



Claire McKinney Public Relations, LLC

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Claire McKinney/908-955-7563
claire@clairemckinneypr.com
Keely Flanagan/908-955-7580
keely@clairemckinneypr.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“[A SURGEON’S ODYSSEY] belongs on the bookshelf as a modern tale next to *the Iliad*, *the Odyssey*, *Ulysses*, and the biblical Exodus.”

—John F.X. Ryan Jr., Former Managing Director, Sovran Limited and Pac West Distributing Inc., Executive Assistant, Lieutenant Governor, Indiana

“Dr. Moss gives the reader a glimpse of his three-year expedition into an exotic world, a true-life quest that is inspiring, uplifting, and tragic.”

—Danny J. Barrett, Director, International Agreements, Commander, US Naval Forces, Japan

“A fantastic journey through third world Asian medicine, culture, and spirituality. Dr. Moss’s odyssey exposes the reader to people and worlds that would otherwise remain hidden.

A must-read for the adventurous!”

—Diane Larson, RN, Charge Nurse of Endoscopy Services, Memorial Hospital Outpatient Surgery Center

“Moss is a captivating storyteller who from the first page masterfully pulls the reader into the world of his life as a young head and neck surgeon...Readers will be swept away in this incredible journey.”

—Kimberly Wagner, Featured Writer at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and children’s book author

A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY

A Memoir

By Dr. Richard Moss

“Do not forsake your dreams for material security.” This wisdom, inscribed on a fortune cookie in a downtown Manhattan Chinese restaurant, was the catalyst a newly-licensed Dr. Richard Moss needed to book a ticket to Asia and start the next chapter in his life healing people overseas. In his exploratory and moving new memoir, **A SURGEON’S ODYSSEY** (*Archway Books; September 2018*), Dr. Moss tells his story of entering the medical field by helping those in need and going on the adventure of a lifetime.

As a 33-year-old surgeon, fresh out of his residency training in Manhattan for Otolaryngology (Ear Nose and Throat), Dr. Moss dedicated 14 years of his life to becoming a surgeon and was finally at the point where he could start a practice and earn money. But when a letter from the hospital at Chiang Mai University in Thailand arrived, asking to put his experience to work in their Otolaryngology department, Dr. Moss was at a crossroads...Until fortune stepped in and made him realize what he wanted to do all along.

In **A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY**, Dr. Moss takes readers along his exciting journey as a young doctor learning to navigate the medical field on a foreign continent, far from his humble beginnings in the Bronx. He shares how, as a cancer surgeon of Jewish faith living in the exotic landscapes of Thailand, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh, he had to teach himself to view situations from different cultural and religious perspectives.

Dr. Moss juggles his responsibility to heal with his bizarre and otherworldly wanderings through Asia, including: Meeting his wife Ying, a Buddhist Thai nurse he married in the context of unexpected and powerful Thai cultural imperatives; encountering the enigmatic Jewish-American Buddhist monk Uttamo living in the jungle at the Thai-Malaysia border; operating on a man by candlelight in Bangladesh when the power cut out in the hospital during a monsoon; motorcycling with Ying through the Himalayas and nearly getting rammed off a cliff by a mother Yak protecting her calf; practicing walking meditation in a forest temple in southern Thailand; surviving one of the worst typhoons and mudslides in modern history; getting shot at by a Burmese soldier when trying to cross the border; pounding a drum all night to ward off evil spirits at a Buddhist ceremony; receiving a prize chicken and newborn goat from a poor family as a token of their gratitude for a surgery performed on a loved one; and getting robbed on a train in India, only for Ying to jump on the thief's back and successfully retrieve his stolen wallet.

Forgoing comfort and financial security to find himself in a strange but beautiful world, **A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY** is the unique and inspiring journey of a cancer surgeon who, against conventional wisdom, embarks on a pilgrimage of healing, working under daunting circumstances among some of the most fascinating cultures in the world.

About the Author

RICHARD MOSS, M.D., is a board-certified head and neck surgeon with a private practice in Jasper, Indiana, where he has lived for over 25 years with his wife and four children. Dr. Moss earned his Doctor of Medicine degree at the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. He is a columnist, a local businessman and investor, and has sought political office. He is also the author of *Matilda's Triumph: A Memoir*.

About the Publisher

Simon & Schuster, a company with nearly 90 years of publishing experience, has teamed up with Author Solutions, the leading self-publishing company worldwide, to create Archway Publishing. With unique resources to support books of all kinds, Archway Publishing offers a specialized approach to help every author reach his or her desired audience.

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About Dr. Richard Moss,

Author of **A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY**



Dr. Richard Moss is a board-certified specialist in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (Ear Nose and Throat). He earned his undergraduate degree in Biology at Indiana University and completed his Doctor of Medicine Degree at the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis.

