

# The West family chiropractic dynasty: celebrating a century of accomplishment in Canada

## Part II: Samson J. West, David I. West, Neil A. West, Megan L. West, R. Ian Buchanan and James L. West

Douglas M. Brown DC\*

*This historical paper documents the unbroken legacy of the West family of chiropractors which has flourished in Canada for over 100 years. Part I, unearthed the origins, development and careers of Archibald West, the founder of this dynasty, his son Samuel and grandson Stephen. Part II, delves into the life of Archie's brother Samson, and Samson's chiropractic progeny: grandsons David and Neil, and great granddaughter Megan. Then it goes back to look at Stephen West's nephew, R. Ian Buchanan and ends with a descendant of another branch of the family tree, James L. West.*

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KEY WORDS: history, chiropractic, West

### Introduction

This historical paper documents the unbroken legacy of the West family of chiropractors which has flourished in Canada for over 100 years. Part I, unearthed the origins, development and careers of Archibald West, the founder of this dynasty, his son Samuel and grandson Stephen.<sup>1</sup> Part II, delves into the life of Archie's brother Samson, and Samson's chiropractic progeny: grandsons David and Neil, and great granddaughter Megan. Then it goes back to look at Stephen West's nephew, R. Ian Buchanan and ends with a descendant of another branch of the family tree, James L. West.

### Samson J. West DC: Archibald's Brother

Frederick and Mary Ann West had 12 children; eight boys

*Ce document historique rassemble l'héritage ininterrompu des chiropraticiens de la famille West qui a prospéré au Canada depuis plus de 100 ans. Partie I, la découverte des origines, le développement et la carrière d'Archibald West, le fondateur de cette dynastie, son fils Samuel et petit-fils Stephen. Partie II, plonge dans la vie de Samson, le frère d'Archie, et la descendance chiropratique de Samson : petits-fils David et Neil, et arrière petite-fille Megan. Ensuite, il fait un retour en arrière pour observer le neveu de Stephen West, R. Ian Buchanan et se termine par un descendant d'une autre branche de l'arbre de la famille, James L. West.*

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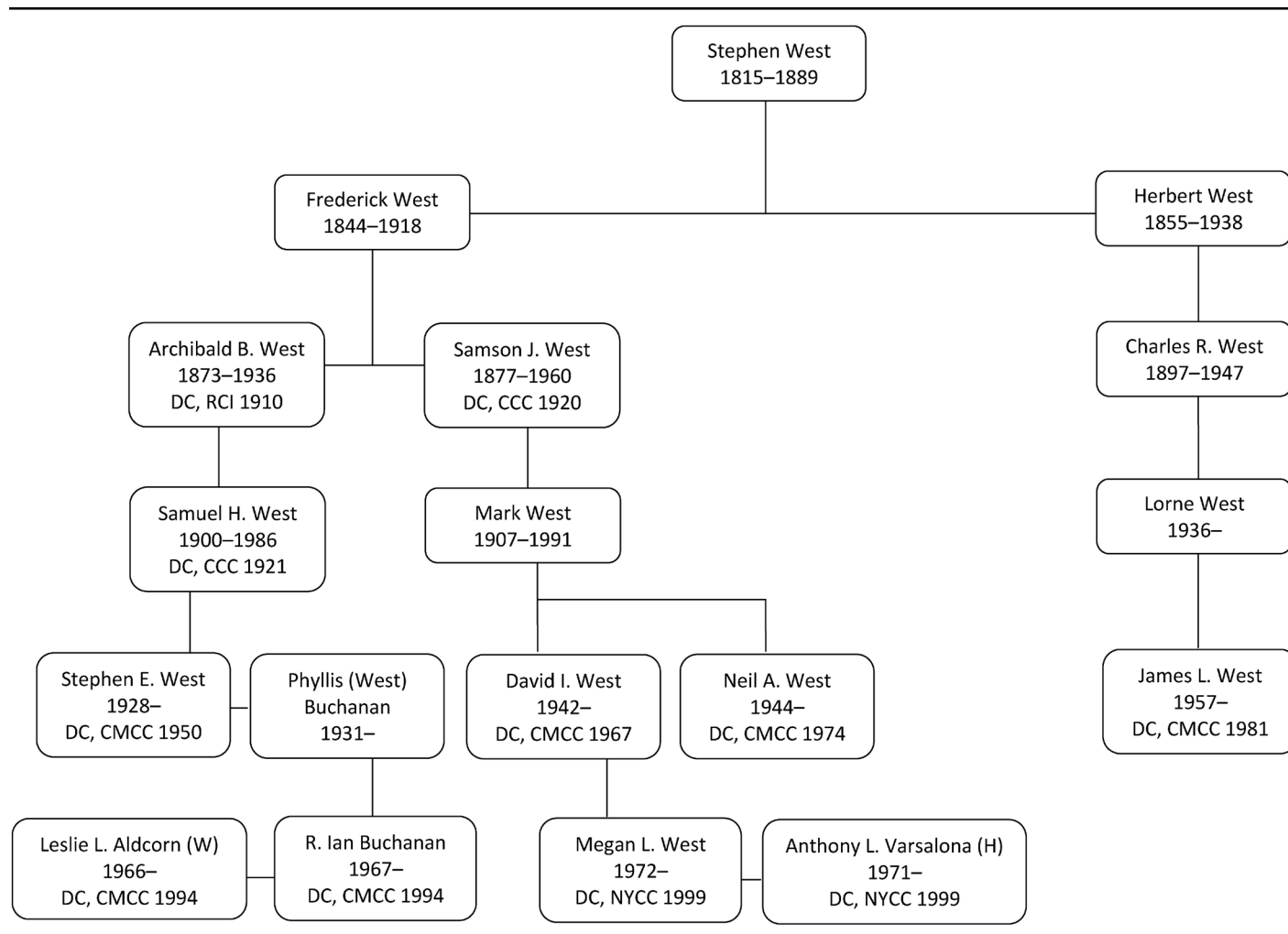
and four girls. Archie, the eighth child, was born in 1873, while Samson, the tenth, was born January 3, 1877.

