

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



DO All the Good You Can DO

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From an early age I knew I wanted to be a physician. With the exception of my father, I'm the fifth generation of physicians who all practiced medicine in North Georgia. I'm the first DO in my family.

Becoming ACOFP's newest President is a defining moment for me and that is what I would like you to reflect on in your life. We all have them – defining moments – a point in time that determines the course of our lives.

A defining moment can be big or small. Maybe yours was when, as a child, you won a race or when you were bullied. Maybe as a student, you passed a big test or you failed a big test. Perhaps your defining moment was a failed romance.

One of my first defining moments happened when I was just 10 years old when I hurt my knee. My friend's father, who was not a physician, tended to my knee. After he looked it over for some time, he said I'd be fine.

At that moment, I thought he really cared about me. From that point on, I decided I would be a physician who touches his patients, who lets them know that he cares about them. To me, that's what it is to be an osteopathic family physician.

Many years later, after I had become an osteopathic family physician, I had another defining moment. I had been in practice about 10 years when a five-year-old boy came in as a new patient for his annual checkup. I noticed a heart murmur. His mother told me his pediatrician said not to worry and that he'd grow out of it.

I called a pediatric cardiac surgeon and presented my patient. It took three surgeons and more than three months to decide what would be the best procedure for this child because his heart condition was so rare. The surgery was successful and the child thrived.

This story is not about the child. It's about the mother. The look on her face when I said the other doctors who told he'd simply grow out of it were wrong and he needed immediate care was a look of sheer terror, as thoughts of losing her son came over her face. After the surgery, the thrill of happiness and joy of knowing that her son was going to be alright was a defining moment for me.

Serving in the military was another defining moment. It shaped my future, my respect for authority and my understanding that service often requires sacrifice – not always, but sometimes, even the sacrifice of one's own life.

That's why I asked Medal of Honor recipient, Colonel Bruce Crandall to be our Keynote Speaker at the ACOFP's Annual Convention. I wanted him to share his defining moments that were captured in the movie, *We Were Soldiers*, but also for us to see how that moment shaped his life for the decades that followed.

You will have defining moments in your careers when you save a life, make a cancer diagnosis that everyone else has missed, or diagnose a heart attack with minimal symptoms. When you do, you will realize that all the studying, tuition and sacrifices that you have made will be worthwhile.

My theme this year as President is "DO All the Good You Can DO." Everything starts and ends with being a DO. When you start each day, think about how you can "DO all the good you can DO."

The idea for my theme came from a partial quote from John Wesley, the leader of the Methodist movement. "Do all the good you can.

He said, "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

But did you know that we all share the same, all-encompassing, defining moment?

That defining moment, common to each of us, was the moment when we first heard these inspirational words, once spoken by the founder of osteopathy, Dr. A. T. Still, who said, "Let your light so shine that the world will know you are an osteopathic physician pure and simple, and that no prouder title can follow a human name."

Similarly, Scripture tells us that Christ said "no one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand so that those who enter may see the light."

I challenge you to be intentional about not hiding the light of osteopathy under a bushel.

Rather, seek out someone for whom you can become a defining moment in their life – the defining moment, when – through you – they see the shining light of osteopathic medicine!

Sincerely,

Larry W. Anderson, DO, FACOFP *dist.*
ACOFPP President