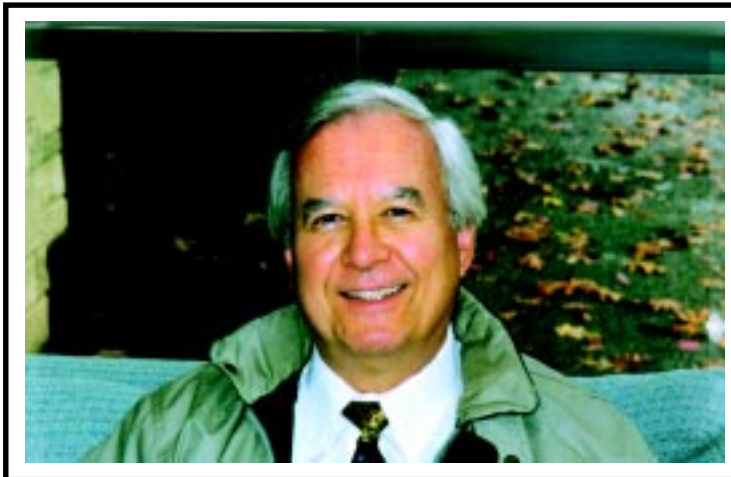


DR. TOM ROCKE (LEFT) WITH HIS FATHER, DR. BOB ROCKE (SEATED) AND DR. PETER KESLING AT SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY CIRCA 1998.



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Dr. R. Thomas Roche



1940 – 2001

Early Years

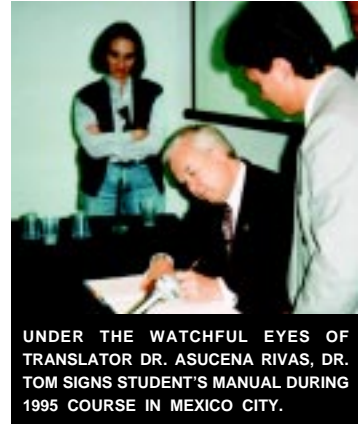
One of my first memories of Tom is when his parents, Bob and Dot, stopped by our house every Christmas Day with him, Sue and Paul. I remember the children were all dressed up and well behaved—except for little Paul who seemed to have a knack for getting into trouble.

Tom had an early introduction to orthodontics as his father, Dr. Bob Roche, was in orthodontic practice with my father, Dr. H. D. Kesling, in La Porte Indiana. He also was introduced early to the excitement and hard work associated with giving

orthodontic courses. After my father had invented the Tooth Positioning Appliance in the early 1940s, Tom often accompanied his father to the many courses given on this new finishing appliance, Figure 1.

During his high school years Tom worked at the La Porte Tooth Positioning Laboratory (name later changed to TP Orthodontics) located behind

Figure 1. Tom Roche sitting at his father's, Bob's, knee during a Tooth Positioner seminar in La Porte in the early 1940s. Woman at left is a set-up technician.



UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF TRANSLATOR DR. ASUCENA RIVAS, DR. TOM SIGNS STUDENT'S MANUAL DURING 1995 COURSE IN MEXICO CITY.

the Kesling and Roche orthodontic office in La Porte. He liked to relate the story of his introduction to the "Live Wire" technique. His job was to vulcanize rubber tooth positioners using antiquated S. S. White dry heat presses, Figure 2. This required turning them shut by hand. Once, to gain more leverage, he pulled the handle of one press while pushing the handle of another. There was an electrical short—Tom was it and he couldn't let go with either hand. A fellow employee heard his cries and



Figure 2. Bank of S. S. White dry heat presses used to vulcanize rubber tooth positioners. Photo taken in the original Tooth Positioner (T-P) building now located at the Orthodontic Center.

knocked his hand off with a broom handle.

