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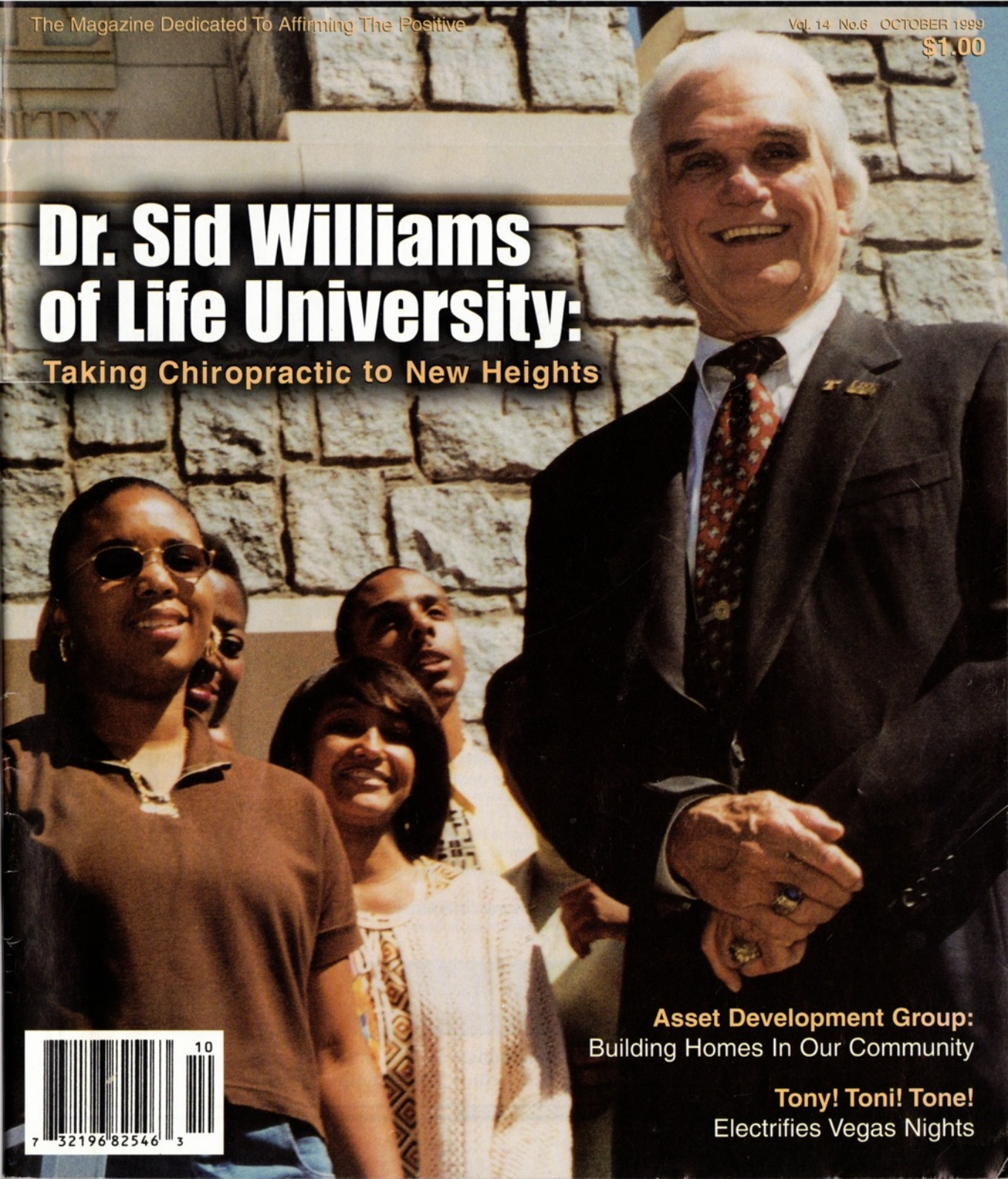
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Dr. Sid Williams of Life University:

