

## **HUGH EMERY CHANCE, JD. A MAN AHEAD OF HIS TIME**

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### ABSTRACT

This paper traces the life of Hugh E. Chance from his boyhood on his father's farm, his education at Cornell and Iowa State University, his early life after graduation, his military service, his service to the chiropractic profession as Chief Executive Officer of the International Chiropractors Association and his 30 year service on the Universal House of Justice of the Bahá'í Faith in Haifa, Israel, based on documentation collected by his daughter, the late Mary Ann Chance, DC, FICC, FACC, FPAC. (*Chiropr J Australia* 2017;45:249-268)

### DISCUSSION

Hugh Emery Chance (Figure 1) was born on 28 December 1911 at 11:45 a.m. at Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas. His parents were Hugh Chester Chance, a farmer of Winfield aged 27, born in Cowley County, Kansas and his wife Mary Edna *nee* Johnson aged 25, also born in Cowley County. The attending physician was S.J. Guy, MD.<sup>1</sup>

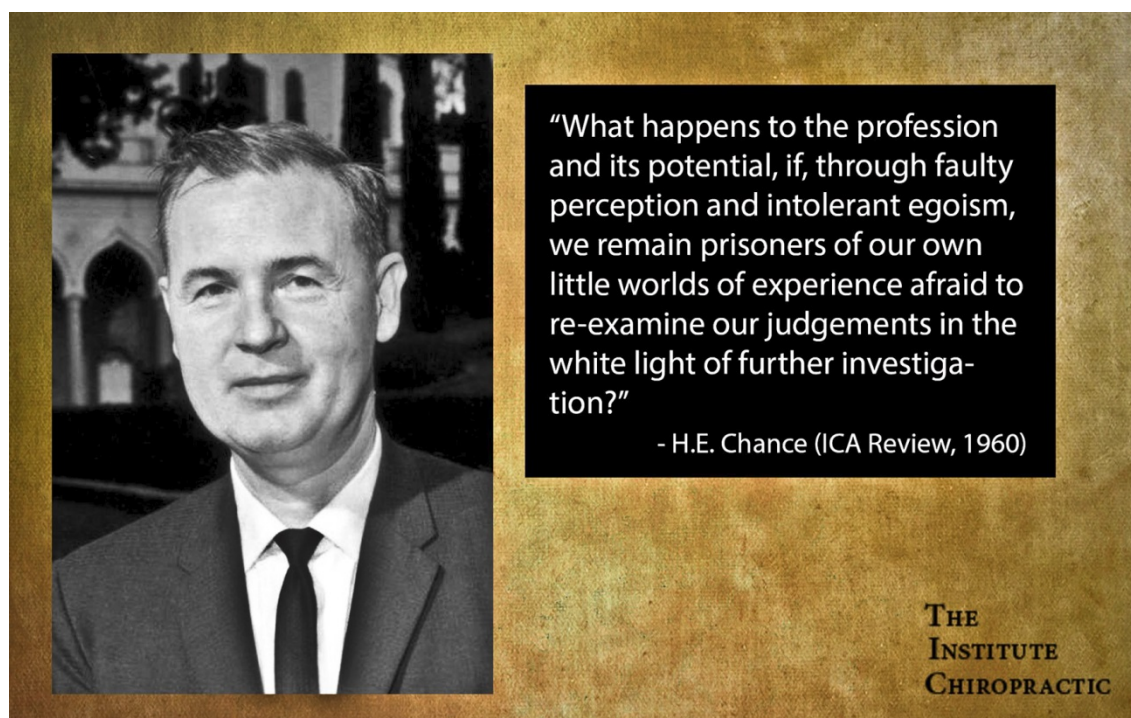


Figure 1. HE Chance

Hugh Chester (Chet) Chance was born in October 1884 on the Chance family farm in Cowley County, Kansas, nine miles west of Tisdale and about 6 miles east of Winfield. Chet's parents had come from Seattle, Washington, and settled in Cowley County on a farm which was the southern half of the North Eastern quarter of a

section of land about six miles east of Winfield. His sister Grace owned the northern half. They had inherited the farm from their father, who came to Cowley County from Illinois after the Civil War. They were not the original owners of the patent issued by the government but had purchased the farm from him.<sup>2</sup>