He is one of the original investors in the St. Thomas Surgery Center and a member of both the Indiana State Medical Association and the Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

Between 1987 and 1990, he traveled extensively throughout Asia, serving as a visiting surgeon on a voluntary basis at major medical centers in Thailand, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. During his time in Hat-Yai, Thailand he met his future wife Ying, a nurse at Prince of Songkla University Hospital. In 1991, Dr.

Moss and Ying settled in Jasper, Indiana, to begin a private practice that has been in operation for over 25 years with offices in Jasper and Washington, Indiana.

Although Dr. Moss received little or no compensation during the three years he traveled in Asia, he considers them among the most rewarding periods of his life. He continues his volunteer work and extensive travel with his family around the world today, including lecturing and performing surgery on a limited basis. He has been to Central and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and gives presentations of his travels and work overseas at local schools and churches.

Dr. Moss has written regular columns for Indiana newspapers, including *The Dubois County Herald*, *The Indianapolis Star*, *The Evansville Courier and Press*, *The City County Observer*, *The Vanderburgh Independent Press*, *The Bloomington Herald-Times*, *The Petersburg Press Dispatch*, and *The Ferdinand News*; had a local radio talk show; and was the host of a local TV show *Yoga for Health*. He also founded, owned, and operated local eateries, Bronx Bagel and Simply Pasta. Today, he speaks publicly; was a candidate for state representative for Indiana's 63rd district; and for Congress for Indiana's 8th district.

Dr. Moss and Ying have been married for over 27 years and have four children. He is also the author of the memoir *Matilda's Triumph*, about his mother's encounter with a devastating stroke intertwined with compelling vignettes of her as a young woman, raising her five sons as a single parent in the Bronx.

For more information, visit his website at RichardMossMD.com and exodusmd.com. Find Richard Moss, M.D. on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



A Conversation with Dr. Richard Moss,

Author of A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY

Why did you write A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY?

A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY describes my three-year journey as a young man and cancer surgeon operating in the third world under daunting circumstances. It is an adventure story, but also a cultural and spiritual passage as I worked and wandered through Asia. There is joy and triumph along with shattering defeat and tragedy. It reveals much about human nature, poverty, disease, and healing, and the fascinating cultures I encountered. All of this and more inspired me to write this book.

Did you learn anything new about yourself through writing your memoir?

I got to relive it all—to review my notes from that period, and reminisce about this unusual phase in my life. I remembered the many colleagues, mentors, patients, and the countless weird and exotic characters I encountered on the road. I learned how much I missed it all—the traveling, the colorful cultures, the happenstances, the ways of life, cuisines, art, customs, religions, and magnificent temples. I missed the trials and setbacks along with the victories and triumphs, the effort to heal under challenging conditions.

In your memoir you mention that you were always drawn to Asia, which is one of the reasons why you decided to go to Thailand to practice surgery. Why were you so interested in traveling to Asia? What was the biggest “culture shock” to you as an American?

For seven years, during my college days, I lived in a yoga ashram, and had a long interest in Eastern spirituality and religion. I loved Asian cuisine, architecture, dress, and culture; I also loved Asian manners and the respect Asians showed each other. It was the birthplace of two great world religions, Buddhism and Hinduism, both of which I admired. It was natural for me to travel there. One of the biggest culture shocks was how carefully relations between the sexes were orchestrated and chaperoned—very different from the free-flying ways of the West.

Much of your book includes your interest in Buddhism—you even befriend Uttamo, an American Buddhist monk living in Thailand. What is the core reason that you were so drawn to Buddhism?

The Buddha was a great teacher who gave the world a method of ending suffering through insight and inner discipline. To this day, his teaching and wisdom has influenced millions through the centuries and across the continents. The temple architecture, art, and literature surrounding the Buddha's story was beautiful and moving and evolved as it spread through Asia. It was a fascinating contribution to world civilization and spirituality that any student of culture and religion would be interested in and may even incorporate into his or her personal life. For a time, I considered myself a Buddhist and accepted the Buddha's teaching and wisdom. In the story, I lived in a forest temple in southern Thailand outside of Hat-Yai named Wat Satchatam and practiced with a great Buddhist monk, Jaroon. I spent time in Sungai Kolok, also in southern Thailand, with Uttamo, an American Jewish man who lived as a monk in Thailand for over 30 years. I still practice Yoga daily and although not a Buddhist (I am a practicing Jew), I endeavor to integrate the Buddha's wisdom in my life today.

You met your wife Ying in Thailand, and married her early into your courtship. What does your life together look like today? How does she feel about having you write about your relationship?

