

For osteopathic physicians, by osteopathic physicians

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CELEBRATING A.T. STILL

# Happy Birthday A.T. Still, MD, DO! 5 facts about the father of the profession

*His body, mind, spirit approach to care is still being taught today at colleges of osteopathic medicine across the country.*

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By **The DO Staff**

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Topics

A.T. Still

**E**ditor's note: The following article is from the August 2019 edition of *The DO*. We have updated it and are highlighting it in August 2024 as our monthly "throwback" article, our effort to share past columns to provide helpful advice and information to the osteopathic medical community.

Andrew Taylor Still, MD, DO, the founding father of the osteopathic profession, was born 196 years ago on Aug. 6, 1828.

Dr. Still's revolutionary approach to care continues to impact patients today through the nearly 149,000 U.S. DOs practicing the osteopathic philosophy. In 2023, there were also close to 38,000 osteopathic medical students—the largest number yet.

To celebrate his legacy, here are five things to know about Dr. Still on his birthday.

**1. Dr. Still has a statue in the [Hall of Famous Missourians](#) at the Missouri House of Representatives**

While Dr. Still was born in Virginia, he lived in Kansas before founding osteopathic medicine in Missouri. The first osteopathic medical school opened in 1892 in Kirksville, Missouri. Known originally as the American School of Osteopathy, the school is now known as A.T. Still University College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-COM). Visit his bust at the Missouri State Capitol alongside other celebrated Missourians such as Walt Disney, Mark Twain and Harry Truman.

**2. Dr. Still had a passion for [invention](#).**

Dr. Still had always been interested in machines and loved improving mechanical inventions. He patented a better butter churn, a medical brace and a smokeless furnace burner.

**3. Dr. Still was 10 years old when he made his first [osteopathic discovery](#).**

In his autobiography published in 1897, Dr. Still noted that at age 10, he used a rope sling to alleviate a headache. He says in the book that this was the first time he



used an osteopathic approach.

#### 4. [He served in the Union Army](#) during the American Civil War

Dr. Still enlisted in the Civil War on the Union side in 1861. He served as a hospital steward in the 9th Kansas Cavalry, a captain in the 18th Kansas Militia and a major in the 21st Kansas Militia. Throughout his life, Dr. Still was a staunch opponent of slavery.

Dr. Still (or, as his soldiers knew him then, Major Still) and his older brother James M. Still, MD, went into battle together under the command of Col. Sandy Lowe. The 21st Kansas Militia protected the flank in the Battle of the Big Blue River, during which Major Still rode his mule into the fight, leading over 600 men. Read more about Dr. Still's Civil War service in The DO's July 2024 [coverage](#) of newly discovered documents that shed light on this time in his life.

#### 5. He was committed to serving the profession [until the very end](#)

Dr. Still remained active in the profession almost to the end of his life, having been weakened by a stroke in 1914. He died at 89 years old on Dec. 12, 1917. Nearly 3,000 men and women had been trained in osteopathic medicine by that time.

#### Further reading:

[The DO Book Club, June 2024: 'Autobiography of Andrew T. Still'](#)

[New documents illuminate the Civil War legacy of A.T. Still, MD, DO](#)

## One comment

Joseph Clarino

Dr. Palmer, founder of chiropractic, was a friend of Dr. Still's. He was a