

Preserving the Gonstead Clinic of Chiropractic – A Case of National Support

By Matthew J. Amman, DC

It is said that great art never dies. However, architectural artwork is not subject to the same natural laws as a Van Gogh painting. A building must deal with the hot and cold, the wet and dry, and the profit/loss margin of the business. The Gonstead Clinic of Chiropractic is a work of architectural art and one of significance to the chiropractic profession. It is worthy of national support.

Today there is a need to come together to preserve the Gonstead Clinic of Chiropractic. The place is falling apart and it needs our love and our money.

The work of chiropractor Clarence Gonstead is well known. In his amazing career that began in 1923 in the small Norwegian town of Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, Dr. Gonstead created an empire of loyal patients and doctors. Practicing at a time when BJ Palmer's Hole-In-One (HIO) was popular, Dr. Gonstead offered a successful alternative approach for chiropractic, one built on the principles of sound biomechanics. His chiropractic innovations include: refinement on the use of the nervo-scope, a full-spine x-ray marking system, chiropractic adjusting tables, a unique style of cervical chair adjusting, a new model for understanding pelvic misalignment, and a new model of understanding discogenic back pain.

As Dr. Gonstead's practice flourished, he built his first clinic on Main Street in Mount Horeb. This beautiful facility offered everything necessary for patient comfort including the relatively new feature of air-conditioning. Years later, after the Gonstead Seminars was created and growth of his patient base continued, Dr. Gonstead decided it was time to rebuild. His initial vision was to rebuild on top of the existing clinic. However, the local zoning commission voted down his proposal.

After some serious thought and reflection, Dr. Gonstead decided to build outside of town.

The final Gonstead Clinic of Chiropractic was completed in 1964. It was a state-of-the art facility designed by Wisconsin architect John Steinmann AIA. Boasting 19,000 square feet, the facility had eleven adjusting rooms, a reception area large enough to seat one hundred people, various conference rooms for the Gonstead seminars, and a complete laboratory. The facility often treated 600 patients a day with Dr. Gonstead carrying much of the load.

Over time, other chiropractors became an integral part of the Gonstead clinic. Most notable were Drs. Alex and Doug Cox. In 1974 they purchased the clinic from Dr. Gonstead and perpetuated the Gonstead technique by their ownership of the Clinic and Gonstead Seminars. They sustained the facility until they sold it to Dr. Nick Schultz. When Dr. Schultz decided to sell the clinic, a group of Gonstead doctors organized the C.S. Gonstead Foundation and purchase the clinic.

The Foundation was initially formed to prevent the disappearance of such an important chiropractic clinic. It currently works to maintain the solvency of the clinic and manage day-to-day operations. The Foundation created the Gonstead Preservation Group, the working arm for the preservation of the facility. The effort to preserve and restore the clinic is one of monumental proportions and intricate steps. Physical preservation of the clinic is necessary because the building fabric has badly deteriorated. Deterioration has occurred for many reasons—the passage of time, an increasing pace of

required maintenance, and, in many cases, because of the experimental nature of construction and original materials.

One of the first projects for the Gonstead Preservation Group was to create the Gonstead Stabilization Master Plan. The plan outlines the overall preservation of the Gonstead Clinic and Legacy and act as a blueprint for the Foundation. Once the plan was finalized, various action steps were taken. These included initiating a biography of Dr. Clarence Gonstead, creating the Gonstead Archive that now holds more than 300 artifacts and documents, and securing the famous “Elvis” Cadillac. Future projects include an ongoing effort to acquire relevant Gonstead memorabilia, preservation of the original C.S. Gonstead video collection, and writing scholarly papers relevant to the Gonstead story and technique.

Today, the Foundation has reached the next major step for preservation: to procure money for an endowment fund. The Foundation has an aggressive goal of raising three million dollars over the next five years which would be professionally managed by The State Bank of Cross Plains. Once accumulated, the funds would provide a systematic approach to the restoration process.

The projects that would be realized by the endowment fund include: repair of the heating and air conditioning unit which is estimated to cost over \$75,000; replacement of the clinic carpet; and repair of masonry cracks found within the foundation of the clinic.

The Gonstead Preservation Group welcomes support for conservation and preservation. For additional information, contact Gary Pennebaker, DC at 952-941-2225.

Levels of Donation:

Gonstead Preservation Group Level

\$50/yr membership dues
Membership certificate
Newsletter twice/yr by email

Dr. Nick Schultz Level

Donation: \$300/yr for 5 years
GPG membership dues waived for 5 years
Membership certificate
Newsletter twice/y by email
DVD of Dr. Gonstead

Drs. Alex & Doug Cox Level

Donation: \$600/yr for 5 years
GPG membership waived for 5 years
Membership certificate
Newsletter twice/yr by email
DVD of Dr. Gonstead
Charter membership plaque (1st yr)
Silver nameplate on Memorial wall of the
Gonstead Clinic

Dr. Clarence S. Gonstead Level

Donation: \$1200/yr for 5 years
GPG membership dues waived for 5 years
Membership certificate
Newsletter twice/yr by email
2 DVD's of Dr. Gonstead
Charter membership plaque (1st yr)
Gold nameplate on Memorial wall of the
Gonstead Clinic
Invitations to "Members Only" special events

Gonstead Clinic Philanthropist Level

Dr. Clarence S. Gonstead Level benefits
A room in the Gonstead Clinic to be named after the donor (e.g. adjusting room, classroom, x-ray room, etc.). Ask for details.

Make your check out to the
GONSTEAD ENDOWMENT FUND

And send it to:
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1740 Business Hwy 18-151
Mount Horeb, WI 53572