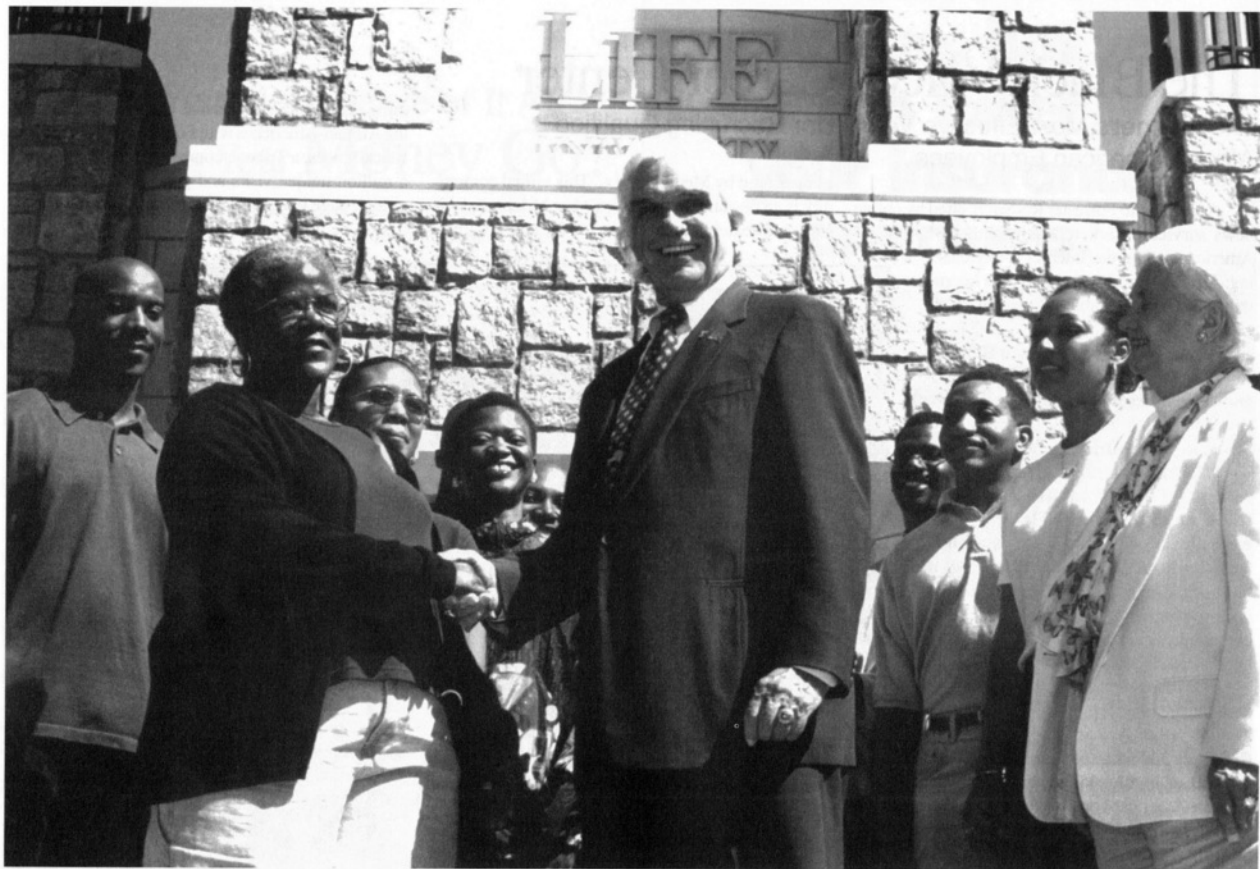
Taking Chiropractic to New Heights



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Electrifies Vegas Nights





Dr. Sid Williams and Life University are fast becoming icons, both jointly and on their own. Dr. Sid is the charismatic leader of Life University and has led its growth from just 22 students in 1974 to over 4000 today. In 1997, the college was granted university status. One of the most outstanding characteristics of Life is that it can boast an enrollment of 18% minorities with 12% of that number being African American. Those numbers, combined with over one million dollars in contributions to outreach and community-based programs for minorities, puts Life University at the top of its class. Most of the larger, state-operated universities cannot show numbers that speak of a commitment to diversity at that level.

Even at those levels, Life University is striving for higher ground. As the University grows and develops, an integral part of that development is a dedication of doing it right and being a place of inclusion, not exclusion. It is most important to note that the first patient of chiropractic was an African American male named Harvey Lillard. He was in Davenport, Iowa, which is the location of the oldest school of chiropractic. Dr. Sid has a very prominent display in his office of Mr. Lillard's gravestone from Seattle, Washington, and there are plans to possibly relocate his remains, as well as his home, to Life University for a place of honor and distinction.

