

A Moment of Silence for Rex Wright, DC

CHAMPION OF CHIROPRACTIC ACCREDITATION

Editorial Staff

Dr. Rex Wright, 71, one of the greatest leaders in the history of the chiropractic, passed away Sunday, May 31. He crafted a distinguished career that spanned nearly a half-century of helping advance chiropractic throughout the United States.

"He was truly one of the pillars of the chiropractic profession's first century," observed James Edwards, DC, FICC, a friend of Dr. Wright and a fellow member of the Kansas Chiropractic Association. "Rest in peace, my friend, rest in peace."

Born on July 2, 1926 in Coldwater, Kansas, Rex Wright left his beloved Kansas in 1943 at the age 17 to serve in the United States Navy for three years. He returned to the Sunflower State in 1946 and graduated from Cleveland College of Chiropractic-Kansas City in 1950.

Dr. Wright married Marie Rogers Wright and together they had five children; Linda, Craig, Janice, Joyce and Shannon. They also had 11 grandchildren.

In 1952 he joined the Kansas Chiropractic Association, where he would remain a member for the rest of his life. Almost immediately, Dr. Wright became an important figure in the development of the KCA. From 1955-1957, Dr. Wright served as the association's vice president. He played a vital role as chairman of the KCA's public relations committee, and served as chairman of the association's journal committee from 1966-1973.

But Dr. Wright's achievements weren't limited to helping further the goals and mission of the KCA. In 1957, he helped form the Kansas Chiropractic Society, which eventually led to greater emphasis being placed on chiropractic education and research. He also served 26 years on the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts, including three years as its president. Dr. Wright also worked as the Kansas delegate to the American Chiropractic Association for from 1986-1995.

As large an influence as he was on the chiropractic profession in Kansas, Dr. Wright had just as much an effect on chiropractic nationwide. From 1967-1969, he was the president of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners. He served as president of the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (FCLB), and was a fellow of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the U.S. for 13 years.

For all of his service and dedication to chiropractic, Dr. Wright earned a number of well-deserved accolades and awards throughout his career. Among them, were the "Distinguished Jayhawker" award from Kansas Governor John Anderson in 1964, and a certificate of appreciation from the Federation of State Medical Boards in 1966. In 1968, Dr. Wright was elected a Fellow of the International College of Chiropractors and a Fellow of the Palmer Academy of Chiropractic.

The 1969, Dr. Wright received an award from the American Chiropractic Association for his "white paper" on accreditation. In 1987, the Kansas Chiropractic Association honored him with their "Doctor of the Year" award; in 1996, the KCA named the Healing Arts Board Service award in his honor.

One of the issues that Dr. Wright felt most strongly about was chiropractic accreditation. In a 1969 report, he wrote: "I do feel that accreditation is still confronting us and probably is one of the most major problems we have had in the chiropractic profession in many years. We have been told several times by the legislative bodies in Washington, D.C., that this is the first hurdle we must clear before we can expect to be a part of the Medicare program."

Dr. Wright was not afraid to stand up for what he believed in, even if it was not what other in chiropractic wanted to hear. He once wrote: "The dinosaur is no longer in existence; he could not stand the modern civilization, so he is extinct. This will be the chiropractic profession's fate if we don't buckle down to the issues at hand..."

In another report, he wrote: "It has become evident to us that you cannot buy accreditation, you cannot politic accreditation; you are going to have to follow the outlines and the steps set forth by the federal agency on this."

Perhaps the most momentous occasion of Dr. Wright's career occurred in 1994, when he received the George Arvidson award for meritorious service to chiropractic from the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards. During the presentation of that award, Dr. Carroll Winkler, the FCLB's president, praised Dr. Wright's years of service to chiropractic:

"This year's recipient combines both current and past service. He enriches our history with what he has given, and our present with his bold vision for tomorrow. This is a man who took strong stands on issues for years, and they were not always popular stands. He stood up for the unity of this profession. He is the original man of integrity."

Adding to those sentiments, Dr. James Edwards may have summed it up best when remembering his friend and colleague:

"In the final analysis, he completely fulfilled the mission that every chiropractor should have. He protected and defended the chiropractic healing art and most importantly, he was able to pass it on to the next generation stronger and in better condition than it was when he received it. That is what Dr. Wright sought to do, and that is what he so magnificently accomplished."

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