

William Harris, DC

DR. WILLIAM HARRIS' GIFT TO THE FUTURE

George McClelland, DC

In 1988, chiropractic research was still embryonic. Although most of the chiropractic colleges had research departments doing some work in the basic sciences, very few had taken serious steps toward true clinical research, much less randomized clinical trials. The Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER) had funded only one major clinical trial on low back pain. Therefore, the idea of establishing a center of excellence for chiropractic clinical research was a unique concept.

However, chiropractic has always had its visionary personalities. William M. Harris, president of the Foundation for the Advancement of Chiropractic Education (FACE), through his many years of dedication to the chiropractic profession has certainly demonstrated that quality. So when Dr. Harris let FCER know that he wanted to make a major contribution to chiropractic research, the midnight oil began to burn in the Arlington, Virginia office. There were numerous phone calls and conferences before any contractual agreements could be put to paper.

On November 7, 1988, an agreement was made to establish a project at the National College of Chiropractic. This research think tank would be known as the Practice Consultants Clinical Research (PCCRC) and would explore seven different project areas over five years.

In the late 1980s, finding a benefactor who would donate more than one million dollars to a concept seemed like a fantasy based on the old television series, "The Millionaire." However, Dr. Harris did prove to be chiropractic's "Millionaire" benefactor as far as National College was concerned. Although the college would put up two to three times the amount in matching funds to this project over the next five years, it was Dr. Harris' contribution that broke the inertia.

Today, 15 months after the close of that project, papers and presentations are still being developed and this dynamic process could continue for another one to two years. Additionally, this project has already served as the impetus for two studies that resulted in federal grants. One was the first federally funded clinical study that involved chiropractic care and chiropractic researchers and was funded through the Veterans' Administration. The second study was much larger and has been funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Public Health Service. Both are collaborative studies with medical research centers with primary investigator M. Ram Gudavalli, PhD.

Dr. Harris' investment in chiropractic research has already brought about scientific journal publications and presentations. It has assisted in building bridges with other research centers. It has brought federal grants into chiropractic research and continues to produce new publications and presentations, stimulate new interest in chiropractic research, and will certainly spin off future chiropractic-based research studies. Dr. Harris' generosity has given growth to a tidal wave in chiropractic research. It is a gift that will keep on giving. Dr. William Harris, we thank you for your dedication and commitment to the future of chiropractic.

George McClelland, DC

President, FCER

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