Back in the summer of 1881, Frederick West had purchased and developed a 300 acre tract of land at the upper end of Ottertail Lake, in Algoma Township, which he later sold to Samson. Samson was 41 years old, married to Eliza (Emma) Marshall, with two sons and one daughter when, in the fall of 1918 he enrolled, along with his nephew Samuel West (Archie's son), in the Canadian Chiropractic College (CCC), then located at 22 Main Street West, in Hamilton.

Samson attended the CCC for 18 months. His course comprised 12 months of classes followed by six months of clinical training. Formal courses included anatomy, physiology, pathology, spinology, the art of chiroprac-

\* 281 Ridgewood Road, Toronto, ON M1C 2X3. Tel.: 416-284-1168. E-mail: browndouglas@rogers.com  
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## West Family Tree



tic (palpation, adjusting and nerve tracing), chiropractic philosophy and the polemics of chiropractic (logical arguments to defend the science and convince sceptics).<sup>2</sup> Samson graduated on March 23, 1920. By then the CCC had moved to 757-759 Dovercourt Road, in Toronto.

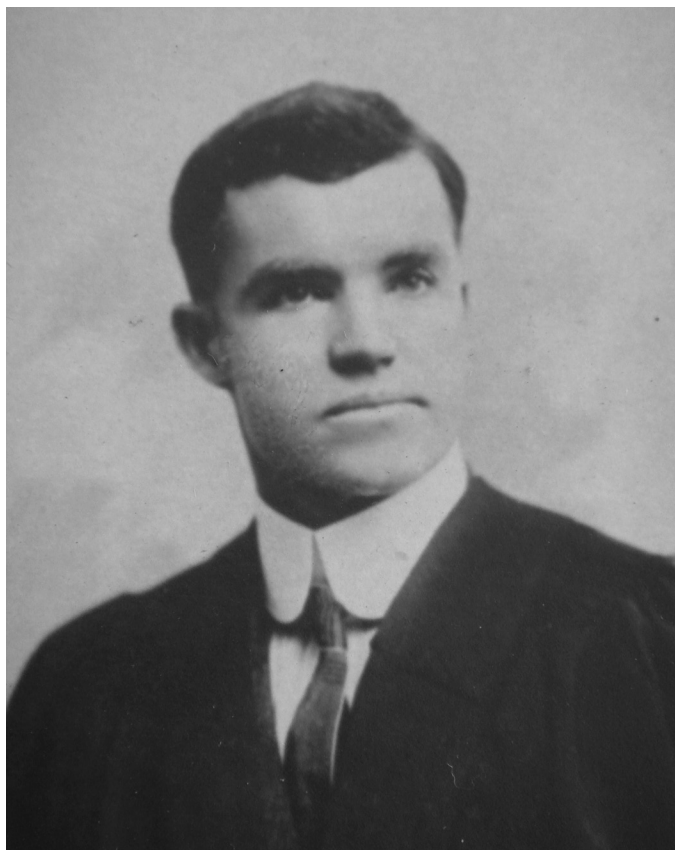
Upon graduation, Samson established a part-time practice at his farm. Patients would come to the farmhouse kitchen, to be adjusted a number of times a day for several days. Around 1922-23, Samson left his property in the care of his wife and children, travelling to the clay-belt area near Ottawa, to open a practice. After a year, he returned to his family in Algoma, resumed farming and practicing there, and probably saw patients at Bruce Mines as well.

David West describes his grandfather as “free thinking. In addition to agriculture and chiropractic he was among the first to install telephones in this area and was an amateur photographer.” [Interview, David West by Brown, April 5, 2008]. Samson died on February 10, 1960.

