unfortunately for our profession, some chiropractic colleges are becoming caught up in this trend by offering degree programs in acupuncture, massage, physical and occupational therapy and other health care practices apart from chiropractic. They are jumping on the bandwagon of the "alternative health care" boom and diluting the image and emphasis of their chiropractic programs by teaching very different health care philosophies, many of which are contradictory to chiropractic.

It saddens me to see chiropractic colleges like National and Northwestern become part of this trend. Northwestern recently changed its name to Northwestern Health Sciences University, merging with the Minnesota Institute of Acupuncture and Herbal Studies and the Sister Rosalind Geffre School of Professional Massage. I believe this unfortunate change confuses the public, reduces chiropractic's image and diploma value to the level of massage and acupuncture, and constitutes a temporary response to the popular fad of alternative medicine.

For chiropractic colleges to jump on the alternative medicine bandwagon at this juncture is shortsighted and premature. Certainly there are ways for chiropractic to capitalize on this trend, but diluting the chiropractic image (and possibly the curriculum) is not one of them. The profession can respond to this opportunity by stepping up our public education efforts regarding the nature and benefits of chiropractic care and new research proving its efficacy. We must increase market share, but not by giving up who we are. The time is ripe to get the truth about chiropractic out to the general public, not to confuse them by diluting our educational offerings.

There have been many health care fads over the past several hundred years. Such practices as bleeding, purging and hydropathy were very popular, but that does not mean they were effective. Today's fads may have different names such as aromatherapy, colonic irrigation and color therapy, but their efficacy is just as questionable as those trendy healing practices of 100 years ago. Chiropractic colleges can do great harm to our profession by offering courses in any other healing arts, no matter how popular they may be and how promising they may seem.

Now, more than ever, every chiropractor needs to belong to a state and/or national organization and/or an alumni association that reflects best (not perfectly) your value system. Then we need to roll up our sleeves and get busy. If you need a "home" because you hold the same values as we do, then in spirit, you're a Palmer alumnus or alumna regardless of your alma mater, and you can join us in moving chiropractic forward.

My promise to our profession is this: Palmer College of Chiropractic is a chiropractic school. Chiropractic is what so many early pioneers went to jail to advance. It's what we stand for, and that will never change. We pledge to always take our responsibility as "The Fountainhead" seriously, remembering that every one of us has a connection to Palmer because it is the source of our founding philosophy.

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