

Who Was the "Missionary of Straight Chiropractic" in California?

Joseph Keating Jr., PhD

Tall, thin, and serious, the perfect ectomorph, he strode through the Middle Ages of chiropractic as a pioneer in philosophy, education, and licensure of straight chiropractic. He asked for no mercy, only justice. Faced with the choice of 90 days in Los Angeles County Jail for "practicing medicine without a license" or a pardon from the governor if he would accept a license as a "drugless practitioner" from the Board of Medical Examiners, he chose jail. Faced with a mandate by the Board of Chiropractic Examiners to increase the number of hours in his curriculum and to include instruction in diagnosis and physiotherapy, he preferred to sell the chiropractic college he had founded 40 years before, now the Cleveland Chiropractic College of Los Angeles. "B.J." would write of him in the Fountain Head News:

"No one can work with him ... he's just like the cow, gives a splendid full-to-the-brim bucket of the richest cream and then in a huff kicks it all over the desert and lets it go to waste, ... he won't let anybody help him think anything."

Yet, for all his cantankerousness, few in the profession have ever rivaled his contributions. Indeed, it may well have been his absolute faith in D.D. Palmer's principles which enabled him to accomplish so much:

- Founded four chiropractic colleges: in Oklahoma, Kansas (two), and California
- Initiated the legal campaign that created the first chiropractic licensing law in Kansas and subsequent law in Oklahoma
- Hired D.D. Palmer to teach at his school in Los Angeles
- Attended every legislative session in Sacramento from 1911 to 1952
- The driving force behind the 1922 referendum which created licensure and the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners
- Filed suit in 1946 against the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners to force the licensure of blind chiropractors
- Established a tradition of free chiropractic care for the poor among his alumni, a tradition that continues today

- Campaigned for the commissioning of chiropractors as health providers in the armed forces during World War II
- Founded the Chiropractic Forum in Los Angeles (1947-1956), whose legacy can be traced to the modern era through the activities of the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) Council on Technic and the recent Consensus Conference on the Validation of Chiropractic Methods
- Licensed in Arkansas on his 82nd birthday by special act of the governor, despite his refusal to sit for the basic science examination
- His principle biographer and former student would eulogize him: "The keynote of his life was 'Honesty in all things; the truth cannot be compromised.'"

Who was this giant of the chiropractic profession, this genuine chiropractic hero, this missionary of straight chiropractic in California?

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FEBRUARY 1991