#### David I. West DC, and Neil A. West DC: Samson's Grandsons

##### *Background*

Samson and Emma West's second son Mark, was born October 30, 1907. In 1933 Mark purchased the farm from his father and on September 27 that year, he married



*Samson West 1918*

Helen Harnden. They had four sons; Ian, Alex, David and Neil. David was born July 26, 1942 and Neil on May 15, 1944. In 1955, Mark shocked his relatives and friends by selling the property, which had been owned by the West family for three generations, and moving to Grimsby, Ontario. Helen was well-educated and obtained a good job working in the admissions department of the Grimsby Hospital. Mark purchased a 14 acre fruit farm, which ran in a narrow strip from Highway 8 to the Niagara Escarpment and augmented his income in various ways, such as working in the local grocery store.

David and Neil's memories of chiropractic go back to their early childhood. Neil relates that when he and David were small boys living on the Algoma farm, their father's cousin Samuel West, would come to visit. Often he would adjust both boys and afterward, give each of them a piece of candy. [Phone call, Brown to Neil West, May 2, 2008] They also travelled to Sault Ste. Marie, where they were



*David West, Megan West, Anthony Varsalona 2008*

adjusted by Sam and his son, Stephen. David remembers that "father and son were very busy with patients lined up out the door and down the street."

### *Education*

While in high school, David and Neil became patients and friends of Emil Zmenak, DC, a 1960 graduate of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC) and the only chiropractor in Grimsby, who took them on a tour of the College, at 252 Bloor Street West, in Toronto. David received his senior matriculation from high school in 1963 and was admitted to CMCC in September that year. While there he participated in a number of sports, belonged to the Junior Canadian Chiropractic Association, the X-ray Club and the Clinic Committee. David admits that "Probably my greatest personal achievement occurred at the end of my third year at CMCC, when on May 28, 1966, I married Diana (nee Sexsmith)." [Letter, David West to Brown, September 15, 2009]

Neil West also graduated from high school in 1963 but took a detour, enrolling in the Economics program at the University of Western Ontario, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1966. Neil was hired by the John Deere Company and on September 23, 1967, married Lynn Urban. In 1970 he changed vocations, tracing his brother's footsteps to CMCC. Neil was "a driving force during his College years. He was elected to the position of Executive Secretary in his second year and was President

of the SAC (Student Administrative Council) in his last two. He was also active in 'Practichiro' (an annual variety show), as an actor and producer. In 1973 he was editor of the *Cornerstone* and assistant editor in 1974. His athletic prowess was shown in floor hockey, baseball, volleyball, curling and bowling."<sup>3</sup>

### *David West's Professional Career*

David West graduated from CMCC in May 1967 and promptly opened an office in Grimsby. His practice grew rapidly. Anticipating that his brother Neil would soon join him, in 1972 he built a modern, 4,000 square foot, multi-doctor, well-staffed facility, including an X-ray technician and a registered nurse. The Ontario Chiropractic Association (OCA) was curious to discover how he could run such a large operation and still provide competent service. "Follow me around and find out," was David's response. The OCA was so impressed, it used David's statistics as guidelines for developing standards of care for chiropractors in Ontario. [Letter, David West to Brown, September 15, 2009]

David's involvement in chiropractic organizations started in 1967 when he was inducted into the Hamilton District Chiropractic Council (HDCC). "We were fortunate to have wonderful peers in the Hamilton/Burlington area, including Drs. Robert Wingfield, David Churchill, Ronald Oswald and John MacRae, to name a few." David held all executive positions in the HDCC and chaired the Historical Committee, interviewing a number of senior practitioners, including his uncle, Dr. Samuel West, of Sault Ste. Marie.

In 1973, David Churchill, DC, then Chair of the CMCC Board of Governors, invited David to join the College Board. On April 23 that year, David attended his first meeting and was soon chairing the Education Committee. "With much help from Dr. Herb Vear and Dr. Tom Maxwell, in 1975 we expanded the admission standards at CMCC from senior matriculation to one year post-secondary education. In 1979 these were further extended to two years prerequisite and in 1993 to three." [Letter, David West to Brown, September 15, 2009]

When CMCC's Bayview campus was opened in 1968, it was designed to house four classes of 75 students. By 1973 the freshman class had mushroomed to 150 students and total enrolment was headed for 600. As Chair of the College Expansion and Development Committee, solving



*David West Grimsby clinic*

this problem would test David's endurance and ingenuity for five years. In 1975 a three-phase plan was approved that would see the successful construction of three amphitheatres, various administrative offices, a large technique lab and renovation of the clinic and its associated departments. The last major change under David's watch took place in 1980, when the library was doubled in size by relocating it to the entire top floor of the College's south wing.

October 30, 1976, David replaced William S. Baird, DC, as Chair of the CMCC Board of Governors. In July 1976 the Board had begun exploring the complexities of accreditation and in October 1977 started the process by amending its by-laws to allow it to hire a president. By April 1978 the Board was totally committed to accreditation and was instrumental in convincing the CCA to form and sponsor an independent agency, the Council on Chiropractic Education (Canada) Inc. [CCEC]. David describes the decade between 1976 and 1986 as "a time of transition." Others have called it tumultuous. Much of this "transition" occurred within the CMCC Board as the College evolved from an organization similar in some respects to a proprietary trade school, to a fully accredited institute of higher learning in chiropractic. Implementing a presidential system of governance was the Board's most difficult task, requiring its evolution from a body deeply involved in administrative matters, to one mainly concerned with policy formation, accountability and fund raising.<sup>4</sup>

On October 24, 1980, David left the Board but maintained his ties to the College and in April 1982 was elected as the first President of the CMCC Governors' Club, which became an important and still active fund raising arm of the institution.

