

# 1997 Lee-Homewood Heritage Award: Herbert J. Vear, D.C., *Chiropractic Scholar*



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filename: Vear bio 1/26/97

word count: 2,094

## **Acknowledgments**

Preparation of this paper was supported by the Los Angeles College of Chiropractic and the National Institute of Chiropractic Research. The author is solely responsible for its content.

Herbert James Mortlock Vear was born in Toronto to Reginald and Marguerite Vear on June 10, 1924. He was educated in the Ontario school system, and earned his Senior Matriculation in 1942 from the East York Collegiate Institute. The future Dr. Vear enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in December, 1942 and trained as an Air Navigator. He saw action in the European Theatre of war with the RCAF Bomber Command during 1944-45 (see [Figures 1&2](#)). Following the Allies' victory in Europe, Herb volunteered for combat in the Pacific, but the war ended before conversion training was complete. He served in the RCAF's reserve force during 1961-68, and retired at the rank of major.



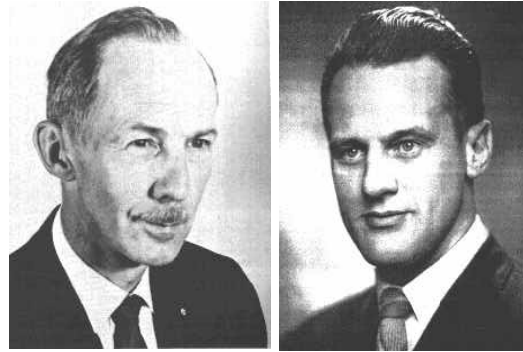
**Figure 1:** "Young and reckless," Vear stands in front of his four-engine Lancaster bomber in Europe during the final years of World War II



**Figure 2:** Herbert J. Vear, April, 1944

Herb had intended to study medicine before the war, but changed his mind and enrolled at the University of Guelph for a career in veterinary medicine upon his return from Europe. His mother's chiropractic treatment brought him in contact with C.C. Clemmer, D.C., one of the founding fathers of the then just forming Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC). Clemmer urged the young veteran to consider a career in chiropractic, and introduced him to

Herbert K. Lee, D.C., a National College of Chiropractic graduate and original faculty member at CMCC. Dr. Lee, who still serves on CMCC's faculty, and is a founding member and former president of the Association for the History of Chiropractic (AHC), is himself a former recipient (1994) of the Lee-Homewood Award. Vear enrolled in the first class at CMCC in September, 1945. Among the mentors he considers most influential in his training as a chiropractor were Dr. A. Earl Homewood (see [Figure 3](#)), after whom the Lee-Homewood Award is named, and Rudy O. Muller (see [Figure 4](#)), the second dean of the College.



**Figures 4&5:** A. Earl Homewood, D.P.T., D.C., N.D., LL.B. and Rudy O. Muller, D.C., Ph.C.

Herb earned his chiropractic doctorate at CMCC in May, 1949 and commenced a full-time clinical practice of 20 years in Toronto. In September, 1957 he returned to his alma mater as an instructor in pathology, but continued his private practice. To further his knowledge of his subject matter, he sought and received permission to attend the postmortem examinations of the Banting Institute, a division of the University of Toronto. In his three years at Banting he participated in some 250 dissections, and with the specimens he was allowed to retain, established the CMCC's pathological museum. Meanwhile, his studies and his interactions with the biomedical community furthered his commitment to scholarship in chiropractic.

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**Table 1:** Charter members of the College of Chiropractic Science (Canada)

David Churchill, D.C.	Ronald Gitelman, D.C.	Edgar Houle, D.C.	Thomas Maxwell, D.C.
David Drum, D.C.	Adrian Grice, D.C.	Robert Johnston, D.C.	Herbert J. Vear, D.C.
Glen Engel, D.C.	Scott Haldeman, D.C.	Lyman Johnson, D.C.	

