

A.O.A. Executive Director True B. Eveleth pointed out that this interpretation will clarify the status of those D.O.'s who now seek an M.D. degree from the California College of Medicine, as well as those who might seek the degree from any other institution of a similar nature.

Two things should now be obvious to members of the profession: First, the Executive Committee interprets the Code of Ethics of the American Osteopathic Association to mean that anyone seeking an unearned M.D. degree, that is, one received without actual attendance at a college approved during that period of attendance by the American Medical Association, places his future A.O.A. membership in jeopardy.

Second, the A.M.A. Council on Medical Education and Hospitals and the Association of American Medical Colleges seem to have made it clear that only those graduating from the California College of Medicine after February 15, 1962, will be considered by those bodies to have received an M.D. degree from an accredited medical school.

Therefore, in view of both the interpretation of the Executive Committee of the A.O.A. and the statement that the California College of Medicine cannot in fact issue retroactive M.D. degrees which will be considered as coming from an accredited medical school, the \$65 California medical degree seems, if anything, to be overpriced.

Apparently the California Medical Association and representatives of the American Medical Association were led to believe that the osteopathic physicians in California desired only an M.D. degree, without concern for its standing. And the leaders of the California Osteopathic Association seem to have been perfectly willing to have osteopathic physicians in California turn over a \$9,000,000 county hospital, a college, and control of several million dollars worth of osteopathic hospitals in California for two letters, which in this instance symbolize nothing.

In all this there is a matter of degree—not only M.D. or D.O.—but the degree of merit implied by the letters themselves. An earned M.D. degree or an earned D.O. degree represents an academic achievement worthy of pride.

Shakespeare in discussing the gift-certificate degree might have said something like this:

It is but a shadow, a poor substitute
That gives the holder his hour upon the
stage
And then is recognized no more; it is a
shell
Given as appeasement, full of sound and
fury, signifying nothing.

EDITORIALS

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

This periodical is the official publication of the American Osteopathic Association.

Editor	George W. Northup, D.O.
Associate Editor	Katherine Becker
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Who is there to listen?

Commenting favorably on recent JOURNAL editorials and in particular on the 1962 A. T. Still Memorial Lecture, a member of the profession posed a provocative question: Who is there to listen?

This is a good question and it deserves thought.

Does the profession really listen to the words of the officers of the American Osteopathic Association? Does the profession listen with its mind's eye to editorials, addresses, and organizational news? Are those in the profession who seem to feel that an M.D. degree is the answer to all of their problems really listening to what is happening in California? Of course, the answer to these and other questions can never be completely known. However, there is evidence that the profession is listening and beginning to understand better than ever before some of the problems it faces. There are manifestations of an increased desire to confront these problems and find their solution.

Who is there to listen? There are over 9,000 osteopathic physicians, members of the American Osteopathic Association, to listen. Regardless of previous opinions concerning the program of eliminating the osteopathic profession by *degree*, correspondence, personal contacts, and group discussions indicate that there are those who earlier viewed the

California program with envy but are disenchanted as it becomes a reality. Through this experience, members of the osteopathic profession have been taught a long-to-be-remembered lesson.

To many osteopathic physicians in California, their "acceptance" by organized medicine seemed too good to be true. And it was. Now they are realizing, as do most members of the profession, that they literally sold their birthright for sixty-five pieces of silver. The cheap M.D. degree is just that—cheap. California specialists may continue their specialty practice, but reports coming from the state already indicate that they may no longer accept in-hospital consultations. Despite the bitterness of the past few years, one cannot help but feel sorry for those osteopathic physicians in California who instead of gaining status lost it, instead of achieving economic security became less secure, and instead of being accepted into the medical fraternity as equal partners are in actuality being considered as outsiders with "honorary" degrees.

Who is there to listen? More members of the profession are listening and watching than ever before in its history. It is well that they do, before they, like some of their colleagues on the West Coast, find themselves sold into a form of professional slavery.

Who is there to listen? Let's hope it is the whole profession. Its future depends on the ability of individual members to listen and, having listened, to understand.

A matter of degrees

Ever since the California plan for the absorption of the osteopathic profession became a matter of public knowledge, considerable thought and attention have been given to the matter of degrees. And much discussion concerning the status of the M.D. degree and the D.O. degree has transpired, since it has been apparent that the \$65 medical degree granted by the California College of Medicine has been a part of the "come-on" in the California conspiracy. Despite the obvious cheapness, from both the financial and intellectual standpoints, of the M.D. degree granted in the State of California, never in the history of medical education has a group of professional people paid as dearly for their own self-destruction. Never has a medical diploma of dubious reputability been sold so cheaply yet cost so much.

Leaders in osteopathic medicine have tried to answer for themselves the question of why otherwise intelligent physicians would sacrifice so much to achieve so little. Has the inferiority complex of some osteopathic physicians so affected their reason that they would sell their professional souls for such a mess of academic pottage?

Was the desire of the osteopathic physicians in California for an M.D. degree a true one or was it politically conditioned? How widespread throughout the profession is such an unhealthy desire undermining the future existence and development of osteopathic medicine?

