

Visionaries



Linda Smith, DC, PC
Class of 1982

Dr. Linda Wheatland Smith has had many moments of achievement over the years, but perhaps the most profound have been those where she made a diagnosis that impacted a patient's life.

"If I had not listened carefully and touched the patient, I may not have detected the osteomyelitis masquerading as back pain; breast cancer that had metastasized to a women's ribs; a stroke in progress that looked like neck pain; or a tumor in a patient's leg that was previously misdiagnosed as a hip problem," she said. "My hands-on skills allowed me the privilege of these moments."

Dr. Smith has been drawn to the personal touch that chiropractic provides. "At one point, I had a vision of what I thought I could accomplish and that vision has evolved and expanded," she said. "The longer I've been in practice and taught across disciplines, it's become clear to me that hands-on care, especially chiropractic, can help fill the expensive and enormous gap in health care."

Evidence of that vision is seen through Dr. Smith's partnership with Logan in creating integrated clinics for the underserved; the challenging cases she has co-authored and published with Norman Kettner, DC, DACBR, FICC; and the integrated model she has created in her private practice.

Dr. Smith's work is not finished. In her latest project, she is collaborating with Logan to develop protocols for common chiropractic syndromes in an effort to clarify conditions and efficient treatment strategies and to combat the model of multiple brief chiropractic visits.

Dr. Smith said she focuses on creating relationships across divisions in health care. "I have taken each opportunity to represent chiropractic well to other professions," she said. This has included guest lectures at Washington University School of Physical Therapy and Saint Louis University Medical School on the value and effectiveness of an integrated model, including chiropractic care, massage therapy and acupuncture. In addition she has represented the profession as the first Chiropractic Honoree for the Arthritis Foundation and currently as the organization's expert spokesperson.

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For someone who asked herself, "How will I ever know what to do?" on graduation day, Dr. Smith has clearly succeeded at navigating the profession and serving as an inspirational leader, and paving new paths for chiropractors to serve a greater share of the population.

For now, she feels grateful to have been given an opportunity to do what she loves. "Every day, I get to help make someone feel remarkably better," she said. "I will never get over how satisfying that is."