

Hospital Donations Largesse

WHERE HAVE WE GONE WRONG?

William Risley, DC

Editor's note: What "class" of donator are you? What does it take to be in the Circle of Distinction, to be a Luminary, Pacesetter, Champion, or Philanthropist? Dr. Risley explains, and wonders why chiropractic can't be the beneficiary of donation largesse.

Dr. Risley (Palmer '61) is the author of 10 textbooks for the chiropractic profession. He was granted board eligibility in chiropractic orthopedics from LACC in 1985.

He retired from active practice in 1990, and is the owner of a 180-office chiropractic licensing organization, and lectures worldwide on clinical nutrition, hospital protocol, and neurovascular diagnosis.

He is a Parker team teacher, and a visiting lecturer for Palmer College.

Because my wife and I happen to live in an upscale area of our city, we have recently been "privileged" to be on the mailing list of a local hospital. The quarterly bulletin that we receive is indeed enlightening. How any organization such as this hospital can cry poverty while charging ludicrously outrageous professional fees and charges is more than I can comprehend.

In addition to being enlightened by this bulletin, I am overwhelmed by the largesse handed to hospital administrators under the guise of contributing to bountiful and eternal health. Contributors listed in this bulletin are categorized by the level of monetary donations. It would seem that the fundraisers have to search dictionaries to find original titles for each level of financial contributions.

Under the category of Circle of Distinction, they have subtitled the giver of \$3,000,000 to \$4,999,999 as a Luminary. My hand shakes at the sound of such a title. Not an even five million dollars, mind you, but \$4,999,999. Why they omitted the extra \$1 is beyond me. There has been one Luminary thus far, and the local street has been given the donor's last name. I guess that \$4,999,999 must be the going price to have a street named for you. Some areas of the country could build an entire city for that much money, but as one contributor has stated, it is comforting to know that "quality medical care is available if we need it."

Now we come to the cheaper contributors. They are known as Pacesetters and have only given somewhere between \$1,000,000 and \$2,999,999. Shame on them! They must also have not had the extra dollar to round off the total to \$3,000,000 and become a Luminary. I am indeed embarrassed to live in such a cheap neighborhood. There are only 10 Pacesetters listed, several in memoria. Even when they are dead, they must keep donating.

As distressing as the list of cheaper donors is, there are those that donate even less. They are given the ignominious name of Leaders. What an embarrassment they must suffer, being able to contribute only between \$500,000 to \$999,999. Everyone in town doesn't seem to have that extra dollar. Surely we must be in a depression! Thankfully, there are only eight of those poor souls,

including the dead contributors.

As difficult as this is becoming, to be fully complete in this report, I must list those other derelicts below. These poor folks have given donations between October 1, 1995 through March 31, 1996. I can't wait to see what happened during the ensuing six months. My eyes need "quality medical care" from straining to see the fine print list of contributors. There are so many names squeezed onto the pages, no doubt due to cost-containment, policies, and a likely splendid example of reducing the cost of health care. The list is as follows:

Champions: (\$250,000 to 499,000): 14, including the dead ones.

Guardians: (\$100,000 to 249,000): 35, including the dead ones.

Founders: (\$50,000 to 99,999): 34, including the dead ones.

Philanthropists: (\$20,000 to 49,000): approximately 85. There were 27 dead Philanthropists.

Platinum: (\$10,000 to 19,999): 38 of these.

Gold: (\$5,000 to 9,999): 49 of these.

Silver: (\$1,000 to 4,999): 237 of these.

Friends: (\$500 to 999): three full pages with an estimated 750 contributors.

There are an additional three full pages in fine print of memorial gifts given in remembrance of a loved one. The amounts given were not revealed. With all that money, one would wonder why there is a reason to die.

In addition to this incredible total of money -- \$69,000,000 given within the Circle of Distinction, which is a "lifetime membership" -- the poor folks outside of the Circle of Distinction donated \$28,000,000. Further fund raising occurred by:

- golf tournament that raised \$130,000
- "ball" that raised \$280,000
- "tobacco grant from state taxes" that raised \$200,000
- hospital auxiliary that donated \$220,000

There are, of course, numerous benefits allowed to these volunteers who are referred to as the hospital auxiliary. They graciously donate labor, and for their efforts, are allowed to have one styrofoam cup of their "choice of drink" in the cafeteria. Talk about corporate perquisites! That is likely where the missing \$1 has gone.

As poor as this institution is, graciously dedicated to "community service," I would urge that they begin to charge \$10 for one or two aspirin to make up the shortfall. Did you say they already do that? Well, they certainly need the money.

Just imagine how many children could be substantially aided if Kentuckiana had one-tenth of those donations! Much of this financial windfall nationwide is used to castigate alternative health, not the least of which is the chiropractic premise.

Even in their own ranks, there is an awareness that there may be much better ways of restoring or maintaining health. Dr. Andrew Weil, of the College of Medicine in Tucson, Alternative Health Faculty, put the problem very succinctly in a recent issue of the Association for Research and

Enlightenment Journal. "The philosophy of medicine today that diseases have external causes has led this nation to the edge of bankruptcy."

Another of his quotes which I am fond of is: "Maybe 20% of sick people going to doctors have conditions for which allopathic medicine is appropriate ... but we are using this for everything and it doesn't work for the vast majority of problems." Throwing money at the problem seems to be the national pastime. And yet few citizens can believe that medicine might just be more of a business of making money that takes precedence over the healing philosophy that the herd mentality expects. Just like in the political arena, all politicians are corrupt excepting for those in "my district." Doctors or their political organizations may be less than upstanding and ethical, but "my doctor" is not included.

Where have we gone wrong? The truth is, we haven't gone wrong. Some day, the tide will turn and the herd mentality will recognize the serious shortcomings of the current system. It is already happening.

I believe I will now incorporate as a charitable foundation and begin to seek donations from each of my neighbors. If you wish to contribute, so that you too can "feel better that quality medical care is available when you need it," please feel free to send in your check. You may be a Luminary in my organization with a very small donation. I will return your free drink in the mail. I will also paste your name over my local street address so that you may be suitably honored. You may address your contributions to this journal. Donations to a charitable foundation are tax deductible, of course.

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