

ROADMAP TO UNITY
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ACA Chairman

Since many readers graduated from chiropractic after 1988, allow me to give you just a brief history about the failed 1988 ACA/ICA merger attempt if I promise to do it in a single paragraph of 100 words or less.

In 1987, ICA and ACA leaders decided it was time to merge and went to work to get it accomplished. After many meetings between the two organizations and 10 working drafts, the ACA House of Delegates in June 1988 formally approved the Constitution and Bylaws for the new merged organization. The documents were then approved by the ICA Board of Directors and sent to the ICA membership for ratification. Although over 60% of ICA members voted affirmatively for merger, the proposal failed since a 2/3's majority was required for passage. As a result, this profession still remains divided today. (as promised - 99 words)

Now that you have that background information about a very sad day in chiropractic's history, let me tell you about the good that remains from that Herculean effort by so many great ACA and ICA leaders.

As a student of chiropractic history, a few years ago I contacted Dr. Michael Pedigo (who is the only person to have served as president of both the ICA and ACA) to inquire if he still had a copy of the 1988 ACA/ICA merger documents. Dr. Pedigo was kind enough to send me his only remaining copy that I stored safely away...without reading.

Recently, I decided it was time to "dust off" the documents just to get an idea about how the 1988 ACA and ICA leaders had planned to merge the organizations. As I thumbed through the yellowed typewriter prepared pages (remember, there were no computer word processors back then), I was not at all impressed. That is...until I started actually reading the documents!

And once I started reading, I couldn't stop because I quickly discovered that both documents were beautifully crafted and extremely comprehensive. Every aspect of the proposed merger had been studied and addressed. The documents covered almost every conceivable question from who gets to have the first president (the former ICA) to which organization's office will become the headquarters of the merged association (the former ACA). I won't bore you with all the details except to say everything was covered including a 4 year transition period, staggered terms, term limits, a bill review committee and re-districting provisions. The documents even contained provisions for how employees would be handled and the precise mechanics for merging the Student ICA and Student ACA! In other words, the ACA/ICA merger documents would have worked in 1988.

More importantly, they will work today!

Whenever a merger of the ACA and ICA is discussed today, the discussion soon bogs down in the mechanics of how it could be done. Well, we can now stop doing that because that “wheel” has already been invented. After deleting a few references to 1995 and making a few other housekeeping changes, the 1988 ACA/ICA Constitution and Bylaws can easily and quickly become the ACA/ICA Constitution and Bylaws of 2003!

This is tremendous news for the chiropractic profession because a merger of the ACA and ICA can now be accomplished within months after each organization’s leadership has made the decision.

As ACA Chairman, I again invite the ICA to join the ACA to form a “Unity Committee” that will be charged with the responsibility of developing a merger proposal that will be presented to both organizations for formal adoption at the earliest possible time. The ACA is ready. Let’s make it happen!

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