



Former building of the Spears Chiropractic Hospital, circa 1950.

CHIROPRACTIC (GENERAL)

Early Mile-High Chiropractic

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Denver, the Mile-High City, has long been a center for chiropractic activities.⁴ In recent memory, it was the site of the short-lived Colorado College of Chiropractic, a division of Marycrest University, which was led by Doug Davison, DC. However, Denver's chiropractic tradition dates back to the early years of the profession. Among the best-known names associated with chiropractic and Denver are: Homer G. Beatty, DC, ND; Senator Neal Bishop, DC; Willard Carver, LLB, DC; A. Earl Homewood, DC, ND; Frank Margetts, DD, LLB, DC; Leo Spears, DC; Leo Wunsch, II, DC; and the National Chiropractic Association (NCA). I will touch briefly on these various people and organizations.



D.D. Palmer building of the Spears Chiropractic Hospital in Denver, circa 1950.



Dr. Doug Davison, former dean of Colorado Chiropractic College.



Dr. Leo Spears.



"FOUNDATION EXECUTIVES: Dr. Frank O. Logic, Dr. O.A. Ohlson and Dr. W.H. McNichols discussing agreement with Dr. Leo L. Spears to give Spears Sanitarium and future projects in Denver the approval of the Chiropractic Research Foundation." From the October 1947 issue of the *National Chiropractic Journal*.



Conventioners at the NCA's 1933 gathering in Denver; Drs. Carl S. Cleveland Sr., DC, president of the Cleveland Chiropractic College of Kansas City, and William C. Schulze, M.D., DC, president of the National Chiropractic College, are seated together, just left of center in the front row. Both were members of the NCA's Schools Council.



"Perfect Back" finalists at the NCA's 1933 convention in Denver.

Perhaps the best recognized name on our list is that of Leo Spears, DC (1894-1956), a 1921 alumnus of the Palmer School of Chiropractic (PSC). Dr. Spears was an extremely litigious individual who battled with local and state medical authorities for decades in his effort to promote chiropractic and build his hospital, which was undoubtedly the largest inpatient facility in the profession's history.^{12,13} The Chiropractic Research Foundation, forerunner of today's Foundation for Chiropractic Education & Research (FCER), briefly flirted with Dr. Spears in an effort to secure the Denver facility as a research center.^{10,14} However, these efforts were not successful, owing

largely to Spears' reluctance to give up control of the institution.¹¹ Following his death in the mid-1950s, his nephews, Dan and Howard Spears, also chiropractors, carried on their uncle's work.



Stock certificate for the Carver Chiropractic University of Denver, issued Aug. 25, 1923 and signed by Dr. Willard Carver (courtesy of Russell W. Gibbons).



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Faculty of the Colorado Chiropractic University, 1920s.