Back in May 1978, as Chair of the CMCC Board, David had attended the inaugural meeting of CCEC, and declared it to be, "one of the most significant events in chiropractic history in Canada."<sup>5</sup> In April 1984, David was made a Director of CCEC and Secretary of its Commission on Accreditation and in January 1985 chaired a team that conducted a short visitation of the CMCC clinics. "The CCE board was going through personnel difficulties at the time and as a result, much effort was spent familiarizing ourselves and refining the standards to mesh with the Canadian scene. These were exciting times in chiropractic education and I was fortunate to be a part of it." [Letter, David West to Brown, September 15, 2009] David resigned his post with CCE in 1988.

From 1975 to 1980, David was one of CMCC's representatives at numerous liaison meetings between the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Board of Directors of Chiropractic and the OCA, attempting to negotiate new chiropractic legislation under the Health Disciplines Act.

In 1980 the HARP (Healing Arts Radiation Protection) Act was passed, placing limits and restrictions on the operation and function of X-ray machines in Ontario. Its legislation applied to medicine, dentistry, podiatry and chiropractic, and each profession had its own advisory committee. David was an ad hoc member of the Chiropractic Advisory Committee. A critical task was to develop uniform, mandatory, quality assurance tests. The members met once a month for five years and finally adopted a safety code acceptable to all parties. This was a major accomplishment. [Information courtesy of Robert Wingfield]

In May 1990 the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA) Board of Governors voted to establish national chiropractic practice guidelines and on April 15, 1991, a Guideline Review Group of 25 chiropractors was formed and began critiquing the literature and consulting others in the profession. By August 1992, initial drafts of the Guidelines Document had been completed and distributed to over 23 sponsoring organizations for their input. At this point the Guidelines Review Group was disbanded and replaced by a Guidelines Consensus Commission of

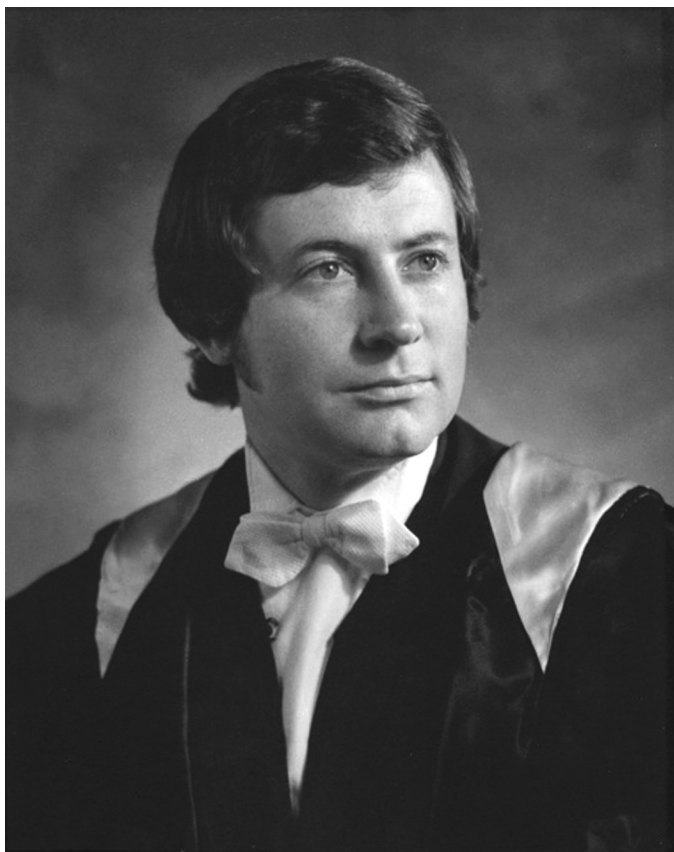
35 members. The Commission's job was to re-evaluate the Review Group's draft guidelines and provide further clinical support for suggested revisions. The work was divided into 20 teams, one for each chapter. David was appointed Team Leader for chapter 15, Maintenance/ Preventative/ Supportive Care. This re-evaluation took place over seven months and preceded a four day, round-table conference held at the Glenora Inn, Mississauga, Ontario, April 4-7, 1993. Here 305 guideline recommendations were debated and voted upon in plenary sessions with nearly all votes achieving a consensus level greater than 90% and no minority opinions. "Three years after the CCA initiated the project, it was finally complete. There had been as much professional participation as possible. More than a few hundred people were involved in shaping the document."<sup>6</sup> This made chiropractic one of the first health care professions to have nationally based clinical guidelines in print.

