

Chiropractic History

Herbert K Lee, DC an accomplished professional

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Introduction

This is a biographical study of Herbert Kenneth Lee, arguably one of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College's more influential educators, certainly its most tenacious. The article delves into Dr. Lee's background and his busy, balanced, personal, public and professional lives in an attempt to provide some sense of the sustained impact he has had on CMCC and its graduates for the past 45 years. This, he accomplished, while maintaining a full-time private practice, contributing to his professional organizations and participating in community affairs.

Background and education

Herbert K. Lee was born on November 5, 1910, in Peterborough, Ontario. His father Ernest, was a native of London, England and had sailed as a midshipman on a commercial square rigged schooner for three years. He jumped ship in Antwerp, Belgium, emigrated to Canada in 1903 and laboured on a farm near Port Hope for some time. Here he met his wife, Sophia Peacock, who came from a nearby farm close to Elizabethtown, Ontario. Following their marriage, Herb's parents moved to Peterborough. There his father worked as a carpenter before joining the post office, where he was employed for 50 years.

Dr. Lee attended King George Public School and received a grade XII graduation diploma from Peterborough Collegiate Institute in 1927. Following high school, he was hired to work in the cost department of the Western Clock Co., now known as Westclock. At this time, he was taking a correspondence course

in accountancy from LaSalle University in Chicago. After three years of honest effort, Dr. Lee was rewarded with a 10% cut in salary.

He left Westclock and moved to Toronto in 1931, at the height of the great depression. He obtained a position in the premium renewal department at the head office of the Manufacturer's Life Insurance Co., where he remained for seven years. During this period, he attended night school and earned certification with the Toronto Insurance Institute. He then began to study for his Certified Accountancy exams but never wrote them. He was also active in the company's drama club and played the lead male role of "Charlie" in a production of "Charlie's Aunt."

In 1925, Dr. Lee developed a cardiac arrhythmia, which the family medical doctor was unable to correct. He then attended Mark Goodwin, DC in Peterborough and when he moved to Toronto was referred to Herbert Hill, DC. Herb's heart symptoms were permanently relieved and Dr. Hill, who later became one of the founding fathers of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC) and a member of the College Organization Committee, urged Herb to consider chiropractic as a career.

In September 1937, Dr. Lee enrolled in the National College of Chiropractic (NCC) in Chicago, Illinois. Joseph Janse, DC,

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who was destined to become the President of NCC and a powerful force in improving the quality of chiropractic education, was in his third year at this time. Herb chose National because he felt it was the best academically. NCC provided a four year course of nine months each year. Classes ran from 8am to 3pm, Monday through Friday. While at NCC, Herb was active not only academically, standing in the upper third of his class, but also socially, acting as yearbook photographer.

World War II broke out in 1939 and Dr. Lee was squeezed financially. Unable to borrow money from an aunt in England, he struggled to make ends meet as he watched the value of the Canadian dollar drop from 95¢ to 80¢ US. Later that year, he was faced with another dilemma when his student visa was cancelled and displayed considerable ingenuity in getting it renewed. In 1941, foreign students began to be recruited into the American Army. Fortunately Herb graduated in May that year and escaped to Canada just ahead of his draft board review.

Professional career

The early years

On returning to Toronto, Dr. Lee went to work for Andrew D. Nicholson, DC, at 893 Bloor Street West, which is still the site of a chiropractic office. Here he gained significant practical experience and was soon adjusting the majority of Dr. Nicholson's patients, 50 to 60 a day. However, he strongly disagreed with Dr. Nicholson's reliance on radionics as a means of diagnosis and treatment, and he left in December 1941 to open his own office on the second floor of the Royal Bank Building at 2 Bloor Street East. His rent was \$45 a month for 800 square feet of space. At this time, Herb joined the Association of Chiropractors and Drugless Therapists of Ontario (now the Ontario Chiropractic Association [OCA]) and was an executive member from 1942-1944 (Dr. Lee, personal correspondence).

On January 10, 1943, the inaugural meeting of the Dominion Council of Canadian Chiropractors (now known as the Canadian Chiropractic Association [CCA]) was held in Ottawa, Ontario.¹ Dr. Lee credits John S. Clubine, DC and Walter T. Sturdy, DC for having been the driving forces behind the creation of this national organization. Its main purposes were to gain inclusion in Medicare, a national health scheme about to be introduced in Parliament, and to build a chiropractic college to be supported by the profession across Canada.

To facilitate the process of establishing a school, on January 3, 1945, the Dominion Council formed a separate body under the Corporations Act of the Province of Ontario, called the Canadian Association of Chiropractors, which later became the charter of CMCC.² On January 31, 1945, at the first meeting of the Directors of this College Association, Dr. Lee was elected Secretary/Treasurer of both the College Association and its Financial Organization Committee to establish a Canadian College of Chiropractic³ where he played a prominent role in setting up the school until October 19, 1945.^{4,5} Dr. Lee was to return to the CMCC Board of Directors (now Board of Gover-

nors) and its Board of Management (now Executive Committee) as Secretary/Treasurer from 1952 until March 3, 1962.⁶

The College Association had planned to open its school in September 1945, but as summer rapidly approached this appeared impossible because the Organization Committee was stymied in its attempts to find the necessary funds and suitable facilities. At this time John Clubine, DC and Cecil C. Clemmer, DC approached John (Jack) S. Henderson, DC and convinced him to close his practice in Hamilton and become the College's Business Manager and Registrar. Within a short time Dr. Henderson raised \$50,000 from the profession in Ontario and used it to purchase the Medonia Hotel, at 252 Bloor Street West in Toronto.

