

A Moment of Silence for Michael Sabia, DC, PhC (1914-2003)

Editorial Staff

New Jersey chiropractor Michael A. Sabia passed away on Jan. 9, 2003, one day before his 89th birthday. He was a practitioner in Jersey City for more than 50 years, and played an important role in the passage of the state's chiropractic licensing laws.

Dr. Sabia was born in Hoboken in 1914. His mother passed away when he was five, and since his father worked in a scrap yard to support the family, he was raised by his older sister, Conchetta. He became interested in sports at a young age. At Dickenson High School, in Jersey City, he lettered in soccer, gymnastics and boxing, and was undefeated as a boxer in his senior year. He also competed in boxing and gymnastics through the Amateur Athletic Union, winning gold and silver medals in the AAU's Olympic trials.

Michael's participation in the AAU led to him meeting the love of his life. A friend who was on the same gymnastics team introduced Michael to Maryanna Swidryk, who would later marry Dr. Sabia and be his wife for 68 years.

In the 1930s, during the height of the Great Depression, Michael Sabia did everything he could to help his wife raise their newborn son. He was inspired by the founder and president of Columbia College of Chiropractic, Dr. Frank Dean, and as a result, worked at up to four part-time jobs to maintain attendance at the college. The assistance, personal tutelage and consideration of Mr. Sabia's finances by Dr. Dean made the two lifelong friends, and Dean's attention paid off when Michael graduated from Columbia in 1937.

After graduation, until well into the 1980s, Dr. Sabia practiced in his home state and continued to work for the betterment of the profession. In 1953, the same year a chiropractic licensing law was passed in New Jersey, he was named as a "Chiropractor of the Year," and received his award personally from B. J. Palmer in Davenport, Iowa. He often spoke proudly of his earning a doctorate in chiropractic philosophy (PhC), which was given to him by Dr. Dean.

In 1986, Dr. Sabia co-founded the Academy for the General Practice of Chiropractic, of which he was honored as a life member.

When not practicing chiropractic, Dr. Sabia was an avid fisherman. Baiting and fishing were among his passions, and he was noted to have spoken fondly about such activities shortly before passing on.

As his close friend Marie Cianciulli said at Dr. Sabia's eulogy, "Michael's passing is the end of an era in chiropractic."

