

LIFE[®]

University

SECTION THREE

LEADERSHIP | HISTORY

OF LIFE UNIVERSITY



ABOUT THE PRESIDENT

Guy F. Riekeman, D.C. President

Dr. Guy Riekeman is a second generation chiropractor who graduated from Palmer College of Chiropractic in 1972. He became a successful chiropractor and businessman, creating companies and seminar programs to improve chiropractic practice and facilitate personal growth. After years in the field, Dr. Riekeman decided to shift his energy and focus to education. He went on to become Chancellor of Palmer College of Chiropractic before becoming the fourth President of Life University in 2004. As an educator, he extols the message to “Make Your Life Extraordinary,” and he challenges everyone to strive for excellence, both in the classroom and in life.



As a leader in the chiropractic profession, Dr. Riekeman works non-stop to keep the public and his fellow leaders in health care informed of important issues in Chiropractic, Vitalism, wellness and healthcare, and to create a greater appreciation of the shift from an authoritarian “sickness care” system to a vitalistic partnership approach to health and wellness. For 30 years he has organized efforts to advance personal integrity, and has worked tirelessly through educational programs and thousands of personal presentations to promote a new attitude and approach to health care and personal responsibility. Since becoming President, Dr. Riekeman has guided Life University to become the largest chiropractic college in the world. His leadership created the 20/20 Vision, a multi-year, multi-phase initiative that will transform Life University into a modern college campus with all the old-world values of education. In a dynamically changing world glutted with information and roiling with uncertainty, Dr. Riekeman demonstrates a unique ability to articulate meaning and inspire discipline for institutional, professional and personal success.



HISTORY OF LIFE UNIVERSITY

The idea for Life University was conceived among a group of prominent and influential chiropractors in 1974 during a weekend getaway in Ormand Beach, Florida. The discussion among the group centered around the need for a principled and vitalistic-based chiropractic college in the southeast region. This “Founder’s Circle” consisted of: Ian Grassam, D.C.; Janet Grassam; R. James Gregg, D.C.; John A. Hofmann, D.C.; D. D. Humber, Beth Humber, Wayne King, D.C.; Thomas O. Morgan, D.C.; Mary Ann Morgan; Michael Nathanson, D.C.; Charles Ribley, D.C.; Ruth Ribley; James Sigafoose, Patsy Sigafoose, Ralph Ungerank, Wilma Ungerank, Nell Williams, D.C.; and Sidney E. Williams, D.C.

In 1975, Life Chiropractic College opened its doors, using half of a building of what was, at the time, the Georgia Unemployment Office. Twenty-two students attended the first classes in January 1975. Since that “Day-One Class,” the school has grown both in enrollment and physical space, acquiring land and buildings and constructing new facilities. Currently, Life University occupies 104 acres of the property on the northwest corner of the intersection of Cobb Parkway (US 41) and South Cobb Drive (US 253) in Marietta, Georgia.

By 1990, under the leadership of the original president, Dr. Sid Williams, Life College had grown to become the largest chiropractic college in the world. In 1996, Life College expanded its degree offerings to include an undergraduate school and became Life University.

In June 2002, Life University’s accreditation was questioned by the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Accreditation by the CCE was temporarily suspended before being restored by a Federal Court injunction. Life University was put on temporary probation by SACS but returned to normal status soon after the accrediting restoration by CCE. During this time, Dr. Sid Williams resigned as President of Life University.

Michael Schmidt, D.C. was installed as interim President in July 2002. Dr. Schmidt diverted resources from many of the programs and initiatives secondary to academics, such as the athletic program, in order to keep the University solvent. Other cost-cutting measures included workforce reductions and the sale of off-campus administrative and industrial buildings owned by the University. During the relative uncertainty of this period in LIFE's history, enrollment dropped significantly.

In January 2003, Benjamin DeSpain, Ph.D. was named President. Prior to his arrival, Dr. DeSpain had developed a reputation in his previous positions in higher education for turning the most challenging situations into opportunities for growth. It was during his tenure that the University's programmatic accreditation was restored retroactively by the Federal Court.

In March 2004, Guy F. Riekeman, D.C. was installed as President of Life University, and he currently remains President today. Dr. Riekeman, former Chancellor of Palmer Chiropractic University, played a key role in restoring Life University's credibility as an institution of higher learning. Within months of his appointment, he raised millions of dollars for capital expenditures and operating costs. Dr. Riekeman also led the University through reaffirmation of accreditation by SACS and CCE. Enrollment began growing again in 2004 and has been increasing consistently ever since. By 2008, Life University once again housed the largest chiropractic college in the world, a distinction it holds to this day.



Under the direction of current President Dr. Guy Riekeman, LIFE has undergone transformational innovation that has set a standard of world-class excellence in the physical campus, curriculum design, academic programs and national policy. Dr. Riekeman has established "Life U" as a premiere university with an international reputation for service and as a thought leader in the healthcare industry.

Changes included new construction built to Gold-level LEED standards, the "greening" of the campus and modernization of existing buildings. Life University has established chiropractic clinics in places such as China and Costa Rica, while also establishing chiropractic education across the globe through international governing bodies and universities. It has developed the first master's degree program in positive psychology with an emphasis on secular ethics and more, and affected National Testing Protocols.

Additionally, LIFE is known throughout North America for its sports programs, especially its number one-ranked rugby program. LIFE continues to influence policy makers via its forums and summits organized through the Octagon, a global think tank serving to advance dialogue on health care and in the community at-large related to the University's Eight Core Proficiencies.

LIFE is appropriately tagged as the "not-so-little" university that is changing the world.