

1991 KCA Doctor of the Year Acceptance Speech
By James D. Edwards, D.C.
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After 7 years, you have time to put some thoughts on paper that I would like to share with you. Before I do, I would like to thank the members of the KCA for this tremendous honor. I would also like to thank a few very important people in my life.

First, my father who taught me principle, who if he were alive today would be very proud of me even though his dream in life was for me to be a preacher.

Second, my 75-year old mother who taught me to speak up for what I believe in. I'm sure she'd be here tonight but she recently remarried and is presently on her honeymoon in Hawaii.

Third, I'd like to thank Glen Heese who saw me being active in the KCA while I was still a patient of his. He has literally taught me everything I know about chiropractic.

And finally, I would like to thank my daughter Laura. Through all the good and bad, through all the ups and downs you've always stood by me and supported me. You'll never know how much you mean to me and how proud I am of you.

Let's talk a little bit about history. 1991 marks the 20th anniversary of the KCA's highest award, Chiropractor of the Year. In 1985, a new nominating system for this award was initiated in an effort to give the membership some ideas on who was truly deserving of the KCA's highest honor. The KCA Board of Directors wanted more involvement and we got it. Now, almost 1/2 of all KCA members return their ballots.

During the last 7 years, two individuals have been nominated for this award every year. Dr. John Hill and myself have been runners-up every year which has lead to some good natured kidding by our colleagues.

But let's look at who we were runners up to. In 1985, it was Bob Godbey, in 1986 James Croy won, in 1987 Rex Wright, 1988 Fred Good, 1989 Gary Counselman and 1990 Larry Fulk. Well, I submit to you that finishing second to these individuals is like finishing second to Babe Ruth in home runs or loosing the football rushing title to Walter Peyton. It's truly been an honor to have been included in that company.

This year was no different. The nominees this year were P.T. Greene and again John Hill and myself. Let's look at P.T. Greene. He's served on the KCA Board of Directors for five years and is now on the Kansas State Board of

Healing Arts. John Hill served six years in every KCA office and still chairs the all-important legislative committee. Both are truly deserving of this award and I salute their dedication to this association and to chiropractic.

Prior to 1985, there were several winners of this award and the wonderful thing about that is that some of these individuals are still driving forces in the KCA and this profession. Three that deserve special mention are Glen Heese, Orbie Elliott and M.D. Niedens.

But there are four really special recipients of this award that aren't here tonight. Who will ever forget Don McKelvey - "Mr. Orthopedics" who wanted to see this profession using the highest standards of care. I learned from him. Who will ever forget Chris Pinkenberg and Bob Godbey? These two gentlemen were long time Board members and they were on the Board of Directors when I arrived on the scene. These were men who often disagreed on particular issues but still respected each other after the Board meeting. I learned from both of them. And finally, Ed Counselman, a man who had no peer in the manner in which he injected this association with pure energy and enthusiasm. What a leader. I learned from him. All four of these were truly great men and I miss them. I can honestly say that seldom a day goes by that I don't think of at least one of them and wonder what their advice would be.

I remember Dr. Ed Counselman relating some thoughts he had about world history and chiropractic. I remember him telling a group of us how fortunate we were to be alive at this given time in the history of the world. In all the 6,000 years of recorded history through all the wars, plagues and famines this was the best of all times. Of all the countries to have ever lived in throughout the history of the world, this country, the United States of America was by far the best country to have ever lived in all of recorded history. So in other words, not only were we living in the best of all times, we were living in the best of all countries and as chiropractors we were in the best of all professions. I guess what he was trying to say is, appreciate it, because it doesn't get any better than this.

One of the reasons that we have it so good today is because of the sacrifices past generations made for us. I think it's important that we remember the sacrifices our chiropractic pioneers made so that we can have the profession we have today. Men like Dr. Lyndon Lee of New York, who from 1933 to 1936 was in court 30 times for practicing medicine without a license. He didn't go to court those 30 times for his own benefit. He did it for this profession so it would survive. Men like Dr. Foster Lee Lemley of Texas who during the 1920s, the 1930s and the 1940s was arrested 66 times for practicing chiropractic.

What a debt we owe these pioneers. I guess you could say at that particular time it was their watch. They were responsible for what happened to chiropractic and they were willing to go to jail to protect and defend chiropractic so future generations

would have this valuable healing art. They paid the price during their watch and because they did, chiropractic survived.

Today, we fight the insurance companies for insurance equality. We fight the Healing Arts Board for the term "chiropractic physician". And we fight the legislature for better workman's compensation coverage. Why? What's the purpose? For some, it's for more money and prestige for the chiropractor. But ladies and gentlemen, that's not what it's all about. All of our actions must be aimed at what's best for chiropractic and our patients.

Chiropractic doesn't belong to chiropractors. It never has and it never will. It belongs to humanity. We are only the caretakers of it for this particular generation. What we do with it, how we preserve it, how we defend it, how we protect it, how we nurture it will affect many generations to come. We have been charged with a solemn trust. Our primary responsibility is to take chiropractic and to pass it on to the next generation better and stronger than it was when we received it. That's what it's all about. And the great thing about that is - we don't have to sacrifice our freedom by going to jail like the pioneers had to do.

In closing let me just say this. Although I'm very proud to receive this award and to be included in the distinguished group that have received it in prior years, I must admit it has never been a major concern of mine. My major goal has always been to protect and defend chiropractic. And every time the KCA wins a small battle for chiropractic that's all the reward any of us need. Our chiropractic pioneers did their jobs. It's now our time to protect and defend chiropractic. It's our watch. Thank you for this tremendous honor.