Both of Chet's parents, Hugh and Kate Chance, had been widowed and had children from their first marriage, though only Kate's daughter Stella lived with them. Chet came into the world when Kate was already in her 40s, so it fell to Stella to give him extra attention, especially at night. He was a colicky baby, and when she couldn't silence him by rocking or walking the floor with him, she would saddle up her horse, take the baby in her arms and ride him along the country roads until he fell asleep.<sup>3</sup>

Chet Chance had his preliminary education in Winfield, then took a one year electrical study at the Oklahoma State College. He graduated in 1909 after completing a 5-year course in Electrical Engineering at Scranton, Pennsylvania (Fig. 2).<sup>4</sup>



Figure 2. Hugh Chester Chance and Mary Edna Johnson Chance

He also studied Steam Engineering from the International Business School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.<sup>5</sup>

He raised all sorts of grains and vegetables and fruits, also livestock including hogs and cattle. He always milked a half dozen milk cows, and he would sell the hogs at the local market.<sup>5</sup>

To earn extra money Chet often worked for a neighbour who had a threshing machine and a steam tractor and often he would take that equipment to various farms to thresh wheat and oats.<sup>5</sup>

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One of Hugh's jobs on the farm was to take care of the chickens, feeding and watering them, and he learned to milk the cows. He would help his father butcher a hog in order to have meat for the winter. That included scraping the hair off the hog and cutting it up into various pieces, like hams, shoulders and bacon. Other parts of the hog were used right away as fresh meat. They would grind up what was left over for sausage. Hugh had to clean the intestines to be used as casings for the sausage. On the afternoon of the second day all fatty parts were rendered down into lard. Some of that was used for grease to fry things in the skillet. The lard was also used for putting sausage away which would be stored in large jugs of lard. About the third or fourth day Chet would start smoking the hams and the shoulders. Before that all took turns rubbing salt into the parts that were to be smoked so they would be thoroughly done, as otherwise they might spoil. Usually they would be smoked in one of the old smoke houses that were standing near the house. Sometimes Chet built a special little enclosure where it would be smoked for a week using hickory, because the family liked the flavour of hickory for hams and bacon.<sup>5</sup>

Chet would also buy a quarter of beef and he would hang it outside when it was cold enough. That was his form of refrigeration. When the outside temperature was not cold enough he would hang it in the well. He was very handy in making things work. He piped water from the well into the house, so they had running water, not usual for that era. He also had pumps, run by gasoline engines, to have water for his stock in the barn and also outside down the paddock in stock watering troughs near the creek. This was activated automatically depending on the water level in the troughs.<sup>5</sup>

Tisdale was just a wide place in the road where there was an elevator to store grain that was threshed in the various places around Winfield, and it had a branch of the Santa Fe Railroad coming out to Tisdale from Winfield, so if anybody wanted to go into town, we had to go by train. The family were active members of the Tisdale Methodist Church, where Chet served on the Official Board.<sup>5</sup>

Transportation was by a one-horse buggy, powered by an ex-trotting horse called Barney. About 1917 Chet bought his first automobile, a Ford Touring car, not a sedan, but an open touring car, with isinglass widows. It was not battery operated, but ignition operated, so it had to get started by cranking it, which when it was freezing weather made it very difficult to get started.<sup>5</sup>

When Hugh started school he started riding Barney to school, but one day Barney bolted, threw him off and Hugh wound up with a broken arm. Later Chet bought him a pony, Hokey Pokey, and Chet built a little shed on the school property for the pony. The school was at Tisdale, about 2 miles away. It was a two-room school house with two teachers. Chet thought that perhaps Hugh would get a better education at a city school, so he took him to Winfield and enrolled Hugh. But he did not stay there long, because the school was going to vaccinate all the students and Chet pulled him out because he did not want Hugh vaccinated.<sup>5</sup>

