“Those Were the Days”

I will never forget the first time I met Patricia Tippett in person. We had corresponded on blood bank problems for a couple of years, then she stopped off in Houston for a personal visit on her way to the ISBT meeting in Mexico City. At that time I was still working as supervisor of the blood bank at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Houston and also planned to go to the meeting in Mexico City, along with most of the blood bank supervisors and chief technologists in Houston (10–12 people). All of us were members of the Houston Antibody Club, the first such organization in the country.

All of the Houston group ended up on the same flight with Patricia. As we prepared to land in Mexico City, there was an announcement that the plane had mechanical problems and that we were going to circle up in the mountains in order to dump part of the fuel before landing. (Remember, this was back in the late 1950s.) The women were told to remove their high heels, and everyone was told to take off their glasses and put their heads on a pillow or down between their knees for landing. Because most of the Houston group had limited air travel experience, we were all scared to death! Then we looked over at Patricia and she was calmly reading a book.

As it turned out, we landed safely in a sea of foam on the runway, blowing several tires along the way. It seems the landing flaps would not go down. Blood banking in Houston would have forever changed—in fact, wiped out for the time being—if that plane had crashed.

I asked Patricia a couple of years ago if she remembered this experience and she replied that this had been one of the most frightening experiences of her life. I suppose she just didn’t show her fear as much as we did!

For all of my blood bank working life I had heard of the Lister Institute and had corresponded with Rob Race, Ruth Sanger, and Patricia Tippett on several antibody problems, so on my first trip to Europe I was naturally eager to pay them a visit. The opportunity came when we stopped off in England on our way to the ISBT meeting in Paris. After our tour of the laboratory, the group took us to lunch at the local pub. Rob suggested that we sit outside, because we had our 10-year-old daughter with us, and insisted that David order two kinds of ale. He was sure that David wouldn’t like either kind, thus giving Rob a chance to have the extra glass without being chastised by Ruth!

These three people—Rob Race, Ruth Sanger, and Patricia Tippett—meant so much to me in my development as a blood banker that I am deeply disappointed when many of the students we see today say “Rob and Ruth who?”

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Letters From the Editors

Retirement

An icon of the world of Immunohematology, Peter D. Issitt, PhD, FRCPath, has retired and his shoes will be hard to fill. Dr. Issitt retired January 1, 1998 from his position of associate professor of pathology and senior director of the Transfusion Service at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina. He received his training in England at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School and at St. Mary’s Hospital, London. He came to the New York Blood Center in 1964 as a research fellow. Following that position, he spent 11 years as associate professor and director of laboratories of the Hoxworth Blood Center of the University of Cincinnati and directed the Master of Science Degree program in Immunohematology. In 1981, he moved to Miami to become scientific director of the Red Cross Blood Program, South Florida Region, and in 1989, he moved to his position at Duke University Medical Center.

Dr. Issitt’s research interests were the genetics and serology of the human red blood cell groups, with special interest in the Rh and MNS systems. To that end, he published over 400 papers, reviews, and abstracts on the blood groups and related subjects. He is perhaps best known for his book, Applied Blood Group Serology. The fourth edition was just published in May (see his advertisement in this issue).

Dr. Issitt has received seven prestigious awards, including three from the American Association of Blood Banks.

The editors thank Dr. Issitt for his years as a member of the editorial board of this journal and for his participation as a peer reviewer. The editors and readers wish Dr. Issitt a happy and fulfilling retirement.
New Editorial Board Member

Dr. David Stroncek, chief, Laboratory Medicine, National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, joins the Editorial Board of Immunohematology. Dr. Stroncek will be a welcome addition with many strengths, including stem cell collection, transfusion medicine, granulocyte and platelet serology, and laboratory practices.

Delores Mallory
Editor-in-Chief

Mary McGinniss
Managing Editor

LITERATURE REVIEW


Blood group antigens

Blood group antibodies

Blood group genetics
3. King MJ, Kosanke J, Reid ME, et al. Co-presence of a point mutation and a deletion of exon 3 in the gly-