Tom graduated from Indiana University in 1962 and went on to receive a D.D.S. degree in 1965 from Indiana University School of Dentistry. That same year he began his orthodontic post graduate studies at Saint Louis University. Soon after and much to

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(Continued from page 1)

his surprise, he was drafted into the U. S. Army. His patients were divided among other classmates to be finished in his absence. Returning to school eighteen months later, he found his new classmates had each begun treating two extra patients for him. He hit the ground running—not one step behind than when he left, Figure 3.



Figure 3. Dr. Tom Rocke working on one of his patients while a graduate orthodontic student at Saint Louis University in 1968.

Professional Years

After receiving his M.S. degree in orthodontics from Saint Louis University in 1969, he joined the Kesling and Rocke Orthodontic Group which included our fathers, my brother,

Dave, and me at the Orthodontic Center, Westville, Indiana. Tom was a wonderful partner and followed in his father's footsteps with the highest ideals and finest quality of treatment, Figure 4. At that time in association with Dr. P. R. Begg, we were practicing and giving courses in the Begg technique. He quickly fit in with both the treating of patients and helping in the lab and lecture room during courses at the Center. He also taught part time at Saint Louis University for several years.

In 1983 Tom heard of an orthodontist treating patients with the brackets and tubes attached to the lingual surfaces of the teeth. He was intrigued and began treatment of several patients with the attachments bonded on the lingual. Although he and his assistant had to nearly stand on their heads at times, the results were excellent—even in extraction cases. He joined the Lingual Orthodontic Society and showed his cases at their first meeting. It was reported that his were the finest treatment results by far. Part of this was due to his skills and part to the ribbon arch type brackets (256), which he bonded with the slots facing incisally. This facilitated archwire changes, yet still permitted differential



Figure 4. Dr. Tom adjusting an archwire for his Tip-Edge patient. Photo taken in the treatment room at the Orthodontic Center, Westville, Indiana.

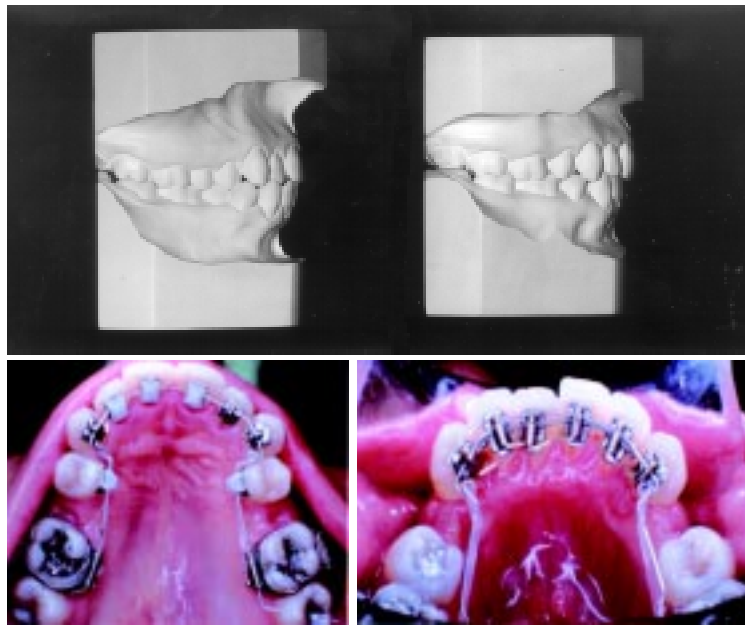


Figure 5. Before and after treatment models and intraoral photos of a lingual, four premolar extraction case treated by Dr. Tom in 1983-84.

tooth movement, Figure 5.

By the early 1980's both my father and Dr. Begg had died and my brother was retired. However, my son, Dr. Chris Kesling, had joined the practice after completing his post gradu-

a few patients instead of the 256, ribbon arch type brackets we were using for Begg treatment. We all were eager to see the progress of these patients at each visit. The nonextraction, Class I malocclusions seemed to do well.