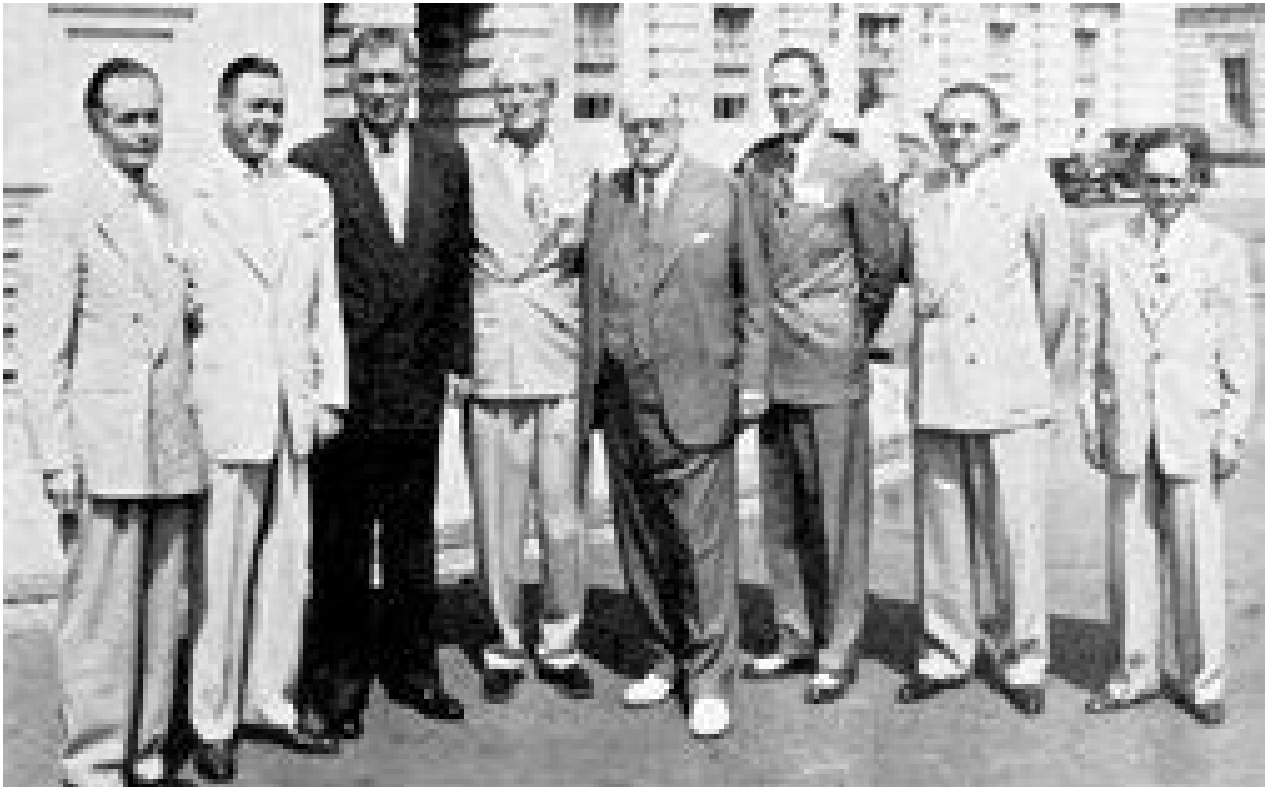


Dr. A. Earl Homewood, mid-1940s (courtesy of Herbert J. Year, DC).

Leo Spears arrived in Denver at about the same time as attorney-chiropractor-minister Frank Margetts (1871-1968). Dr. Margetts graduated from the National College of Chiropractic (NCC) in 1920 and taught at his chiropractic alma mater for a few years while his wife completed her chiropractic education.¹² She graduated in 1922, and the couple relocated to Denver, where Frank was promptly elected president of the Colorado Chiropractic Association. He served no more than a year, for he was elected president of the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) in 1923, and in this capacity, made his most significant contributions to the profession.⁶ Margetts led the opposition both to political medicine's anti-chiropractic campaigns and to B.J. Palmer's neurocalometer-centered "back-to-the-back" program in the mid-1920s. He spoke in state legislative halls around the nation on behalf of the ACA's quest for chiropractic licensing laws, and resigned the presidency when it seemed the most expeditious way to bring about a merger of the ACA with the formerly Palmer-led Universal Chiropractors' Association. That amalgamation took place late in 1930 and gave birth to the NCA, the immediate predecessor of today's ACA.⁷



Gathering of faculty and postgraduate students at the Colorado Chiropractic University, 1927. Drs. Willard Carver and Homer Beatty are seen squatting front and center (courtesy of Texas Chiropractic College).



"COLORADO POLITICS AND CHIROPRACTIC: The Congressional delegation from Colorado poses with the Denver delegation to the annual convention of the National Chiropractic Association before the Capitol in Washington. From left: Dr. O.A. Ohlson (Denver), Congressman John A. Carroll, Senator Edwin G. Robinson, Dr. Neal D. Bishop (Denver), Senator Eugene D. Millikin, Dr. H.G. Beatty (Boulder), Congressman Wayne N. Aspinall (D, Palisade), and Congressman John H. Marsalis (D, Pueblo)." From the September 1950 issue of the *Journal of the National Chiropractic Association*.