Chet had suffered from what he called "Sick Headaches" migraines. Sometimes he would go down to the barn and lie there for what seemed to be like days on end, nursing his sick headache. His wife Edna urged him to try chiropractic, since she had several brothers and cousins who were chiropractors. Eventually he relented. He went to Davenport and made a wager with the people at the Palmer School: "If you can cure my sick headaches, I'll take your damned course." They did fix his sick

headache and he went through with his bargain. He rented out his farm, loaded up his Ford and made his way to Davenport.<sup>5</sup>

In those days, there were no paved roads; it was all mud in Iowa. On the first day they got as far as Emporia, Kansas, on the second day they were at Olathe, Kansas. They stayed there overnight. Then they went on to Chillicothe, Missouri, then to Centerville, Iowa, where they got bogged down in the mud. Chet decided they could not go any further, so he unloaded all the gear from the Model T Ford and put it on a train and sent the family on the train to Davenport. Chet came through a few days later. They stayed with Hugh's grandmother at 11 West 13<sup>th</sup> in Davenport. Besides Hugh's grandmother and grandfather Johnson there was another family living in that 3-apartment building by the name of Nelson. Grandfather Emory Isaac Johnson and Nelson went to the Palmer School.<sup>5</sup>

H.C. Chance (Fig.3), a 38-year-old farmer from Winfield, Kansas, enrolled 31 August 1922, referred by Drs Johnson and Johnson, in a 3-year course and spinography, paid \$400 for tuition, graduated 29 March 1924. (DC, PhC) His wife, Edna M Chance, 36 years old, enrolled 21 December 1922 for a 3-year course, and spinography, graduated 26 July 1924, (DC, PhC) referred by Drs Johnson and Johnson.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 3. H.C. Chance 1922

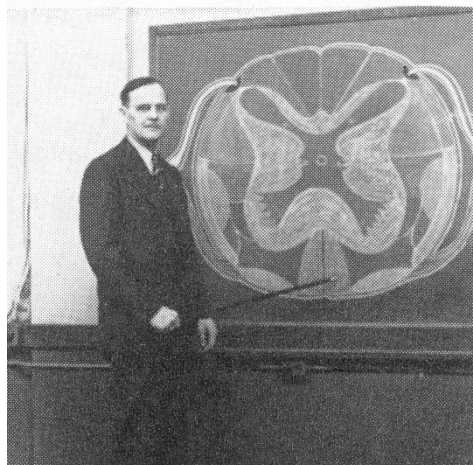
After graduation they planned to practice in Illinois and when they became acquainted with some people from Olympia, Washington, they planned to go to Washington State. But destiny had other ideas. As Chet had electrical experience

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B.J. Palmer hired him to work with Dossa Evins as a technician in the development of the Neurocalometer.<sup>5</sup>

The following year, 1925, B.J. appointed him to the teaching faculty of the Palmer School of Chiropractic (Fig. 4). He was the only new faculty member admitted that year.<sup>7</sup> Chet eventually became Head of the Neurology Department and Director of the Student Clinic. A lot of his teaching methods were very innovative because of his electrical background and he related it to that to help the students.<sup>5</sup>



H. C. CHANCE, D.C.  
Neurology  
Student Clinic Director

Figure 4. HC Chance at Palmer

In the early 1920s most radios were crystal sets. Hugh built a little radio for himself. He was able to find a system that would pick up KDK Pittsburgh, KAO Denver and even San Francisco sometimes. But the strongest was Des Moines with 50,000 Watts.<sup>5</sup>

During his last year in High School Hugh joined the ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) where he joined the rifle team. (His daughter Mary Ann would later become a crack shot who on the boy's team competed in interstate competitions).<sup>5</sup>

While in high school, and later in college, Hugh would work during school holidays at the ice-cream parlour in Twildo, a passageway between 2 of the buildings of the Palmer School.<sup>5</sup>

