

STRICTLY BUSINESS

CONTINUING THE LEGACY OF DR. CHARLES R. DREW

There is by now a familiar tradition of careers undertaken by college students across America. However, when one graduates and becomes the first African American to establish a plasma center nuff respect is due. I had a delightful opportunity to meet this distinguished gentleman and find out who he really is and what exactly is he contributing to the American society.

SANDZ: Tell our readers who you are and what you do?

FS: My name is Furquan R. Stafford, Sr., and I am the Founder/Chairman/CEO of C.P. Plasma Center, Inc..

SANDZ: Tell us about your education and background in the field of plasma studies.

FS: I graduated from Baniker High School here in Atlanta, Georgia. I then went to McCook Community College for two years. From there I moved on to Texas Southern University for another year, majoring in pre-nursing. I then attended Sanyer Center College in Pasadena, Texas with a major in EMT-Paramedic. I worked at American Plasma Center, Inc. in Houston for almost two years. In 1996, I worked at Seratec Biologicals. Then I transferred to Georgia State University, back in 1997.

SANDZ: What is the primary goal of C.P. Plasma Center?

FS: Our objective is to explore plasma protein to manufacture and supply high quality remedial treatments that elevate and extend the lives of patients across the world.

SANDZ: From our research we have learned that there is an interesting process of removing whole blood and separating red blood cells from plasma. The red blood cells are then returned to the donor and the plasma is retained for use in preparing medicinal products. Can you elaborate a little more about the procedure?

FS: This process is called Plasmapheresis. It's done with a machine called the Plasma Collection System, most recent version being the PCS2. I was fortunate to work with the PCS1. It was a huge machine but they made it a compact size. During this procedure, a needle is inserted into the vein of the donor and the machine extracts the blood, which in turn is separated from the plasma. The machine then returns the red blood cells to the donor while retaining the plasma.

SANDZ: What are some of the potential hazards of the procedure?

FS: Donating plasma is a very safe procedure because they only use one needle per person and they use sterilized equipment. The plasma is tested for just about every type of disease such as HIV, Hepatitis C, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, etc. The FDA and the



Plasma Protein Therapeutic Association (PPTA) have done a phenomenal job in adding infrastructure to the quality of testing blood and plasma products.

SANDZ: What health issues and concerns are addressed through plasma research?

FS: People are using plasma to manufacture medical products to treat medical deficiencies. Some people would prefer to use plasma instead of whole blood because of religious beliefs. Also plasma is used to treat people with Hemophilia, a bleeding disorder. It is also used in cardiovascular surgery, pediatric HIV and other medical deficiencies.

Plasma is indeed a very universal product.

SANDZ: Is there a lack of whole blood donations?

FS: Yes. African Americans do not donate whole blood, however we donate plasma because we receive financial rewards. I believe C.P. Plasma Center will encourage African Americans to donate whole blood to help fight the prominent Sickle Cell issue that hits close to home for so many of us.

SANDZ: What, in your opinion, is the most common concern among donors?

FS: Being treated with respect. Over the years, some of the companies have had a negative image of not respecting the donors and using them as commodities. What C.P. Plasma Center wants to do is to educate the donor of the historical background of blood plasma and also provide a quality product that help extend lives across the world.

SANDZ: What can we do to stress the importance of plasma research?

FS: Come and donate plasma with C.P. Plasma Center. We are especially looking for individuals who have a rare type of anti-body in their blood.

SANDZ: For the young people today, what advice would you give to someone targeting such a career?

FS: Focus on education and have faith in God. C.P. Plasma is a Kingdom assignment. It is not about C.P. Plasma Center or Furquan Stafford. Also, don't allow people to tell you what you can't do, educate yourself.

SANDZ: On a lighter note, tell our readers what kind of music someone is such a serious field listens to.

FS: I listen to a variety of music such as Reggae and some Hip-Hop.

SANDZ: Who is your favorite Reggae artist?

FS: Shabba Ranks.

SANDZ: Yes, he's one of the greats. What do you like about Shabba's music?

FS: His unique style, his passion for the music, and his lyrics and beats make a perfect blend. I also admire Bob Marley, I can never forget Bob Marley. That's the legend.

SANDZ: That's the truth right there. Have you been to Jamaica or any of the Caribbean islands?

FS: No, but I plan on going real soon. I am taking my entire family.

SANDZ: What are your final words of wisdom to our readers?

FS: I want people to know that you can do anything in life. I am also looking forward to working with some of the organizations and companies in the plasma industry in terms of creating diversity initiatives. I can say this would be the first and only Black-owned plasma center in the world. The objective is to pave the way for minorities to concentrate in the fields of health and science. We have always been known as a talented race in athletics and entertainment, but I personally feel that we need to exercise our creativities outside that box. So, competing with other individuals in the fields of health and medicine will cause others to have a greater respect for the Black race.

By Steven Reynolds.

Photography: Adam Divila

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AND HAVE FAITH IN
God.**