Denver served as the site for the NCA's 1933 convention, which drew chiropractors and their leaders from around the nation. The NCA's push to raise educational standards in the profession had not yet begun in earnest at this point, and the organization was focused primarily on contending with the spread of basic science legislation. Popular as a means of generating publicity for the still embryonic profession were the NCA's "Perfect Back" contests (destined to be reincarnated as the "Posture Queen" competitions of the 1950s).



Left to right: State Senator Neal Bishop, DC, of Colorado, U.S. Senator John F. Kennedy, and Emmett J. Murphy, DC, Washington representative for the NCA and the National Chiropractic Insurance Company. From the September 1958 issue of the *Journal of the National Chiropractic Association*.

Denver was the location for one of the several chiropractic colleges founded by attorney-chiropractor Willard Carver. The first and largest of the Carver schools was located in Oklahoma City.⁵ Carver's Denver institution was variously known as the Denver College of Chiropractic, Carver Chiropractic University, Colorado Chiropractic University and the University of Natural Healing Arts (UNHA). Dr. Carver presided over the institution at its inception, but turned the reins over to his nephew, Homer G. Beatty, DC, ND. The latter disappointed his uncle by introducing what Carver considered "mixing" methods of healing, and by removing the word chiropractic from the title of the institution.² The future president of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, A. Earl Homewood, DPT, DC, ND, LLB, earned the first of his several doctorates from the UNHA - the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) - prior to his training at the Western States College.⁷ The UNHA closed its doors in 1962, but the college corporation has continued to function. Its main activity is awarding scholarships to chiropractic students.⁴

The Carver school was but one of several institutions which have provided training for chiropractors in the Mile-High City (see Table 1).



Dr. Leo Wunsch, II, 1977.



Dr. Leo Wunsch, Sr. From the December 1951 issue of the *Journal of the National Chiropractic Association*.



"ACA State Delegate, Dr. Harry Swanson, presents a plaque to Mr. Robert Twedell, representing the Denver Post. Dr. Leo E. Wunsch II (right), president of the Foundation for Accredited Chiropractic Education looks on." From the March 1965 issue of the *ACA Journal of Chiropractic*.

Colorado passed its first chiropractic statute in 1933,⁴ due in large measure to the efforts of state representative (later state senator) and Denver practitioner Neal Bishop, DC, who also served as a faculty member and vice president of the UNHA.¹ Bishop was also influential in establishing a continuing education requirement for the re-licensure of chiropractors in the state.⁴ Dr. Bishop's career and contributions to the profession have yet to be told in any depth.

TABLE 1

Several chiropractic educational institutions were located in Denver (courtesy of Glenda Wiese, PhD, and Louis O. Gearhart, DC):

- Colorado College of Chiropractic
- Denver Chiropractic Institute
- Rocky Mountain College of Chiropractic and Psychology
- Spears Post-Graduate College of Chiropractic
- University of Natural Healing Arts
- Western College of Chiropractic

Denver native Leo Wunsch, II, DC (1924-1996), practiced immediately following his 1952 graduation from Lincoln Chiropractic College until his retirement. The son of a PSC alumnus, Leo II followed his father's lead and became a chiropractic radiologist. He served on the governing boards of several chiropractic organizations,³ including the state Board of Chiropractic Examiners, the FCER (over which he presided from 1964-1969), and perhaps most notably, the National Chiropractic Mutual Insurance Company (NCMIC) during 1962-1981, including two nonconsecutive two-year terms as president of the company.⁹

There are many more stories to be mentioned about chiropractic in the Mile-High City. Perhaps another time.

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