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Of Birthdays and Paper Trails: FCLB's 75th Anniversary

By Joseph Keating Jr., PhD

In September 2001, the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (FCLB) will celebrate the 75th anniversary of its founding. Organized in Kansas City in 1926 (almost precisely concurrent with the birth of the Chiropractic Health Bureau/CHB, forerunner of today's ICA), the International Congress of Chiropractic Examining Boards (ICCEB) was called together by 1907 Carver College graduate Harry Gallaher, DC, a member of the Oklahoma Board of Chiropractic Examiners. It was a moment of confusion and ominous changes for chiropractors. The tumultuous introduction of Palmer's neurocalometer two years before had widened the gulf among many DCs, and 1925 had seen the introduction of the first full-fledged basic science law in Connecticut. The profession was besieged from within and beyond.

Although more than half of the American states had passed chiropractic statutes by this time, basic science legislation now threatened to block the legal rights the profession had won. In unlicensed states, chiropractors were routinely arrested, tried and sentenced to jail. Morris Fishbein, MD, had just come to power in 1925 as editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and secretary-treasurer of allopathy's guild (AMA); he soon launched a nationwide anti-chiropractic propaganda campaign. And with the dawn of the CHB, there were now three national membership societies (CHB, the American Chiropractic Association/ACA and the Universal Chiropractors Association, UCA) vying for the loyalty and dues of the rank and file.

But the ICCEB would be something different: not a membership society, but a federation of lawfully constituted examining boards from the several states. Cooperative action among the licensing authorities, it was hoped, would aid in standardizing curricula among the feuding chiropractic colleges, speak with authority before legislatures and the public, facilitate licensing reciprocity among the states, and provide the leadership that seemed so fractured within the profession. The ICCEB's first leaders were generally well known to the profession, at least within their respective states (see **Table 1**).

Table 1: Officers of the International Congress of Chiropractic Examining Boards,
1926 (Turner, 1931, p. 169)

Officers

Eugene Cox,DC, North Carolina,
president

Anna M. Foy,DC, Kansas,
first vice president

R.C. Ellsworth,DC, Oregon,
second vice president

Sylva Ashworth,DC, Nebraska,
third vice president

E.J. Bullock,DC, New Hampshire,
fourth vice president

Harry Gallaher,DC, Oklahoma,
secretary-treasurer

Board of Directors

J. Ralph John,DC, Maryland

Maud Hastings,DC, Tennessee

C. Sterling Cooley,DC, Oklahoma

Myrtle Long,DC, Iowa

W.J. Robb,DC, Kansas

It was a promising start, and report after report hailed the new congress as the most promising step in professional organization to date. Early commentary on the ICCEB's activities also emphasized the cooperative sentiment that prevailed in its deliberations, despite the inclusion of straights, mixers, and pro and anti-B.J. sentiments. Two years later, the International Congress expanded its inclusive umbrella to create divisions for school leaders and officers of state chiropractic associations. This expansion suggested even greater possibilities for cooperation among the previously fractured group of chiropractors. When the ACA and UCA merged in 1930 to form the National Chiropractic Association (NCA; the immediate forerunner of today's ACA), many saw an alliance with the International Chiropractic Congress (ICC) as a

natural consequence. Many of the officers of the ICC were also leaders in the new membership society.

The profession did not have long to wait. An affiliation between NCA and the ICC was announced in 1931 (Watkins, 1931), and two years later, the monthly periodicals of the two groups were consolidated into the jointly-sponsored *The Chiropractic Journal* (today's *Journal of the ACA*). However, the affiliation between the membership society and its congress had the paradoxical effect of dismembering the ICC, because of the duplication of efforts. Accordingly, in 1934 the schools' division and state association division of the ICC became subordinate councils within the NCA. The ICCEB, on the other hand, emerged from this reorganization as it had begun: as an independently chartered alliance of state licensing boards, now to be known as the Council of State Chiropractic Examining Boards (COSCEB).

Some of the earliest actions of the COSCEB are known. It was as president of the COSCEB in the late 1930s that John Nugent, DC, launched his campaign to evaluate, rate and accredit chiropractic schools. His efforts paralleled those of C.O. Watkins, DC, who had led the formation of the NCA's Committee on Education in 1935 (Keating, et al., 1998). Labeled the "Anti-Christ of chiropractic" by Palmer, Nugent drew praise and condemnation for the "bootstrapping" of chiropractic education. His early activities on behalf of COSCEB led to his 1941 appointment as NCA's first director of education. During the subsequent 20 years he succeeded in consolidating numerous small, proprietary schools into larger, financially sounder and nonprofit colleges. Nugent led the formation in 1947 of the NCA Council on Education, and this agency was a direct ancestor of today's CCE.