It was September 1929, and the leaves were beginning to turn in the small college town of Mount Vernon, Iowa. Tall, slim, attractive and idealistic, Margaret Chamberlin had gone there to enrol as an English major in Cornell College, a Methodist institution with a good reputation for academic excellence and high moral standards. Margaret's Grandfather Chamberlin, a retired Church of God minister, would have approved, as would her grandmother, a staunch member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.<sup>8</sup>

At Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa, classes were seated alphabetically by surname. Hugh Emery Chance had come from Davenport, Iowa, where his father

headed the neurology department of the Palmer School of Chiropractic. His parents practised chiropractic from their home in west Davenport. Margaret Chamberlin's father was a photographer in Muscatine, Iowa, but before she was born he had graduated from the Palmer School and had practised chiropractic in St Paul, Minnesota where she was born, in Bloomer, Ohio, where her sister Marian was born, and other cities where his siblings practised. Finally his wife warned him that their next move would have to be the last, so they settled in Muscatine, where her parents lived (Fig. 5).<sup>9</sup>

Hugh took a general course at Cornell, majored in political science and minored in psychology. He spent three years there to earn a B.A. degree, which he could apply to the first year of law school. So Hugh and Margaret graduated in the same class. They were the only couple in the academic procession, which was reserved for those who were married or engaged.<sup>5</sup>



Margaret Chamberlin

Hugh Emery Chance

Figure 5. Hugh Chance and Margaret Chamberlin.

In 1932 B.J.'s radio station WOC hired a new radio announcer. Dutch Reagan (Fig. 6) had applied for a job, was auditioned, and his first paid job, \$5 and bus fare, was to cover the homecoming game between the University of Iowa against Minnesota.<sup>10</sup>

After that game he became a regular member of the station at a salary of \$10, the same amount that Hugh Chance was paid for running the ice-cream parlour, where he served Reagan milk shakes and coke. They were of the same age, both having been born in 1911.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 6. Reagan at WOC

Some 49 years later, on 21 January 1981 Ronald Reagan was inducted as the 40<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, one of the great Presidents of the United States. He serve two terms.

Hugh's mother, Edna Mary died in March 1934, apparently of breast cancer.<sup>5</sup>

Hugh was in law school at the time. In the summer of 1934 Hugh and Margaret were married (Fig. 7), and Chet, his father, told him "Since I can't afford to send you to law school any more you'll have to finish law school by yourself."<sup>5</sup>



Figure 7. Wedding picture

So, Hugh had to get to work. His first job was as an assistant to one of the professors writing *Conflicts in Law*. Hugh spent a whole year at that job for \$27.50 a month. He also worked as a janitor for 25 cents an hour. The following year he worked in the library also at 25 cents an hour. His main job there was organizing and collecting all of the German doctoral theses that were in the library and bound them up in folders. He also worked with the accession department and unpacked books and shelved them.<sup>5</sup>

During the summer he attended summer school, took extra courses and moved his grade average from the middle of the class and graduated 15th in a class of 165, *cum laude*.<sup>5</sup>

Hugh studied for the bar examination and decided to practice in Muscatine. Things were very, very slow at that time, in fact, he had very little practice, if any. Hugh and Margaret lived with her mother. In 1936 Hugh got a job as Justice of the Peace which had an annual salary of \$1000, or \$83.33 a month. Margaret gave music lessons at 50cents to pay the grocery bill. Hugh started to have a few weddings. Altogether he had 600 weddings. Having a guaranteed income, they could think of having a family and Mary Ann was born on 6 October 1937.<sup>5</sup>

Hugh was a member of Y's Men International from 1935 to 1961, serving as International President in 1943.<sup>11</sup>

In the early 1940s, just as his practice was starting to build up, it became evident that he would have to go into military service. He had a very low order number because he was married and had a child that he was able to skip a few draft calls. In 1943 he decided to get a commission through the US Navy, and about Christmas he received

