



Year of the Osteopathic Spirit

Dear Academy Member:

I write to you today in another of the series of presidential notes in this “*year of the osteopathic spirit*”.

In my presidential address at Convocation on March 20, 2010, I described the activity related to the osteopathic spirit as, “to know, love, and serve”. Our profession was started by Andrew Taylor Still in June 1874 in Baldwin, Kansas, when he proclaimed on that day of founding of a new medicine, or more precisely a reform of current medical care. He called it osteopathy. Dr. Still was a seeker of truth. Andrew Taylor Still lost his first family due to cholera. As an MD, he used traditional allopathic treatments, all to no avail. With this devastation to his life, he decided to seek God to find a way if God designed his creative with mechanisms of self healing. He worked with the goal of finding truth, the truth of the physiological mechanism within the machinery of man. From these truths he formulated a philosophy we call osteopathic principles. The osteopathic philosophical principles are the body’s unit, structure and function are reciprocally interrelated, the body possesses homeostatic mechanisms and rational therapy is based upon understanding the previous three tenants for good osteopathic treatment and care.

So, we stand as disciples of Andrew Taylor Still, recognizing that we use reason, the scientific method, and search for truth in identifying and healing patients. When I mention that we are disciples of Andrew Taylor Still; that means that we follow his principles: that we are obedient to the form and nature of his tenets because obedience forms the fundamental disposition for discipleship. By obedience in discipleship this provides one with identity, and isn’t this identity what the osteopathic profession is continually searching for? Identifying themselves not with just initials, but by words, actions, and deeds. It’s one thing to talk about philosophical approaches to the human condition that the allopathic profession and now most of the world recognizes, its another thing to realize that we actually diagnose and treat the whole person, body, mind, and spirit, in tangible, codable, and real way in our every day practices.

By practicing the osteopathic way, one learns and trains their patients by example. Then the patients realize that they are actually being treated by a D.O. that is truly an osteopath.

Richard A. Feely, D.O., F.A.A.O., F.C.A.

Richard A. Feely, D.O. F.A.A.O.
AAO President