As spouses and parents living in a small town in Indiana, we have worked together to raise our children and build our lives and family. Our relationship is strengthened by these experiences. Having children always changes things and has deepened the commitment between us and with our family. The book is based on a three-year journey that occurred almost 30 years ago, and so much has happened since then. She looks back and laughs at our early “courtship,” however unusual it was. She accepts my telling of our story and is not bothered by it, since it is truthful – and occurred a long time ago. It was certainly not typical, but it shed light on traditional Thai culture, which I found intriguing. That relationship is also

A Conversation with Dr. Richard Moss, Continued...

crucial to what happened on the journey afterward—the story could not be told without it. We became a team, husband and wife, surgeon and nurse. And so it has continued all these years.

What was the hardest obstacle to get over in being a surgeon overseas versus the U.S.?

In some places there were technical or equipment deficiencies, yet somehow we managed. Sometimes it was difficult to get blood for transfusion during surgery. Medical students, residents, and family members would have to donate blood before a case. Anesthesia monitoring equipment was not always ideal. Postoperative management, Intensive Care, was often deficient. Some facilities did not have frozen section or radiation, critical to assessing margins during surgery and overall head and neck cancer management. Chemotherapy could not be offered, as it was too expensive. CT scans were often not available. There were some important cultural differences in terms of attitudes about illness and dying. Asians were much more accepting of their fates than Americans, and many times would rather die than undergo aggressive treatment. Asian patients generally presented at much later stages in the disease process, often to the point where the cancers were disfiguring and hopeless.

You have run for Congress in the state of Indiana, where you live. How does the time you spent in Asia and in other countries affect your view on U.S. politics and culture? Is there anything we as Americans can learn from Asian culture?

For any endeavor, and certainly a political career, it is useful and informative to have a deeper knowledge of the world and other traditions, cultures, and religions, especially through direct experience. I respect Hinduism and Buddhism—they are great world religions, emerging from India and spreading throughout Asia and the world. Both religions have become popular in the West, which is where I first encountered them. Many Asian nations have become successful—their dedication to strong families, education, and hard work are worth emulating. They are role models as an approach to creating resilient families and raising young people to become productive citizens. My experience in Asia has taught me to respect our own Judeo-Christian tradition that is the foundation of Western culture, which I consider to be the pinnacle of world civilization. Asian culture can teach us much: patience, detachment, self-reflection, quieting the mind, discipline, hard work, and respect. We have much to teach them as well.

In writing your memoir, did you recall any forgotten experiences? Has hindsight cast a different light on them? If you could give your younger self advice on career and travel, what would it be?

I should have explored opportunities to offer my services in places like Nepal or Bangladesh for compensation, rather than only for free. Earning money would have allowed me to continue volunteer work for the indigent much longer, perhaps even my entire life. I would have loved that! Then we could have had the best of both worlds—earning a living *and* helping those unable to pay. But I was fresh out of medical school and residency and didn't have the business sense or background that I have now. I was wedded to the idea of my work being wholly voluntary, a pure vision and noble but in the end not practical as it prevented other options that would have made the endeavor more self-sustaining. It is a regret I still harbor yet I understand my thinking at the time and accept it.

You have another memoir, *Matilda's Triumph*, about your mother and growing up in the Bronx. Which was more difficult for you to write? How are they both different/similar?

Both books are memoirs, but they cover different chapters in my life. *Matilda's Triumph* is about my mother, her stroke, and my efforts to help her, intertwined with vignettes about how she struggled to raise her brood of five boys as a single mother in the Bronx. It opens with my mother's encounter with a devastating stroke and me, her *physician-son*, who failed her at a most inopportune time: its precise onset. The narrative then weaves two stories: the gripping saga of a family devastated by illness intertwined with compelling episodes of that same family's turbulent past. **A SURGEON'S ODYSSEY** focuses on my three years as a vagabond surgeon encountering misery, poverty, and horribly advanced disease in the third world. Both stories take you on a journey to discover eternal truths, wisdom, beauty, and the nature



A Conversation with Dr. Richard Moss, Continued...

of suffering, healing, and seeking; they both dwell on inner struggle and turmoil. Both books were challenging to write – in the end all writing is rewriting and reworking and hence deeply demanding.

Do you have any upcoming projects after this book?

I will continue to write, venturing off now into novels. I am contemplating a political thriller based on my experience seeking political office. I will continue writing columns and essays. I will pursue investments in real estate and business, and, of course, continue my medical practice. I will take exotic voyages to far-flung corners of the world with family. I want to take my children to visit my old ENT colleagues from Asia. I enjoy my home and family, tending to my garden, relaxing by my pool (in season), and being actively involved in raising my children. I try to guide them to be strong, engaged citizens and encourage them in their religious, academic, musical, and artistic endeavors – along with having fun together. They are my legacy, the work of my hands, as I am my mother's.