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a call from the Navy in Chicago: "Ensign Chance, your orders are here, when can you report?" Right after Christmas he had to report for a physical and passed all tests.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after that he received orders to report to Tucson, Arizona for indoctrination. He was there for 2 months. He received a short leave and went back to Davenport to see the family. When he got to Davenport his father told him that B.J. Palmer wanted to see him. He met B.J. who said, "You're a Lawyer?" Hugh said, "Yes." B.J. said, "I want to hire you to be the secretary of the Chiropractic Health Bureau." The Chiropractic Health Bureau was the forerunner of the International Chiropractors Association. Hugh told B.J., "You see these stripes on my sleeve?" "I can't shed these stripes right quickly." B.J. responded "If you get out of the service at 10:00 you can catch the 11:00 train." So, I was hired.<sup>5</sup>

After Tucson Hugh was transferred to San Diego where he was assigned to Armed Guard Duty, which is the arm of the naval service in charge of putting armament on all freighters (Fig. 8). He had to take a course on gunnery and was given orders to report to Armed Guard Centre in San Francisco and was quartered on Treasure Island. Shortly after he was assigned to the crew of S.S. Moscowski. His crew, usually 28-33 people, were mostly ordinary seamen, also one gunnery officer and one communications officer. First trip was to Seattle, where he took on cargo for Honolulu. On the return trip, he had empty gas barrels and fear was that very volatile fumes might leak out from these barrels.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 8. Lt Jg Hugh Chance

The next assignment was to take cargo to Eniwetok. There they were anchored for 30 days before they were noticed and allowed to discharge their cargo. The only time general quarters were called when crew members claimed they had seen a periscope. Orders were to ram the submarine and when they got close realised that it was a log which was standing upright. So much for wartime experiences.<sup>5</sup>

Chet had told Hugh that if you ever get to Australia, "Look up the Boltions", and he spent a weekend with them. He noticed a sign that read Bahá'í. Mrs Bolton told him a little about the Faith and gave him a few pamphlets which he passed on to his wife. Hugh thought the Boltions were nice people, but I don't know about this Bahá'u'lláh whoever he is.<sup>5</sup>

So when Hugh got out of service in San Francisco, he headed for Davenport, and on 1 February 1946 he started to work for the ICA (Fig. 9).<sup>5</sup>



Figure 9. B.J. Palmer and Hugh Chance

He started a 4-page newsletter called the ICA Review which became a regular quarterly magazine. He also did a lot of letter writing trying to increase the membership, increasing it fourfold to more than 3500 members.<sup>5</sup>

His main job as counsel was to defend chiropractors who were being charged with practising medicine without a license. The ICA had the best defence record and was so good in defending malpractice cases that they were able to offer their members an additional \$50,000 worth of additional coverage for less than \$100 a year on top of the original \$10,000.<sup>5</sup>

Through the ICA he was able to improve the record of chiropractic competence by various means. He built up the staff, having Paul Mendy as editor of the ICA Review; an insurance specialist, Dr Huff; a public relations man by the name of Dunham; then finally got a lawyer that worked with the ICA in Washington, DC, and so quite a few legislators became interested in chiropractic.<sup>5</sup>

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Hugh also became a member of the faculty and taught ethics and jurisprudence.<sup>5</sup>

The Boltens visited Chet Chance in 1953 and talked more about the Faith to Hugh and his wife. Hugh's wife and daughter Mary Ann accepted the Faith in August 1953 on an emotional level.<sup>5</sup> A year later Hugh also accepted the faith, but more on an intellectual level.<sup>12</sup>

A short time later delegates were elected for the National Convention and he was surprised to be elected. Soon after he was appointed to the National Teaching Committee.<sup>12</sup>

On 14 June 1958 his daughter Mary Ann (Fig. 10), who was studying Chiropractic at the Palmer School married a fellow student, Frank McLeod of Melbourne, Australia.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 10. Mary Ann McLeod

