

The Chatanooga Group -- Supporting the Centennial as "a Point of Unity for the Profession"

Editorial Staff

Mr. Tom Voight, general manager, table/traction division, Chatanooga Group, Inc.: "The Centennial Foundation ... is a way for the profession to rally around its success."

Editor's note: This is the eighth in a series of 12 brief interviews with the corporate sponsors of the chiropractic centennial. In this issue, "DC" recognizes the Chatanooga Group, Inc., for its Platinum Crown Club sponsorship, and its commitment of at least \$50,000 to our centennial.

"DC": Please tell us about Chatanooga Group's commitment to chiropractic.

Mr. Tom Voight: Our commitment to chiropractic goes back a lot of years. But in recent years we went back and tried to process the input of thousands and thousands of chiropractic practitioners to determine what they needed in the way of products. My responsibility is tables and traction in the Chatanooga corporation, that is my division. I make tables and traction for the chiropractic market. The tables have been developed as a complete line to address issues that we feel are pertinent to what the customer is asking for. We've spent about two and one-half years developing a product that has three major focuses: one was that we wanted to build equipment that was low maintenance, that provided superior function, and that was ergonomically compatible with the practitioner. You are always striving to improve a product, day in and day out. You never say, "Okay, we're through with that, now we're going to move to something else." After spending about two years developing our table line, we have a major update and redesign that is in the works right now. Within 18 months we'll have another major overhaul of that line, based on additional technology available and equipment. It will provide us with opportunities to advance even more.

Our commitment to chiropractic is a customer-oriented commitment, which means we're committed for the long haul to create the products that the industry needs to help a chiropractor do his job better and easier. Beyond that we try to support the industry. We've been in the FCER Investors' Club for a number of years, and have supported the effort to do pure research on chiropractic techniques and equipment, and whatever they choose to do with that money.

"DC": Tell us why Chatanooga Group decided to become a Platinum Club Crown Sponsor.

Mr. Voight: We've been a supporter of the Centennial Foundation because that is a way for the profession to rally around its success. We felt that it was a point of unity for the profession, something for the profession to take satisfaction in. It is neutral ground. I've been concerned for a number of years about some of the divisiveness that goes on in the profession. It concerns me and I do not take sides in that, but I'm concerned that if the profession does not take care of itself, it certainly will not be growing and maturing as I would like to see it as a supplier to the industry. The centennial is good for the profession, and it was a good decision for us to sponsor it.

I see a lot of positive things happening in this industry. I think chiropractic is finally getting some

published recognition in the medical arena that it has long needed and deserved. The Centennial Foundation has been a good vehicle for rallying around some of those issues and getting some of the publicity and real effort cultivated within the profession to work as a team. I'm really thrilled with the posture that the chiropractic profession is in. I feel that chiropractic really has an opportunity to come out much stronger over the next couple of years than it realized it could, even as recently as six to eight months ago.

"DC": Now that chiropractic is entering its second century, what do you think the future holds for the profession?

Mr. Voight: I think the future holds a tremendous opportunity. I think chiropractic as a profession has several challenges. The challenge is to develop unity within the profession, and I would parallel that with the AMA. They disagree predominantly behind closed doors. I fear that divisiveness is the chiropractic's worst enemy.

On a positive side, I would say that chiropractic is getting some of the best press it's ever gotten in mainstream health care delivery arenas. I think we're on the verge of a lot of positive changes and shifts. The drive to cost-containment in the health care delivery system is a real positive for chiropractic. A lot of the research and studies which have been done -- the Manga report, the British Medical Journal study, some of the studies which are coming up in the United States -- is stuff that the profession can really hang its hat on. The profession has to tread carefully and precisely through the next few years and make the most of that. It is a real opportunity for chiropractors to get into the limelight and get some real recognition and appreciation from the people who drive the payment portion of the industry, the insurance companies. The insurance companies need to understand that there is a tremendous opportunity in chiropractic care for chronic low back problems as opposed to the cost of surgery. There are some really neat things that are going on out there that will contribute to that. I think it's an exciting time and there is a major opportunity for chiropractic to move to another level as far as the acceptance of the profession and the opportunity the profession has in the big picture.

"DC": Thank you for your sponsorship.

JULY 1995