



Inventor, Atlas Orthogonal Instrument and Program

Roy W Sweat

1927 (Albany, GA) - 2nd January 2022

Joseph Ierano

A tribute to the mentors' mentor.

In 1995 I had my first photo with Dr Roy Sweat (above, Ierano age 31 Left, and Sweat, age 68, c1995). I knew it would mean something, and it has, every day, on my office shelf, since.

Chiropractic had just turned a hundred years old. I felt like a new-born with a head of hair, and he was only ten years older in that picture than I am today (58). Unbelievably, I was in the USA at The Fountainhead of Chiropractic, far from my 'down under' birth home, about to embark on my studies at Palmer College in Iowa. Disgust (dilution of values), mishap (adversity), education (for purpose) and destiny (self-seeking direction) led me to study the upper cervical joint complex in parallel to the greater curriculum.

What is a mentor? No less than the personal encouragement of Australian mentors Drs Donald McDowall, Dennis Richards, Stanley Bolton (dec) and Alan Wigg, got me to the other side of the world.

Dr Vern Hagen, genius Palmer professor said, as if there weren't enough miraculous redirections to date, 'here is the best way to adjust atlas', pointing to a Spinalight model Sweat Percussion Adjusting Table Instrument that was quite alien to me, and to 99.9% of the world (Mind you, I had never met a more masterly manual adjuster than Hagen). Sweat was the mentors' mentor.

From then on, I was not only immersed in the traditional teachings of Palmer chiropractic, modernised instrument adjusting (via Arlan Fuhr's Activator, who is now one of the last technique 'gurus' still living) but also those of Roy W. Sweat. I was in Activator and AO clubs on campus and had other great mentors on campus like Dr David Hannah who knew the work as well. So many of my Palmer colleagues also attuned to Roy and his son Matt's work: Dr Kay Nickelson in Germany; Dr Chantal Felteau in Quebec; Dr Darren Scheuner in Australia; Dr Iain Smith in England, and so many others now that have been connected via 'The AO King' into what feels like a family more than some have biological families.



Dr Sweat saved the quality of lives of countless many, such as my patient Greg Buchanan (1) who then dedicated a part of his life to writing about AO. Pertinent point: a technique master sends his ministry far and wide via disciples honouring and living the programs; no less than greats like Goodheart, (2) DeJarnette, (3) Gonstead. (4) As all of these techniques have been historically results-driven but lacking in scientific drive, Sweat was unique to me in his scientific focus that had an engineering slant and always wanted to objectify quantitative findings. For this reason he struck up an affiliation with Chung-Ha Suh, PhD (see below).

For me, no technique ever combined the art science and philosophy as specifically, uniquely as AO did. He managed to incorporate:

1. Biophysics; what are the angles, tangents and coefficients of friction characterising a unique spinal joint complex?
2. Biomechanics; what effect does the cranial centre of gravity have on whole spinal function and locomotion? Can it be changed by an adjustment via instrument?
3. Engineering design; can I gain mechanical advantage via an adjusting instrument over the pisiform and hands? Can one without manual dexterity or disability be able to adjust the atlas?
4. Geometry; what is the vector and how is it calculable for inter-examiner validity?
5. Intuitive healing; how much of 'me' goes into an adjustment and what is my mindset in the process?
6. Palpation; the staple of the chiropractic healer and why it is our main diagnostic tool, and how to quantify it.
7. Technical analysis; what can we know and measure and record at every patient encounter to enhance intra- and inter-examiner agreement?
8. Mathematics; how can the vectored adjustment be enhance with the purest of the sciences?
9. Diagnostic imaging; Spinography revisited and refined from BJ Palmer to Grostic and Suh's (sadly) incomplete work. (5)
10. Instrument-Assisted mechanics; 'done by hand' is the chiropractic care hallmark but as the pen is to the quill is to the typewriter to the keyboard, so is the scalpel to the laser and the atlas percussion instrument to the hand.
11. Economy of Mission: all the while cutting out anything contentious or scientifically implausible, he stated the mission of the AO Program to be *'to improve the health of the human race and to teach them the head should be straight on their neck.'*

His comedic peppering matched the succinct delivery. At some point in a seminar I was always in stitches of laughter (Dr Sweat even self-published a joke book for joyful consumption). I recently further discovered his immense dedication to the Platonic 'all things are knowable' through [my article on Chung-Ha Suh and the University of Colorado](#) (6) (In this exercise they attempted to

1. www.upcspine.com

2. <https://www.icaka.org.au>

3. <https://soto.org.au>

4. <https://www.gonstead.com.au>

5. <https://atlasorthogonality.com/product/proof-of-subluxation-final-report-of-chiropractic-research-at-the-university-of-colorado/>

6. https://www.apcj.net/site_files/4725/upload_files/leranoSuhreview.1.pdf?dl=1

'pre subluxate' an upper cervical spine model and see if the alignment coordinates matched up reliably on radiographic imaging Roentgenometrics). Very useful research that seems not to have caught on, in spite of the landmark paper by Ebrall and Molyneux. (7)

You see, putting a head-on-straight has ramifications that go far and wide beyond cosmetic. Is it about neuro-mechanical tonal integrity? Locomotion? Brain/body connection and adaptation of the human to environs by removing the ultimate subluxation known: in the Cranial-Atlas joint? (8) (this phrase was eventually his preferred nomenclature).

