

A Farwell Toast to RHT

Debi Pugliese

It was an early winter morning in January of 1987. There was an air of excitement as Dr. Petersen, staff of MPI and Dynamic Chiropractic awaited the arrival of the new associate editor. Most had already heard stories of this unique bundle of talent and energy. A former childhood actor, born of theatrical parents, some of us had previously sampled his talents watching the old "Henry Aldredge" T.V. series and his memorable screen performance in "The Bell's of St. Mary's" with Ingrid Bergman and Bing Crosby.

Enter Richard H. Tyler, D.C., -- chiropractic physician, former editor of the Chiropractic Family Physician, and prolific author of wide renown, whose articles appeared in the Chirogram, Today's Chiropractic, and the Digest of Chiropractic Economics. We couldn't wait to meet Dr. Tyler who counted among his friends and patients, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Burt Reynolds, and Franco Columbo. Our expectations soared.

We were not to be let down. This red-haired dynamo arrived, wits sharpened and shirt sleeves rolled up, eager to go to work. There was no mistaking his glee over the prospect of this new challenge, nor the pleasure of his glee over the prospect of this new challenge, nor the pleasure of his publisher, Dr. Petersen (who was slyly aware of what he was about to unleash on the chiropractic profession).

To readers of his column, "RHT" was either devil or prophet. Column after column, he cast a scathing and often hilarious eye upon the chiropractic profession. Few will forget his popular "Conan the Chiropractor" series, "rubbing" as he put it, "a little salt in the wounds of those who felt wounded." He fought tirelessly for his beloved profession, never bowing to popular politics, never softening his attacks on the decimators of the profession. To Richard Tyler D.C., the optimum capabilities of the chiropractic profession were anything but manifest. "Rise up!" he implored. Chiropractic is NOT a religion; it's a dynamic healing art and as such should have the ability and the right to expand along philosophical and pragmatic lines."

None were spared the swipe of his pen. Any offense given was purely intentional. RHT's irreverence drew quick notice. After each issue of "DC" was released, letters to the editor would pour in; a healthy portion were always addressed to RHT, alternately praising his honesty, or panning his humor. His favorite target was the medical profession, (which he artfully dubbed as "Big Brother Medicine") which had attempted to wrap its tentacles around the throat of chiropractic. When the famous 11-year antitrust court battle of the "Chicago Four" against the American Medical Association was declared a victory, he was jubilant.

Through his column "RHT" lobbied the chiropractic profession. He lobbied the associations. He lobbied the researchers. He lobbied the institutional leaders. He lobbied every member of the profession. He fervently embraced the efforts of the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) and its commitment to educational excellence. He rallied mercilessly against those who would denigrate educational and institutional improvement by aggrandizing their narrow interests through propaganda of dual

accreditation. His protests carved deep. He wrote: "Every profession has its loonies, but only in chiropractic are they organized and elect officers."

He was perhaps an acquire taste. But his enthusiasm was contagious. Call it coincidence, but as his reputation grew, so did the impressive list of regular contributing columnists for Dynamic Chiropractic. He enjoyed a special relationship with Lorraine Golden, D.C., founder and pioneer of Kentuckiana Children's Center, a facility dedicated to the health care, education, and research services for specially handicapped children. While difficult to imagine anyone busier, RHT managed to convince her to write an exclusive monthly column for "DC" as he did with so many other notable authors. Among those who yielded to his persuasive invitations to write for "DC" were Robert Mendelsohn, M.D. ("The People's Doctor"), William Heath Quigley, D.C. ("Early Days at Palmer/Early Palmer Lyceums"), Deborah Pate, D.C., DACBR ("Roentgenology"), and Richard Schafer, D.C., FICC ("Viewpoint: State of Our Art"), just to name a handful; the list grew.

A self-described "chiropractic chauvinist," RHT managed to run a full-time practice and to commute twice-weekly to the Huntington Beach offices of "DC," a 174 mile round trip. Without fail, he would always be greeted by staff members who requested an adjustment or advice, or both -- and both of which he served with spirited generosity and laughter. One of the privileges of having worked with RHT is the memories of those Tuesdays and Thursdays when gales of laughter spilled through the hallways as he inoculated the staff with humor and mirth.

The profession never failed to inspire him. He spent hours pouring over hundreds of articles and letters submitted for publication. To those who would telephone seeking his opinion over a baffling case history, or to discuss the problems beleaguering the profession, he gave generously of his time. Probably his favorite "task" of all was his job as review editor. RHT adored books. He could barely contain his excitement whenever new books, journals, videos, or audiocassette tapes were submitted for review. And in the end, he would up at his keyboard, praising or condemning. (Many can attest that those he praised often gained sudden, if temporary fame.)

And now, regretfully, "DC" bids farewell to our friend and Associate Editor RHT. Dynamic Chiropractic has been honored by this unforgettable time RHT has spent with us. Thank you Dr. Tyler for helping "DC" grow -- for helping the profession grow.

We'll continue to treasure your wisdom carved in courage and in ink. While other challenges await you, you leave us with the knowledge that whoever stands on the future paths you travel will be enriched by your boundless passion for life and your healing gift of chiropractic.

God speed Dr. Tyler. We shall miss you greatly.

Debi Pugliese
Former Assistant Editor of "DC"
and current law student

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