
In Memoriam

Joseph C. Keating, Jr, PhD, LittD (1950–2007)



The chiropractic scholarly community will be without one of its most enduring personalities for evermore. Without question, the most published scholar in the profession, Joseph C. Keating, Jr, PhD, passed away October 14, 2007, at the age of 57. Joe served many roles during his more than 20 years of service to the profession. Over the past decade, he became known as the incontrovertible foremost chiropractic historian—and gave his efforts, time, and passion extensively to the Association for the History of Chiropractic. Joe’s legacy will live on in the careers of those he nurtured.

Joe was an officer in many chiropractic organizations and was presented awards from nearly every chiropractic college and society. Not only recognized for his impressive writings, Joe was a featured speaker at many events because of his wittiness, entertaining lecturing methods, and knowledge of reasoning and philosophy. Joe worked for no less than half a dozen chiropractic colleges during his career and, by virtue of his itinerant nature, had a profound geographical effect on chiropractic faculty members. An author of at least 500 published articles, the profession has lost its most productive scholar in history, and likely that of history to come. His loss will leave a void in the scholarly voice of chiropractic.

Yet, for those who knew Joe best, while his writing prowess was indeed awesome, we will miss him most for his mentoring of junior scholar-practitioners. Joe gave to us all that we could assimilate and continued counseling many of us into our mid-careers. He treated each of us as though he was our own personal dissertation

advisor, continually offering advice, stimulating thought, and providing encouragement. While in our minds, Joe's time was up too soon, his legacy will live on through us and the deeds we perform.

Mentors are people who change you. They affect your behavior; you might find that you do something based on that person's prior interactions with you, such as the style in which you write, the strategies you use to teach, approaches you take to coaching, or how you interact with patients. A mentor is more than a teacher; a mentor leaves an indelible positive influence on how you think and behave in, usually, more than one dimension. A mentor shows you how to mentor someone else. I was fortunate to have been mentored by Joe.

Joe was my teacher of scholarship and science. He taught me how to make unobtrusive measures, how to ask pointed questions, how to measure clinical change in a meaningful way, and the basic skills of how to be a scholar. He taught me how to make a meaningful difference in the lives of my patients and students; he taught me how to be reasonable and how to communicate with other health care professionals. Without these skills, and without Joe's willingness to love and mentor a very rough youth, my life path would look very different. In fact, it is doubtful that my career would have been successful without Joe's guidance. Joe gave me the courage to ask grand questions and taught me to be judicious and conservative in my conclusions. Everyday when I work with patients and students, Joe's influence on my life has a direct influence on their health and learning, respectively. I cannot think of a more powerful effect to have on the world. Patients and pupils of the past, present, and future will have their lives altered by Joe's influence on my life.

If all of us could have such an enduring influence on the lives of others, how much better would our world be? B.J. Palmer is credited with saying, "You never know how far reaching something you think, say, or do today will affect the lives of millions tomorrow." Joe lived up to that. May we all do the same.

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