



MODERN FATHER OF CANADIAN CHIROPRACTIC PASSES

Paul F. Carey (March 17, 1943 - October 31, 2023)

One of the most influential figures in the history of modern-day chiropractic in Canada, Dr Paul F. Carey, has passed away following a long illness. He was 80.

Paul Carey was born on St Patrick's Day, 1943, the son of a British father and Irish mother. He grew up on the tough East side of Toronto, where disputes were often settled on the basis of physical dominance than diplomatic negotiation. Driven by a love for his high-school sweetheart and later wife, Nina, and with a steely desire to improve himself, the young Paul took a part-time job, mainly outside school hours, with Eaton's department store in Toronto.

Paul opted to use his earnings to pay fees to attend St Michael's College, a respected Catholic private school in Toronto. However his job forced him to cut some afternoon classes. When his father was summoned by the principal who said this was a waste of the tuition fees being paid, and threatened expulsion, his father said, "Talk to Paul, not me – he is the one paying."

Suffering from persistent back problems as a teenager, Paul changed his career choice from dentistry to chiropractic. Despite numerous chiropractic schools in the United States, at that time there was only a single institution for Canadians, which fortunately was based in Toronto.

Dr Carey graduated from the then Bloor Street-based Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in 1967, at a time when chiropractic was



Dr Paul F. Carey

becoming increasingly popular due to its coverage, through multiple union contracts, by a number of health and accident insurance companies.

Upon graduation, the 24-year-old Paul Carey moved to Stratford, a bustling town 80 miles (129km) southwest of Toronto and established his clinic, Chiropractic Healthcare, from which he became highly respected in his community, treating tens of thousands of patients during the course of his 48-year career.

After just four years in practice, in 1971, Dr Carey joined the Board of the Ontario Chiropractic Association (OCA), the largest of

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Canada's provincial associations. Serving on the OCA Board, he passed through its various offices and was its president between 1981 and 1983. Having secured the services of Mr David Chapman-Smith in 1982, a significant part of Dr Carey's tenure was engaged in developing legislation to regulate the practice of chiropractic in Ontario. What was intended

to be a two-year process took almost ten, with the Chiropractic Act finally receiving Royal Assent in 1991.

The mid-1980s were challenging times for chiropractors in Canada. Following a number of high-profile incidents, in 1985 the insurance market abandoned the chiropractic profession, leaving practitioners with no public indemnity



The WFC Council (1993) with Dr. Paul Carey standing (front, fifth from left)

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coverage. This existential threat to the practice of chiropractic as an accepted health profession in Canada called for drastic steps to be taken.

At the time, Dr Carey was vice-president of the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA). Facing a critical situation, the CCA shouldered the responsibility for finding a solution. At the eleventh hour, two weeks before the existing insurance policy for chiropractors in Canada expired (December 31, 1985), with Dr Carey as a driving force, the CCA Board of Directors voted to create a professional "protective fund".

As a CCA committee, the creation of the fund, early in 1986, with contributions from chiropractors across Canada, was the first step in the formation of the Canadian Chiropractic Protective Association (CCPA).

Within six months, the CCPA became its own, standalone entity. It was a high stakes venture. Without financial reserves and with limited experience in handling professional liability claims, the risks were significant. Dr Carey was appointed as the first President of CCPA a role he continued to hold until 2014. Working with Dr Carey, the late Dr Donald Bramham was appointed vice-president and their tireless efforts served to ensure that the CCPA got off the ground.

Past president of CMCC, Dr Jean Moss, recalls, "Paul Carey was an icon of the profession in Canada for many reasons and showed great courage in setting up the CCPA. A huge risk was being taken. If there

had been a large claim in the first few years the organization would have been quickly bankrupted. Fortunately, fate smiled on us and we got through those first few years. Paul had the foresight to make sound long-term investments and his financial and business acumen were highly respected.

"Paul was determined that chiropractors would be protected and they went to battle on claims but where the chiropractor was at fault, they would be fair with the patient and not drag things out needlessly. His resolve to support the profession was best seen during a high-profile inquest into the death of a patient in 1996 following chiropractic treatment six days earlier. Without the support of the CCPA the result would have been very different.

"Paul also had a belief that once the CCPA was financially secure, money should be ploughed back into the profession. They supported research, they supported the educational institutions in Canada, and they supported the provincial associations to get better office facilities, all the time keeping premiums at a reasonable level.

"The CCPA became an organization that was respected by insurance companies and lawyers – with a reputation to be cautious in launching a claim against one of their members in the absence of an ironclad case. Without Paul and his strong character, much of this would never have occurred."

Such was his contribution to chiropractic in Canada, in 2003, Dr Carey was named as one

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of *Dynamic Chiropractic's* People of the Year. This recognized his contribution in defense of the chiropractic profession whilst giving testimony during the Lana Dale Lewis inquest as well as his contribution to an international task force examining efficacy, safety and cost effectiveness of neck treatments.