### *Neil West's Professional Career*

Neil West graduated from CMCC in May 1974 and immediately joined his brother David, in the Grimsby clinic. Neil's role as President of the SAC during his last two years at the College, required him to represent student interests at meetings of the Board of Governors and the Senate. In fact, he was present on April 23, 1973, when David was welcomed to the Board. It seemed appropriate that Neil, with his background in economics, would join his brother on the Board, which he did, January 19, 1975.

In 1975 CMCC began implementing its extensive Expansion and Renovation plans and Neil became David's unofficial "executive assistant," working and travelling with him extensively, sitting at his side during meetings and somehow finding time to tackle his own project; the creation of a Satellite Clinic for the College at Parliament and Gerrard Streets, in Toronto, a feat he accomplished in less than a year. In 1977, Neil "chaired a senate study into the development of the various terms of reference and a flow chart of all administrative personnel at CMCC. This has been a commendable task and a very important one for it now gives our administration a foundation upon which to build and develop."<sup>7</sup>

Neil parted company with his brother in 1979, moving his family to Tecumseh, Ontario, a town on the eastern edge of Windsor. Although this more than quadrupled the



*Neil West 1974*

distance he had to travel, Neil maintained his commitment to the CMCC Board until his term ended in February 1981.

Arriving in Tecumseh, Neil opened two solo practices in rapid succession; one in Tecumseh and the other 17 km east, in Belle River. "When I moved here in 1979, I was the only chiropractor for 30 km along the south shore of Lake St. Clair, east of Windsor. Today there are more than 20. That is similar to the rest of Ontario and represents our strengthening and expanding base...I had a relatively high volume fun practice. My focus was to emphasize my practice and avoid too many collateral activities." [Email, Neil West to Brown, April 21, 2010] Actually, Neil had little time for other endeavours. He worked five and a half days a week, spending his mornings in Tecumseh and his afternoons in Belle River. Still, in addition to his involvement with CMCC, he held executive positions on the Hamilton and Windsor-Essex Chiropractic Societies and

served on the board of the Ontario Chiropractic Credit Union.

In 1988 Neil and a partner constructed the 30,000 square foot Tecumseh Life Centre. The Centre contained a four doctor chiropractic clinic, a pharmacy, X-ray, ultrasound and medical laboratories, medical doctors, dentists, optometrists, audiologists, a psychologist, speech therapist, chiropodist and orthodontist. It also offered something unique at that time; an urgent care centre. This was a walk-in clinic, staffed by emergency specialists from the nearby Grace Hospital.

### Megan L. West, DC

#### *Background*

Megan, the second of David and Diane's three children, was born on May 2, 1972, into a large chiropractic family. Megan relates that, "It was all I ever knew. I grew up hearing stories of my great, grandfather, Samson, farming all day, seeing patients in the evenings, and of Grandma West (David's mother) taking her sons to Sault Ste. Marie for adjustments by Sam West." Megan too was adjusted regularly and talked to her friends about "how good it makes me feel." Even the teachers knew that the West children didn't have any sick days. One of her happiest childhood memories occurred in 1981, when she "attended CMCC's Convocation and Dad was the guest speaker."

#### *Education*

There wasn't much doubt that Megan would take after her father. Following high school, she selected the human kinetics course at the University of Guelph, because it offered full body human dissection and was highly recommended as a pre chiropractic program. Megan graduated from Guelph with honours in 1995. By this time it was too late to apply to CMCC so Megan investigated the New York Chiropractic College (NYCC). Situated in Seneca Falls, NY, on 286 acres of land, Megan describes it as having "an amazing campus."

In January 1996, Megan was one of 120 students to begin the program at NYCC. Many of her classmates were Canadian. Megan was "very happy" with the education she received, particularly the adjustive techniques. In addition to diversified, she was exposed to a lot of alternative methods, which made her "very confident." One member of her class was Anthony Varsalona, an American

*Neil West's Tecumseh Life Center*



citizen who was raised in Branchville, a small town in the northern region of Sussex County, New Jersey. Anthony was first exposed to chiropractic in grade seven, when he injured his chest wrestling. Because he was having difficulty breathing, he was taken to a hospital where all tests were negative. A local chiropractor diagnosed Anthony's problem to be a displaced rib, which he promptly corrected.

In grade eight, Anthony became interested in the spine itself and began considering chiropractic as a career. That summer he started researching the profession by arranging to observe a variety of chiropractors in their offices. He was also receiving regular adjustments from two local chiropractors. Following high school, Anthony won a wrestling scholarship to George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia, where he completed a pre-med, major biology course.

Prior to university, Anthony began exploring chiropractic colleges. He was interested in the Palmer College, Davenport, Iowa, and the Life College in Atlanta, Georgia. He had been accepted by both colleges but a friend told him to check out the NYCC. As soon as he toured the campus, Anthony knew "this was the right place" for him, and luckily, he ended up in Megan's class.

Megan and Anthony began dating in their second year, graduating together in April 1999. Megan's proud

father David, recalls participating in the ceremony. "At my daughter Megan's NYCC convocation, I was permitted to hood her. This was a great thrill for me, with our entire family in attendance."

