

Health Care Needs a Wake up Call

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I have been reading for the past few years about the efforts made by doctors/organizations within our profession to get a chiropractic postage stamp. What would have been more appropriate and fitting than to have it released during our 100 year anniversary? It hasn't happened, not because we haven't tried, but the powers that be within the postal service just don't seem to recognize the immense contribution that chiropractic has made to suffering humanity. In my opinion the American priorities on deserving individuals are not only bad but outright sick and need healing.

It is my understanding that postage stamps are generally dedicated to individuals postmortem. How about Dr. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic? How many lives in the past 100 years have been helped by what he founded? How many years of pain, suffering, and human agony have been eliminated because of his contribution to humanity? Reasonable minds can agree that his contribution was monumental: being depicted on a postage stamp would be a very small gesture compared to his great contributions.

But who does the postal service choose to put on postage stamps? Well, there's Elvis Presley, who died a drug-induced death; there's Marilyn Monroe, who was emotionally disturbed and committed suicide. At this rate we can expect postage stamps commemorating Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead (drug abuser) and Mickey Mantel (alcoholic). This seems to be the direction our society is going, but it's a bit warped.

I don't say this to put these people down because they might have been very fine people in their personal lives. It's just that putting people on postage stamps implies a very special honor and it would seem that their deeds should reflect this honor.

For many years I have marveled over the many wonderful accomplishments of this profession in spite of the adversities that have been inflicted upon it. I'm proud of this profession and its accomplishments. We've had Dr. John McMillan Mennell say that the science anatomy department of a chiropractic college was the finest he had ever seen in his 40 years in medicine. Imagine the significance of that statement! Here is a world-class medical physician, a professor in anatomy who has authored textbooks found in medical libraries all over the world, has taught in five medical schools in his long and illustrious career, claiming that one of our colleges was better than any medical school he had ever seen in the world! And we did it without the \$1.4 billion that went to the top 10 medical school recipients from the National Institutes of Health (1992 figures).

In my travels I happened to be passing by a very famous university and noticed a sign indicating that an osteopathic college was located there, and so I dropped in to see the school. It was a very nice school. In my travels I have had the opportunity to visit most of the chiropractic colleges in this country and I can unequivocally say that it did not compare as favorably to any of the chiropractic colleges I have visited. Beside the material superiority at chiropractic colleges, there is also a greater aura of enthusiasm from the chiropractic faculty and students.

We have so much to be proud of, and don't think our competition isn't looking at our accomplishments. The Western Medical Journal conducted a poll that found patient satisfaction

three times greater for chiropractic than for medicine. That has got to be a very sobering finding for medicine. We have every right to be proud.

The chiropractic profession is a minority group in the finest sense of the word, and its leaders have always stressed overcoming adversities by being better than the competition. A competitive spirit combined with a fierce drive for superiority has always been a hallmark of chiropractic. Instead of being hung up on some of the differences that exist within our profession, we need to build on our common bonds and how we can strengthen them through better cooperation. Having differences is human nature, but we need to view them as challenges, not obstructions.

Instead of apologizing for being chiropractors, or for breathing, if we become more assertive in educating the public for all the good we do for the society, society will be more prone to accepting what we have to offer. Groups who promote their products and services are very competitive: even outright aggressive. We don't need to go to that extreme, but we must rely on the powerful facts that we have going for chiropractic to open some minds and hearts. If we did, society would be more prone to embrace our services; we'd even see a postage stamp commemorating the many contributions of chiropractic.

Abe Lincoln insisted that public sentiment is everything. He insisted that without it, you cannot win; with it, you cannot lose. We have the facts to turn very strong public sentiment toward our cause, but we need to become more assertive with these facts. It's up to us.

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