

## Looking Forward to the Future of Chiropractic

### COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY KEY ROLES

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As this year marks the 25th anniversary of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, I have been asked to share some of my observations about the past and the future of chiropractic. There is no doubt the past 25 years have been especially important to me, to the chiropractic profession as a whole and to the mutual challenges we will face in the future.

Back in 1983, Foot Levelers, Inc. - the company my father, Dr. Monte Greenawalt, started in the early 1950s - was situated in Iowa, not far from the banks of the Mississippi River. At that time, I could drive leisurely past cornfields to reach my office. Life was much simpler. For one thing, none of the amazing technology we have come to depend on - laptop computers, the Internet, multi-purpose cell phones and all the other marvelous gadgets we use on a daily basis - was in use by the general public. Heck, Foot Levelers didn't even have a fax machine back in 1983!

Today, my company and my home are in Virginia, and millions of people have personal computers, cell phones, "smart" appliances and other incredible technological innovations that were nonexistent in 1983. Modern technology has vastly altered our methods of communicating with one another, and gathering knowledge about nearly any subject is so much simpler now. It's not just the individual who has been affected by these changes; every business and profession has been affected by the technological changes we've witnessed since the early 1990s.

For example, take the publishing industry: Many people who worked at newspapers and in print shops in the early 1980s were still cutting and pasting headlines, copy and images onto sheets of graphed paper. I know that's how Foot Levelers' *Success Express* magazine was put together back then, and I wouldn't be surprised if the earliest issues of *Dynamic Chiropractic* were created in a similar manner.

Chiropractic has benefited greatly from the recent technological advancements that have made communication and knowledge-sharing much more of an immediate, personal process. Because so many millions of people now have Internet access, potential patients can easily seek out chiropractors in their area, learn valuable information about chiropractic from doctors' Web sites, and even set up initial clinic appointments online.

As much as communications technology has changed in the past quarter century, the need to "tell the chiropractic story" to the general public remains a goal yet to be achieved to its fullest potential. In 2003, when *Dynamic Chiropractic* entered its 20th year of publication, 20 chiropractic leaders met at the annual Congress of Chiropractic State Associations (COCSA) and agreed to support a united national public-relations campaign for the profession.<sup>1</sup> The Campaign for Chiropractic was the result of several years of effort to come together as a profession to reach one goal: to get the public to go see a chiropractor.

From that historic milestone sprang the Foundation for Chiropractic Progress, whose mission is to generate positive press for the profession. For the past five years, *Dynamic Chiropractic* has graciously allowed me to have a regular "Unity" column in which I and several guest writers reported on the foundation's progress. As I mentioned in my April 22, 2008 column, the foundation has distributed more than 250 million impressions to the public about chiropractic. These positive messages have been conveyed through advertisements in national magazines, advertorials in newspapers and other means of mass communication.<sup>2</sup>

Our challenge in the future will be to take advantage of whatever new opportunities arise in communications and technology. "Telling the chiropractic story" is, to me, the foundation of everything we can do to ensure a strong future for this amazing profession. I believe chiropractic will continue to reach a broader audience. Right now, there are millions of people who still haven't discovered chiropractic, but that is destined to change.

We all know Thomas Edison had some intriguing observations about the "doctor of the future." I would like to make my own prediction: The patient of the future will take a more proactive approach when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and they will make regular chiropractic care an integral part of that lifestyle.

In closing, I would like to congratulate *Dynamic Chiropractic* for its first 25 years of fair and honest reporting of the events shaping the world of chiropractic. I hope I'm asked to share some additional thoughts when it celebrates its 50th birthday!

### *References*

1. "Chiropractic Leaders Sign Document of United Public Relations." *Dynamic Chiropractic* Dec. 15, 2003. [www.chiroweb.com/archives/21/26/07.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/21/26/07.html).
2. Greenawalt KS. "Is 90 Percent Off a Good Deal?" *Dynamic Chiropractic*, April 22, 2008. [www.chiroweb.com/archives/26/09/08.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/26/09/08.html).

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