



KIWI

IN FLIGHT

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1996

58

MY WAY

The Sid Williams Story
—The president and
founder of Georgia's
Life College, the Mecca
of Chiropractic, is quite
the character. By
Vincent Coppola.

GOLF ORLANDO

RIVERBANKS ZOOLOGICAL PARK

INTERNATIONAL DRIVE



The Sid Williams Story

by VINCENT COPPOLA

THE CADILLAC, A GREAT WHITE FLEETWOOD BROUGHAM, 24-CARAT GOLD-PLATED GRILL GRINNING IN THE MORNING SUN, NOSES INTO A RESERVED PARKING SPACE. A TALL MAN, SILVER-HAIRED, WITH EYEBROWS LIKE HAWK WINGS, EMERGES. THE DOORS OF A NEW GYMNASIUM SWING OPEN AND DR. SID E. WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF GEORGIA'S LIFE COLLEGE, THE MECCA OF CHIROPRACTIC, ENTERS.

Hundreds of students shuffle to attention while "Dr. Sid" glad-hands his way to the podium. He harangues his audience non-stop, no notes, for an hour about breakthroughs and threats looming on chiropractic's horizon. A masterful speaker, Williams combines Jimmy Swaggart's histrionics with Jimmy Carter's folksiness.

"In the past," he thunders, "we've been labeled illiterate charlatans and cultists. But we've grown! We are flourishing! Chiropractors heal without drugs, without surgery," he says, and therefore are a threat to the "trillion dollar medical establishment."

Like any good preacher, Williams extends the promise of salvation: "The will of the people will always win," he tells the fired-up crowd. He is personally organizing a massive pro-chiropractic campaign. Fifty million pieces of mail will flood Washington. "And then," he says, "the politicians will come crawling to us."

The assembly ends with Dr. Sid's famous trademark

Money Hum: "Start imagining yourself ultra, ultra, ultra wealthy," he whispers. "Just see bales and bales of money, just everywhere. Gold or diamonds or whatever it is that turns you on.... Start down at the bottom and get you a handful of it. In your mind's eye, say M-m-m-m-m-money!!!"

Life College is the largest school of chiropractic in the world. It is also a fully-accredited college, offering baccalaureate and master's programs in business, nutrition and sports science. It pulls in students from every state and 64 foreign countries. As chairman of the 6,000-member International Chiropractors Association, Williams has introduced chiropractic to Israel, Greece, Egypt, Mexico and Korea. He brought a contingent of chiropractors to Ted Turner's Good Will Games in the former Soviet Union.

Crackling with energy, Williams pounds students' backs and pumps hands outside the auditorium like the former jock he is. A fearless, 167 (yes, 167)-pound defensive end, Williams starred on Georgia Tech's undefeated 1951 football team. He capped his career with seven shattered teeth and nine broken bones. While in college, Williams visited a chiropractor despite warnings "not to fool with them quacks." The chiropractor (from Greek, meaning "done by hands") restored Williams flagging energy ("I could outrun a pickup truck"), and even cured his migraine headaches. "I saw the multiplicity of it," he says. "If I could do what was done for me to

Photograph by Jay Thomas ©



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58

another patient and another, I could be a success."

In 1953, Williams and his wife ("Dr. Nell") moved to Davenport, Iowa, where D.D. Palmer had established the Palmer College of Chiropractic in 1895. Palmer theorized that adjusting a patient's spine removed "interference" – a blockage of carefully programmed signals from the brain through the nervous system to organs and tissues – allowing the body's "innate intelligence" to restore health.

