

# CAMPUS LIFE

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## Day One Alumni Remember Life College Beginnings

When you look at Life College today, with some 8,000 alumni, over 4,000 current students hurrying between classes in newly constructed state-of-the-art facilities, it's hard to imagine the College's humble beginnings a little more than two decades ago.

The College in 1997 bears little resemblance to that first rented warehouse space on the hill. The campus is spread from one end of Barclay Circle to the other and across more than 100 acres, and the construction trucks parked continuously along the curb spell out the story of its current growth and progress.



Classrooms, cutting-edge laboratories, offices and world-class athletic facilities are either just completed or under construction, as well as numerous campus beautification projects. And, just a few miles away on Marietta's historic town square, a new clinic will open its doors this spring.

Yet nearly everyone on campus can recall hearing stories of the early days. Dr. Sid E. Williams, founder and president, frequently reminisces about that first classroom and the 22 Day One students he began Life with in January 1975.

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Today Dr. Tribuno is healthy and most people are shocked to discover this fast-talking, exuberant individual was once so ill. She often still feels the effects of Guillian-Barre, which causes the myelin sheath (the outer covering around nerve fibers) to disintegrate. Her nerve fibers, particularly in her feet, are excruciatingly sensitive, although her reaction to pain is slowed. Still, a stubbed toe is agony; a small burn pure torture.

She maintains a full schedule, but makes sure she gets enough rest, and gets adjusted regularly. "I'm still amazed at the continuous improvement my body expresses," she said.

However, her health can still be fragile. On a recent trip to Florida, she had a cardiovascular episode. She

got adjusted, but after enduring "excruciating, crushing chest pain," she and her friend ('92 Life graduate Dr. Patrece Frisbee) went to a local emergency room.

"The doctors told Dr. Frisbee I probably wouldn't make it," she stated. The doctors also were, according to Tribuno, less than impressed with her devotion to chiropractic. "When they asked who my doctor was, who my cardiologist was, I replied 'my chiropractor,' one of them said 'what's he going to do, manipulate your coronary arteries?' I got mad and said to myself 'I am not going to do this,' and I sat up and took out my IV, unhooked the monitor and said 'I'm going home.' And we did."

By that time, some 40 minutes had passed since her

adjustment, and Tribuno "felt the power coming back on" in her body. "I was fine—tired, but ok."

On a personal level Dr. Tribuno says that her success as a D.C. and the recovery she has made from her illness is also a tribute to the network of local chiropractors who have supported and cared for her and helped imbue her with a clear knowledge of the power of chiropractic.

"It's that kind of support that gives you the courage to walk out of a hospital and gives you the ability to trust in the innate ability of the body to heal itself," she said.

It is this power and knowledge, coupled with a deep faith in Jesus Christ, that guides Dr. Tribuno and her three children on a bright road to the future. ♦

## COVER STORY

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With the College's 23rd anniversary (January 20) so near, those original 22 Life College students also have special recollections of those early days in 1975. Among them:

• *Arriving every once in a while to find the single classroom dismantled and reassembled in another part of the warehouse which served as the first Life College building.*

• *Building the bookshelves in the library by hand with board and bricks to hold the books — when they eventually arrived.*

• *Getting grades two quarters after the class was over because all the scores were tabulated by hand.*

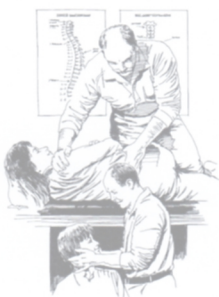
• *Living in a teepee — equipped with a telephone — in the woods across the street from the College.*

• *Having the first cadaver on campus arrive from Chicago — only after its driver was stopped for speeding by the police. The second cadaver spent the weekend in a car after the student who volunteered to retrieve it arrived too late to put it in the lab.*

Some of the first students were refugees from other chiropractic colleges — devoted to the power of chiropractic, but unwilling to endure the long winters of Iowa or Missouri. Others were looking for an adventure, or wanted to stay close to home.

"I was in my first semester at Logan College in Chesterfield, Missouri, and being originally from Alabama and Florida, I wasn't used to that cold," said Dr. Gary Craft, now Associate

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Dean of Students at Life. "I remember I left the library to go get something to eat one day, and the snow fell so thick and so fast that I couldn't get back to the library. I decided then and there I needed to make a change."

Arkansas native Dr. Mike Ungerank remembers: "I was already registered as part of the October 1974 class of Palmer, but I didn't want to go because Iowa is so cold. In July 1974 I attended a DE meeting with my father (Dr. Ralph Ungerank, now on Life College's Board of Trustees), took the tour and in about 15 seconds decided I'd rather be in Atlanta than in Davenport."