As with all great visions, it is the leadership

By Evelyn Bethune

Life University

and Dr. Sid Williams

that sets the tone and Dr. Sid Williams had anchored his feet on solid ground. His book, "Lasting Purpose" talks about how a sense of purpose and direction can take you to phenomenal heights. Dr. Sid Williams and his wife Dr. Nell Williams are living examples of what simple habits like belief, focus and persistence can achieve.

It was my first visit to Life University and, after seeing the commercials featuring the founder and president, I couldn't help but be a little curious about the man who seemed to radiate from the TV screen. As I sat in the waiting area of the administration building, I found myself surrounded by the life history of Dr. Sid Williams. Almost every wall and alcove is filled with memorabilia of his life. I tried to convince myself that I didn't want to get up and read all the stuff that was before me, but I was curious to know more about this man who believed so strongly in his chosen profession himself that he founded a school to teach it to others.

Dr. Sid Williams was born in Rome, Georgia, but spent part of his early childhood in Montgom-

ery, Alabama and Atlanta. He grew up during the Great Depression and learned by watching his parents that persistence pays off. His father rose from adversity in the 30s and in the process taught his son to never accept defeat. This ability to be disciplined and stay focused has resulted in the growth and development of the largest school of chiropractic in the world at Life University.

To begin the interview, Dr. Sid (as he is called by almost everyone) comes out of his office to greet me and welcome me to the University. Having grown up on a college campus, I am thoroughly impressed by his humbleness and true warmth as a human being. Many colleges have presidents who believe that they are the reason that the colleges exist. They are unapproachable by the average person and definitely put themselves on the level of at least the Pope. Dr. Sid is different.

As we begin to talk, I start to see a pattern of an overachiever who just has a knack for being the best and wanting to always give his best no matter what the arena. He also was colorblind. Sid Williams experienced racial hatred as a child. He was

called a "WOP" (Without Papers) by the lighter-skinned children because he had a dark complexion and dark hair instead of blond hair and blue eyes like theirs. He was called a "nigger" when he didn't even know what that meant. Once, when he was living in Montgomery, Alabama, several boys chased him home, throwing rocks at him, and calling him the "n" word. When he looked back to see if they were gaining on him, one of those rocks made contact with his forehead, and the scar can still be seen today. Yet he excelled at all that he undertook.

Some of Dr. Sid's most memorable childhood experiences were of his family's travels together to Florida. It was during these periods that he got to spend time with his father. His father worked very hard and traveled a great deal, but when the opportunity allowed, he would take his family with him. This was a time that instilled the importance of family in Dr. Sid.

"As an individual, my scouting days are the most memorable," he recalled. "I'm an Eagle Scout with bronze and silver palms, and pursuing the Eagle Scout Badge was the best thing I could have done at that time in my life. As an only child, I was always looking for camaraderie and found it in Scout Troop 76."

When Dr. Sid was 11 or 12, he was living on Harmond Street right off of Lee Street in Oakland City. It was here that he made best friends with two African American boys who lived next door to him at the corner of Harmond and Oakland Drive in Oakland Park. Sid, James and "Dubo" played marbles every day. "I mean EVERY DAY! I remember having those big marbles and I was pretty good. I wasn't any better than they were, but I pretended I was good. But most important, I had James and "Dubo" as my close friends."

At Tech High School, he achieved the rank of Cadet Captain in the ROTC and was the commander of the ROTC championship drill team. Later, the young Sid Williams became the Cadet Colonel and Regimental Commander at Tech High. He was also captain of the track team and the rifle team for three years.

"However, this was not enough, as my inner self continued to strive for more" Dr. Sid explained. "I remember in June I started to be interested in going out for high school football. Well, you know, you just didn't do that with a team like Tech High School, which was one of the top schools in the South. They played all of the top schools from Kentucky; Tallahassee, Florida; Augusta, Georgia; Miami, Florida; Leon High in Tallahassee; and, of course, Boy's High of Atlanta, Georgia.