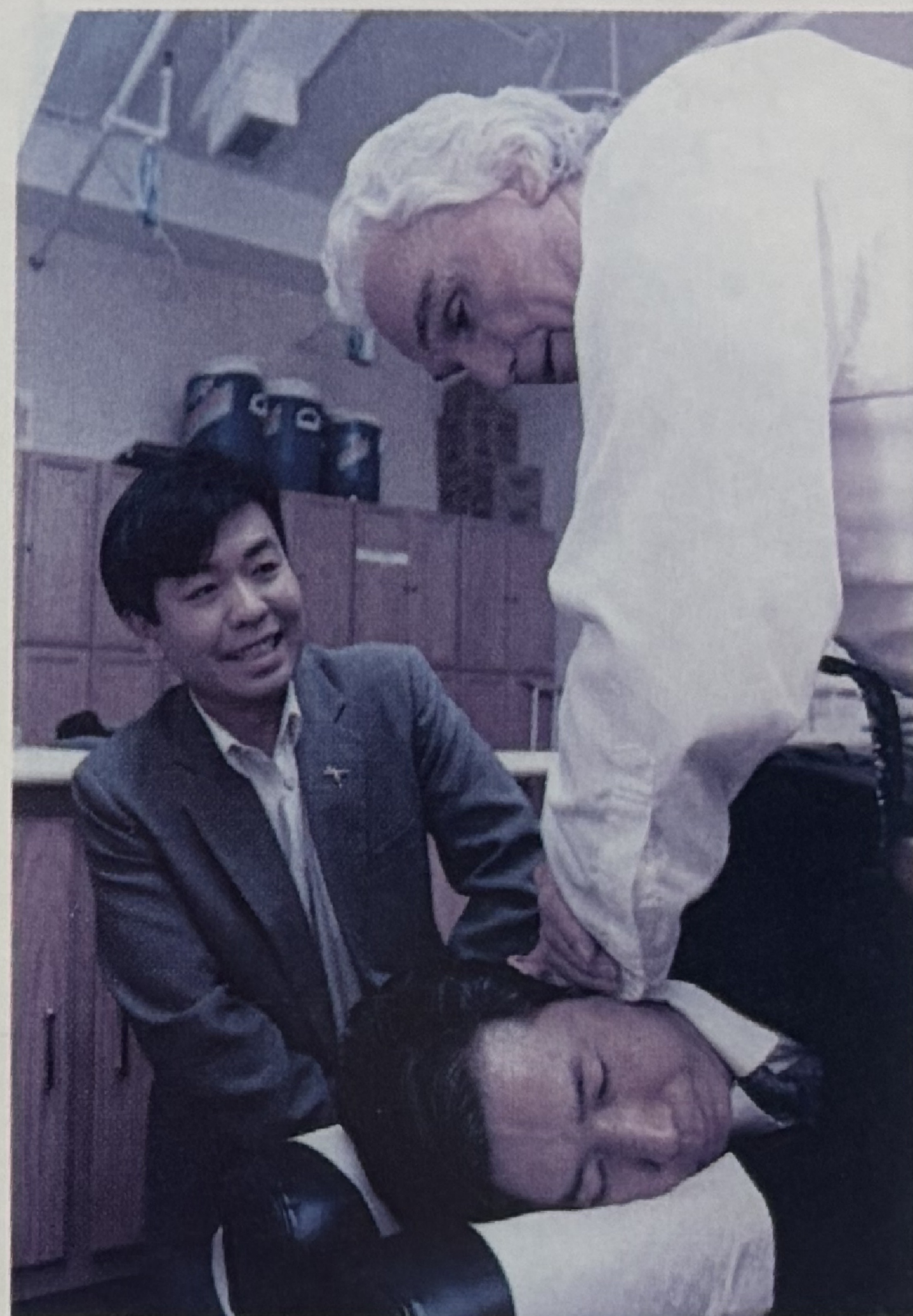
Today's chiropractors use X-ray machines and high-tech imaging equipment to locate "subluxations" (misalignments of the 33 vertebrae that make up the spinal column). "Homeostasis" has replaced "innate intelligence," as the term of choice, but chiropractic theory as expounded by Palmer remains unchanged. "If you got an improved homeostasis," says Williams, "what damn difference does

it make what disease you gonna be encountering?"

By 1958, Williams and Dr. Nell were operating 18 clinics in Atlanta. They opened Life College in 1974. At the time the American Medical Association was intensifying its opposition to chiropractic, labeling its practitioners "unscientific cultists," chiropractors sued, alleging the assault derived from financial rather than ethical concerns, and accused the AMA of violating anti-trust statutes. In a landmark 1987 decision, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the AMA and issued a permanent injunction against further interference. The U.S. Supreme Court let the ruling stand.

Today all 50 states license chiropractors. Annually more than 18 million Americans visit chiropractors. Medicare, Medicaid and many private insurers and workman's compensation policies all cover chiropractic services.

Dr. Sid wants more. He envisions a



Photograph by Barry Shapiro ©

medical revolution that could land him up there with Galen and Hippocrates. "There's a billion dollar industry built around the germ theory," he says, leaning back in his Cadillac. "I'm gonna prove that damn theory wrong." ■