

## Tough Battle in Wisconsin Primary

MEREDITH BAKKE, DC, LOSES IN SIX-CANDIDATE RACE

Editorial Staff

It was one of the closest races in this 1998 election year: six candidates all trying to win the Republican nomination for U.S. Congress in Wisconsin's second district. Because of the district's conservative nature, the Republican winner had a good chance of being elected.

With no incumbent, it was a wide-open race: four men, two women. The race was so close that the political experts refused to make predictions even days before the September 8th balloting. The winning candidate's margin of victory was less than 400 votes.

Watching the results come in on election night was agonizing. With six candidates, the numbers were consistently very close. After the winning candidate for almost every race was projected by the local media, it wasn't until the wee hours of the next morning that the winner was decided.

Meredith Bakke, DC, was one of three chiropractic hopefuls running for Congress this year (please see "Chiropractic's Triple Threat" in the February 9, 1998 issue). She ran as a successful businesswoman and health care provider with concerns for the needs of people.

Dr. Bakke ran as a nonpolitician and was proud of it. Hers was a good, clean race. She was respectful of her opponents and was always honest: quite a novelty. In the end, little more than 5,000 votes separated her from victory.

But her efforts were not without accomplishment. Meredith Bakke ran her race notably as a doctor of chiropractic. Her visibility throughout the campaign brought people closer to understanding chiropractic and the role played by DCs in all areas of life. An article in the September 8, 1998 edition of USA Today made mention of her chiropractic campaign. Her views on health and wellness were in sharp contrast to the realities of managed care.

"It (the campaign) makes me realize how much easier chiropractic practice is compared to politics," Dr. Bakke noted after the election. "We got great support from chiropractors in the district and in the state. But we need to raise the awareness in chiropractic that if you are not involved in some way politically, you are missing an opportunity to do things for your patients. We need to be involved in politics at the highest level.

"Some doctors were fantastic. They did a wonderful job supporting the campaign and more. I want to thank them with all my heart for their efforts. Unfortunately, there weren't enough. Any chiropractor who is going to run for office must have the support of their fellow chiropractors.

"You'd like to think that it isn't totally about money. Chiropractic does its best work at the grassroots. To win, we need to talk to our patients about the issues. This is the area that we fell flat on, that could have made a huge difference.

"If we have to play the money game, chiropractic is going to have a tough time. And in order to protect our patients, we have to have a DC in the midst of the discussions on Capitol Hill before the vote is taken. We need to be making decisions in government with more of a preventive mindset.

This is very compatible with chiropractic."

For now, Dr. Bakke will spend time in her practice, seeing patients and reflecting on her congressional campaign. It was a good fight and a learning experience. It's our loss and Congress' not to have Dr. Bakke as a representative. Thank you, Dr. Bakke, for your sincerity, honesty and effort.

OCTOBER 1998