But Dr. Jennifer Peet, from snowy Michigan, changed her mind and decided to attend Life instead of Logan at the suggestion of a friend. (It was she who lived in a teepee in the woods for a year.) "I was already enrolled in Logan College—literally had my car packed—when I stopped by Dr. Jim Gregg's office near where I lived in Michigan. He said 'we've got a chiropractic college in Atlanta now, you ought to go. So, instead of driving to Missouri, I drove to Georgia.'"

Peet's first residence at Life was in the woods where the gym is now located ("I'd always wanted to live in one," she recalled). She lived there alone for a while, but later another student erected a teepee of her own and moved in next door. Hers, however, had all the comforts of home, including a telephone.

The "college in a warehouse" overlooked Barclay Circle. This small once rural lane was now dotted with warehouses and surrounded by

woods whose peaceful tranquillity was sometimes shattered by the roar of jets from nearby Dobbins Air Force Base.

Early on, the students were short on amenities. According to Dr. Craft, there was no snack bar, and students bought meals out of a food wagon that made the rounds between construction sites. "But we had, and still have, the world's best water fountain," chuckles Dr. Craft.

"We had no lab, but plenty of parking," he continues. "We had no financial aid, no athletics program — although we participated in city league softball. We had no formal assembly, but Dr. Sid did come and talk to us about the chiropractic philosophy."

"One year we had terrible rains and a flash flood, which collapsed the bridge over Rottenwood Creek," remembers Dr. Craft. "Most of us were living up at what was then Barclay Arms (now The Commons at Life College), and the school had to build a wooden foot bridge for us to get to class because the City of Marietta and Dobbins Air Force Base fought over who was going to repair it."

Despite the hardships and shortcomings, the Day One class worked hard, pulled together and made it work. There was a distinct feeling of camaraderie among the employees and students at Life in those days.

"We only had one classroom, and it had cardboard walls," said Dr. Craft. "The library had no books, no bookshelves. I was the first library assistant, and built the shelves. Dr. Sid put out a call to chiropractors to send books, and they did. We still didn't have

enough to go around, so Mrs. Hill, the librarian, would put the anatomy books and others on reserve. We had to go to the library to use those."

Dr. Mike Ungerank, now practicing in Jonesboro, Arkansas, took all of the x-rays for the first six months. "I took 50-60 a day because I had experience doing it from my dad's office."

Though the physical conditions weren't complete, the academic standards were. "Tuition was \$400 per quarter, with a \$50 lab fee," remembers Dr. Craft. "We had to see 500 patients instead of 300 that students see today, and we started seeing them in the fourth quarter."

Remembers Dr. Ungerank: "That first quarter, we went to school from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. five days a week. We didn't have a lot of books and we had guys teaching off the top of their heads. Dr. Gerard Clum (now president of Life West) would come in and give a lecture out of *Gray's Anatomy* without ever opening the book. Once you've learned it like that, it's pretty dry trying to read the text."

According to Dr. Peet, now practicing in South Burlington, Vermont, "The curriculum was very similar to what it is today, but we had to see a lot more patients to graduate. That wasn't a problem for me because I recruited patients by giving health talks. Dr. Sid wanted us to do more than the CCE (Council on Chiropractic Education) recommended. I saw 13 patients my first day in clinic."

"I also remember lectures by Dr. Clum and Dr. Kalb — he always liked to flunk everybody."

The school had only a handful of employees — Dr. Charles Kalb, Dr. Richard Fitzgerald, Dr. Jeff Buncher, Ms. Nancy Hill, Dr. Ed Ambrose, Dr. Gerard Clum, Dr. Bob Chadwick, Ms. Wynowa Dawkins and Dr. Ron Watkins, to name a few. Dr. Nell was still practicing then.

"Because we were the first class, there was a more relaxed atmosphere then before the CCE was looking over everyone's shoulder," said Dr. Ungerank.

"Ms. Dawkins was in charge of recruitment, admissions, bookstore, anything like that. That sure made registration easy," recalls Dr. Craft.

In spite of its humble beginnings, Life College gave those original 22 students what they wanted — an excellent chiropractic education.

"We got a great education. We all passed national boards and became successful," said Dr. Ungerank echoing the sentiments of that historic group. ♦

#### **Cover photos From top to bottom**

**TOP:** Day one class members with Dr. Sid Williams at 20th Anniversary Homecoming banquet.

**MIDDLE:** Students and faculty examine one of the first cadavers brought to campus.

**BOTTOM:** An unknown visitor visits one of the teepees that housed two female students during the early years of Life College. The teepees were pitched in the woods where the SHSC is now located.