

## IN MEMORIAM, DOUGLAS WINTER: THE FATHER OF UNIVERSITY-BASED CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

On Monday 26 Feb 2018 our profession lost a man I consider the Father of University-based chiropractic education in Australia. Others will write of his outstanding humanistic and healing qualities but I wish to celebrate his intellect.

The 1970s were a veritable hotbed of chiropractic activity by the then A.C.A in most states, and the then U.C.A.A in New South Wales. Millennials were not born at the time and, sadly, our corporate memory is being lost as our pioneers check-out from their last adjustment. Drs. Tony Hart John Waterhouse, Stan Martin and Graham Hunt led the activists of the day in Victoria, while Ed Devereux led the New South Wales crew leading to the Teece Report (1974) which, in very brief terms, opened a door for chiropractic education in that state at TAFE diploma level. I hasten to add Waterhouse, Hunt and Devereaux are still serving the profession.

The Western Australia A.C.A. Branch was small but active and drove the country's first formal Chiropractic Act (1964). Tony Hart, although a Victorian, cut his teeth on the rough and tumble of politics by working closely with the W.A. branch to achieve this. They also had a secret weapon known as Doug Winter. The least I could describe him as is a giant of a man, a true visionary who saw beyond the horizon. Whilst the activists paved the legislative path in Victoria, Doug created the chiropractic education path for the nation. So insistent was he with the quality of chiropractic education he subsequently became active with establishing the accrediting body, now the CCEA.

His report was cited by Edwin Webb who, for younger readers, was commissioned to produce a report for Government on 'what to do' with chiropractic and other 'small' health disciplines (April, 1977). The Webb Report was only as good for chiropractic as the material it could consider. A close reading of the 925 pages of Webb's report reveals the impact of Doug's vision.

Doug's report is cited by Webb as '*Winter, Douglas O. A chiropractic course within an Australian university: A proposal prepared for the Australian Chiropractors' Association (Springwood, Australian Chiropractors' Association, 1974).*' To my amazement a copy is not held in the library of CAAN, a situation I am in the process of rectifying. Copies of Doug's Report are extremely difficult to source. My copy is the result of diligent effort by the Librarian at Southern Cross University where I am a student.

The title says it all. In Doug's eyes there was no alternative to chiropractic being formally based within the university environment. It took until the early 1990s and then more by accident than diligent effort. Energy is wasted on bragging rights for being the world's first chiropractic program in a university setting. This claim is empty and wasteful. The historical fact of what happened is that in response to the Dawkin's reforms (1988) a lot of forced marriages ensured between technical institutions in RMIT's case with the resultant baby being named a university under statute, and a stand-alone college which was adopted by an existing university with high reputation in Macquarie's case. Any suggestion it was planned and orderly is a concoction.

There is no doubt Doug Winter laid a very clear plan that was applied in Victoria from 1975. On reflection we can see that the gains made in chiropractic education took agitators with endless energies such as Hart, Hunt and Deveraux, visionaries like Doug, and indefatigable drivers like Andy Kleynhans. With such luminaries at the wheel it is little wonder that today students can study chiropractic in the capital city of their choice, from one option in each of Perth and Brisbane, two choices in each of Sydney and Melbourne, a regional centre at Mackay, with a potential on the horizon for Adelaide. From zero to 8 in just over 40 years.

## Obituary

The collective hope of my colleagues and I is that this history is proactively taught today with passion and conviction to demonstrate that a huge amount of sustained personal effort was invested over a period longer than the average life-age of most current students. Our pioneers are people whom our students must value and vow to treasure and defend as they enjoy the fruits of our pioneers' bloody hard work, always at significant personal cost.

There is no doubt Douglas O. Winter is the Grandfather of University-based chiropractic education in Australia. To me personally he was also a friend and mentor. The circle will be complete for me after the Hobart conference, when I realise there no longer was a tug on my elbow and me looking to see Doug's twinkling eyes and saying 'listen young man, I have a question for you' and off we would go to a quiet corner and natter for an hour or so. As always Shirleigh was at his side. Thankfully, her presence saved me from doing a 'Basil Faulty with Mrs Richards' routine.

Doug and Shirleigh married, studied together, graduated from Palmer together in 1959 and set up practice in Fremantle. More, not only were they married and lived together, they practiced together for nearly 60 years. Their son Russell now runs the practice and Shirleigh continues to treat. Her compassion knows no bounds, just like Doug's. No wonder they were two peas in a pod. Beautiful peas at that.

While I mourn Doug's passing I celebrate his vision for education which remained sharp to the end. Doug, my friend, travel safely, and know our profession's education is so much the better for your vision and leadership.

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