Hugh's first grandson, "Rusty" was born on 9 April 1959 (Fig. 11).<sup>13</sup>

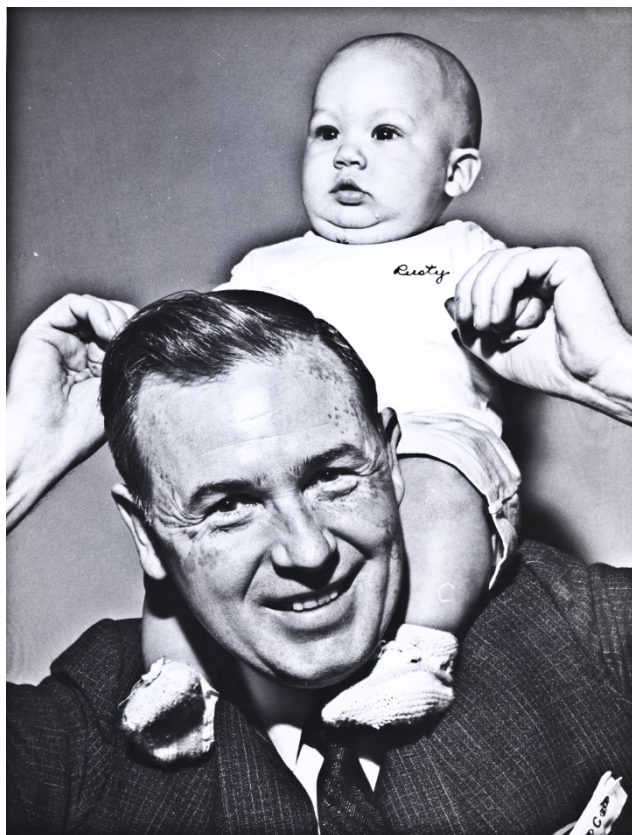


Figure 11. Hugh and his first grandson "Rusty" on 16 September 1959

Shortly after, Mary Ann, Frank and Rusty left for Melbourne, Australia, Frank's hometown.

In 1961, in a bi-election, Hugh was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly. He was elected at Ridvan, then elected Secretary. The previous Secretary, Charles Wolcott, had just been elected to the International Bahá'í Council (Fig. 12). As they parted, Charles Wolcott remarked, "You'll be in Haifa some day." Hugh did not think so.<sup>12</sup>

When B. J. Palmer died in 1961, Hugh also left the ICA as he had been elected Secretary of the National Assembly of the Bahá'í Faith in the USA and moved to Wilmette, on the northern outskirts of Chicago in September 1961.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 12. Bahá'í House of Worship, Wilmette, Illinois

Two years later Hugh was in Haifa to elect the Universal House of Justice. As the first 6 names of the members of this new institution were called out Hugh noted that he knew them. When the seventh name was called out he thought, "That must be some other Hugh Chance!" The person sitting beside him later said that, as his name was called, all colour drained from his face. Never in his life had he imagined being a member of the House of Justice.<sup>12</sup>

God had taken a Chance.

His first thought was that it was impossible. They still had a home in Davenport. They had not sold it thinking their time in Wilmette would be brief. Margaret's mother was elderly and needed their care. He would have to resign, but first the 9 members called had to decide what to do. The World Congress in London was just a couple of days away and the nine members didn't know where they might meet to consult. Where was a room they could use? Was there a room with nine chairs?<sup>12</sup>

The nine men were told that there was a room at Bahjí with nine chairs, so they met there. All had planned to go to London for the World Congress, so they decided to meet there again. In the next few days, before Hugh could resign from the House of Justice, his wife's mother had died and the house in Davenport had sold. He spent the next thirty years in service on the House of Justice.<sup>12</sup>

In the beginning the members of the Universal House of Justice met in Bahjí near the Bahá'í Holy places, and Hugh was attached to the English Secretariat. The first major job for the members was to draft a constitution, and Hugh, being a lawyer, had the major part of that to handle. That constitution remains in force without amendment to this day.<sup>5</sup>

Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book of Laws, The Kitáb-I-Aqdas, was translated, codified by Hugh Chance, and published as well as three additional compilations of scripture.<sup>11,12</sup>

