COMMUNICATIONS

Letter to the Editors

“Those Were the Days”

Back in the “good old days” Ortho Diagnostics had week-long schools for blood bankers with limited experience. I don’t remember if Ortho paid the participants’ expenses or if their hospitals did but those were the days when hospitals had money for education. That, alone, should come as a shock to most young blood bankers. The Ortho folks wined you, dined you, educated you, and treated you like visiting royalty while you were in Raritan. As you recall, those schools were very popular and I suspect there was a long waiting list to get into one of them.

In January of 1966 I was barely 23 years old, had been out of college for a year, and was working in the University of Kentucky Hospital blood bank. My wise and wonderful supervisor, Jane Bryant, decided that this ignorant country girl needed some seasoning in blood banking and in worldly ways. At that point in my life I had been nowhere, done nothing, and did not know my seat from second base. I was sent to Ortho to be seasoned! I had never flown so I chose to take the train from Lexington, KY to Newark, NJ. I chose NOT to get a sleeping compartment because I just knew they would disconnect my car along with the dining car in Charlottesville, VA. I sat up the entire way! As I recall, I didn’t even venture to the dining car because I didn’t know where it was or what to do. I arrived at Union Station in Newark about 18 hours later and went about finding someone who would sell me a ticket on the commuter train to Princeton Junction. The only ticket seller I could find appeared not to speak English and we had a terrible time communicating. It turns out he had a New Jersey accent, which I had never heard before, and I had my Kentucky corn-pone accent, which he had never heard before. At this point I was ready to get on a return train to Lexington and never venture out again but I ran into two other people going to Ortho and they, being from Chicago, understood the ticket seller and me. We got to Princeton Junction, grabbed a Tiger Taxi, and arrived at our motel intact.

The next morning our group was shuttled to the Ortho plant where we were shown to our classroom and laboratory. There we met Marjorie Stroup and Margaret Treacy, two wonderful ladies who were a big influence in many lives, including mine.

Marjorie and Margaret were, are, and always will be consummate educators. Through their Ortho training programs, research, publishing, travelling workshops, and participation at local, state, national, and international blood bank meetings, they have probably trained or helped train more blood bankers in the United States (and maybe the world) than anyone else. They recognized the need for education when blood banking was in its adolescence and they met this need with dedication. Marjorie and Margaret showed us what “quality” meant before the word was defined and redefined by various licensing and accrediting agencies.

I got seasoned at Ortho, sort of. I found out that Kell, Duffy, and Kidd were not just Delores Mallory’s cats, I learned to understand (sort of) a New Jersey accent, and I met Marjorie and Margaret. Oh, by the way, I flew home to Kentucky.

Sincerely,
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Letter From the Editors

Ortho Dedication

The editorial staff of Immunohematology is grateful to Ortho Diagnostic Systems, Inc., for its generous contribution each year in support of the publication of the September issue of the journal. This is the seventh year that Ortho has made this contribution and the fifth year that copies of that issue have been sent to Ortho Banker’s Club members.

Ortho Diagnostic Systems, Inc., is a leading worldwide manufacturer and distributor of reagents for the blood bank laboratory. This leadership is demonstrated through the development and distribution of a full line of blood bank products, infectious disease screening tests, RhoGAM™ Rh(D) Immune Globulin, and educational training and support.

We thank Ortho Diagnostic Systems, Inc., for its continuing support.

Delores Mallory
Editor-in-Chief

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