MEMORIAL: DR. EARL FRANKLIN CRATON, D.C., Ph.C., A MAN TO REMEMBER

BY YVONNE CRATON KENNEDY

Figure 1: Dr. Earl Craton.

Dr. Earl Franklin Craton, D.C., Ph.C. (Figure 1), was born on a farm near Downing, Wisconsin, on July 6, 1902. He had 4 brothers and 2 sisters. The family moved to Mitchell, South Dakota when Earl was a small boy, and later moved back on the farm in that area.

Earl's mother, Edith Craton, suffered from severe headaches which caused her to vomit repeatedly, and the children were called home from school many times to care for her. In a search for help for his wife, Earl's father, Jay Craton, took her to medical doctors, and at one point visited the Mayo Clinic, all to no avail.

He finally took her to a local Mitchell, SD chiropractor named Dr. Solberg, who treated Edith's headaches, and did more for her than all of the other doctors combined, including those at the Mayo Clinic. From the inspiration of Dr. Solberg, 3 of the 7 Craton children became chiropractors.

Earl graduated from the Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, IA, on March 11, 1925. On March 13, 1925, he took a train to Shawnee, OK, to begin his practice with his sister Dr. Ruth Payton, in her chiropractic clinic.

Several months into his practice, at the insistence of one of his patients, Dr. Craton treated a greyhound dog,

making it possible for the dog to race again. This was one of the earliest animal chiropractic treatments.

Dr. Craton left his sister to branch out on his own and moved his home and office to Enid, OK in 1929. He married Helene Renfro in 1930, and they had 2 daughters, Mavis and Yvonne.

Dr. Craton helped many people in his practice in Enid for almost 30 years. But, he was disappointed when any of his patients did not respond to his care. Dr. Craton married Dr. Florence VanOsdol, D.C., in 1950. He continued his practice in Enid until 1957 when he sold his home and went on the road to teach doctors, not receiving the response he had sought.

Disillusioned with chiropractic, he quit his practice, and while living in Beaumont, TX went into the business of sandblasting and kenetexing houses, and vowed he would never return to chiropractic again.

But, in 1959 he did return, opening up his office in Fort Worth, TX. With renewed vision, he conducted his own research and developed his own method of adjusting the head and the hip that was different from what he had been taught in chiropractic school. He observed closely an actual human skull, and discovered it had 4 facets, instead of the 2 facets the anatomy textbooks still list. With enthusiasm, and without fear, he pointed out his findings, feeling "duty bound" in his own words, to help his profession.

At one point he had a wooden splinter in his hand that was not detectable because of its color. His hand swelled to such an extent that a doctor suggested he might have to have it amputated. Can you imagine a chiropractor having his hand taken off? But, with antibiotics and eventually removing the splinter, his hand was saved, allowing him to continue his practice.

We all remember what happened on November 22, 1963 the day President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated. But what is not known is that a letter from a patient of Dr. Craton's by the name of Marion Ludwig arrived at the White House before President Kennedy made his trip to Dallas. Mr. Ludwig worked in Government Service in Washington, D.C., and had been

so impressed with the help he received from Dr. Craton, he wanted to recommend him to President Kennedy for his well-known back problems.

Mr. Ludwig had suggested that, perhaps, when the President arrived in Fort Worth before going on to Dallas, he might stop in to see Dr. Craton to see if he could help his back.

Of course, this never happened. We do not know if he ever received the letter.

Dr. Craton's individual expertise became known as Nerve Signal Interference Removal. This was his "baby," and he was the original Nerve Signal Interference specialist.

Dr. Craton received the distinction of being awarded the Texas Chiropractic College's Centennial Award in exclusive recognition of exemplary service to the chiropractic profession in 1995.

In feeling "duty bound" to get his message across, he had articles published in chiropractic journals. He met with chiropractors and inquiring osteopaths to teach them his work. He participated in dissections. He had hoped to get his methods taught in the chiropractic colleges, but when it was learned that Dr. Craton insisted his methods be taught by themselves alone, and not with their current curriculum, they were not willing to make the change.

What has been the impact of Dr. Craton's discoveries to mankind? Immeasurable! It was the patients who got well who told him, "Doc, you've got to get this out!" He was known for fixing the "hard cases."

What has been the impact of Dr. Craton's discoveries to the chiropractic profession in the past? In spite of all of his hard work and effort, he was brokenhearted at the lack of response from the profession. He reached few doctors in comparison to the many he sought to teach.

Dr. Craton searched for someone to carry on his work, fearing it would die with him. What a loss that would be!

Dr. Craton taught 2 of his grandchildren his work: his grandson, Dr. Joel Miller, an osteopath in Colorado, and his granddaughter, Tammy Joy Kennedy, a Nerve Signal Interference specialist. Dr. Craton taught Tammy for 14 years. He signed a notarized document certifying her to carry on his work as a Nerve Signal Interference specialist.

Dr. Craton moved his office from Fort Worth to his home he built in Granbury, TX. In March of 1996, he moved back to Enid, OK, to be near his daughter Yvonne and her husband Alfred. During this time he tended his 20-fruit orchard. When his health began to fail, he made his home with Yvonne and Alfred.

He passed away on January 13, 2002, at the age of 99 years, 6 months and 7 days, without realizing his dream of his wonderful discoveries being fully accepted by the world.

On July 6, 1984, his 82nd birthday, Dr. Craton and his daughter, Yvonne, spoke about his work on an audio cassette tape. Here are his own words:

"I feel morally obligated to leave to my profession that which I know is an improvement over what we know now today. And time, of course, will tell how much improvement it is, but it could be used as a stepping stone to keep improving our work." "The disappointed patients, from past efforts to get well, have been so enthusiastic over what I have accomplished, that it has inspired me to keep going with this." "This is just the beginning."

Which brings me to my final question. What will be the impact of Dr. Craton's discoveries to the chiropractic profession in the future? That will be up to you. His work lives on at NSIR Technologies, in the town he lived for so many years, Enid, OK.

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