



## HOME OF THE INTERSTATE COMPANIES; ELVIS PRESLEY AND PPTA'S PAST LEGACY

**MOST PEOPLE KNOW MEMPHIS,** Tennessee as the “Home of Elvis Presley and Good Barbeque.” Elvis’ home, Graceland, is in Memphis and, as a residence, it is second only to The White House in the number of tourists that visit annually. Memphis also hosts the world’s largest barbeque cooking contest every year during its annual “Memphis in May” Festival.

A considerably smaller number of people know that Memphis and PPTA are even more intimately linked than Memphis and Elvis. Elvis was born in Tupelo, Mississippi. PPTA was born in Memphis—almost 40 years ago.

Morris “Buddy” Moss was president and co-owner of what was then Interstate Blood Bank Inc. Its first U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) license, which is still active, is #173. It is one of the oldest licenses in the industry. A family owned and run business from the start, Buddy teamed with partners Joe Rubert and Jack Gary to grow Interstate into a network of blood banks that supplied small bed hospitals throughout the eastern half of the U.S. that were not being effectively served by the Red Cross. In Memphis alone, for more than 15 years, Interstate drew whole blood on weekends, from servicemen stationed at the military base outside Memphis for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. The donors re-

ceived their donor fee and got a duty free weekend, the Interstate lab processed, tested and labeled the units, Interstate gave St. Jude Hospital credit in their account for 50 percent of units collected, and Interstate performed the cross matching of units for their leukemia patients before surgeries—all at no charge.

In the early 1960’s, seeing the need to reconstruct its business model, Interstate began developing the plasmapheresis side of the company. Drawing donors via the “double-stick” method into glass collection bottles, Interstate was one of the earliest companies to produce what we now know as source plasma in considerable volumes. As the public forum in the U.S. began its move away from compensated donors as a source of blood for direct patient transfusions, there began to be concerns about pressure from local, state and even federal agencies that were against compensating donors in any form.





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In the early 1970's, these pressures were growing and Buddy Moss saw the importance of unifying the efforts of the dozens of independent blood component producers as well as the fractionators and diagnostic manufacturers to preserve our industry. He managed to get what was, at that time, a sizable group of competitors with a common interest, to agree to meet in Memphis to see if there was a possible unified way to fight for the way we do business. At a hotel which is now owned by Crowne Plaza, that first meeting was held. The participants could hardly have been expected to know then, what the significance of their discussions would ultimately mean.

Larry Moss has worked at Interstate since he was 16 years old. Although only in his early 20's at that time, he was told by his father, Buddy, that he would be going to this meeting too. When he questioned why, Buddy responded, "You'll get to meet some people that you'll hopefully be doing business with in the future, you might learn something, and since everyone in the room are true competitors, I may need a bodyguard!"

That meeting was the beginning of The American Blood



**Pictured from left to right, Matt, Larry and Stephen Moss of the Interstate Companies.**

Resources Association (ABRA), the organization that evolved into what became PPTA in 2000 and the division now known as PPTA Source. Apparently Larry Moss got a lot out of that meeting. ABRA's first secretary, Judy, ultimately became Larry's wife. In 1981, when Buddy Moss retired, Larry became President of the group of businesses that now make up The Interstate Companies. Larry and Judy live in the house that Buddy built in 1966. When asked why Buddy retired at the young age of 51, Larry responded, "I took his secretary, I took his job, and I took his house—why not?"

Judy and Larry, the proud parents of three kids, have been married 37 years—a marriage that has survived even though Larry fired Judy only six months into their marriage. Their son,

Matt, works for Interstate in Operations and the Whole Blood division. Judy and Larry bought a candy company that has operated in Memphis since 1902. Judy works there with their youngest daughter, but they insist that Larry stay away from the customers. They are of the firm opinion that Larry's brutally honest approach to things is not always a very good way to handle the retail public. It sounds like Larry has been put in his place.

Larry owns Interstate Blood Bank, Inc, the parent corporation of The Interstate Companies. He shares ownership with his brother, Stephen, and his son, Matt, in the other divisions of the group, which collectively owns 23 plasma collection centers, eight diagnostic whole blood collection centers, a testing lab and its own supply and distribution warehouse. The three Mosses work side-by-side every day supplying plasma and blood components to a broad customer base that includes multiple fractionators and a large group of diagnostic and reagent manufacturers.

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Larry served as a Board member of ABRA for over 20 years and has served on the PPTA Source Board since its formation. If you ask Judy or their kids, what is Larry's goal in life—what drives him? They will all answer the same way—TO WIN!

When asked what PPTA could do better for him, his response is quick—reduce the number of audits and inspections we endure. "With every customer auditing, each U.S. federal agency auditing, each international regulatory group auditing, each state auditing, and even the need to conduct our own corporate audits, the resources committed to dealing with

them is outrageous, he says. He adds "This is even made worse by the fact that most of the particulars of each inspection are replicated over and over and over in each audit. There has to be some way to consolidate and share the information garnered in order to reduce the number of audits."

JAN M. BULT is PPTA's President



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