

"We Are the Only Hope for Survival of Chiropractic in France"

STUDENTS IN PARIS STRUGGLE TO OVERCOME LAWS, THREATS

Stephen Eckstone

Peter Fysh, DC, chairman, department of practice, Palmer West and columnist of "Kids Need Chiropractic Too" in "DC", and Mr. Stephen Eckstone, dean of institutional advancement and admissions at Palmer West, recently visited the Institut Francais de Chiropractie in Paris (founded 1983). They met with Dr. Claude Archambault, past president of the college and current president of the French Chiropractic Association, and Mr. Charles Martin, director of the college. These are some of their observations.

Dr. Archambault, a trim man in his 40s, earned his DC from National College, returning to practice in France. Chiropractic is not "legal" in France. "We have struggled for years to become recognized, but the medical profession is too powerful in France," Dr. Archambault told us. Dr. Archambault stated the problem was economic. "With 1,000 MDs unable to support themselves in medicine, they believe that chiropractors will only cause more MDs to suffer. So today, there are 360 chiropractors in France and we face the prospect of jail every day."

Despite this bleak scenario, the college has enrolled 90 students who will study for six years to complete the rigorous program. While classes are taught in French, American textbooks are used. Instructors include 14 DCs, seven docteurs es sciences (PhDs), and six docteurs en medecine (MDs). The MDs teach anatomy, physiology, pathology, and radiology. According to Mr. Martin, the school's director, the anatomy labs are at a nearby medical school.

The college's clinic is housed in a separate building to protect the school from liability, in case of a raid by police. "There is a constant risk that the police will arrest our students and instructors for practicing in the clinic," said Mr. Martin. For that reason, the clinic faculty are not included in the college catalog.

The actual treat of arrest is rare, Dr. Archambault informed us, but penalties and fines are common. The French Chiropractic Association has created a war chest to provide funds to pay the fines of its members.

Dr. Archambault is a pioneer. As a young man, he was planning to go into medicine when he met a chiropractor. "I watched him use his hands to heal people and I realized that as an MD I would probably sit and write prescriptions all day." He returned from America and helped develop the college, becoming president and then president of the French association. As an interesting side note, Dr. Archambault's hobby is collecting pieces of crashed World War II aircraft, which he catalogues and displays.

The Institut de Paris, located in the center of Paris' historic Montmartre district, includes several adjusting rooms, a small library, classrooms, and a nonfunctioning x-ray machine. "We are struggling," said Dr. Martin, "but we are the only hope for the survival of chiropractic in France."

