

**W**hile Roling® structural integration (SI) has been around for the better part of fifty years, the fact is its foundation was based on an intuition and not scientific evidence. As a biochemist, Dr. Rolf knew that the flash of insight that inspired her life's work would not stand up in the courtroom of science, at least not the way a scientist would usually prove a theorem in his or her laboratory. "I don't know why it works," she told Rosemary Feitis, "I only know that it works. I only invent these explanatory rationalizations later" (Rolf 1978, 27).

As the work developed from the 1950s, Rolf seems to have had two preoccupations. First, who would carry on her work? Second, how could she prove that it worked to the scientific community? This dual quest for legitimacy was a preoccupation until her death. When she presented her "Postural Dynamics" to a group of chiropractors in Kansas City in the 1950s, the class also did metabolic readings to confirm health benefits (Johnson 2006). Unfortunately, her presentations to the chiropractors and osteopaths in the 1950s proved to be a dead end, and she was left little alternative but to create a new school and a new profession.

Ron Kirkby's (1975) landmark article "The Probable Reality Behind Structural Integration: How Gravity Supports the Body" was an exegesis of how SI was based on tensegrity concepts, and from our vantage point forty years later stands out as an accurate explanation of why and how SI works. Please, however, note the word "probable" in the title, not an easy sell by any means if you had to convince the common layman, never mind an educated scientist, of the efficacy of our work. What was lacking still, bemoaned Kirkby, were mathematical analysis and measurements of the fascial networks of the body. In 1977, UCLA professor Valerie Hunt published her study of the benefits of SI, which was later looked upon askance due her use of questionable scientific methods. Even with the death of Rolf in 1979, various explorations and conceptual articulations within SI continued, such as consideration of craniosacral rhythm, development of the external/internal typologies, evolution of the Advanced Training program, and the development of the Principles of Intervention. (Much of the credit for various of these endeavors is due to Roling instructors Jan Sultan, Jeff Maitland, and Michael Salvesson.) This indicated progress within the SI community. However, the epistemological problem of explaining how SI worked to the larger community of the specialist, the educated layman, and especially prospective clients lingered. Much of the conversation between practitioner and client harkened back to Rolf's words about knowing it works, but not why.

This all changed in the new millennium as a number of practitioners within the SI community – among them Certified Advanced Rolfers™ Robert Schleip, PhD and Tom Findley MD, PhD, both already doing scientific research related to fascia – organized the first Fascia Research Congress (FRC) in 2004, which produced an explosion in information concerning fascia and dynamically changed the relationship between SI and the scientific and academic community. While not directly confirming the validity of SI, the basic components of Rolf's vision – the plasticity of fascia, tensegrity (now referred to as biotensegrity), and the efficacy of manual therapy – were now validated by scientists. Perhaps more importantly, SI practitioners were no longer alone on Planet Fascia. There were many other busy explorers, researchers, clinicians, and practitioners from all over the world now alongside. These new relationships marked, I believe, a new alignment with the scientific community and a new stage of maturation in the evolution of SI. No longer an outlier, SI had provided, with its sponsorship of the first FRC, a powerful impetus for research into a neglected but critical component of human health, fascia. This new partnership between clinical research and manual therapeutics was bolstered and reinforced by each succeeding FRC. A signpost of this new development was an increasing number of SI practitioners who entered the ranks of the scientific community doing research and publishing articles of scientific value. The articles in this issue are a commentary on and an affirmation of this new stage in SI's development.

As the explosion of information concerning fascia begins to seep down into the general culture, the public will become acquainted with new fascia-oriented therapies such as Fascial Stretch Therapy™ or the MELT® Method. Other modalities such as yoga, pilates, gyrotonics, and training programs will likely claim to be 'fascia-oriented', whether they truly are or not. The present moment offers the SI community a unique opportunity to fulfill one of the missions that Rolf set out for the Rolf Institute®, to educate the public, even if it is only one client at a time. But, offering laurels of old will no longer do. While this new integration with the scientific community offers a higher validation of our work and a more confident engagement with our clients, we too will have to immerse ourselves in this new world. What once may have seemed to be our private bailiwick is no longer, and there will be more and many competing modalities in this new world of fascial fitness. The old Chinese saying about crisis and opportunity applies. And if crisis is an invitation, the Rolfer/Scientists in this issue of *Structural Integration: The Journal of the Rolf Institute®* and associated Rolfers in the research community have accepted it. I applaud and congratulate them.

**Szaja Charles Gottlieb**  
Research Editor

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