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**Figure 5:** Herbert J. Vear, D.C., *Dean* of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, 1969-1976

In January, 1969 Dr. Vear was promoted to the office of Dean of CMCC in the administration of then president A.E. Homewood. Following Homewood's departure in 1970, Herb assumed the role of chief administrative officer for the CMCC, and struggled with a poorly organized administrative structure. In 1974 he was named a Fellow of the International College of Chiropractors (F.I.C.C.).

Dr. Vear joined with other Canadian leaders in early 1970s to form the College of Chiropractic Sciences-Canada (CCS-C) (Keating, 1992, pp. 71-2). The group was established to promote scholarship in chiropractic and to better prepare a generation of DC-academics to meet the challenges of chiropractic science and research and to serve as faculty mentors to future doctors (see Table 1). Scott Haldeman, a chiropractor-neurologist-neuroscientist who taught briefly at the CMCC during Vear's administration, recalls that "Although the CCS was a group effort, it could not have developed without the support of Herb Vear and CMCC. At all times he tried to open doors and smooth the way for research and higher academic achievement" (Haldeman, 1996). Among the CCS-C's first accomplishments was the organization of an extensive bibliography of scientific papers bearing on the art of manipulation. It was this resource that served the profession during the 1975 Conference on Spinal Manipulation organized by the U.S. government's National Institute of Neurological & Communicative Disorders & Stroke; the bibliography eventually became the *Chiropractic Research Abstracts Collection*, and was published for a time by Williams & Wilkins.

The first resident completed the CMCC-based, CCS-C fellowship program in 1977, but by this time Dr. Vear had left the college to become academic dean of the Western States Chiropractic College (WSCC). This was a troubled period for the Portland, Oregon school (Wiese, 1995, pp. 170-201). The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) had granted "recognized candidate" status to WSCC, but this was in jeopardy for a variety of reasons, including the college's meager enrollment and consequential poverty, and the questionable

actions of its board of trustees and president. After two years as academic dean, Vear was appointed president of WSCC in 1979 and was charged with making an appeal to the CCE that the school's provisional status be extended beyond the normal time limits so as to permit the college to bring itself into conformity with CCE standards. With the assistance of John B. Wolfe, D.C., president of the Northwestern College of Chiropractic and a member of CCE's governing body, WSCC's appeal was granted, and two years later the reforms Dr. Vear had implemented earned the school full accreditation.

Herbert Vear is remembered with affection by the faculty of the WSCC. His commitment to excellence in chiropractic scholarship has earned him accolades, such as:

...He was a strong supporter of academic departments and a leader in establishing professional standards of chiropractic. He was responsible (along with Robert Tolar) for establishing a strong faculty core at WSCC and focusing the institution toward higher academic standards. He helped to create a strong faculty oriented collegial government at WSCC...

...As a young lecturer, I was impressed by the fact that Dr. Vear would pop in on classes -- not to be seen -- but to just listen, to hear what the students were learning, and to learn himself. He was that interested in the education of the students and that interested in his faculty. I thought that was neat as it said a lot about Dr. Vear as an educational leader...

...Dr. Vear was truly committed to the educational process...A heart of gold...An ACTIVE administrator. A man of substance, not form!...

Under Herb's direction the WSCC earned a reputation within the profession for its commitment to quality in academics, including research and teaching. An intellectual cross-fertilization between the basic and clinical faculty emerged at the school, and encouraged a skeptical, curious, scientific orientation to clinical practice. As academic dean of the college, Vear had inspired the formation of a Committee on Chiropractic Technique to "oversee the teaching of all undergraduate technique programs at WSCC" and to "identify and recommend additional technique programs" at the college (Vear, 1977). Although Herb (see Figure 6) was not a co-author, the flow chart (see Figure 7) for the scientific evaluation of chiropractic techniques which first appeared in the *Journal of Manipulative & Physiological Therapeutics* (Kaminski et al., 1987; Boal et al., 1992) points to the Vear influence upon the institution.

