

Growing Your Own

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Anyone who has walked through the halls of a major research department in a large university can't help but be amazed at the resource-intense environment that exists. An unending maze of laboratories with people in white lab jackets and large goggles running all over the place - it gives the feeling of high-intensity activity. Everyone in the place seems to have at least one PhD and a list of publishing credits as long as your arm. To the novice, the whole experience is a credit to the public and private support directed toward the research enterprise.

While walking the halls of a chiropractic educational institution, a similar experience of awe is lacking. There are scientific labs, to be sure, more designed for teaching than research. There are also people running around adorned in white lab coats and goggles, but never as many as in the major research university lab.

This comparison may be viewed as a "blight" on chiropractic educational institutions. It is, to some degree, but my intent is not to demean or defame. One only needs to compare the resource outlay between a major research university and a chiropractic educational institution to realize how far the almighty buck can really be stretched. It causes one to wonder just what could be done if equivalent resources were made available to chiropractic education.

For all those white-coated lab assistants and their mentoring professors, chiropractic has its own claim to fame. As a profession focused on survival and clinical training, research investigation was a high priority to a sacred few in the early years: C.O. Watkins, Joseph Janse, B.J. Palmer, Clarence Weiant, and H.G. Higley.

When I began my master's degree training at the University of Utah in 1976, Scott Haldeman and I determined there were no more than five individual doctors of chiropractic in the entire profession who also held a graduate degree. That was just over 40 years ago. Not only was it not popular to hold a graduate degree, but it also was not practical. There was no use for the degree within the profession and no mechanism to assist anyone wishing to obtain a graduate degree.

In 1976, the former NINCDS director of extramural programs, Dr. Murray Goldstein, encouraged pursuit of graduate research training by aspiring young chiropractic students and faculty. He even promised to pay tuition charges for those who successfully gained entry into an accredited program.

After I concluded my radiology residency program at National, I was anxious to pursue clinical opportunities back home in Salt Lake City. I inquired into a master's program in community medicine at the University of Utah School of Medicine. The program director was Robert Kane, MD, author of the *Lancet* article "Manipulating the Patient" that caused quite a stir when it was published in the mid-1970s. The article compared the outcome of workers' compensation patients treated by medical doctors and chiropractors in the state of Utah. It was quite favorable to the chiropractors.

Dr. Kane accepted my application (more on the strength of my BS degree from the University of

Utah than my DC degree from National) and I enrolled. I also was just starting a practice and expecting our fourth child. I applied to NINCDS for tuition support and was denied.

Broke, discouraged and overwhelmed, I turned to the FCER for tuition support and also was summarily denied. (*Note how history changes at this point.*) The decision by the FCER Board of Trustees to deny my application occurred over the weekend preceding the meeting of the ACA and its House of Delegates. Dr. Henry West was president of the ACA at that time. He orchestrated an appeal to the body to overturn the decision made by the board of trustees of the FCER. First, he spoke on behalf of my cause. He then turned the podium over to Dr. Janse, who likewise spoke forcefully (as he always did) for the cause. Dr. West then introduced Dr. Kane, whom he had flown down from Salt Lake City.

Dr. Kane took the profession to task by telling them that if it ever hoped to gain credibility as a profession, it needed to conduct its own research and not rely on someone else to do it. He further stated that if we were going to do our own research, we certainly needed to grow our own research-trained individuals.

The decision was overturned and I received the support needed to complete my master's degree. But more importantly, history was changed. Following what was an embarrassing episode, the FCER implemented a new program to provide support to additional promising doctors of chiropractic pursuing research training, to the foundation's credit. The FCER launched its fellowship training program and has continued to provide support for doctors of chiropractic seeking either a master's or PhD degree.

A few years later, as these newly minted DC/MS/PhD researchers became available, there was no place for them to apply their research skills within the profession. The FCER initiated what it called a "residency-support program" that provided partial funding for the salary of those seeking employment at chiropractic educational institutions. This helped the institution carry them until they could acquire their own grants and soft-money support.

Since 1983, the FCER has funded 148 fellowships (\$736,835) and 23 residencies (\$620,000), totaling \$1,336,835. That's a million-dollar investment in growing our own. In fear of embarrassing someone, I have refrained from mentioning names. However there is an impressive list of facilities at which some of our research people have been trained:

- McMaster University
- University of Illinois
- University of California at Los Angeles
- University of British Columbia
- University of New South Wales
- University of Minnesota
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Michigan State University
- Oregon Health Sciences University
- Medical College of Ohio
- State University of New York at Stony Brook
- University of Colorado at Boulder
- University of Southern California
- University of Iowa
- University of Calgary
- University of Southampton
- University of Edinburgh
- Loyola University

- University of Saskatchewan
- Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine

The FCER remains committed to the support and training of clinician scientists within the profession. Limited available resources prevent the foundation from providing as much support as is requested and needed.

When put into a historical perspective, chiropractic research has achieved remarkable progress. We need more than the fingers on one hand to count those who hold graduate degrees. But we need so much more. Membership and support of the FCER enhances its ability to continue to grow our own.

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