"Part of Tech's front line, two tackles, weighed 240 and 260 each. In those days, that was big. In July, a group of Tech High football players practicing in a field in front of my house came by to visit

on their way to practice and asked me if I was going out this year. I told them - without hesitation - that I was. I felt a change in my mind and heart and I was strong on that point. I was amazed. All the fear was gone". In the summer of 1944, in spite of his light weight, he took up football and quickly became a star. He weighed no more than 150 pounds, but he was "quick, fast, a great leaper and also a thinker." He persevered and he also believed that he could do it.

As I sat listening to Dr. Sid, I looked at the pictures on his wall and the artwork that was visible everywhere. Mohammed Ali graced the wall in a life-size portrait of him knocking down George Foreman. Dr. Sid pointed out that Mohammed continues to be a chiropractic patient. There were many pictures of Dr. Sid and Dr. Nell at various functions and formal engagements. The Trumpet Awards is paramount among them. Dr. Sid has supported this major event for the past five years. The Trumpet Awards were created in 1992 to salute achievements in the African American community in the areas of philanthropy, medicine, education, politics, sports, business and entertainment. I continued to wonder how these things all tied together to make Life University.

Our interview continued by moving from high school to the Georgia Tech years. When he went on to play for Georgia Tech, he began as a starting defensive end in 1950 and continued in this position through the 1951 season. He then went on



with his undefeated team to help them become the Orange Bowl champions. Football Hall of Fame Coach Bobby Dodd complimented the young Sid Williams by proclaiming in the Atlanta Journal, "Sid Williams is the best end for his size in America. He is one of the rare boys who improves every year". This compliment was accentuated in 1999 when he was elected to the Georgia Tech Athletic Hall of Fame.

By giving every play his best at Tech, Sid Williams sustained compound fractures to his right wrist and a splintered fracture of his clavicle. This was followed by fractures of the right hand and fractures of three spinal vertebrae. Nevertheless, these severe injuries did not stop this determined young competitor. When he began to lose proficiency, and his speed, agility and leaping skills began to weaken for some unknown reason, Sid Williams tried everything to regain his strength and skills, but nothing worked.

Finally, in desperation, he turned to chiropractic. "That made all the difference," he said. "I regained my proficiency as if by magic. Subconsciously, I knew then that I would pursue chiropractic as a career." Dr. Sid pointed out that his football injuries made it necessary for him to have three operations on one knee and he confided that his other knee has needed attention for the past 40 years. He is determined, however, to tough it out.

Dr. Sid continued to excel in academics and continued his outstanding accomplishments in the senior ROTC program at Georgia Tech. He served as a Lieutenant Colonel and battalion commander. In 1948, when he was not playing football because of an injury, he joined the Georgia National Guard and was then commissioned a second Lieutenant by Governor Herman Talmadge after completing his ROTC program at Georgia Tech, thereby fulfilling his military obligation.

Sid Williams met Nell Kimbrough while still a student at Georgia Tech. She would help patch him up after games and she would help him with homework. Ms. Kimbrough was his sponsor at the Auburn game in 1951. She rented an apartment right across the street from Tech, diagonally from the Varsity, so she could keep up with the active Sid Williams. She was working then because she had already graduated from college in North Carolina.

As they thought about building a life together, chiropractic was a part of this decision. They were married on March 21, 1953, and moved immediately to Davenport, Iowa, where they both enrolled in the Doctor of Chiropractic program at Palmer Chiropractic College. They both earned Doctor of Chiropractic degrees in 1956. Following graduation, Dr. Sid and Dr. Nell developed 18 chiropractic clinics in the southeast. During this period, Dr. Sid also founded "Dynamic Essentials International" (DE) to train and motivate chiropractors, students and lay people in the philosophy and practice of chiropractic. "We teach them how to put it all together and be successful and defend their glorious profession," he explained.

"That's why our practice grew by leaps and bounds. It's not about business. It's about loving. It's about serving. It's about feeling better. This is what people respond to. They can tell when you love them and appreciate them"

Because of Dr. Williams' no-holds-barred aggressive reaction to attacks on his beloved profession, decades have been spent in legal confrontations to defend chiropractic. He helped initiate laws in Massachusetts, New York, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, all of which were the last to license chiropractic. Dr. Sid demonstrated fearlessly in a number of states, often defying legal constraints, to defend chiropractic and help it to receive the recognition it deserved as a separate and distinct legal entity.

