

# ‘He always worked hard with an unstoppable, undeniable determination’<sup>Jilly Hunt, 2020</sup>

R. Graham Hunt, DC, AM

‘RG took any attack on Chiropractic personally, and went for the jugular’<sup>Ellis, 2020</sup>

Phillip Ebrall

Words are hard to find to discuss a chiropractor who lived larger than life and empowered every second of it for the betterment of his patients and the profession.

Chiropractic is built of people and the cycles of their lives which entangle in fascinating, unexpected ways. Graham taught me as he taught a number of my colleagues now successful in practice and staying clear of the over-reach of a myopic registration authority. RG would be appalled to read of the contempt Australia’s chiropractic board shows towards its registrants; he taught us to respect authority, to keep our noses clean, and to put patients above self. What is more, he would be the one to do something about it. They simply don’t mint chiropractors like Dr Hunt any more and I think we are worse off.

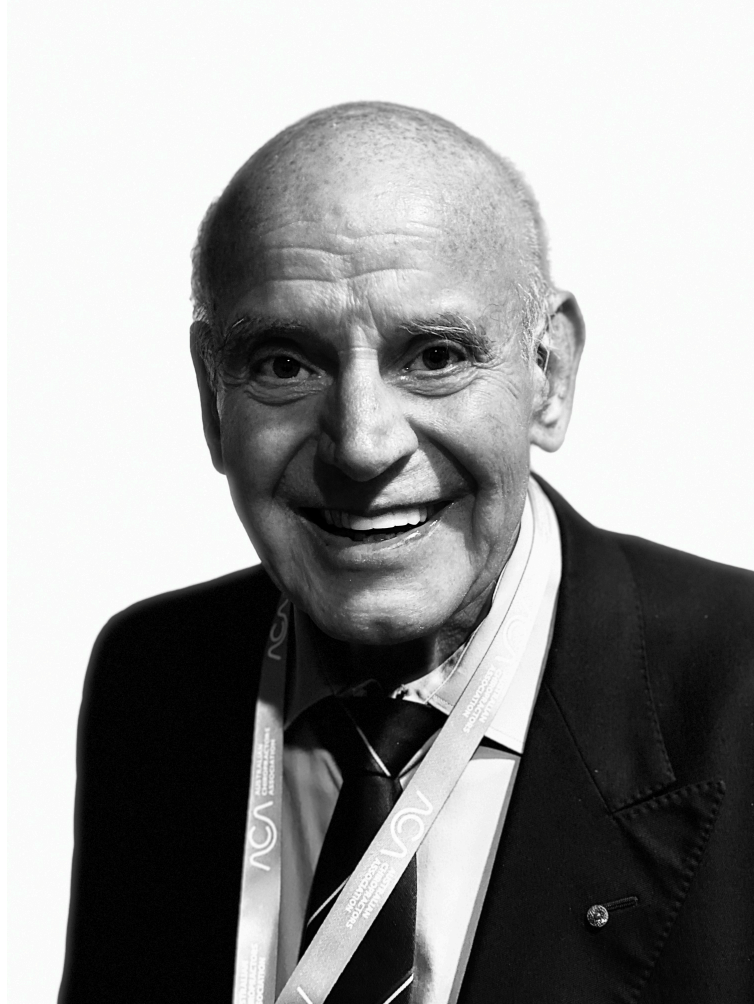
As one colleague wrote, RG ‘*Doggedly ground down the government to help get registration and had a few little strong arguments with one and all along the way*’. Indeed, RG was argumentative, and no others had the understanding of Victoria’s politics that he held and, I might say, used with ‘dogged determination’.

The story of chiropractic, and Australia is no exception, is a story of men who stood up to be counted. RG certainly did this with his war-time flying in the Asia theatre of war specifically in the defense of Malaysia, and later returned to live for 19 years in Kuala Lumpur with his dear wife Patricia, who survives him. Among his patients was a Sultan during his rotation as King. Those who knew Graham would expect no less a dignitary as a patient.

In his role as President of the *Australian Chiropractors’ Association* (ACA), a professional association that dates from 1938 and not just 30 years ago (September 1990) as promoted by the incumbent officers of the Association,<sup>1</sup> RG signalled his support of education by having the



1. Australian Chiropractors Association. Celebrating 30 Years. 27 October 2020. URL <https://www.chiro.org.au/celebrating-30-years/>



association hold an Education Conference in September 1975,<sup>2</sup> the year chiropractic education commenced in Australasia.

He and his colleagues such as Stan Martin, all of the Victorian Branch, each played a role in establishing Australia's first program of chiropractic education, in Melbourne, where the discipline of chiropractic was taught by licensed chiropractors. I write of this in detail in a forthcoming paper in submission with the *Chiropractic Journal of Australia*.<sup>3</sup>

RG also served as President of the ACA-Victoria Branch 1985-86, the time I commenced my chiropractic education with the then Phillip Institute of Technology (PIT) now RMIT University, and I found him a constant presence on campus, working with students not only in class but in informal small groups. He was an avid supporter of Prof Andy Kleynhans, himself a giant of the profession in Australia, and between them they implemented successful strategies to grow and enrich chiropractic education in the tertiary sector.

Those were the years during which legislation to allow chiropractors to provide services under the provisions of workers' compensation was before parliament, and a time that demanded astute lobbying to keep chiropractic before the law-makers. The outcome was favourable.

Graham excelled as a lobbyist, an art which also served well in Malaysia in the 1990s as the *International Medical University* in Kuala Lumpur was appearing before government with its proposal to establish a chiropractic program. My privilege was to lead the argument at a significant meeting with both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. RG sat opposite and played the consummate hand of restrained if not critical support which diverted the negatives from the medical lobby, then as that wave of antagonism passed, lent his resounding support. History tells us we now have a wonderful program of chiropractic education in Malaysia

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2. Hunt RG. President's communique. J Aust Chiropr Assoc. 1975;9(3):4.

3. Ebrall P. The establishment of the International College of Chiropractic (ICC) Melbourne. Chiropr J Aust. 2021;in submission.

and professionally I could not think of a better institution than IMU to be its custodian in the region.

The history of chiropractic is complex yet has its colourful asides. For example RG was 'chiropractic registrant #2' in Victoria which was effectively Australia. I am unsure as to the actual registration number of his close and dear colleague James Evans (dec.), but know that the licence plate of James' Fairlane was 'CHIRO 1'.

There are not a lot of our pioneers living among us and we really must take time in our lives to pause and think of how we got to where we are today. There are literally so many heroes for us to be celebrating, and RG is one. A hero sleeps on the floor of a parliamentarian's office during a crucial debate and writes for the opposite party to prompt his relatives in the ruling party to do the 'right thing' by our profession. RG is a hero of chiropractic.

Please let me conclude the *Journal's* tribute to a loyal advocate of chiropractic with an anecdote. It was a weekday in late November 1989 and I had just stepped out of the Registrar's office with the news I had passed my finals and was clear to register. I pinned a badge to my chest that read 'I'm a Grad ... got a job?'

RG happened upon me and berated me in no uncertain terms to remove it and told me to never demean our profession again. As a graduate chiropractor I was the job.

Goodbye RG, DC, AM, you irascible and irreplaceable treasure of our profession.

Phillip Ebrall

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