

Grand Old Man of the LACC: J.G. Anderson, DC, ND

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Teacher, clinician and academic dean at three chiropractic colleges, Dr. John Gordon Anderson has watched the profession grow up and has consistently contributed to its maturation. And for 32 of his 40 years of active contribution to chiropractic education (1946-1978), he served his alma mater, the Los Angeles College of Chiropractic (LACC).

Andy was born 11 June 1916 to Oscar and Christina Anderson, who made their home in Ashton, South Dakota. He took his grade-school and high-school studies in Watertown and Onida, South Dakota, and moved with his family to Southern California in 1934. The young man relocated to Canada, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the National College of Ontario in 1938. An injury while working at an ice-cream factory prompted him to seek chiropractic care, and the benefits he experienced inspired him to his subsequent career.

"J.G." enrolled at the Ratledge Chiropractic College in Los Angeles in 1939, but transferred to the Southern California College of Chiropractic (SCCC) in March, 1941. The SCCC, successor to the College of Chiropractic Physicians & Surgeons (Keating et al., 1983), sought a broad scope of practice grounded in the basic sciences, and was in the vanguard of intraprofessional politics in the Golden State.

Hearing Uncle Sam's summons following America's entry into World War II, Andy left school before earning his degree. From 1943-1945 he served in the U.S. Navy's hospital corps, including a stint at the San Diego Naval Hospital. At several of his postings stateside and in the South Pacific, he operated unofficial chiropractic services within various Navy facilities. While medical supervisors turned a blind eye, the chiropractic care he rendered was well-received by officers and enlisted men alike.

Following discharge, J.G. earned his chiropractic doctorate from the SCCC in 1946. Shortly thereafter (1947), his naturopathic credential was awarded by the Lincoln College of Naturopathic Physicians & Surgeons in Indiana. He continued his education throughout his career, including graduate studies at Pepperdine College (1958) and California American University (1978). He has been licensed as a chiropractor in Arizona, California and Nevada, and as a naturopathic physician in Arizona.

"J.G." joined the faculty of his alma mater the same year he graduated. These were exciting times in chiropractic education. Prompted by the reform efforts initiated by the National Chiropractic Association's (NCA's) Director of Education, John J. Nugent, D.C., and fueled by an expanded tuition base derived from veterans' benefits, significant reform in chiropractic training began to take shape. The schools of Southern California became a major site for these efforts, and in 1947 Nugent negotiated a merger of the proprietary LACC with the nonprofit SCCC. The result was the nonprofit LACC, which combined the resources of both schools and continued to absorb smaller proprietary institutions in California.

Anderson taught a variety of subjects in the doctoral program and in the college's newly formed

graduate School. Although he specialized in neurology, the several books he authored (Anderson, 1959a&b, 1960, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1982) reveal considerable expertise in histology, pathology and manipulative technique . Worthy of special mention is the histology laboratory established at the LACC in the 1950s based upon his Navy training. From 1949 through 1954, Dr. Anderson's workload was augmented by his responsibilities as editor of the LACC's journal, the Chirogram. Forever a shutterbug, Andy served as school photographer throughout the 1950s and 1960s; a preponderance of the images depicted in the school's journal and the Aesculapian (college yearbook) came from his camera.

In 1953, Andy joined the LACC's administration when he was appointed dean of the LACC Graduate School. This division of the college provided postdoctoral and specialty training to chiropractors and worked in collaboration with the specialty societies of the California Chiropractic Association to create high standards of training and credentialing. But the graduate school had operated in the red under its predecessors, and Anderson was charged with the responsibility of making postdoctoral programs pay for themselves. This he accomplished by expanding the range of topics and sites offered for this training. By the time he stepped down from this post in 1964, graduate education had been conducted in California, Arizona, Michigan and Arizona, and the graduate school had become a revenue generator for the college. Along the way, he helped to create a model for continuing education that has been widely mimicked in the profession.

The 1950s and 1960s were difficult times for the LACC and its leaders. College finances were strained as tuition benefits for veterans of World War II and the Korean conflict came to an end. Anderson and his fellows sometimes went without pay so that the wages and salaries of faculty and staff could be disbursed. On other occasions, he and other senior administrators took out personal loans to help the college meet the payroll. Despite the hardships, the LACC persevered in its quest for federal recognition of chiropractic education. Improvisation and the stretching of available resources became routine tactics as the institution struggled to meet advancing standards for chiropractic education.

After stepping down from his role as editor of the college's journal, J.G. assumed responsibilities as chairman of the LACC's Clinical Sciences Division. Despite his workload, he found time to make a memorable "international housecall" all the way to South Africa (Anderson, 1966; Nilsson, 1966), when a patient implored him to bring his diagnostic skills to the bedside. His duties at the LACC were further briefly interrupted in the mid-1960s, during which time he served as dean of the newly formed Anglo-European College of Chiropractic (AECC) in Great Britain. Upon his return Andy took over as chairman of the department of principles and practice at the LACC.

In 1976, following Dr. George Haynes' resignation from the presidency of the LACC, J.G. accepted the role of vice president and academic dean, and very briefly served as chief executive officer of the college. Not content with retirement, Dr. Anderson returned to England as an instructor and chairman of clinical sciences at the AECC (1979-1981). Upon his return to California, he accepted an appointment as an instructor (1981-1983) and later as academic vice president and dean of the Pasadena College of Chiropractic (1983-1986).

Dr. Anderson has held memberships in the National and American Chiropractic Associations, as well as the California Chiropractic Association, the Michigan Society of Chiropractic Internists and the American Council on Chiropractic Neurology. He has been a highly valued lecturer throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. This has served him well, as he delights in traveling and has visited over 50 countries on four continents (so far). Still vigorous in his eighties, his additional hobbies include hunting, fishing, oil painting, woodworking and making jewelry; his affinity for turquoise is ever in evidence.

J.G. Anderson has served his profession well for more than half a century, including 40 years in service to chiropractic education. Mentor to thousands, he is fondly remembered by the many doctors who learned the healing art from him. Today this grand old man of the LACC is retired in Northridge, California, where he lives with his wife of 49 years, LACC alumna Sophie Frances Zarabski. Dr. Anderson maintains his own personal archive of college history; his willingness to share his many insights concerning the evolution of the college has been of inestimable value in the preparation of a book length history of the college that will be released next year. We salute you, Dr. Anderson, and look for many more years of contribution to chiropractic and the LACC.

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