The principles laid down by the Palmers were never transgressed, rather, Sweat further developed BJ Palmer's principle to deliver maximal (therapeutic benefit) via minimal force (intervention) in engineered form, when '*not to adjust*', and DD Palmer's concept of Tone, (9) where the adjustment was wedded with the subtle frequency and neuro-modulating vectors borne of Dr Grostic's work. Result: the specific, small stimulus that leads to a quantum cascade of re-organisation innately modulated. All in all, doing as much as you can with less, for maximal benefit is the hallmark of efficiency of human intervention, as was the goal of visionaries from Henry Ford (automobiles) to Tesla (energy) to Satoshi (Bitcoin). I vowed to bring AO to Australia and have practiced it since 1997 and even got my story into a book (on Amazon, for those who need more information). (10)

To experience the teaching of Roy Sweat directly was to hear an infallible sequence of verbal instruction that only years of application can ensue, but that hidden magic has no quantifiable ingredient. Within his delivery is the cradle of humour, familiarity and respect that you only find in that of a family elder, a tribal leader, a sociological student of human development, an anthropological master who simply delivers a message contextually. An innovator. A healer. A taste of his person instruction can be experienced in my short video on YouTube. (11)

A divine plan is sensed at work when you learn from this apostle of atlas wisdom. Then you sit with him; merely a man, after a long teaching session and cradling a cold beer in the Atlanta sun - and you think, he is just like us. To those who loved him most, I hope he had a dark side and was in touch with the master and monster in us all. For in the balance lies the real human; mighty and frail. He was rarely in excess, like his '*one-thrust-on-the-atlas-at-a-time*' policy, and '*light is right*'; he treads lightly with a big imprint of knowledge.

But on another level, he was the '*Atlanta, Georgia Royal*'. That is: Roy means 'King' from the place of Atlas, who still symbolically carries our universe on his Greek back, ordered by Zeus. Chiropractic, from the Greek. Atlas is the spirit of the Atlantic and Atlanta is ground zero for AO whose mission shall not be terminated until every head can at least be given the chance to sit orthogonally upon every persons body. God bless Chiropractic, and Dr Roy Sweat, the Atlantan King!

Roy was a master of cutting to the chase and inspired me that '*there ain't no fat old ones Joe!*' and I made my transformation to the man I am today, with a little bit of tough love from the master. I could not make this tribute a soulless list of the man's achievements and quirks, as those who want to know, can know the knowable on him. What is tantamount to metamorphosis is the

7. Ebrall PS, Molyneux TP. Rotary Subluxation of the Atlas: An Exploration of the Diagnostic Potential of the CT Scan. *Chiropr J Aus.* June 1993;23(2):42-7.

8. Personal communication to the author, 2017.

9. McDowall. (2021). Daniel David Palmer's heritage and his legacy of tone to chiropractic [Southern Cross University]. URL <https://doi.org/10.25918/thesis.121>

10. <https://amzn.to/3ztkuru> or search 'atlas of healing ierano'

11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7VLxLV9i4>

effect on one person, student, doctor and his extended family of patients and world citizens. You can not be much more revered than to be the 'mentor's mentor'.

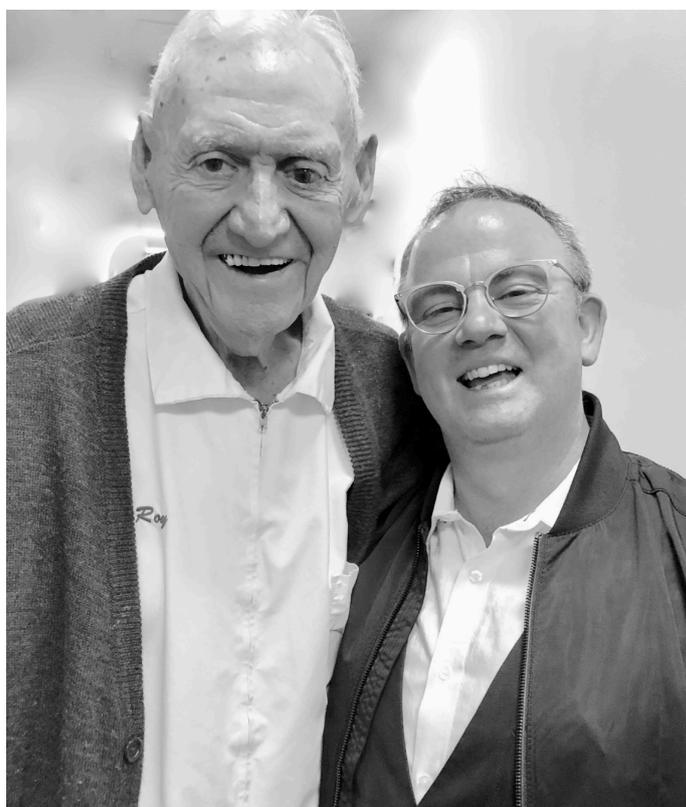
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Sweat and Ierano c.2017