*Professional Practice*

By the time they graduated, Megan and Anthony had a good idea of how they wanted to practice. Now they had to decide where they wanted to practice. December 31, 1999, Megan and Anthony spent New Year's Eve with Megan's parents in Grimsby. That weekend they made up their minds to return to Ontario and become associates in David's clinic. On February 26, 2000, Megan and Anthony were married and the clinic's ground floor was renovated to provide them with plenty of space for growth. By June the happy couple had settled into the bustling, well-established, West clinic. [Interview, Megan West and Anthony Varsalona, by Brown, June 21, 2010]

Ten years later, Megan and Anthony are raising their bright, energetic, six year old son Colin, in a spacious home perched on the brow of the bluffs overlooking Lake Ontario. They have taken over much of the clinic's administrative duties and David now works just three days a week. Although their main adjustive technique is still diversified, they utilize Thompson Drop, Sacro-Occipital and Pro Adjuster methods when appropriate. Anthony is

certified in Active Release Technique and handles a lot of sports injuries. Megan has her fellowship in paediatrics with the International Chiropractic Paediatric Association, so her focus is on children.

The clinic has evolved into a wellness centre, offering affordable, patient-centred, chiropractic care, along with supportive disciplines such as massage and physical therapy. Megan and Anthony are adamant that business will never take precedence over public service.

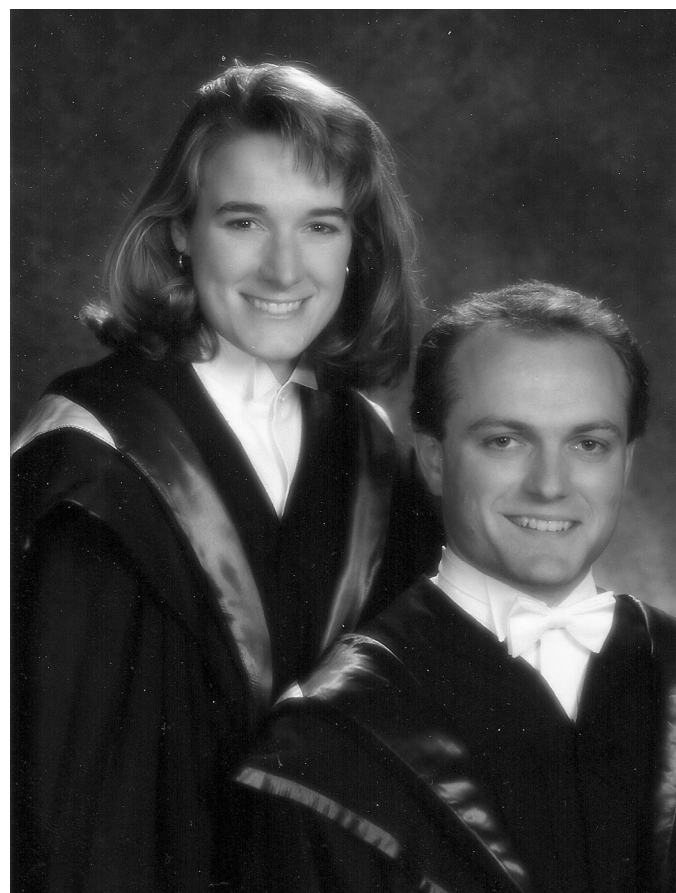
Robert Ian Buchanan, Stephen West's Nephew

### *Background*

In 1954, Stephen's sister Phyllis, married Stanley Buchanan, in Sault Ste. Marie. Stanley was a store manager for Sears Canada, requiring the family moved from city to city across Canada, eventually settling in Toronto. Phyllis and Stan sired six children. Their five sons and one daughter were born in various locations. Ian, the youngest, arrived on the scene in 1967, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Ian has memories of his grandfather, Sam West, striding briskly through airports to visit them, carrying a can of Maple Syrup from the Sault, under his arm. In the late 1970s, while living in Vancouver, Ian recalls playing football in the backyard with three friends, when Grandpa Sam called them into the house and told them to lie down on the living room floor to be adjusted. Ian says he only received upper cervical adjustments from his grandfather. [Phone call Brown, to Ian Buchanan, July 8, 2009] His mother Phyllis recollects driving with her family to attend Lyceum, at the Palmer School in Davenport, Iowa, when she was eight years old. Phyllis was impressed by meeting BJ Palmer in his "Little Bit 'O Heaven," an indoor tropical paradise designed and constructed mainly by BJ himself. She was also frightened to be leaving for home on September 1, 1939, the day World War II was declared against Germany, by the Western Allies. [Phone Call, Brown to Phyllis Buchanan, Oct. 3, 2009]

Phyllis relates that Sam and his wife May, like their parents before them, were faithful members of what was originally known as the Albert Street Gospel Hall, in Sault Ste. Marie. This evangelical Protestant assembly had its beginnings in 1900, with Archie West becoming one of its first two converts.<sup>7</sup> In 1947, Sam and another parishioner donated a new property at the corner of Spring and Wellington Streets, where a larger Hall was erected. After



*Leslie Aldcorn and Ian Buchanan 1997*

church, Sam and May usually invited parishioners back to their home for dinner, where the topic of conversation invariably got around to discussing the merits of chiropractic care.