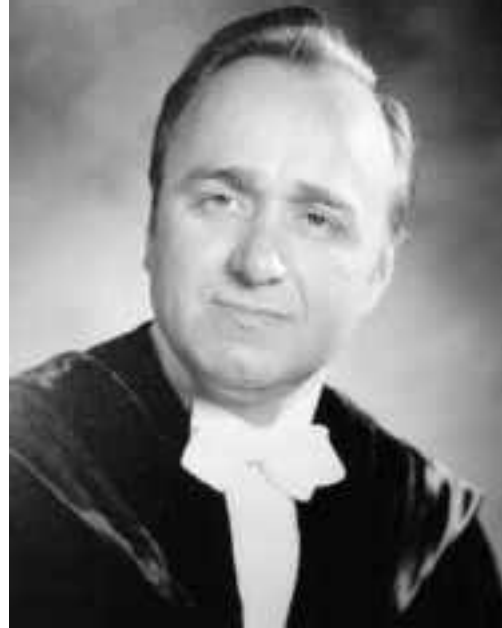


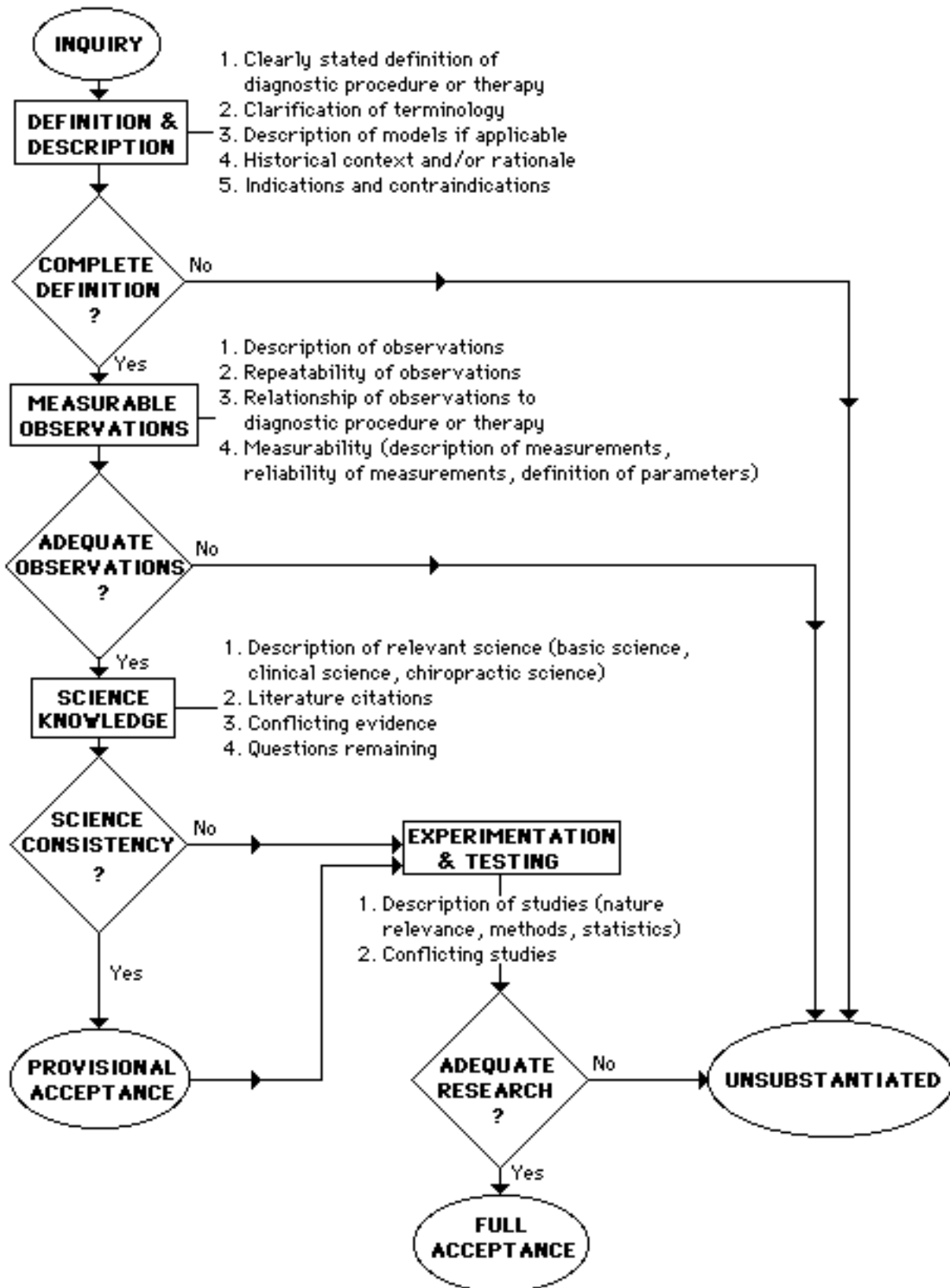
Figure 6: Herbert J. Vear, D.C., *President of Western States Chiropractic College, 1979-1986*

