



IN MY VIEW

DR. OTTO SCHWARZ: AN INFLUENTIAL INDUSTRY LEADER

IN THIS COLUMN I WOULD LIKE TO PROFILE

Dr. Otto Schwarz, a man who was a pivotal influence during the early days of our industry. He is someone whom I admire and learned from. He and Dr. Hans Eibl were the owners of Immuno AG, a leading European manufacturer with headquarters in Vienna, Austria. In 1992, Dr. Schwarz was also one of the founders of the International Plasma Products Industry Association (IPPIA), the industry association representing the manufacturers of plasma protein therapies. This organization was the forerunner of PPTA.

I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Schwarz recently in Vienna. He is a gentleman in his eighties with enormous wisdom and experience. He is definitely one of the persons who helped shape the industry into what it is today. It is true to say that most of the current standards that are in PPTA's Quality Standards of Excellence, Assurance and Leadership (QSEAL) program originated with his determination to improve the quality and safety of the source plasma collections.

He was the first to recognize the importance of qualified donors and how to best apply nucleic acid amplification (NAT) technology. This new

technology significantly improved the ability to detect viral infections earlier than serology testing. The introduction of these steps was an early demonstration of the industry's commitment to safety.

In 1997, his company was acquired by Baxter, then under the leadership of John Bacich. The lengthy negotiations were successful and both parties came to an agreement in Zurich, Switzerland. It was a coincidence that I happened to pass by the hotel where the final negotiations were completed and saw a tired John Bacich leaving at 7:00 in the morning. After the acquisition, Dr. Schwarz stayed involved in the new company for another five years to provide the incoming leadership with his expertise.

Dr. Schwarz has always been an avid art collector and a patron of young artists. Lately, he has stopped collecting since "there are no more places in my house to hang paintings."

I asked Dr. Schwarz what his message would be to the industry today. He reminded me of the importance of the industry demonstrating leadership through an industry-wide mindset. Twenty years ago when the Association started, companies were not used to working together on issues of common interest. He showed the other companies that sometimes making a compromise will lead to a better outcome. As one of the first Chairpersons of IPPIA, he showed that first-hand.

During my visit to Vienna I met several knowledgeable people who have worked personally with Dr. Schwarz. Without exception they told me that Dr. Schwarz and Dr. Eibl put Vienna on the map of the plasma protein industry. Their significant role in building a reputable company is well recognized.

Dr. Otto Schwarz is a man rich in experience, who has led an influential life. I thank Otto for his many contributions and leadership to the industry over the decades.



PPTA's President and CEO Jan M. Bult with Dr. Otto Schwarz