### *Education*

Upon graduating from Grade XIII, Ian Buchanan applied to study engineering at the University of Toronto (U of T). On January 4, 1986, Grandpa Sam died and the Buchanan family drove to the Sault for the funeral. During the visitation, Ian and Brian, an older brother, were up in the attic, rummaging through memorabilia stored there and eavesdropping on the folks who had gathered below, reminiscing about their grandfather. Ian was examining a clock which featured the letters chiropractic in place of the numbers one to twelve, when suddenly he experienced an epiphany: "I'm supposed to become a chiroprac-



tor!” he shouted, and quickly changed his courses at the U of T to comply with CMCC’s requirements.

From 1986-88, Ian completed the first two years of a three year BSc program before leaving for Jerusalem to pursue his interest in Old Testament historical geography. Returning to the U of T in 1989, Ian earned his BSc before enrolling at CMCC, where he graduated in 1994. Although initially surprised by the content of the course, which emphasized the science of chiropractic, rather than the philosophical aspects he was expecting, Ian found his four years at College to be “a great experience.” One of his most memorable recollections is falling in love with fellow classmate Leslie Aldcorn. Leslie and Ian had something in common: they were both born in Winnipeg. At this time Leslie was living in Markham, Ontario. Her father Gary, was a professional hockey player who had skated on left wing for a number of leagues including the National Hockey League, where he toiled for Boston, Detroit and Toronto.

### *Professional Careers*

Because Leslie and Ian had spent much of their youth in western Canada, both wanted to practice in a western province once they graduated. During the summer break of 1993, they began their search. Starting in Vancouver, British Columbia, the couple kept moving east, until they landed in Lethbridge, Alberta, which they found the most welcoming. In July 1994, before moving out west, Ian proposed to Leslie in front of the Palmer Homestead, on Old Simcoe Street, in Port Perry, Ontario. They were married on December 30 that year and now (2010), have two lovely children, Meghan 12 and Quinn 10. Although they began their careers as associates in separate offices, since 1997 Ian and Leslie have practiced together in their own 3,400 sq ft clinic.

For a few years Ian had an auxiliary office in Pincher Creek, south-west of Lethbridge, until the main clinic became too demanding. Recently the Lethbridge Clinic has been modernized. The office is now paperless and three massage therapists share the premises, although Ian and Leslie still take their own X-rays, use no modalities and the primary adjustive technique remains diversified.

Sixteen years later, Leslie and Ian are still motivated by Grandpa Sam, in that they use spinal adjustments, by hand only and practice the “Golden Rule,” with affordable fees and a schedule that meets their patients’ needs.

## **James L. West, DC**

### *Background*

James West’s lineage goes back to Stephen West (1815–1889), the first family member to settle in Ontario. Stephen West and his wife Mary Ann had 11 children. Frederick West, their fifth child, was the father of Archibald West, the first of four generations of chiropractors previously discussed in Part I of these two papers. James West comes from a separate branch of the family. His great grandfather Herbert West was the tenth child of Stephen West and Frederick was his brother. (See the West Family Tree)

James’ father, Lorne West, was born on a farm near Sault Ste. Marie in 1936. His family received chiropractic care from Samuel West and attended the Albert Street Gospel Hall. In 1946, Lorne’s father Charles died suddenly, leaving his mother Dorothy with seven young children to feed. Members of the Gospel Hall offered to adopt the children and Sam said he would look after Lorne, who was a much younger second cousin. However, his mother didn’t want to break up the family and determined to raise the children herself. In 1954, Lorne left his job at Algoma Steel and moved to Toronto, to stay with a sister who was studying to become a Victorian Order Nurse. The year after, he joined the North York Fire Department, where he became a Captain and served for 25 years. In 1955 Lorne married Beverley Baker and they had five sons, who produced 22 grandchildren, 11 boys and 11 girls. [Lorne West interview by Brown, August 12, 2010]

### *Education*

James, the first child, was born in Toronto, Ontario, April 29, 1957. He always excelled academically, achieving his Grade XIII diploma with the second highest marks in the Region of York. After high school James studied neurosciences at the U of T, on a full academic scholarship. He already knew he wanted to be a chiropractor because of his personal experience and the stories his father had told him about Samuel West. “In the Sault, Sam was as influential as the mayor ... He had a large practice, was always on the move and known for his generosity ... Sam was an elder in the Gospel Hall and spoke a lot. Some people thought he was the pastor.”

James’ teachers at the University knew he wanted to be a chiropractor and he “took a lot of flack for it.” When



*James West 2007*

he approached one of his professors for a letter of recommendation to the College, James was told he was making a big mistake; throwing his life away. Although this was intimidating, he wasn't deterred.

