

# Remembering Wilfrid Oliver Morgan, DC, FICC 1922–2006

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Dr. Wilf Morgan, DC, FICC

When Dr. Wilfrid Oliver Morgan died on April 30, 2006, the Canadian chiropractic profession lost one of its most respected practitioners and statesmen.

He was born November 24, 1922 in Norquay, Saskatchewan, to Fred and Myrtle Morgan. He graduated from Scott Collegiate in Regina, Saskatchewan, and had two siblings – Madelon, who now resides in Parksville,

B.C. and John from Vancouver, who predeceased Wilf. He studied aeronautics for one year in Los Angeles, which helped to prepare him for 3½ years of service in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a pilot and flying instructor in the Second World War. On January 8, 1944, he married Geraldine (Gerry) Johnstone, also of Regina. At the end of the war, Wilf was turned down for a position as a commercial pilot because he was considered too young, at age 22. Aviation's loss proved to be chiropractic's gain.

His first introduction to chiropractic occurred early in life when he witnessed the remarkable results his ailing mother obtained through chiropractic treatment. As a result of this early experience, and his exposure to chiropractors on Gerry's side of the family, (Gerry's father, Dr. A.W. Johnstone; her brother, Dr. W.W. (Bill) Johnstone; and three uncles, Jack Lillico, Harris Johnstone, and Andrew Nicholson, were all chiropractors), he decided on a career in chiropractic. He enrolled in the inaugural class of Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC) in Toronto, Ontario, on September 18, 1945.

By the time he graduated from CMCC on May 20, 1949, he had excelled in academics and athletics, had been active in several clubs and organizations, gained the unanimous respect of fellow students and professors and received the prestigious Dr. Walter T. Sturdy Scholarship. In the 1946-47 academic year, he was elected president of the CMCC Student Administrative Council.

After graduation, Wilf, Gerry, and their young son, Scott, moved to Vancouver. He established a practice in the South Fraser area on July 25, 1949, where he practiced alone until 1960 when Dr. Bob Beattie joined him in practice. In 1969, Dr. Norman Schneider also joined the practice. In 1972, when Dr. Beattie left to establish his own practice in Delta, Dr. Blake Alderson associated

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with Drs. Morgan and Schneider at their 6685 Fraser Street location.

Immediately after beginning practice, Dr. Morgan volunteered his time and effort to professional and community service. In September 1949, he was elected to the board of the British Columbia Chiropractors' Association. His tenure with the BCCA board was sixteen years, including over two years – 1955 to 1957 – as president. He also joined the Kiwanis service club where he eventually served as president. In the mid-1950s after the birth of his daughter, Merrilee, he became involved with the Association for the Mentally Handicapped (later renamed the Developmental Disabilities Association). He served on the board of directors for sixteen years and continued to be actively involved in the association throughout most of his life.

His professional responsibilities expanded beyond B.C.'s borders when he was elected B.C.'s representative to the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA) and the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College Association – serving in both capacities until 1965. He was chairman of the CCA Education Committee from 1958 until 1961, during which time he was instrumental in establishing the Canadian Chiropractic Examining Board. In 1961, he was elected president of the CCA and remained in that position until 1963.

His position as CCA president occurred during a crucial period in Canadian chiropractic history. At that time, Chief Justice Emmett Hall was conducting the Royal Commission on Health Services. Dr. Morgan (with the assistance of Drs. Ralph Chatwin, Don Sutherland, Bruno Marini, Donald MacMillan, and legal counsel, John Burton) prepared an extensive brief on behalf of the CCA for the commission in May 1962. The brief – monumental in scope – was followed by an equally thorough rebuttal submission in October 1962, also written primarily by Dr. Morgan. These documents were instrumental in chiropractic's inclusion in health care insurance plans across Canada. Later in 1962, he joined forces once again with B.C. Chiropractic Association president, Dr. Ralph Chatwin, to prepare and present yet another brief to the Royal Commission on the Workmen's Compensation Board – which effectively thwarted an attempt to remove chiropractic from Workmen's Compensation coverage.

Dr. Morgan was the recipient of many awards, honours and recognitions, including: CCA honorary membership

(1963); CCA Medal of Merit (CCA's highest award); Centennial Medal from the Government of Canada (1967); fellowship, International College of Chiropractors (1969); honorary life membership, BCCA (1977); 25th Anniversary Medal from Her Majesty, the Queen (1977); life membership, CMCC Association (1984); and honorary membership, Association for the Mentally Handicapped. In addition, he delivered the 1973 CMCC commencement address and has served on almost every BCCA committee. In 1995, in recognition of his many years of service, he was awarded the CCA's Centennial Award of Excellence.

After 33 years in practice, Dr. Morgan retired in September 1983. His retirement marked the end of a very important era in the history of chiropractic in British Columbia, and Canada.

Despite his unselfish and tireless professional dedication, Dr. Morgan was, first and foremost, a family man. He is survived by his wife, Gerry; their eldest son, Scott, and his wife, Cathy, and their children, Paul and Matthew; daughter, Merrilee; son, Brent, and his wife, Lorene, and their four children, Andrea, Jennifer, Tara and Stephen; and youngest daughter, Sydney, and her husband, Larry Hughes, and their two children, Kailey and Brynn. All three generations live in the Vancouver area. He is also survived by his sister, Madelon Buhr; sister-in-law, Arliss Kehoe of Richmond, B.C., as well as four nephews and two nieces. One nephew, Bruce Johnstone, is the financial editor of the *Leader-Post* newspaper in Regina and the other three nephews, Drs. W.A. (Bill) Johnstone of Regina, R.J. (Bob) Johnstone of Ajijic, Mexico, and Bradley Kehoe of Richmond, B.C., are all chiropractors. His nieces are: Elizabeth (Beth) Duff of Edmonton, and Shelly Milligan of Richmond, B.C.

In order to fully appreciate Dr. Morgan, it is not enough to simply list his many accomplishments. It is essential to understand some of his exceptional personal attributes.

Anyone who had the honour of knowing him during his active professional career would regard him as chiropractic's voice of reason. Even in the heat of boisterous, emotional debate at meetings, Dr. Morgan inevitably offered calm, clear, analytical solutions to seemingly insoluble problems. And, because of his respectful, dignified and objective approach, he always managed to deal strictly with the issues, avoiding any personal offence.

When Dr. Morgan spoke, people listened. It was almost impossible to disagree with his arguments because he was always so articulate, persuasive and thoughtful.

Wilf Morgan was a true gentleman – in every sense of the word. He was altruistic, intelligent and articulate. He was thoroughly devoted – to his family, to his patients, to his profession, and to his community. Moreover, he was supportive, always willing to listen, to offer meaningful and profound advice, and to help in any way possible. He

was a mentor and role model for many. A humble person, Dr. Morgan always took his own contributions to the profession for granted. Those who knew him realize that his contributions far exceeded the call of duty. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

#### Acknowledgements

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