

## Tribute to a Warrior



JAMES D. EDWARDS, DC

**T**o my knowledge, no ACA chairman of the board has ever used his *Journal of the American Chiropractic Association* column to eulogize a fallen warrior. That is...until now.

Dr. Gerald M. Brassard enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the ACA, serving in 1964 on the "Committee of 100" that established the ACA. In addition to serving as ACA president and executive vice president, he also spent time as ACA's director of governmental affairs. Prior to his work at ACA's national headquarters, Dr. Brassard was one of the three original incorporators of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners and served as president of the Texas Board of Chiropractic Examiners and the Texas Chiropractic Association. A true champion of the chiropractic profession, Dr. Brassard was named Doctor of the Year in Texas in 1959, and was chosen Outstanding Chiropractor of the Year at the joint convention of the

American Chiropractic Association and the International Chiropractors Association in 1987.

After his death last June, the ACA board of governors unanimously adopted a motion to commission a bronze bust of Dr. Brassard to honor his many years of service to the ACA and to the life he dedicated to the chiropractic profession. I am extremely proud that the board of governors took that action, but I am even more proud that the members of the board agreed to personally pay 100 percent of the cost.

On March 8, 2002, at the National Chiropractic Legislative Conference (NCLC) in Washington, D.C., ACA President Dr. Daryl Wills told the assembly about Dr. Brassard's dedication and unveiled his bronze bust with his wife Mae and sons Dr. Richard Brassard (ACA Council of Delegates president) and Raymond Brassard in attendance. As a fitting honor to this great man, the bust of Dr. Brassard is now permanently displayed at the ACA home office.

I first met Dr. Brassard in Dallas, Texas, in the early 1980s at a Parker Seminar, where he was representing the ACA and I was the vice chairman of the Parker College Board of Trustees. Although I was a "young pup" back then, I had already met many of this profession's leaders. But there was something different about Dr. Brassard that really impressed me. It was the passion I heard in his voice and the fire I saw in his eyes as he discussed the issues facing this profession.

Although I followed Dr. Brassard's career of service to the ACA and the profession over the next two decades, we did not have an opportunity to visit at any length again until we both attended the

Texas Chiropractic Association (TCA) Convention in 1999 in Corpus Christi. During my address, I discussed the importance of the HCFA lawsuit and how every DC should take up arms in defense of this profession.

Afterward, Dr. Brassard came up to me and congratulated me on my remarks. He did that not once...not twice...but three separate times that evening. And even though he was in his late 70s at that time, I heard the same passion in his voice and saw the same fire in his eyes.

So what did I say that night that so touched this giant of the profession? Thanks to computers, I was able to search my documents and locate the comments that I believe so impacted Dr. Brassard.

I told the TCA members that in the first generation of chiropractic, it was chiropractors like Dr. Lyndon Edmond Lee of New York, who was arrested and in court 30 times for "practicing medicine without a license," who made the difference. I also mentioned Dr. Foster Lee Lemley of Texas who was arrested 66 times for practicing chiropractic during the '20s, '30s, and '40s. When it was their "watch," they were willing to go to jail to ensure that chiropractic survived.

I then told the audience about the next generation of chiropractors who stood up to protect chiropractic, the ones who legally challenged the American Medical Association in the 1970s when it was doing everything it could, legally and illegally, to destroy chiropractic. My remarks included the AMA Committee on Quackery, whose stated goal was to contain and eliminate chiropractic and who described chiropractors as "rabid killers." Fortunately, that second

generation of chiropractors, of which Dr. Brassard was a key leader, took up arms against the mighty AMA and defeated it in court. That generation met the challenge and fulfilled its mission of preserving and defending chiropractic on its "watch."

I concluded by saying that chiropractic doesn't belong to any chiropractor. It never has and it never will. Chiropractic belongs to humanity and we are only the caretakers of it for this particular generation. What we do with it—how we preserve, defend, protect, and nurture it—will affect many generations to come. It is now our "watch," and our primary responsibility is to take chiropractic and to pass it on to the next generation better and stronger than it was when we received it.

Although I didn't know it at the time, it was probably that last sentence that so touched Dr. Brassard. Possibly it was

because my comment so mirrored the remarks he made 13 years earlier when he retired as ACA executive



vice president on July 2, 1986: *"I am very happy in the realization that the ACA is professionally, financially, administratively, and corporately much stronger than when I became your executive vice president. I am*

*also very happy in the realization that a strengthened ACA has enabled the chiropractic profession to better perform its increasingly vital role as an important and full-fledged participant in America's health care system."*

In the final analysis, I guess that is how all of our careers will be judged. Was chiropractic better and stronger as a result of our efforts? When chiropractic was threatened, did we answer the call? When it was our "watch," did we defend and protect? And did we help pass the profession on to the next generation in better shape than it was when we received it?

One thing is absolutely certain. When it was his "watch," Dr. Gerry Brassard magnificently fulfilled this mission, and a grateful profession is forever in his debt. ▼

## Medscape Nurses Issue a Call for Help: Medical Books, Journals, and Supplies Needed in Afghanistan

The Public Health Team of the Coalition Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force, headed by Lt. Col. James Gardon, an Army Reserve Officer (Army Nurse Corps) from San Antonio, Texas, is assisting in rebuilding the health care system for the people of Afghanistan. They need books, journals, and medical equipment, such as the following:

- Medical, dental, nursing, veterinary, and biomedical repair books and journals, published any time within the past 10 years.
- Books and journals that are basic in focus. Subspecialty publications cannot be used at this time, as the health care system in Afghanistan does not have resources such as invasive cardiology or specialized radiology.
- Books and journals published in English are welcome since many health care professionals know English. Others are willing to translate materials into Dari and Pashto.

- Medical supplies, from personal to institutional, are also needed.

Lt. Col. Gardon's recent assessment of a 200-bed hospital in Kabul indicated that there were only two manual blood pressure cuffs and six stethoscopes for the entire hospital. Laboratories and radiology departments are woefully lacking in even the most basic supplies.

Questions can be addressed to Lt. Col. James Gardon at gardonjj@jcmotf.kabul.army.mil. Supplies can be sent to the APO address below. (Donors must pay postage.) All donations will be equitably distributed, and donors will be acknowledged to recipients.

**Please send supplies to:**  
 Afghanistan  
 Operation Enduring Freedom  
 Public Health Team  
 c/o James Gardon  
 C/JCMOTF-K  
 APO AE 09356