CMCC faculty member

In August, the College Association took possession of this Hotel and classes commenced on September 18, 1945, 50 years to the day after DD Palmer administered the first chiropractic adjustment to Harvey Lillard. At 8am on that bright historic morning, Dr. Lee was scheduled to assist John A. Cudmore, DC, to introduce CMCC's first class to the wonders of chiropractic adjustive technique. When Dr. Cudmore got cold feet and didn't show up, Herb found himself alone, facing a room full of boisterous, newly discharged war vets. Fortunately, he had the foresight to bring copious notes on the anatomy of the spine with him and survived. Thus began Herb's prolonged teaching career at CMCC, which continues to this day.

In early 1945, Dr. Lee and A. Earl Homewood, DC commenced a professional and personal association that was to endure until Dr. Homewood's death on February 26, 1990. Dr. Homewood was a member of the College Property Search Committee and Herb convinced him to join the faculty as a technique instructor in that first semester. Earl's role rapidly expanded into full-time teaching, administration and fund raising.⁷

Dr. Lee remained as part of that first team of chiropractors who taught adjustive technique. He followed the freshman class through its subsequent years of study, contributing to the development and teaching in all four years of spinal manipulative therapy. In 1949, Herb's responsibilities increased, teaching extremity technique, accessory technique and abnormal psychology. He also taught Logan Basic and Hurley techniques, as well as pediatric and geriatric adjusting.

As a lecturer, Dr. Lee stressed the importance of developing the finesse required to deliver a specific, controlled, adjustive thrust necessary to obtain a clean joint release. He then demonstrated the post adjustive procedures of static and motion palpation to ensure the correction was accomplished. Dr. Lee always conveyed to his students, the practical experience he gained from his many years of attending to patients in pain.

In 1975, Dr. Lee stopped teaching technique on a regular basis and began working as a consultant and lecturer in the Bayview Outpatient Clinic, six hours a week. Presently he works three hours at the Bayview Clinic and three hours at the

Crossways Satellite Clinic, conducting workshops in the use of a variety of therapeutic modalities, emphasizing the indications and the contraindications for their application.

Extracurricular activities

Since graduating from NCC, Herb has honed his photographic skills as a member and Past President of the Leaside Camera Club and as a member of the Toronto Guild of Colour Photography from 1953–1963. Herb was the principal CMCC photographer for many years and recorded the desecration of the College buildings on Bloor Street caused by construction of the subway from 1961–1963.⁸ These photos were used as evidence in court actions by CMCC against Metro Toronto from 1962–1968.⁸ He also photographed the construction of the new College on Bayview Avenue from the time the footings were poured in June 1968 until he created the first official portrait of the completed facilities in September that same year.⁸

Dr. Lee is a founding member of the CMCC Governors' Club, an important fund raising organization that has contributed half a million dollars to the College since its inception in 1982. He was the Club's Secretary in 1982, President from 1984–1987 and still acts as a Director.

He has supported the College's Alumni Affairs Committee since 1985 and has been a positive factor in the success of four annual alumni fund raising dinners.

Dr. Lee has been Chairman of the CMCC Awards Committee since 1961. This is appropriate, since he is the most decorated member of the Canadian chiropractic profession (see table 1). His citations are ample proof of the admiration and respect his peers have for him, both in Canada and the United States.

Over the years Dr. Lee has submitted a number of papers to the CMCC student Lifeline newspaper and the College Quarterly magazine; he was Editor of the Quarterly in the 1950's⁹. In 1981, Dr. Lee became a founding member of the Association

for the History of Chiropractic. He was its first Secretary, held the office of President from 1984–1987 and published articles in its Journal in 1981 and 1985.^{10,11} In the 1981 issues of the Journal of the CCA Herb wrote a series of biographical sketches paying tribute to several outstanding chiropractic pioneers he has known personally.^{12–14} He began a series of "Practice Pointers" in the September 1989 issue of the OCA NEWS,¹⁵ is currently working on a treatise titled "Looking Back 50 Years," and is preparing to video-tape the techniques he has taught at CMCC for 45 years.

Private practice

Dr. Lee has always considered himself to be a part-time teacher and a full-time practitioner. He maintained several successful private practices in the Yonge and Bloor district of Toronto. He remained in his first location at 2 Bloor Street East for 25 years, moved to 636 Church Street in 1966 and to 11 Yorkville Avenue in 1978. There he remained until his retirement from active practice on March 31, 1990. Yet he has found it difficult not to see patients and thus continues to treat a few of them at his home. Herb prepares his patients with soft tissue mobilization, utilizing low volt electrotherapy to relax the musculature. This is followed by specific spinal adjustments concentrating on areas of stress, accompanied by supportive advice and exercises to be done at home. He does some nutritional counselling and recommends regular spinal check-ups to about half his clientele.

