



# A Happy Warrior Passes: Ralph J. Martin, D.C., Ph.C., N.D.

1904-1994

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Ralph J. Martin, D.C., N.D. died on Monday, January 7, 1994 at the age of 89. Dr. Martin was very well known to an earlier generation of chiropractors, and is remembered among many DCs today for his academic leadership, political astuteness, his prolific publications, including his text on *Neurovascular Dynamics* (1), and his many lectures on physiotherapy and Bennett Technique. He is survived by his wife, Helen, and several children.

Ralph Martin began his chiropractic odyssey in 1935, when he attended lecture on "Position Technique" given by his brother, Miles Martin. In the same year he attended classes at Homer J. Beatty, D.C.'s University of Natural Healing Arts in Denver. In September, 1936 he enrolled at the College of Chiropractic Physicians & Surgeons, one of the major root institutions of today's Los Angeles College of Chiropractic (LACC). The school had changed its name to Southern California College of Chiropractic (SCCC) by the time Ralph graduated in the class of 1938-39. Wolf Adler, D.O., D.C., N.D., LL.B. was Dean of the SCCC at that time, and Clifford B. Eacrett, D.C., N.D. had only recently replaced Rangnar C. Bertheau, D.C., N.D. as president of the institution. Drs. George Haynes and Henry Higley had not yet joined the SCCC faculty; they were still teaching at their alma mater, the nearby Ratledge College of Chiropractic, and were preparing a text on chemistry for chiropractic students.

Dr. Martin received his California license to practice chiropractic on February 12, 1939 and took postgraduate coursework at the SCCC. By 1940 he was awarded the Ph.C. and had joined the faculty at SCCC; in 1941 he earned the ND degree and began to teach naturopathy at the College of Naturopathic Physicians & Surgeons, sister institution to the SCCC. When the United States entered the Second World War following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Dr. Martin had entered private practice; he took a wartime second job with the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in Burbank. Martin collaborated with Henry Higley, D.C., M.S. and Dan Nash, D.C. to defeat the California Medical Association's 1942 effort to have the electorate approve a basic science law in

the state. The chiropractors' campaign is recalled as the first time since the 1922 passage of the Chiropractic Act that straights and mixers in the state had truly pulled together for a common purpose. The

chiropractors won a resounding victory, defeating the medical trust by a 2 to 1 margin. The victory was due in no small measure to Dr. Martin's tireless activities; he would recall in later years (2) that the chiropractic lobby enjoyed considerable clout in Sacramento for the next ten years as a result of the voters' stunning rejection of the basic science proposal.

Ralph Martin was asked to take over as president of the SCCC in 1945. The war had taken a heavy toll on student enrollment, and on his first day in office the county sheriff appeared to close the school for outstanding debts. Dr. Martin paid the officer \$1,000 of his own funds and assured the student body that they would be able to graduate and that the College would survive (2). His contribution was but one in a long series of personal sacrifices he would make for chiropractic.

As president of a college affiliated with the National Chiropractic Association (NCA) Dr. Martin was soon involved in John J. Nugent, D.C.'s nationwide campaign to upgrade education in the profession (3). The NCA, immediate predecessor of today's American Chiropractic Association (ACA), had appointed Nugent its first Director of Education in 1941, and Nugent sought to merge smaller proprietary schools into larger, financially viable, non-profit and professionally controlled institutions. For this he would earn the wrath of many adherents to short-course instruction, including B.J. Palmer, who labeled Nugent the "Antichrist" of chiropractic (4). Despite significant criticism, Dr. Martin joined with Nugent in seeking to merge the SCCC, then perhaps the only non-profit chiropractic college in California, with the larger, for-profit LACC. In the same year that Nugent and the NCA created the NCA Council on Education (immediate forerunner of today's Council on Chiropractic Education), Martin, Nugent and attorney C.P. VonHerzen created the non-profit California Chiropractic Educational Foundation (CCEF), which would serve as a holding corporation for the SCCC and the LACC. Martin served as the first chairman of the board of the CCEF as well as president of the SCCC, and with funds received from the state branch of the Chiropractic Research Foundation (predecessor of today's FCER/Foundation for Chiropractic Education & Research), commenced negotiations for the purchase of the LACC.

