

## One Makes a Difference

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

One person does make a difference. Now is the time to unite and stand together to protect and preserve the profession. It is a sad but exciting time for the profession as we pay tribute to a one-of-a-kind acupuncturist, [Miriam Lee](#). She single-handedly lead and trained many others in this profession before it was legal to practice. Honora Wolfe, of Blue Poppy, has described Miriam Lee as one of the true “Mothers of Acupuncture” in the West. Miriam was an example for each person in the profession. There is an expression that says, “You put your money where your mouth is,” and that is exactly what she did. She, by herself, paid a well-known lobbyist, Art Krause, \$500 per month for seven years for him to help advance the profession at the state Capitol. Although this was a sacrifice for Miriam, she was dedicated to the growth of the profession.

Miriam passed away on June 24, 2009. She left this profession a legacy of personal and professional involvement. When she was arrested in 1974 for practicing medicine without a license, her patients showed up en masse at the courtroom in her defense. Shortly after her release, she began to work for licensure in California, which finally came to pass in 1976. She was one of the first in California to be licensed.

The passage of the law in California set the precedent for the success of similar laws in other states. In other words, California was the ice breaker, and Miriam Lee was a key player in those events some 30 years ago. Bob Flaws, also of Blue Poppy Press, who is a legislative leader and well-know to the profession, says that Miriam was both a pioneer in legal regulations and a teacher in “Master Tung’s Magic Points.”

How can we learn from and apply what Miriam Lee has left in her legacy? She was focused, bold and active. In the 1980s she formed an organization, the Acupuncture Association of America, to engage in legislative advocacy. The profession needs this same level of participation now in 2009, more than ever. Many challenges are facing this profession today.

You might say to yourself, “I am only one. What can I do?” But, as seen in the life of Miriam Lee, one does make a difference! One phone call, one letter, one e-mail, one personal contact to a state or federal representative does make a difference. Students in Southern California from [Samra University](#), [Dongguk University](#), [Alhambra Medical University](#), [Yo San University](#) and [Emperor’s College of Traditional Chinese Medicine](#), generated over 250 letters to [Congressman Henry Waxman \(D-Calif.\)](#) to urge him to include acupuncture in the [Healthcare Reform Bill \(HR 646\)](#). The AAAOM is currently making a united effort to reach legislators to introduce and pass HR 646. This bill would include acupuncture in Medicare for reimbursement.

There is also the issue of having the profession comply with the FDA’s current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP) dispensary policies and procedures. By attending a special seminar, you will be getting trained in the procedures necessary to meet federal compliance, get continuing education

credit, and protect your knowledge of herbs and your right to prescribe them. All the money from these seminars will be returned to the profession for legislative efforts on both the federal and state levels and to support research studies in Oriental medicine. This is also part of the legacy left to us by Miriam Lee - the need to further our profession at the federal level.

You have probably already received an e-mail with all the information about these seminars and how you can seize the opportunity to participate. If you have further questions, call the school you attended or the American Acupuncture Council for a seminar location and date near you.

Now is the time for you to get involved, unite with all your fellow professionals, and stand together to protect and preserve this profession for the practitioners and for the millions of patients who need this medicine and need you, now and in the future. One does make a difference. You can make a difference.

SEPTEMBER 2009