The ever expanding shadow of basic science laws was a menace to the profession and the patients it served. Often administered by allopaths or by university faculty friendly to political medicine, basic science laws were successful in blocking the licensure of DCs in many states. In Nebraska, for example, no chiropractor was able to get through the basic science barrier from 1929 to 1951, which meant that the Nebraska Board of Chiropractic Examiners issued no new licenses during these decades. The COSCEB attempted to overcome this threat by the formation in 1963 of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE). Among the several doctors who were influential in the NBCE's creation was a long-time member of the COSCEB, Gordon Holman, DC. The idea was that if a difficult but fair test could be established, administered by competent chiropractic examiners, it might be possible to substitute the NBCE exams for those of the basic science boards of several states. Ultimately, it would be dissatisfaction within organized medicine (Gevitz, 1988) that brought about the repeal of the basic science statutes. Texas, Utah and Washington were the last (in 1979) to eliminate these laws (see **Table 2**).

Table 2: Enactment and revocation of basic science legislation in the United States. The states are listed in chronological order of revocation, based on Gevitz (1988) and Sauer (1932).

Dates of Enactment and Revocation	Dates
1939-1967	Florida
1936-1968	Arizona
1941-1968	New Mexico
1957-1969	Kansas
1946-1970	Alaska
1940-1971	Rhode Island
1937-1972	Michigan
1935-1973	Iowa
1937-1973	Oklahoma
1933-1973	Oregon
1927-1974	Minnesota
1959-1975	Alabama
1925-1975	Connecticut
1927-1975	Nebraska
1951-1975	Nevada
1939-1975	South Dakota
1925-1975	Wisconsin
1937-1976	Colorado
1943-1976	Tennessee
1929-1977	Arkansas
1929-1978	District of Columbia
1949-1979	Texas
1959-1979	Utah
1927-1979	Washington

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the COSCEB, renamed the FCLB, once again came to the forefront as an agent for professional growth. It was the work of FCLB leaders such as Rex Wright, DC, of Kansas, who prodded the broad-scope (ACA) and straight (ICA) societies to mend their fences and support one accrediting agency for recognition by the U.S. Office of Education, which eventually got the job done. And

when the federal government finally did include the CCE among its list of educational accrediting agencies (in August 1974), the FCLB led the campaign to have the CCE's imprimatur become a standard for licensing boards throughout the nation.

In more recent times the FCLB has continued its efforts to facilitate reciprocity among examining boards and to ensure greater communication among licensing authorities. An important example of this latter goal is the creation of CINBAD, an international database of public board actions by the several cooperating jurisdictions. Like the examining boards that comprise it, the FCLB sees its mission as protecting the public.

I'd like to tell you a whole lot more about the FCLB and its noble activities. The National Chiropractic Mutual Insurance Company has commissioned the preparation of a book-length history of the FCLB, and it's my good fortune to work on this project. But there's a catch. Unfortunately, most of the records of the FCLB prior to 1975 have been lost or discarded. Most of the paper trail has seemingly been lost. The first 50 years of this saga are not available at the FCLB headquarters in Greeley, Colorado.

And so I make a plea to the profession, and especially to those current and former members of state boards of chiropractic examiners who have participated in the FCLB's (and before it, the COSCEB's and the ICCEB's) activities over the course of the chiropractic century. I make a plea also to those sons and daughters, nieces and nephews of chiropractors who have participated in this saga over the decades. I ask that you look to your files, or to your relatives' files, to find the documentary basis for telling this tale.

Please look in your attics, basements, garages, storage rooms, and other forgotten nooks and crannies for items such as conference proceedings, minutes of meetings, resolutions, council newsletters, photographs of participating doctors, and the like. Perhaps you know of an elder doctor who participated in or can recall events related to the FCLB's activities. Ask that person about his or her time of service to the state board or to the FCLB.

If you're not sure what may be relevant, I can be reached at:

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We will be glad to answer your questions. There will never be a better opportunity to discover the details of this noble organization. Thanks for your help in rediscovering this important aspect of chiropractic history.

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