During his time the number of National Spiritual Assemblies increased from 56 to 165. The Seat of the House of Justice (Fig. 13-16) in Haifa was designed, constructed and occupied, and 4 more buildings on the Arc surrounding the Seat were built.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 13. Seat of the Universal House of Justice



Figure 14. The Gate to the Universal House of Justice Building



Figure 15. Hugh Chance in his office at the Universal House of Justice



Figure 16. Conference Room of the Universal House of Justice

Hugh became a member of the Haifa Rotary Club, and was a co-founder of the Haifa Historical Society. He had been a member of Rotary since 1961 and was a Paul Harris Fellow.<sup>5</sup>

Hugh was very interested in audiovisual work and developed a series of slide lectures and later became associated with the founding of the International Bahá'í Audiovisual Centre.<sup>5</sup>

Hugh's particular area of interest and expertise was the South Pacific, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan and eventually China. As his daughter's family lived in Melbourne he took advantage of visiting her. In 1984, when his daughter had re-married and moved to Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Hugh and Margaret visited Wagga Wagga and they caught up with all their grandchildren (Fig. 17).<sup>5</sup>



Figure 17. The Chances and their grandchildren.

In the mid-1980s Hugh Chance learned that the Winfield Oratorio Society wanted to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary by coming to the Holy Land to perform Elijah in the place where the Hebrew prophet was said to have contested with the priests of Baal but were having trouble carrying out their plan because of misunderstandings with the local authorities, he interceded on their behalf. He also arranged to enhance their visit with a tour of the Bahá'í World Centre.<sup>5</sup>

Friendships made at that time and during the Chances visit to Winfield in 1985 when Hugh spoke at a number of churches, was interviewed on radio and conducted a Seminar on World Peace through Education on the campus of Southwestern College where his mother had been educated prompted them to choose Winfield as their home when retiring in 1993.<sup>5</sup>

He had also asked the Winfield Bahá'ís to identify nine leaders of thought in attendance at the seminar, and at the end of his talk challenged them to come up onto the stage, sit around a table and consult on ways in which Winfield could contribute to world peace. Many projects were thus initiated, including one called "The World Is My Backyard," which enabled children in the community to meet and learn about each other's languages, cultures and religions.<sup>5</sup>

Since his personal interest was in the South Pacific region he became close friends with the King of Samoa (Fig. 18), who had become a member of the Bahá'í Faith.



Figure 18. Malietola Tanamufili II, King of Samoa

Hugh's wife Margaret died in 1996. In 1997 Hugh insisted in participating in the Kansas Bahá'í Centennial, despite a broken collarbone.<sup>12</sup>

Hugh passed away on 25 March 1998, cause of death was listed as Cardiac arrest by his physician Sigurd Daehnke, MD.<sup>14</sup>

Both are buried in the Tisdale Cemetery, near his grandparents, just east of Winfield.

The Winfield Bahá'í community published an almost full page eulogy in their local paper.<sup>15</sup>

During his lifetime Hugh had co-authored the "Iowa Annotations to the Conflict of Laws" in 1935 and "A Crown of Beauty" in 1982.<sup>5</sup>

In a letter dated 3 April 1998, their daughter, the late Mary Ann Chance, DC, FICC, FACC FPAC wrote: To the very end of his life, Dad was an enthusiastic futurist, and I understand that he carried on a lively correspondence for a time with such people as Alvin Toffler, John Naisbitt and Marilyn Ferguson. I shall always remember him as a man of clear vision and an idealism that was as practical as it was passionate. His inspiration and guidance came from the Bahá'í teachings, but were brought into sharp focus by his trained mind and his innate capacity to see to the very heart of the matter.

When I agreed to share a few remembrances of my father, I was convinced that I knew him better than anyone else alive, and maybe that is so. However over the past few days, as I talked with many people who knew him and browsed through his books, his papers and his personal effects for inspiration, it soon became apparent that what even I knew of his qualities and achievements was scarcely the tip of the iceberg. It is my hope and prayer that my father and my mother will continue to guide and inspire me to carry on their noble work and to enable me some day to become worthy of being their daughter.<sup>16</sup>

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