Along with a stable and experienced Board of Directors, CCPA became a viable and vibrant reality. With a formidable reputation for sound financial strategy and astute investments, Dr Carey's leadership was instrumental in ensuring the CCPA's success. Today CCPA protects over 8,000 members and has significant reserves and claims experience.

In 1987, whilst still CCA President, Dr Carey was present at the World Chiropractic Summit, held in London, England. Some years earlier, a delegation of chiropractors to the Middle East had exposed the need for chiropractic to engage with the highest levels of healthcare in order to promote the profession and secure recognition. The vision of a global federation was born out of this and, working alongside Mr Chapman-Smith, in 1987, Dr Carey seconded a proposal to form a Presidents' Committee, which was charged with exploring the viability of such a federation being formed to represent the chiropractic profession internationally. Dr Carey's enthusiastic support of the proposal was a key driver when it was important to get all of the large



All WFC Presidents at 9th WFC Biennial Congress, Vilamoura, Portugal. Dr.Carey standing second from right.

national chiropractic associations on board with the idea of a global organization to advance the profession.

One year later, in October 1988, with almost 900 delegates in attendance from 23 countries, the World Chiropractic Congress was held in Australia to celebrate both the fiftieth anniversary of the Australian Chiropractors Association and the bicentenary of Australia's founding as a nation. On October 4, 1988, the Presidents' Committee reconvened at the Intercontinental Hotel in Sydney and, in the presence of 17 countries, a resolution to draft a constitution forming the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) was passed unanimously (ratified by the first Assembly of Members in 1991).

Dr Carey joined the WFC Council (now the Board of Directors) in 1992. He served on the Council for a total of fourteen years, finally stepping down in 2006. Having passed

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The Presidents' Meeting approving the formation of the World Federation of Chiropractic (October 4, 1988). Dr Carey standing fourth from right

through the executive offices of the WFC, he was elected as its sixth president in 2002, serving a two-year term of office.

During this time, alongside Drs Gerry Clum and Peter Dixon, Dr Carey served as a co-chair on one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken by the WFC - a Global Identity Consultation. A worldwide survey gathered the views of almost 30,000 chiropractors plus other key stakeholders from both within and outside the profession. Consensus was achieved, resulting in a number of identity statements being produced and a clear framework upon which chiropractic could promote itself worldwide.

Continuing his engagement with the profession in general and CCPA in particular, Dr Carey was a published author. With experience of managing high-value cases involving cervical artery dissection, he published works including a 1993 report on the occurrence of cerebral vascular accidents in chiropractic practice and a further paper co-authored with Dr Scott Haldeman in 2011.

Dr Carey felt strongly that chiropractors had a place on the healthcare teams of every Canadian. He was a strong advocate for the continued development of the chiropractic profession. Writing in the Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association in 2011,

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he commented:

"No profession can afford to stand still in this era of rapid change. Demanding and savvy consumers, as well as professional competition, make staying the same a huge risk. I would suggest that one of our great weaknesses has been our willingness to accept the status quo."

It was this vision of continuous development and innovation that was one of Dr Carey's greatest strengths and the one for which he will most be remembered.

After 48 years in practice, Dr Carey retired from practice in 2015 and ownership of his clinic in Stratford passed to his son, Dr David Carey, himself a 1996 graduate of CMCC. However, he retained a keen interest in the profession.

Despite his retirement from practice, Dr Carey continued his engagement with the chiropractic profession. He was a commencement speaker at a convocation of CMCC and attended a meeting of past WFC presidents in 2015 in Athens, Greece. He also continued as an active supporter of the WFC. In his honor, the Paul Carey Award was established at CMCC to recognize students holding a leadership position and developing new initiatives or programs that enhance the student experience, the curriculum, or the chiropractic profession.

Recalling his former colleague, CCPA chief executive officer Dr Dean Wright remarked,

"Paul's commitment, passion and intelligence fueled him to ensure that whatever he undertook was done to the highest level.

"Paul was unafraid to tackle a challenge - in fact, he seemed to thrive on it. His resilience was astounding. It inspired others to stretch themselves and find more to offer. He was forthright, and he was unabashedly willing to share his opinion. You always knew where you stood with Paul. While this clarity could be unsettling to some, it was a comfort for many."

Former CCA past president Dr Eleanor White commented, "When in tight spots, Paul was intelligent, thoughtful, and both cool and emotional. He planned and prepared for all types of outcomes. He was well resourced and generous in his support of a worthwhile endeavor. He could be tough as steel, but also quietly and privately supportive of a person in difficulty. His dedication to the goal, the standard and his loved ones, patients and profession was rock solid."

Paul Carey passed away on October 31, 2023 in the same quiet and dignified manner that had characterized him through life. He was predeceased by his parents Kathleen and Phillip, his first wife Nina and an infant daughter. He is survived by his second wife Florenta, brother Bill, children David, Lisa and Robert, grandchildren Nicole, Matthew, Scott, Bryce, Evan, Cameron and Ryan and great granddaughter Olivia.