Figure 6. Kesling and Rocke Group in 1984 consisted of, from left to right: Drs. Pete, Bob, Chris and Tom. Photo taken during Begg course at the Orthodontic Center.

ate studies at Saint Louis University in 1984, Figure 6.

Therefore, the Kesling and Rocke Group now consisted of Bob, Tom, Chris and me. However, interest in the Begg technique was waning due mainly to the promise of automatic treatment and finishing with "straight-wire" brackets.

Tip-Edge Years

Always inquiring and inquisitive, Tom decided he wanted to learn first hand about the advantages and disadvantages of pre-adjusted edgewise brackets. He placed Straight-Edge brackets on

Tom was frustrated, however, with those having deep anterior overbites, Class II relationships or spaces to close. With the Begg technique he was accustomed to seeing all these problems resolved and with light, intraoral forces. With the edgewise brackets, progress was slow, often nonexistent and even at times things seemed to get worse. Bites deepened and posterior teeth moved forward at a rapid rate.

It was while looking at one of these patients of Tom's that I thought of the Tip-Edge arch-

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wire slot. From then on all patients of the Kesling and Rocke Group were treated with these new brackets. Where would we be today without his part in the equation?

Impressed by his clinical skills and ability to explain the new, evolving technique, orthodontists taking courses at the Orthodontic Center in Westville invited

The Charlotte Years

In 1996 Tom's father and mother moved into a retirement home in Charlotte, North Carolina, near their daughter Susan and her family. Tom and Diana fell in love with the area during their periodic visits to his parents and sister. Tom had planned to retire early—this year, in fact. In 1998 he and Diana bought a lot on Lake Norman about 20



Figure 7. Wall of Dr. Tom Rocke's personal office with mementos from Tip-Edge lectures and courses given around the world.

Tom to give courses in their respective countries. These invitations eventually led Tom to give lectures and courses on Tip-Edge around the globe, Figure 7.

Some of those countries he visited included China, Mexico, Germany, Italy, France, England, Indonesia, Australia, Brazil and Japan.

Tom was a member of the AAO and ABO and authored several articles on Tip-Edge in the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ORTHODONTICS AND DENTOFACIAL ORTHOPEDICS*. He also co-authored a chapter in the latest textbook, *ORTHODONTICS: CURRENT PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES*, published by Mosby, Inc.

miles north of Charlotte and began planning their retirement home. They engaged a local architect who designed a French country house, Figure 8.

Early in 2000 during a visit to Charlotte, Tom was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, a form of bone cancer. Upon returning to Indiana he began a regimen of chemical and radiation therapy at the University of Chicago Hospitals. The treatments left him weak and unable to work.

In November Chris was giving a Tip-Edge course at the Center. One day to the surprise of all, Tom showed up in sport coat and tie. He had received a

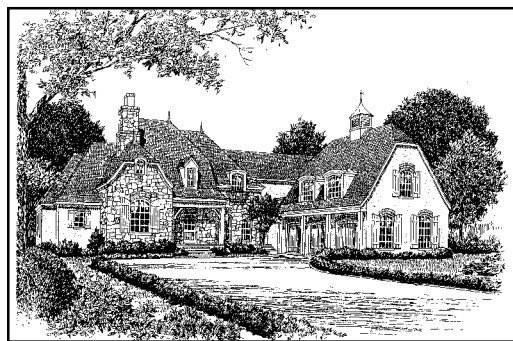


Figure 8. French country house designed by Frank Snodgrass with Building Graphics in Charlotte, for Dr. Tom and Diana's retirement years remains yet to be built.

unit of blood, which gave him the energy to give what turned out to be his last lecture. Luckily a photo taken afterwards captured the moment for all, Figure 9.



Figure 9. Last photo of the Kesling and Rocke Group taken during lunch at a Tip-Edge course in November 2000.