While at CMCC (1977–81) James supported himself as a part-time paramedic for the Ontario Ministry of Health and in his third year he assisted Donald Henderson (CMCC 1975) with the emergency care program. In his third and fourth years he worked as a lab technician for John Duckworth, MD, CMCC's illustrious Professor of Anatomy. "This wasn't a job, it was an opportunity, a magical experience." Despite this heavy schedule, James graduated first in his class, winning the top academic awards. [James West interview by Brown, August 12, 2010]

### *Professional Career*

In 1980, a year before graduation, James purchased a bungalow on a half acre lot, fronting on Highway 7, at Ken-

nedy Road in Unionville, which he converted into a home/office combination. A couple of years later he renovated the lower level and installed a 2,000 sq ft clinic. Next he had the property rezoned commercial, enlarged the first floor and added a second floor, where his parents conduct the retail side of Almira Fine Furniture, a prosperous enterprise they have owned for 30 years.

Although CMCC thoroughly grounded him academically, James thinks he was overly optimistic about his future success in private practice because, like Megan West, he "knew nothing about business." James rectified this by taking courses in practice management and shared this information by lecturing widely on the subject of "patient care and retention," throughout North America from 1994 to 2007. James firmly believes in continuing care. "Most patients come to our clinics because they are seeking resolution of a symptom. If all we do is alleviate that symptom...I feel we have done the patient a great disservice... Through education, patients should experience a shift in their thinking away from simply symptomatic relief to the benefits of long-term chiropractic management."<sup>9</sup>

James has also appeared frequently as a guest on CFRB radio and CBC TV, speaking about the prevention and correction of spinal injuries and the benefits of spinal maintenance. For a number of years James has hired CMCC students to work part-time in his clinic. His goal is to instil confidence, by providing them with professional advice, clinical training, business acumen and respect.

When he started practice, James used diversified, full spine adjusting. Gradually, he has evolved to Activator methods, in which he is certified, but still employs the static and motion palpation skills he was taught in College, for spinal analysis. In 2007, James converted his whole office to the latest generation of Impulse<sup>TM</sup> adjusting instruments, which he describes as electronic impulse adjusting. He finds this technique quite effective, particularly for patients in acute pain who cannot tolerate excessive force.

James is "convinced there are fundamentally two factors which make chiropractors unique, and therefore valuable, in the healthcare marketplace. The first is WHAT we treat – Vertebral Subluxation. The second is HOW we treat it – Spinal Adjustment. Diagnosing and correcting vertebral subluxations with spinal adjustments, and the continued performance of this distinct service, are keys to preserving our chiropractic identity."

*Canadian Chiropractic College 1922*



### Summary

Considering the West chiropractic family's hundred year odyssey in the field of health care, it appears that much of the success Canadian chiropractors now enjoy, particularly in Ontario, emanated from the vision, initiative and courage of Archibald West. Archie began the journey in 1908, when he returned from a rigorous 530 km trip to Plainwell, Michigan, with WJ Robbins in tow and convinced him to open the Robbins Chiropractic Institute, in Sault Ste. Marie. That first bold step ensured that Archie would become a chiropractor and enabled stalwarts such as John Henderson, Albert Price and Sam Sommacal, to do likewise.

The RCI was short-lived, however in 1914 Henderson helped establish its successor, the Canadian Chiropractic College, in Hamilton. This made it easier for Samson and Samuel West to emulate Archie and opened the door for other notables like John Clubine and Arthur Kennedy to join the profession.

By 1919 the CCC had moved to Toronto and closed in 1923. In the meantime, John Clubine and John Cudmore had formed the Toronto Chiropractic College (TCC). Clubine was President of the TCC until its demise in 1926. A few of its memorable alumni were AB Bennett, Herbert Hill, JA Hetherington, HO Langford, Fred Lewis and Harry Yates.

From 1927 to 1945, no recorded chiropractic colleges existed in Canada. On January 10, 1943, the CCA decided to create a national chiropractic college in Toronto, which would be called the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College. Archie West's influence was felt immediately

through the presence of Clubine who attended the inaugural meeting, and reinforced when Henderson, Sommacal and Arthur Kennedy's son Keith, were appointed to the Organization Committee. In 1944, Sam West was successful in getting his colleagues to pledge the money needed to pay for our Bloor Street property, contributing a substantial sum himself. When CMCC opened on September 18, 1945, Clubine was the College's first President, Henderson its first Registrar and Sommacal would become its third President, 1947–51.

When CMCC's first graduating class obtained their diplomas in 1949, Fred Clubine, nephew of John Clubine, Glen Kennedy, another son of Arthur Kennedy and James Langford, son of HO Langford, were among the recipients and in 1950, the second graduating class included Denny Bennett, son of AB Bennett and Stephen West, who justified his father's faith in him by serving the profession diligently in a variety of roles, for 49 years.

Archibald B. West is known as the founder of the West Family Chiropractic Dynasty. He also deserves to be recognized and honoured, as the founder of chiropractic education in Canada.

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