

A United Profession, Guaranteeing Freedom of Choice

Janine K. Dobson, DC

There have been many stimulating articles written in this newspaper which demonstrate clearly the two schools of thought that exist within our profession.

I am writing from New Zealand where I have been in practice for nine years. Here we have practitioners accredited by both the Chiropractic Council on Education (CCE) and the Straight Chiropractic Academic Standards Association (SCASA), flourishing and serving the needs of chiropractic patients in our community. Patients come into our practices and are made aware of the chiropractic care they will receive. It is obvious throughout the world that patients demand both or either of the different approaches taught in chiropractic colleges. The New Zealand Chiropractic Board has the foresight to approve colleges from both accrediting agencies, thereby guaranteeing both patients and prospective chiropractors the right to choose either the doctor of their choice or the school of their choice.

My husband is a Palmer graduate who has practiced for 20 years; I am a Sherman graduate. The president of the New Zealand Chiropractors Association is a Sherman graduate, and the Executive Council of the Association are graduates from Palmer, Lincoln, Sherman, Canadian Memorial and from the Phillip Institute of Technology in Melbourne Australia -- graduates from SCASA, CCE, and ACCE approved colleges. Our association is forward thinking and progressive.

Because the United States is the home of chiropractic, what happens there affects chiropractors the world over. The political infighting regarding the educational accrediting agencies leaves no chiropractor unscathed.

D.D. Palmer founded our profession in 1895. Chiropractic is based on theories that science is now only just beginning to catch up with. How wonderful it would be if we could truly celebrate our centenary by solving the accreditation problem in a positive way so all chiropractors, no matter what their outlook, would feel honored to be part of this wonderful profession.

We have come a long way in the intervening 96 years and have accomplished much including the approval by the United States Office of Education of two accrediting agencies within the one profession. In 1988, the USOE recognized that there were two schools of thought within chiropractic and that the incumbent accrediting agency, CCE, did not accommodate the other viewpoint. Therefore, upon considering SCASA's application for approval and finding it an accrediting agency of a high standard, the USOE approved it, thereby, providing accreditation opportunities for both schools.¹

The fact is, chiropractors with either perspective not only exist, but flourish. Patients the world over are entitled to and indeed have the right to choose the type of chiropractic care they want. Students the world over have a right to the type of school from which they wish to gain an education.

Now we have CCE and SCASA colleges both producing chiropractors according to the federally approved standards, capable of passing state and national board examinations anywhere in the world.

In fact, it is an injustice that graduates from SCASA schools are not allowed to write state board examinations in many of the states in your country and the provinces of Canada when they are more than capable of passing them.

If chiropractic in the United States is only to have one agency to approve educational standards, then perhaps the CCE should come under the auspices of SCASA, and SCASA should be forced to accommodate both schools of thought; or perhaps as CCE has the more accommodating name, SCASA could come under the auspices of the CCE, with a board comprising chiropractors from both schools of thought set up to accredit the two types of colleges with their differing missions clearly defined and kept intact.

Recently, I attended a seminar run jointly by the ACA Sports Council and the Federation Internationale de Chiropratique Sportive (FICS) in San Diego. This was a well-organized informative seminar where a number of speakers, including my husband, spoke from a different perspective. I was struck by the love all the people attending that conference had for chiropractic -- their chiropractic. My chiropractic outlook was different from most of the doctors attending, but all were chiropractors that were happy and fulfilled in what they were doing. I left San Diego with a sense that all was going to be well within our profession -- that good sense would prevail.

Let us face the fact that both schools have benefits and are desired by patients and chiropractors alike. The USOE recognized the need to accommodate both viewpoints. Let us, as chiropractors, turn this eternal problem into a challenge for the future and make this positive by recognizing and fulfilling this need -- truly promoting unity without uniformity.

Let's march toward our centenary in 1995 to celebrate in harmony, together, as a united profession, guaranteeing freedom of choice for chiropractor, patient, and prospective student alike. We have done much hard work to bring us to this stage; let's build on it from here.

1) Editor's footnote: In November of 1990, the National Advisory Committee of Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility recommended that SCASA not be reapproved by the Department of Education, (see December 5, 1990 issue of "DC"). Acting on the committee's recommendation, U.S. Education Secretary Lamar Alexander informed SCASA that it must "show cause" why its recognition should not be withdrawn, (see May 24, 1991 "DC").

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JULY 1991