

Memories, Reflections and Heroes

These words were drafted on Good Friday, a day long set aside by this writer as a time of reflection and remembering. This year it was a particularly delightful Autumn morning; the red chilies were harvested and set on the window ledge to dry in the gentler sun before making their way to winter soups and curries. It was a good feeling to take time to be proactive, a stark contrast to the past year or so during which numerous external forays against chiropractic could only be fended by a reactive behaviour.

It was also a good time to remember the three great chiropractors who have passed away over recent weeks; Drs Vear, Takeyachi, and Gold, and reflect on the marvelous attainments each had selflessly given to the advancement of chiropractic over many years. These men are heroes of our profession as attested in each *In Memoriam* in this issue. No doubt each of us can add a fourth, but hopefully not any more, hero of our own who left our world during this time. For this writer it was a family friend of some 37 years in Tasmania. While being in that State for a day and a half immersed in the traditions of a small town Catholic burial a striking realisation occurred.

Australia is a collection of communities, unlike the United States which is really a collection of 50 countries, each of great cultural diversity and even significantly different dialects in both geographic and sociocultural terms. The seamlessness of two weeks in Mackay, a night in Melbourne and an overnight visit to Hobart and The Huon was an experience of moving through Australian communities albeit with some temperature difference. But in each Australians are an obviously homogenous people regardless of their ethnicity.

Chiropractic is also homogenous throughout our great country. Sure, our profession retains an amazing intra-discipline variation in practice style but this is simply a reflection of the highly variable clinical presentation of the vertebral subluxation complex. The point is, there is really nothing to tell me whether I am in Stephen's clinic in Harrington St, Phillip's on Lower Plenty, Donald's in Weedon Close or Sarah's at Fourways on Nebo Road.

And every one of our communities has its heroes, yet here the term 'community' is able to be broadened to include larger groupings of like-minded people, such as those very committed heroes who create the annual Dynamic Growth experiences. One marvels at the professionalism of volunteers. Similarly we see our heroes at work serving Spinal Research, and then we can see the same names appear on the State or National boards of the CAA, the program

advisory committees of our educational institutions, even the accrediting body. And if we look closely at, for example, the national board of directors of the CAA we see chiropractors who commit six to 8 weekends a year flying somewhere at the cheapest available airfare to stay in a midrange hotel with a meeting room in which some 15 hours is committed to working face-to-face towards common professional goals.

Service to our communities should preclude any culture of self-entitlement and, common to all of our boards of governance, about the only benefit is a dinner on Saturday night of the standard the reader would share with their family and friends. For Board members these are always working affairs with guests representative of the local community.

However it must be noted that serving on a board does not make one a hero, it simply marks one as a servant. Heroes are smelted in the fire outside the frying pan. If only we could know the full and complete stories of Herb, Kazu or Reggie; then we would get a sense of how much more each of us needs to contribute in the absence of personal gain.

The good news is we can each be a hero, always first to our relational family and then to our broader chiropractic family. To this writer, heroes include those chiropractors in Mackay who are providing *pro bono* care for chiropractic students, a wonderful way to not only bring real-world actualisation to their class room experience but to exemplify optimal professional behaviours. Other heroes of this writer include that very small number of chiropractic clinical educators, about 10 nationally, who week after week lead the care of disadvantaged members of our community within the outreach clinics of our chiropractic universities.

Remembering and reflecting should not be maudlin, rather, it can be a quiet time for personal growth, especially when we consider a chiropractic hero or two and seek to learn from their example.

The obvious, formulaic conclusion to a piece like this is to ask 'who are your heroes?' The more challenging proposition is look within ourselves and ask 'to whom am I a hero?' Paradoxically a null response can be life-changing, while care must be taken with a positive response, it could be delusional.

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