An abiding concern for this clinician-scholar has been the scope of chiropractic practice and the quality of the services rendered by members of the profession. This interest was perhaps first publicly visible with the publication in 1973 of his first article on these topics in the *Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association*, and more recently with the editorship of his significant volume, *Chiropractic Standards of Practice and Quality of Care* (Vear, 1992).

Dr. Vear is one of the two individuals most strongly responsible for the 1984 policy revision of the American Public Health Association (APHA) toward chiropractic. The APHA, which is the world's largest and oldest organization devoted to health promotion and disease prevention, had long mimicked allopathic medicine's position that chiropractic was unscientific and without merit (Vear, 1987). In collaboration with Rand Baird, M.P.H., D.C., the APHA's stance toward chiropractic was softened, and chiropractors were admitted as professional members. It was an

important step in the legitimization of chiropractic, and in establishing working relations with a wide range of health scientists and health service providers. Herb was elected to APHA's Governing Council for 1985-86 and again during 1989-1992. He served as chairman of the Association's "Chiropractic Forum" during 1989-1991.

**Figure 7:** WSCC's flow chart for the evaluation of chiropractic methods, better known as the "Kaminski model"; **reprinted by permission of the *JMPT*** (from Kaminski et al., 1987)





It is no accident that during his presidency the WSCC also led the 1980 formation of the Chiropractic Library Consortium and its *Index to the Chiropractic Literature* (Whitehead, 1990), an important sourcework for the chiropractic periodic literature. Kay Irvine, M.L.S., director of WSCC's Budden Library, has served as the *Index*' editor since its inception. Herb's eight years as WSCC president also saw the publication of his first book, *An Introduction to Chiropractic Science* (Vear, 1981).

Dr. Vear returned to Toronto in 1987, where he continued his efforts on behalf of the profession. He served as a consultant to the Council on Chiropractic Education (USA) during 1986-1988, and as secretary-treasurer of the Council on Chiropractic Education-Canada during 1988. The following year Herb was elected to the first of three one-year terms as president of the Canadian accrediting agency.

It was during this period also that Dr. Vear became more active in the AHC. A member since 1982, Herb was first elected to the society's board of directors in 1986, and served two terms as our president (1990-1992). In 1993 he collaborated in the formation of our sister organization, the Canadian Chiropractic History Association. He has been a repeated contributor to the historical literature in the profession, as his paper at this 17th Annual AHC Conference on Chiropractic History bears witness (Vear et al., 1997). In 1995 the AHC named Herb (see Figure 8) a Director Emeritus.



Figure 8: Dr. Herbert J. Vear, 1995

Few there are in any discipline who can claim the quality and breadth of professional contributions as our Dr. Vear. His influence is felt in the areas of chiropractic education, clinical

science, standards of care, inter-professional relations, and historical research and preservation. For nearly fifty years now Herb has quietly striven, often under difficult circumstances, to close the gap between what is and what could be in the science, art and philosophy of chiropractic. We wish him and Joyce many years of continued happiness, and we hope we've not seen the last of his productive scholarship. Thank you, Herb.

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