

Dr. Steven Weiniger's Ripple Effect *Entrusting the Gift of Education to Logan*

There are times in one's life when a single action can set off a chain of events ... shaping a career, shifting a mindset and sparking change.

As kids, many of us, innately awed by the body of water, can recall standing at the water's edge with small stones in hand. With a heaving toss, we'd release each stone and delight in where the rock landed and the size of its splash. Our skills were measured by how many ripples we could create.

Today, there are doctors of chiropractic who still embrace the simple, yet significant, pleasure of creating ripple effects. Only, their outcomes are measured by how many lives they can positively alter through their chiropractic care and teachings.

Career Path Takes Unexpected Turn

As a young man growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y., during the 1970s, Steven Weiniger was sure of two things: he wanted to use his life and career to help people, and he loved science.

But, the mid-1970s ushered in a period of economic uncertainty. While Steven was the first person in his immediate family to graduate from college, the future he planned in scientific research looked bleak. With the recession stripping funding from many university research programs, he reflected on his passions—science and healing—and spoke with his childhood buddy who was pursuing a chiropractic degree in the Midwest.

Steven decided to stay close to his New York roots but broaden his career focus to chiropractic. In 1979, he graduated from New York College of Chiropractic and was ready to make a move. His first step would take him to an unlikely setting for a New Yorker—Georgia, ironically the same area where his childhood friend had established his chiropractic practice.

Despite the doctor of chiropractic diploma that hung on his practice's wall, Dr. Weiniger never stopped advancing his education. His postgraduate pursuits led him to rehabilitation seminars across the country and as far away as Prague, Czech Republic. Along the way, he discovered a new practice focus, posture, and a new personal passion, yoga.

By combining what he learned from his chiropractic and rehabilitation studies, affinity for yoga and teachings at the Prague School of Rehabilitation, he developed StrongPosture™, a series of exercises and tools to help patients move and live well. His new practice focus and posture-related resources soon caught the attention of state chiropractic associations. What began as a 12-hour seminar for the Georgia Chiropractic Association, soon led to more teaching invitations within his state and across the country. Before long, the teaching "ripple" he created began to flood his schedule.

"I never intended to spend so much of my career teaching, but new doors kept opening for me," said Dr. Weiniger. "After a few years, I found myself treating patients until late on Friday evenings, boarding a plane to teach a seminar all weekend only to return home and begin treating patients on Monday mornings."

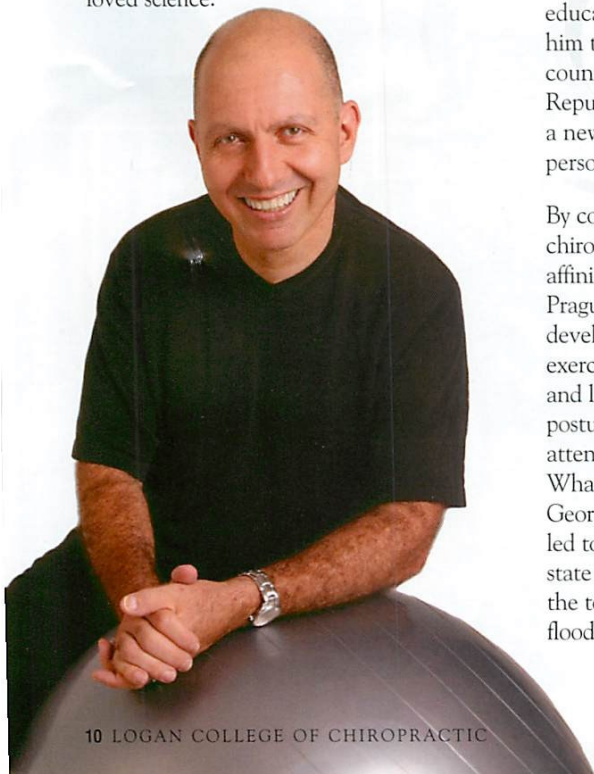
The rigors of his travels prompted him to once again reevaluate his passions. Dr. Weiniger contemplated how best to extend his practice teachings and tools to a greater body of patients and doctors.

Casting a New Stone

In 2006, Dr. Weiniger sold his chiropractic practice to his associate. His hands, once dedicated solely for the treatment of patients, now spent their days toiling on a computer keyboard. For the next several years, Dr. Weiniger focused on publishing his book *Stand Taller~Live Longer*, which he says offers patients a layman's instruction manual for improving their posture and overall health. He also worked with his associates to develop computer programs and other tools for doctors of chiropractic who are committed to improving patients' posture and the profession's standing.

