

## NYCC Honors a Champion of Chiropractic Sports Medicine

When one thinks of Edward J. Ryan III, one thinks of a pioneering crusader who championed the value of chiropractic in sports medicine and led the crusade to include chiropractic as an integral component of the U.S. Olympic Sports Medicine Team. Therefore, it was both fitting and deserving that NYCC bestowed the degree of Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Ryan at the college's commencement exercises earlier this year.

Dr. Jeffrey Solomon, immediate past president of the Florida Chiropractic Association (FCA), past president of the ACA Sports Council, and Team USA chiropractor at the Torino Winter Olympic Games in 2006, commented, "Ed made us a regular part of the Olympic Sports Medicine Team. He realized that we were a key component of the team's health care provider staff and that in order to ensure athlete satisfaction and fulfill the requests of many participants to include us, it was necessary to have a chiropractor as an essential member of the sports medicine team. Ed recognized that without us, the athletes lacked all they needed to optimize their performance and that we were, in essence, instrumental to many athletes' success at the Games."

As medical director and head athletic trainer for the U.S. Olympic Committee, Ryan's first exposure to chiropractic in sports medicine was in Colorado Springs in 1990. There, he met Dr. Philip Santiago, who was there to perform a two-week service tour - one of the many training grounds used to evaluate future members of the Olympic Sports Medicine Team. According to Ryan, "Phil got it. He knew the deal, and he took a unique approach to sports medicine because of his experience as a former professional athlete, coach and chiropractor. He demonstrated that chiropractors not only *could* function as team players, but more importantly, he helped the rest of the sports medicine team to understand, recognize and accept the significance of the chiropractic component to our athletes."

Dr. Santiago was ultimately chosen as Team USA's chiropractor for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.

Ryan's realization that chiropractic offered a level of treatment unavailable in any other health care specialty, coupled with his knowledge that no one professional was capable of providing all the answers, convinced him that in order to provide America's finest athletes with the best possible Sports Medicine Team, chiropractors were an essential element. Ryan commented, "It was my job to ensure the entire Olympic Sports Medicine Team, that regardless of backgrounds, we were all there for one reason and one reason only - the health and well being of our athletes - who were best served by everyone working together." In further demonstration of his commitment both to America's finest athletes and to chiropractic, Ryan increased the number of chiropractors on the U.S. Olympic Sports Medicine Team to two for the 2004 Games in Athens.

In bestowing the honorary doctorate on Ryan, Dr. Frank Nicchi, president of NYCC, stated, "I cannot begin to express how valuable Ed Ryan's contributions have been to the chiropractic profession, and more particularly to chiropractic's increasingly important role in Olympic-class athletics. Ed is a unique individual - unfortunately, the sort we meet all too infrequently in life. His

commitment, perseverance and expertise have benefited all who have made his acquaintance."

Indeed, Ryan's contributions to the chiropractic profession have been profound and enduring. As a non-chiropractor, he has done more to advance the profession in the Olympic-class-athlete arena than anyone else to date - for that, our profession owes him an incredible debt of gratitude. The bestowing of the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree is one small gesture of our esteem for his unfailing faith and dedication to chiropractic's rightful place on the sports medicine stage.

In summing up his feelings about receiving this honorary degree, Ryan commented, "It is very humbling to be recognized by a group such as the chiropractic profession, especially when one is not a chiropractor. This recognition impressed upon me that what I did, which was the right thing to do for our athletes, was respected by the chiropractic community. I would be hard-pressed to find any finer group of professionals anywhere, and I am honored to have been given the opportunity to work side-by-side with them all these years."

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