Dr. Sid and Dr. Nell opened their first clinics in Austell. Their business grew by leaps and bounds, in part because the clinics had no specific fee. They did not want to deny anyone access, so they asked for people's participation at the level they could afford. They explained what it took to operate the facility and then trusted the fairness of their patients and the skills of the doctors to make the system effective. It worked. Everyone contributed according to his or her means. Some paid as little as two dollars. Some paid five, ten, 25 or even 100 dollars occasionally for a visit or a month's care.

Zelma Brooks was an African American patient from Atlanta. He helped facilitate the relationship between Dr. Sid and the African American community. Mr. Brooks got instant relief with his chiropractic adjustment and told Dr. Sid that he was going to bring more patients, and that they would have Southern Railway insurance. He kept that promise. These 12, all African American, Southern Railway men, indeed, did have health insurance that covered chiropractic. "This was practically unheard of for chiropractic at that time," Dr. Sid pointed out. These men came through the front door one evening and took a seat. Remember that this was in the 50's so, not surprisingly, all 30 or 40 of the white patients moved outside. They were peeking in the door and talking outside because they didn't want to be in the same waiting room as the African Americans.

"These new patients from Atlanta were dressed in their best work uniforms," Dr. Sid recalled. "A year to a year and a half later on any given Friday or Saturday in Austell, we might have 300-400 people coming to seek the services of the Williams family. They would come from as far away as Detroit, Washington, Chicago, and parts of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. They came on foot, hitched rides, came in cars and pickup trucks, and some even flew in. They all paid according to their means, and they brought their friends with them. It was an overwhelming, thrilling, love experience as they began to get well and feel the power of loving, giving and serving. The moments are rare that one can have such precipitous camaraderie and love. That's why our practice grew by leaps and bounds. It's not about business. It's about loving. It's about serving. It's about feeling better. This is what people respond to. They can tell when you love them and appreciate them"

This relationship between Dr. Sid and Dr. Nell and the African American community continued to create some uneasiness in the white community. Nevertheless, they did not give up on their mission to provide chiropractic care to

every person, worldwide, regardless of race or ability to pay.

After they received this acceptance and recognition from the African American community in Atlanta, Dr. Sid established seven clinics in African American neighborhoods throughout Atlanta. The night that Dr. King was shot, Dr. Sid and Dr. Nell were at Lake Lanier. They heard on the news that in the shopping center where one of the clinics was located, seven businesses were burning, but the HHH Chiropractic Clinic, owned and operated by Drs. Sid and Nell Williams, was spared. "It was not touched, burned, or even smeared by an egg" he recalled with a smile. "Not one rock was thrown through any of the windows of the seven clinics in Atlanta."

Dick Gregory was leading the hunger march through Alabama when he called Dr. Sid at 3:00 in the morning and asked him to meet him at the Westview Baptist Church to give him and others chiropractic adjustments. He cautioned that the march was filled with CIA people and that the meeting with him would have to be discrete. Dr. Williams met Dick Gregory and the hunger marchers at the church around 6:00 o'clock and single-handedly adjusted 70-80 people that morning. Dr. Sid then stayed for the inspirational messages that were given that morning by Ralph David Abernathy, Coretta Scott King and Andrew Young.

"I still visit with Dick Gregory from time to time," Dr. Sid remarked. "I still admire and appreciate him. He was the graduation speaker at Life University in June, 1998. I think it's significant that he sent his fine son to Life University. He is now a graduate chiropractor and is going to do big things in this world. He plans to someday go to Zimbabwe to help pioneer a humanitarian project there with chiropractic as its spearhead. He is very talented young man. He, like his father, will do well and stand tall."

"Along about the time of the Westview Baptist Church gathering," Dr. Sid continued with his story, "they were integrating the first buses

at Rich's Department Store in downtown Atlanta. Three of the five participants in the first bus were my patients at our Austell clinic. I believe B. Joseph Johnson, who was on the bus, is still around. He was one of my patients as well as Rev. I.S. Mack and Rev. O.C. Wood. They were all ministers. I was pleased to be of service to these men who marched so fearlessly for human rights. I was humbled and felt very honored that I was able to help these brave men with their health care needs in this historic moment and share with them a spirit of love and good will as they moved fearlessly forward to accomplish what they felt had to be done."