In February Tom and Diana were encouraged to learn that his cancer had been cured or at least was in remission. They decided to move ahead with their plans to build their retirement home and drove to Charlotte to

meet the contractor. However, the day before they were to sign the papers Tom's symptoms returned with a vengeance. This time there was no question as to the outcome. Diana drove them back to

Michigan City, Indiana where he died two weeks later.

We all miss Tom very much. He will always be remembered and will always be a part of the Kesling and Rocke family. 🍷

— Dr. Peter C. Kesling

MEMORIES of Dr. Tom Rocke

A Tribute by Dr. Richard C. Parkhouse
Consultant Orthodontist, Glen Clwyd Hospital, WALES

I first heard of Dr. Tom Rocke in the context of the Kesling & Rocke Orthodontic Center, which was widely acknowledged as the world's centre of excellence for the Begg technique. So you can imagine my sense of expectation when his name appeared on the programme for the British Orthodontic Conference, held at Blackpool in 1987. His title was something along the lines of "Modern Begg." What we were actually to see was the very first Tip-Edge presentation in the UK, comprising the early cases under treatment at the K&R Center. I had never heard of Tip-Edge up until that time, but immediately saw the significance of an appliance that might combine the strengths of

the Straight Wire and the Begg techniques (both of which I was using) within a single bracket system. This was surely what the orthodontic world so badly needed.

I had previously applied to sit at Dr. Rocke's table at the following Discussion Lunch. In fact, Dr. Tom Rocke was not only my first choice, but my second, third, fourth, and fifth choice as well, and I had sent my form in specially early to make absolutely sure. By sitting at the very back of the previous lecture and being fast on my feet, I even managed to grab the seat right next to him. I look back with some embarrassment at the number of questions I had to ask him and fear that he had little to eat as

a result! I felt immensely privileged. He answered all of them in his calm American accent, a quiet and laid back man in a grey tweed jacket, understated, but with a reservoir of clinical understanding that only comes with experience and much patience in seeking what works best.

In retrospect, it was a highly significant landmark in my own career and for Glan Clwyd Hospital. At a later stage it became a great honour to be able to share courses with Tom Rocke in Manchester and Adelaide, which was, if memory serves, the largest Tip-Edge typodont course ever, with 65 participants. To be able to help out with the Kesling-Rocke courses themselves was like a dream come true! At each one, there was a genuine exchange of enthusiasm, knowledge and discovery, as anyone who

has been to the K&R Centre will readily confirm. Inspiration shared is surely infectious and Tom Rocke was very much a part of this.

At one of these, my slides travel bag had failed, and it was typical of Tom's spontaneity that he immediately donated his mega golfing bag for my return journey. He would be amused to hear that it is still in use today, and has so stretched that it takes six more cassettes than it did originally!

Tom and Diana Rocke became good friends of ours, together with Muffin, who they affection-



Dr. Richard Parkhouse (with the Mickey Mouse necktie), Dr. Milton Sims of Australia and Dr. Tom and Diana. Photo taken during the 1995 European Begg meeting in Chester, England.

ately described as their thoroughly useless dog. We had some really good times. They both loved Wales, and Tom was particularly taken with the free roaming sheep, on one occasion turning his back on Snowdon to photograph a lamb, much to the astonishment of the locals. Then there was the occasion in a souvenir

shop when the tape struck up *Back Home in Indiana*. "They're playing our tune!" exclaimed Diana, whereupon they both joined in and sang! And why not? Then we went up into the mountains in a narrow gauge steam train as a dummy run for the "TP Express" which later performed for the European Begg Society meeting in Chester in 1995 at which Dr. Tom was naturally an invited speaker.

Subsequently, our youngest daughter Chloe had the time of her life during her summer vacation, handful that she was, staying with the Rockes in Michigan City while earning pocket money packaging brackets at TP. Such days can never be forgotten.

The world has just lost a great clinician, and Rachel, myself and Chloe, a real friend. ☞

Dr. Richard Parkhouse

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