On May 8, 1947 negotiations between Dr. Martin and Wilma Churchill Wood, D.C., N.D., owner of the LACC, were completed, and the LACC was merged with the SCCC as a non-profit institution. Ralph Martin was named the first president of the new school, and appointed Benedict Lupica, D.C., M.A. as academic dean; Lupica was soon replaced by Raymond Houser,

D.C., N.D., former administrator and faculty member at the National College of Chiropractic. George Haynes, D.C., N.D., M.A. was appointed Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs in 1950 (5). Martin was soon engaged in a search for a larger space to house the expanded facilities and student body. The result of this search was the LACC's Glendale campus, which faculty members of that time would recall as thrilling:

...The period of those years between 1948 and 1952 were especially rewarding because of the physical and academic transformation the College was subjected to. Everybody was busy, schedules were reorganized, subjects were revised and improved, and a system of audio-visual methods were added to aid in the teaching procedures....It was exciting, interesting, gratifying!....And then came Glendale! It was quite a change to leave the smaller class rooms as they were on Venice Boulevard and Ninth and Union Streets in Los Angeles to move up to the beautiful premises on Broadway in Glendale. No one complained. All of us were thrilled and happy! (6).

However, Dr. Martin, who as school president had "put in a tremendous amount of effort to secure non-profit status" for the CCEF and the LACC (2), was appalled at the trustees' decision to pay movie maker Cecil B. DeMille's taxes on the Glendale property; the Hollywood mogul held the mortgage on the new campus. He resigned his presidency in protest in 1951, and was immediately appointed to the Committee on Accreditation of the NCA Council on Education, a position he would hold until 1960. He also served on the NCA's Council on Physiotherapy, and would excel as a visionary and hard worker on behalf of education and research (e.g., 7-17). In 1962 LACC chief administrator George Haynes asked Dr. Martin to "activate the Alumni for a fund raising campaign" in order to pay off the mortgage on the LACC campus. It would take Martin, Haynes and the College another 12 years to complete this task, and to finally realize the tax benefit of their non-profit status. Ralph Martin also returned to teaching at the LACC during the 1960s, and served as delegate for Southern California to the NCA. In 1963-64 played a significant role in drafting the by-laws of the ACA, which was formed through the merger of the NCA and a splinter group from the International Chiropractors Association (18).

In 1968 Ralph Martin was elected to the Board of Governors of the ACA for District 7 (including California, Nevada and Hawaii), and served in this capacity through 1972. He served concurrently on the board of trustees of the FCER, "which is the funding arm of the ACA for all activities of the ACA requiring special funding support" (2). Beginning in 1972 Dr. Martin was chairman of the board of the CCEF; he left this post when, in his words, "the Board was taken over by a combination of 'straights' and 'orthopedists' with restrictive concepts of chiropractic" (2). His success in helping to improve the LACC's finances gave Dr. Haynes the room he needed to complete the CCE's final push for recognition by the U.S. Office of Education in 1974.

In his twilight years Ralph Martin occupied his time teaching and writing about the reflex concepts of Terrence J. Bennett, D.C. (1). In his mid-80s he suffered a stroke that paralyzed him

on one side, but credited his recovery to his understanding of the nuances of the vascular disorder and his self-application of Neurovascular Dynamics (19).

Ralph Martin was an exceptional individual. Fierce in his commitment to chiropractic and drugless healing, he was also an extremely gregarious person. His energy seemed boundless and his enthusiasm was contagious. He was eccentric and articulate, concerned but optimistic, a stalwart pioneer for freedom of choice in American health care. He will be dearly missed by those who knew him, remembered for his many contributions to the profession, and perhaps an unknown benefactor to the thousands of chiropractic students who have followed in his footsteps. This happy warrior has gone to his reward.

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