**Charles L. Strauch**

**OTAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND LOBBYIST (1986 to 2008)**

It is hard to capture the full importance that Chuck Strauch brought to OTAC during his 22 year as a full time executive director and lobbyist. It is a story of strength, commitment and perseverance. It is a legacy of leadership, pride, and tradition.

His experience in management brought us newfound energy and strength and provided us with new encouragement to move forward. His political savvy sent us into the field of politics that challenged us to speak up and make a difference in how we represented our profession. His financial and business leadership brought us the resources to provide quality training for our members in conferences and meetings and built us a healthy reserve to play a role in the California healthcare arena. He taught us to persevere through the change in officers, board members and chapter representatives, carrying forward in that long sought goal of licensure that secured us in that healthcare arena. He served us in the role of mentor and guide, carefully finding our individual strengths and championing our growth into roles he knew we could play.

Perhaps his greatest role is his legacy of leadership, pride and tradition. He quietly molded us into leaders with the resulting power of leadership within our jobs, within the state organization and nationally as the largest, most skilled state association. Power not for personal gain but for the ability to lead others in our chosen profession. Chuck had the insight and the personality to bring many of us forward to willingly play a role in growing our organization.

With leadership came pride. Pride in ourselves as occupational therapists, pride in our profession, and pride in our association and the role we could play in its growth. We sought skilled clinicians to provide us with emerging professional skills. During these years we proudly presented ourselves as professionals and it would stay with us.

It stayed with us because it became a legacy passed down from leader to leader that has led to lifelong friendships that brought and still brings us together across the state. Chuck was a “people person”, and was so much fun to be with. If you wanted to play a role in the association you were welcomed and easily “initiated” into this fun and friendship that made the often hard work and commitment well worth the effort. It was understood that good leaders became good friends who would show up and encourage you on.

And he taught us the power of tradition. A tradition of leadership, service, strength and friendship. He wove those entities together into the pride of occupational therapy, our service to the Occupational Therapy Association of California and the treasure of knowing him.