Our Past, Present, and Future Are in Our Hands

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"No matter what your history has been,
your destiny is what you create today."
— Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*

History is sometimes a combination of facts and hearsay—perspectives from varying points of view and some twisted accounts of occurrences with opinions and interpretations thrown in for color. It is challenging to piece together the facts of an event and how it leads to another, the motivations of the people behind the events, and the effects they have on people, institutions, and society, at that time and well into the future. For Norman Gevitz, PhD, an authority on osteopathic history for more than 3 decades, this challenge is a passion. He has authored numerous books, chapters, and articles on the history and sociology of medicine; has been a professor at several colleges of osteopathic medicine (currently professor and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at the A.T. Still University Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Missouri); and has taught and lectured worldwide. Throughout his illustrious career, he has stimulated the osteopathic profession to re-examine its origins, purpose, vision, and mission.

In a special series of 6 articles that will be published throughout the year in *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, Dr Gevitz tackles tough questions that have not been answered adequately by historians to date. He strives to paint a factual portrait of the development of osteopathy and the DO degree from its origins to the present, and he poses challenging questions for the profession. In the first article,[1] which begins on page 30 of this issue, he seeks the origin of osteopathy and the DO degree, Dr Still's purported MD degree, and the influence of Dr Still's "magnetic healer" and "bonesetter" years on the evolution of osteopathy.

In the second article,[2] he examines the establishment of the American School of Osteopathy, the development of the curriculum, the legal battles that allowed graduates to treat patients, and the schools started by Dr Still's early students. The third article[3] in the series attends to the evolving status of the DO degree in the first 3 decades of the 20th century and chronicles the ongoing debate within the profession whether to adopt the MD degree in addition to, or instead of, the DO degree.

The fourth article[4] addresses the ensuing 30 years and the march toward the coveted physician's and surgeon's unlimited scope of practice license. This article includes the introduction of pharmacology into standard osteopathic curriculum and the events leading up to the infamous California merger incident. The fifth article[5] describes the transformation of the Doctor of Osteopathy to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine during the latter third of the 20th century, the continuing debate regarding the title of the osteopathic graduate degree, the tremendous growth of the profession, and the diminishing role of osteopathic manipulation in curricula and practice.

In his final article,[6] Dr Gevitz gives his perspective on how the osteopathic medical profession should focus its time, talent, and treasure to solve its greatest problem: its identity. He gives a clear, concise, and focused path toward resolution of the century-old debate about the DO designation, its viability, and its value. These thought-provoking and enlightening articles should serve as a wakeup call to DOs in the United States to act accordingly and make a difference—the difference a DO makes. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2014.001)

References

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