During the past 50 years, Herb has conscientiously treated tens of thousands of patients from every level of society, from millionaires to welfare recipients, while endeavouring to provide all of them with equal care and consideration.

Personal life

Community

Dr. Lee has been a member of the East York Progressive Conservative Association for 20 years and used to sit on the East York Safety Council. He belongs to two Lodges of the Masonic Order, is a 32 degree Mason and Shriner and a former member of the Grand Lodge.

Herb has belonged to St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church, on Bayview Avenue, since 1943. There he has been a Sunday School Superintendent and represented his parish as People's Warden, Rector's Warden, member of the Parish Council and lay member to the Synod.

Family

Dr. Lee met his wife, Margaret Daniel, on a blind date arranged by mutual friends. Marg, as Herb affectionately called her, was a telephone operator for Simpsons department store at the time. They were married on October 10, 1943 and lived for many years in an attractive and comfortable two storey home in the Leaside area of Toronto.

Marg bore Herb two daughters, Wendy Shephard and Lynda Barnett. Herb dotes on his three grandchildren, Allyson,

TABLE 1
AWARDS BESTOWED ON DR. H.K. LEE

- Honour member of the CCA, 1957.
- OCA Chiropractor of the Year, 1961.
- Fellow of the International College of Chiropractors, 1963.
- Professor Emeritus, CMCC, 1976.
- Chiropractic Oath Plaque, CMCC, 1976.
- Honorary Doctor of Humanities, NCC, 1982.
- Distinguished Service Award, 1983.
- CCA Life Membership, 1983.
- Recognition of 50 Years in Chiropractic, CMCC, 1987.
- Certificate of Merit, CMCC, 1988.
- CCA Medal of Merit, (1st recipient), 1988.

Michael and Jesse. Until shortly before her death on March 22, 1990, Marg continued to work part-time in Herb's office. She also remained a loyal supporter of the Ontario Chiropractic Women's Auxiliary, of which she was President from 1957-1960.

Now that Herb is semi-retired, he plans to spend more time with his family and friends at his summer cottage on the shore of Chemong Lake, north of Peterborough. There he hopes to relax and rekindle the flames of his hobbies of sailing, photography and music (He belongs to the Gilbert and Sullivan Society).

Conclusion

Since entering practice in 1941, Herb has witnessed and has been a part of many changes in the chiropractic profession. But through the years he has continued to have strong convictions about its direction. This is evident from the following quote from a recent interview:

"There were a lot of things that I disagreed with back then. For instance the majority of older chiropractors viewed medical doctors as their enemy. Many practitioners were so enthused with their profession that they made exaggerated and rash statements as to the benefits and results of treatment. Some advertised in the Yellow Pages and listed the many conditions they handled alphabetically. A number used a worthless modality called radionics. There was quite an age gap between newly graduated and established chiropractors. The last Canadian school, the Toronto College of Chiropractic, had closed in 1927 so that all recent graduates had obtained their education in the United States."

(Dr. Lee, personal correspondence)

Despite these early reservations, Dr. Lee has retained his exuberant devotion to chiropractic for five decades. While not ecstatic about the possibility of CMCC moving to Victoria, British Columbia, his greatest satisfaction has been to witness the College grow in stature and improve its curriculum and calibre of its students. He is happy with the progress of the Canadian chiropractic profession, with the exception of the current fascination with management seminars, the preoccupation with "putting the dollar ahead of service," and "the large production line practices" of some of its members.

Dr. Lee is convinced "that there is a brilliant future ahead for chiropractic. When I graduated only a small percentage of the public accepted us. Many were influenced by the opinion of the medical profession, that chiropractors were astute salesmen and that most of our patients were hypochondriacs. Today, our profession has a more scientific viewpoint and our reputation has been enhanced by the bright, young graduates who are collaborating in practice and research with medical doctors. Perhaps our continued success in treating humanity, has influenced more medical doctors to recognize the relationship between proper body mechanics, neural integrity and health."

(Dr. Lee, personal correspondence)

I have had the good fortune to have known Dr. Lee since 1951. I have found him to be a kind and patient teacher, competent and ethical colleague, reliable and willing co-worker and a loyal and compassionate friend. For 80 years, Herb has been a marvelous example of gracious manners and good health. He is always courteous, even when provoked, and has never missed a day of work from illness or injury.

Throughout his life, Herbert K. Lee, has selflessly distributed his talent, energy and substance with quiet abandon. Perhaps this quotation, from the Minutes of the Board of Management of CMCC of October 30, 1945, under correspondence, will provide insight into that largesse:

*"The only letter to be read was one from Dr. HK Lee thanking the Board for the \$100 honorarium, received for his services as Secretary/Treasurer, in which he expressed his appreciation, and donated same to the new building fund. The Chairman expressed the view that this was a very generous gesture on the part of Dr. Lee."*¹⁶

Acknowledgement

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