

In Remembrance of Dr. William David Harper

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Editorial Staff

William D. Harper, D.C., beloved husband of Bobbie Harper, D.C., passed away at his residence on March 6, 1990 at the age of 81.

Dr. Harper served as president of the Texas Chiropractic College (TCC) from 1965 through the first half of 1971, at which time he was forced to resign due to failing health. It was during those 7.5 years that TCC enjoyed steady student growth, a Triple A credit rating, and a financial statement that reflected significant assets and little debt. Dr. Harper found the time to devote to the accreditation efforts with the Council on Chiropractic Education and its recognition by the U.S. Department of Education. Finally, in 1971, after 23 years of effort, TCC was awarded full accredited status and became the third chiropractic college to attain this coveted goal. Without Dr. Harper's untiring efforts during those very trying years, TCC would not have come as far as it did.

When it came to discharging his responsibilities as president of TCC, he had no equals. He always believed in going that extra mile in order to be sure a job was done right.

Of all Dr. Harper's achievements, his finest hour was his testimony in the suit that was filed by Jerry R. England, D.C. against the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners and the then existing medical practice act, which said simply that anyone wanting to practice any form of healing in Louisiana must be a graduate from a recognized medical school before one could stand for the examination for licensure in Louisiana.

Paul J. Adams, D.C. of Lafayette, La., chairman of the Legal Action Committee attended the trial all of the three days and had this to say about Dr. Harper:

"In the recent trial of the England case I had the distinct privilege of witnessing the greatest exposition of the basic principles of chiropractic in my entire career in the profession.

"On the third and final day of trial, Mr. Simon put Dr. W.D. Harper on the stand as rebuttal witness. After questioning Dr. Harper for about 30 minutes, he tendered them to the opposition. Their cross examination lasted for several hours. They carried him through ICA-ACA Master Plan scope of practice -- no scope adopted -- journal articles -- B.J.'s books -- accreditation (no accreditation of schools even by the association) -- how do you treat this and that -- every question you could think of. Then they opened their copy of Harper's book. They started with the title and went through the last paragraph. He was the perfect picture of confidence. He never evaded a question or hesitated. He explained and qualified everything he said with exacting biological references, the authority of which was beyond dispute or question. Many of the exaggerations and indiscretions of our past were dragged into the open. Dr. Harper gave them the treatment they deserved in keeping with our understanding of the science of chiropractic today.

"When the defense and plaintiffs said, 'That is all,' the judge nearest the witness chair said, 'You are excused, Dr. Harper. Congratulations.' The MD who had advised the defense counsel approached Harper with an open hand and said, 'Dr. Harper, that is the greatest thing I have ever heard. Can I buy your book? I want to learn.' Mr. Simon said that the cross examination of Dr. Harper and his response was the most dramatic scene he had ever witnessed in the courtroom.

"In summation, I can only say that Dr. Harper was fantastic. We have something in this man."

Because of this and his other achievements, he was enshrined into the Chiropractic Hall of Honor at Texas Chiropractic College alongside D.D. Palmer, the first and second enshrinees to be so honored.

Dr. Harper's passing spells a tremendous loss for chiropractic. His many years of faithful service have left their mark, and for that, the profession shall be eternally grateful. Though Dr. Harper will be greatly missed, he will not be forgotten.

Editor's Note: The W.D. Harper Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established at Texas Chiropractic College.

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