"I sold my practice so I could keep teaching," he said. "By focusing on education and new resources for chiropractors, I expanded my reach beyond the patients inside my practice. My goal is to not only improve patients' health through proper posture instruction and technique, but to advance trained chiropractors as posture experts. With the aging baby boomer population and the country's focus on health reform, the opportunity has never been greater for chiropractors to assume a leadership role."

On his journey to brand chiropractors as posture experts, his career path steered him to Logan College of Chiropractic. There, he lectured for Dr. Ralph Barrale's class on the importance of helping patients improve their posture for healthy movement and lifestyles. The talk sparked discussions of a certification program with Dr. Barrale, Logan's vice president of chiropractic affairs and dean of postgraduate education. The meeting





Scheduled construction continues on the new Education Wing building on the Logan campus. The building is expected to be completed in January 2012.

also led Dr. Weiniger to a realization: the roots of his posture teachings trace back to Dr. H.B. Logan's Basic Technique.

"I knew that if I wanted to impact the future of chiropractic, I needed to engage with Logan College," he said. Today, Dr. Weiniger offers two certifications for health providers:

- Chiropractic Posture Therapy Specialist, a 36-hour program open only to chiropractors, which Logan's postgraduate department will offer July 16-17 and August 20-21
- Posture Exercise Professional, available to chiropractors, massage therapists, physical therapists and chiropractic assistants

"Our certified posture specialists are taught to find where to adjust and how to assess the patient's posture and motion following the treatment to ensure effectiveness," said Dr. Weiniger. "We're providing chiropractors with a clinical tool akin to a visual palpation."

A Lasting Gift

Dr. Weiniger's presence on the Logan campus will soon be evident outside of the postgraduate department. During the Foundation for Chiropractic Education & Research (FCER) bankruptcy proceedings, he learned the bankruptcy court was planning to transfer one of the foundation's endowments, The Esther Geil Trust Fund, to a non-chiropractic institution.

Ms. Esther Geil of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, established the trust "to provide assistance to chiropractic colleges in the acquisition and improvement of equipment and in the furtherance of educational endeavors." She made the gift "in appreciation for the services and kindness provided to me by Dr. Peter H. Wierenga, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, of whom I have been a patient for more than 40 years."

"When I heard of the plans for the Geil Trust, which was intended to further the education of chiropractic students, I hit the roof," he said. "I made an impassioned argument that such a move would be an abdication of the trust and its intention."

The bankruptcy lead attorney agreed. He asked Dr. Weiniger what he proposed the court do with the trust and he immediately thought of Dr. Barrale and Logan College.

"In my work with Dr. Barrale, I view him as a doctor of chiropractic and educator who realizes the potential for the profession to be greater and do more than it ever has," Dr. Weiniger said. "Based on my experiences working with Dr. Barrale and Logan on educating the chiropractic community about the role of posture, I knew that Logan College should be the rightful home of the trust to ensure the integrity of its educational intentions ... and so I recommended Logan to the bankruptcy attorney."

Last fall, Logan learned of Dr. Weiniger's recommendation and shared information on the college's plans to establish an assessment center to refine students' clinical experiences for enhanced patient outcomes. The court ruled in Dr. Weiniger's and Logan's favor, confirming the assessment center, which will now house a room named for The Esther Geil Trust Fund and its \$88,000 gift, meets the donor's original intent to support chiropractic education.

"Dr. Weiniger's generous act is not only a great service to Logan students, and their

future patients, who will benefit from the assessment center's clinical teachings, but it's a validation that Logan College is a leader in the study of biomechanics and chiropractic research and technique," said Dr. Barrale. "His lessons on posture and commitment to professional advancement through his certification programs are rooted in a passion for chiropractic education. Now, we can help spark this passion, fueled by Dr. Weiniger and the Geil Trust, with the next generation of chiropractors."

As for Dr. Weiniger, he humbly perceives his role in securing the Geil Trust for Logan as simply "honoring the intent of the donor and Logan's educational mission." He added, "I could not have constructed the career path that I'm on or planned for the Geil Trust opportunity. I feel like every step I've taken has been like laying down a brick, paving the right direction for a chiropractic journey that offers limitless opportunities and destinations. I believe that if we wish to engage with the patient community and elevate chiropractic's value and role, we have to empower people. My hope is that through my teachings and the Geil Trust, we can make a greater contribution in the education of chiropractic students and physicians, and extend our benefits and reach to more patients."

What Dr. Weiniger gained through his postgraduate studies and friendship with Dr. Barrale he has passed on, and now the ripple he created in his home state of Georgia has reached immeasurable miles and touched countless lives. His acts call to mind the inspirational words once spoken by Robert F. Kennedy, "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope."