

Dr. Golden Retires from Kentuckiana

DR. SHARON VALLONE APPOINTED ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Editorial Staff

Lorraine Golden, DC, who founded Kentuckiana Children's Center in 1957 to treat children with special needs, has announced her retirement as the center's executive administrator. In her place, the center's board of directors has named Sharon Vallone, DC, as Kentuckiana's acting executive director. A nationwide search is currently being conducted to find a permanent replacement for Dr. Golden.

"Dr. Golden has touched individuals for years with her heart, her devotion and her inspiration," Dr. Vallone said in an interview with DC. "But she has most influenced chiropractic by touching the children. Those children and their families live as testimony to the success of Dr. Golden's pioneering efforts."

"I am a chiropractor today because of hearing Dr. Golden speak, and I have seen that Dr. Golden and her dedicated staff have provided a priceless service, often at great cost to themselves, over the last 41 years."

The retirement of Dr. Golden marks the end of an era for chiropractic pediatric care in the state of Kentucky. From its inception more than four decades ago, Kentuckiana has grown from a small outpatient clinic to a multibuilding facility that serves the needs of hundreds of children a year.

Birth of a Dream in the Bluegrass State

In 1954, Dr. Golden began to formulate the idea for Kentuckiana. She saw the need for children with multiple handicaps to receive chiropractic care and began to organize local DCs and laypeople to open a clinic that would provide free care to these children, most of whom came from families that were financially strapped.

The following year, the Kentucky legislature chartered Kentuckiana Children's Center in Louisville. It was set up as a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian charitable organization to provide direct services free of charge to physically and mentally challenged children in need of health and special opportunities.

The center opened its doors to patient care in 1957 and slowly began to grow and expand its scope of treatment. It was through Dr. Golden's efforts that the Health, Education and Welfare Department's Division of Surplus Property gave some 11 acres of land and six buildings to Kentuckiana in 1961 with the purpose of expanding the center's educational, health and research services. The occasion marked the federal government's first grant to an organization that rendered chiropractic services.

Under Dr. Golden's reign, Kentuckiana became a unique chiropractic institution: providing free chiropractic care for challenged children; combining chiropractic care with a school for children with special needs, and providing that care free to the families that could not afford the care; Kentuckiana also developed the first postgraduate two-year intern program in pediatrics.

Yet despite her 41 years of service to the center, Dr. Golden was considered something of an enigma. "Some disdained her desire to see a union of colleges and chiropractic thought and chose not to align with any political or individual academic association because she wanted everyone to know Kentuckiana was there for them and their children and that Kentuckiana needed support from the whole," explained Dr. Vallone.

Looking Back on a Lifetime of Service

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Golden's work has been acknowledged by the bestowal of dozens of awards. She was the first DC in Kentucky to be named "Kentucky Chiropractor of the Year" (1954), and was commissioned a Kentucky colonel in 1958 for her humanitarian contributions. Her awards are too numerous to list, but some of her other honors include:

- "Outstanding Kentuckian" from governor Martha Layne Collins in 1984, in recognition of her "outstanding achievements and meritorious service to the commonwealth of Kentucky";
- "Dr. Mable Heath Palmer" award (1988), given to the foremost woman chiropractor of the year;
- "Heart of Gold" from the International Chiropractors Association (1989) in recognition of her humanitarian efforts and voluntary help for crippled and special children; and
- "Golden" award, presented to her in 1993 by James Parker, DC, for her 50 years of service to chiropractic.

Most recently, Dr. Golden was named one of six Community Health Service Award winners by the Alliance for Chiropractic Progress and Prevention magazine. Among the six honorees, she received a special award for her contributions to the profession.

Search for a New Director Continues

With Dr. Golden's retirement, Dr. Sharon Vallone has been named Kentuckiana's acting executive director. A 1987 graduate of the New York College of Chiropractic, Dr. Vallone began working for Kentuckiana in January of 1997. She previously served as Dr. Golden's administrative assistant while also maintaining two offices in Connecticut and serving as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Bridgeport.

"The search (for a new executive administrator) is a slow process," Dr. Vallone told DC. "It is difficult to find someone who combines the clinical expertise and business and fundraising skills so necessary to keep a nonprofit institute alive and well. It has been amazing to see just how much was done by one woman.

"At this time, both I and the board appreciate the need to have an individual at the helm who is strong in both creative management and development to bring Kentuckiana into its next 40 years in an economy that does not strongly support nonprofit organizations, and yet it must be an individual that epitomizes her love of children and of chiropractic to keep the legacy of providing chiropractic services to children who might otherwise not be able to afford them."

A Call for Support

Kentuckiana Children's Center has operated for more than 40 years largely on the support of the chiropractic profession. With Dr. Golden's departure, the center has lost its founder and one of the most recognizable names in the profession. But the center's goals of providing free chiropractic care to children with special needs must live on.

If you are interested in knowing more about Kentuckiana or would like to pledge your support so that the institution can continue to grow, please call or write:

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