Were the leaders of the American Osteopathic Association correctly interpreting the profession's mood when they repeatedly stated that the overwhelming majority of osteopathic physicians did not want any degree other than a D.O., regardless of the bargain-counter aspects of the \$65 degree being offered by the California College of Medicine?

Sooner or later this basic problem had to be faced head on and resolved. The time for exploration and decision had come. The time had passed when the leadership of the osteopathic profession thought it wise to avoid this basic issue. And so, with a determination and courage rarely exhibited within organizational halls, the Executive Committee of the American Osteopathic Association directed its Executive Director to bring the matter of degrees before the profession for comment and thought. On June 4, 1962, Dr. Eveleth directed a letter to every member of the American Osteopathic Association which presented in detail the reasons being proposed for a new type of degree.

The response to Dr. Eveleth's letter was most explosive and thought provoking. Some members of the profession were so incensed that the question had even been brought up that they launched themselves into a semantic orbit. An overwhelming majority of answers were thoughtful and discerning.

The voice that was echoed through the mails into the communication centers of the A.O.A. Central Office was clear and unequivocal. It was not the solo voice of the A.O.A. president or editor, not the collective voice of the Executive Committee or Board of Trustees, nor even the democratic voice of an A.O.A. House of Delegates in session. It was the voice of the people—the voice of the average day-to-day practicing osteopathic physician.

In a three-to-one opinion the profession itself spoke out and said, in effect: We are proud of our degree and desire to do everything possible to achieve not merely equivalent status but to earn recognition superior to that accorded any other degree denoting a physician and surgeon. For every one osteopathic physician who thought there might be some advantage to an M.D. degree, three osteopathic physicians felt that the D.O. degree adequately expressed the status and training of an osteopathic physician. Many pointed out that the M.D. degree would actually be disadvantageous to an osteopathic physician. In effect, the osteopathic profession itself has said that this is our profession, the D.O. is our degree, and its members are proud to be identified with both.

There will always be those whose built-in sense of inferiority will lead them into dangerous personal and professional waters. There will always be

those whose feeling of inferiority is an actuality rather than a complex. They will try to protect their *actual* inferiority by false status symbols. True status is earned, not granted. The measure of a physician is not a matter of degree but a matter of service. Neither an M.D. degree nor a D.O. degree makes a physician—it merely identifies him. And the physician who seeks status rather than knowledge worships at the feet of a false god and prostitutes his ability for service.

Yes, the profession has spoken—not to itself, but for itself. It has expressed its desire to *bring* increasing prestige to the D.O. degree rather than to accept an identification created by others.

The matter of degrees has been presented. And the osteopathic profession has moved closer to the threshold of greatness.

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A new year—a new era

The year 1962 will be listed as a momentous one in the annals of osteopathic history. It will go down as the year of the California conspiracy. On July 14 and 15 about 2,000 M.D. degrees were distributed to D.O.'s licensed in that state. On November 6 the people of California by a majority vote supported the desire of former osteopathic physicians

to eliminate themselves and the profession through passage of Proposition 22. The people of California had been told too many times over too many years that there was no difference between osteopathic medicine and allopathic medicine and that in reality there was no need for the separate existence of the two professions. The practice of a majority of osteopathic physicians in California confirmed this philosophy in that every effort was made to follow the precepts of allopathic medicine and to ignore the physiologic principles of osteopathy.

There is little value to recapitulating in bitterness or depression the course of events in California, but the fact remains that the defeat of osteopathic medicine there is a black page in osteopathic history. There is little sense in viewing it otherwise. Perhaps history will reveal that all of us participated in the California defeat. Perhaps it will reveal that this profession many years ago erected the idol of "recognition" and has studiously worshipped at its feet. But regardless of what history will tell, the lesson to be learned from the recent past is a simple one: The osteopathic profession cannot be destroyed without its own participation in the destruction.

Reliable reports coming from California indicate that the pursuit of recognition is already bearing bitter fruit. Evidence is mounting that former osteopathic physicians with an m.d. degree are not granted the same privileges as physicians who earned their degrees at medical schools. It is *now* being pointed out that there are over 2,500 real M.D.'s in California who do not have hospital staff privileges; this number added to the 2,200 m.d.'s make the quest for staff privileges in the newly accepted medical (formerly osteopathic) hospitals highly competitive. When it is considered that the conversion of osteopathic hospitals into hospitals controlled by organized medicine is furnishing a haven for many of the 2,500 M.D.'s who have never before had hospital privileges, it is little wonder that the California Medical Association invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to eliminate the osteopathic profession and to acquire its hospitals for such use.

Other fruits of recognition, California style, are equally sickening. Specialists trained and certified under the aegis of the osteopathic profession have already been told by hospital administrators that no vacancies exist on the staff *in their areas* of specialization. Other specialists are being informed that they can do their own work in a limited area but can accept no more "in the hospital" referrals. It is reliably reported that medical specialists in the various fields have verbally informed former D.O. specialists that they had better not apply to specialty colleges for membership as in that way they will be saved the embarrassment of rejection. It is being pointed out to them that they will not be certified by medical specialty boards.

In a way, it is fortunate for osteopathic physicians in the other states of the Union that the California disaster occurred when it did. By observing