Dr. Sid recalled that later on, at his clinic in Austell, he noticed one night that his flag was torn down. "When I put up another flag," he said, "it too was torn down. Then I knew something was amiss and I asked the Austell Police Department for assistance with what was going on, but they offered little or no help or advice. Then, shortly after we had moved into our new clinic facility in a new seven-bay shopping center, we received calls from the police department and from our children telling us that our shopping center was on fire. We were in San Francisco conducting a Life D.E. seminar. The reports said it was a huge fire and three-quarters of the complex was totally destroyed that night. When we got back home and went to the site, it shocked us because we were looking at a half a million dollar's worth of damage and a lifetime of love and compassion gone up in smoke. Thank God, the fire didn't burn the clinic, but everyone else's business was destroyed."

"One year later to the day," Dr. Sid continued, "we were at the Biltmore Hotel in Atlanta for D.E. and we received another call that the shopping center was on fire again. We immediately rushed to Austell. It was a total loss this time. Nothing could be saved - not a shred. There could be nothing more demoralizing than to come out of a spiritually high atmosphere at D.E. only to be faced with a totally depressing scene of complete destruction. Dr.

Nell and I were devastated. I remember, however, that, as we held hands, giving each other an affectionate squeeze, I told Dr. Nell, 'Well, we've still got each other.'"

Dr. Sid and Dr. Nell also were experiencing mysterious vandalism with their downtown properties with trash and filth being thrown at their clinics and rocks thrown through the windows. Dr. Sid believed this vandalism was the work of the same type of individuals who burned his clinic in Austell and possibly were affiliated with them.

There are many stories that Dr. Sid relates on the topic of his relationship his community and with his African American patients in the Atlanta area. Most of what he refers to are "positive, warm, good, uplifting and enlightening stories" about the friendships that the Williams and the doctors who



worked for them established among their patients. Most importantly, however, the hate that was directed at him, his family and his enterprises did not deter him or change his focus. If anything, it made his determination to accomplish what was right even stronger. He was determined to "keep on keeping on," to provide chiropractic services at a price that everyone can pay and to help bring about a spirit of love, camaraderie and tolerance of differences among all human beings. Senator LeRoy Johnson, the first African-American to be elected to the Georgia Senate, is a good friend of Dr. Sid Williams. He introduced the first-ever chiropractic insurance legislation in the State of Georgia.

"Many thought that he should not do it and could not do it," Dr. Sid recalled, "but he was my first choice. He was warm, friendly, sincere and very much respected. I believed he could start and sustain the long campaign that would be required, and he proved worthy of that trust."

Finally, ten years later, these early efforts bore fruit and an insurance equality bill was passed in the State of Georgia. This gives the public the benefit of being able to seek the doctor and method of treatment of their choice, provided the condition or injury is within the professional scope of practice.

In starting Life College, Dr. Sid wanted to share with the world what he fell in love with - chiropractic. He fell in love with what it could do to help humanity. He says, "I probably even love adversity, since I have experienced so much of it in my life. So many hurdles to overcome. So much preparation. So much work, even when weary, just to stay up front."

Nevertheless, I recognized that there was no college of chiropractic in the South and I set my sights on remedying that situation". Dr. Sid is a born teacher and athlete who loves competition, but his great mission is to give love unselfishly to others with a Lasting Purpose mindset.

He takes the time to explain to people the simplicity and the strength of chiropractic. He demonstrates camaraderie and love to others. He has seminars that he teaches all over the world to people who need to learn to adopt a Lasting Purpose commitment of loving, serving and giving. So, as he said, "there was just sort of a natural progression to the great university that we have in Marietta today."

Dr. Sid explained that "Lasting Purpose provides you with a time-tested, practical philosophy of life to help you become and remain a healthy, happy, productive and achieving individual - whether your natural assets and talents

are great or ordinary. It provides you with a philosophy to guide you toward pursuing your dreams of helping others and expressing love and appreciation at every opportunity. If you are a person whose philosophy is weak and shifting, Lasting Purpose can test it and firm it up for you, throwing out that which is of no value and strengthening that which can help you along your way."

To give, to do, to love, to serve is the reality of Life University and its founder, Dr. Sid Williams is ready for the next millennium and he is preparing others to earnestly and unselfishly seek to give from their own abundance out of a spirit of love and compassion and camaraderie. He is inspiring and most definitely an example of the power of spirituality and true belief. His vision has become reality.

"Some things are worth repeating."



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comes back into our own"
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