

## 2005 TLPA Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year Larry Lewis, SCR Medical Transportation, Inc., Chicago, Illinois

The Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is pleased to announce that Larry "L.L." Lewis, driver of an accessible vehicle for SCR Medical Transportation, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, has been selected as the TLPA 2005 Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year.

In his letter nominating Larry Lewis, Stan Rakestraw, president of SCR Medical Transportation wrote: "Mr. Lewis is an honest, straightforward, hard-working man who loves what he does. He is affectionately known as 'L.L.' and can always be found with a smile on his face. He has worked in the transportation services industry for nearly 20 years. He is a remarkable employee. During his years of driving, he has never been involved in any accidents involving other vehicles or clients. The skills and behavior that Mr. Lewis has exhibited during his years of driving have exemplified his belief and attitude that 'I am in this business to be of service.'"

Larry Lewis was born in Chicago. After working as a production worker at ABDick, a supplier of press and printing supplies, L.L. began work as a dispatcher/driver with Stewart Special Services of Chicago. He says he looked for work in the paratransit industry because, "I had a passion for driving and loved to be in the presence of people, especially those with special needs." He next worked in the same capacity with Art's Special Services. In 1996, with over nine years of experience in the paratransit industry, he became a member of the SCR Medical Transportation team.

L.L. says of SCR Medical Transportation, "What I like about working for this company is that the owners, Stan and Pamela Rakestraw, are really magnificent people. It gives me a great pleasure to not only work for a great company, but for great owners as well. Also, the pay is great and I love to help out new drivers when they have a problem with something."

What L.L. enjoys most about being a paratransit driver is helping the passengers out as much as he can. He says, "Putting a smile on my passengers' faces



*2005 Paratransit & Operating Driver of the Year Larry Lewis, accessible vehicle driver for SCR Medical Transportation in Chicago (lower left), was voted 'King of SCR' and appeared in an SCR float in a local parade. Company owners Pamela and Stanley Rakestraw are in the background.*

is what makes my job enjoyable. Whether, I'm helping them up and down stairs, or when they're in a wheelchair, I just love to help! It's what I enjoy doing. Every day when we come to work we have the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life. Every person involved in providing paratransit service has the ability to positively affect the communities and the lives of the clients we serve. There are not many people or companies that have such an opportunity throughout their workday and I am proud of these good deeds. Don't ever forget to believe in God and always be willing to give."

Larry said that the main changes he has seen in his nearly 20 years as a paratransit driver is the increase in the number of specialized clients in Chicago. He also noted that he is driving newer vehicles and SCR has new, very nice uniforms. He said the best change is that you feel good driving a brand new vehicle when you go to pick up a client and they are waiting for you with a smile on their face.

We asked L.L. what are the qualities a good paratransit driver must possess. He responded, "First, you must love what you do. Second, you must have

patience. Thirdly, you must know how to get your clients to their appointments on time, and finally, take pride in doing our part to provide these services while maintaining uncompromised levels of quality, safety and sensitivity."

Although he loves driving, Larry Lewis' real passion is cooking. He says, "As a little boy, I was always in the kitchen with my grandmother when she cooked — breakfast, dinner and especially holiday cooking. In 2002, I decided to start my own catering business — "L.L.'s Quality Catering at Affordable Prices" — specializing in soul food. It has now become a second successful career." L.L. also enjoys sitting at home with his family watching movies, and going on family outings.

Asked about his response to winning the award, Larry said, "Because I'm considered to be the joker at the company, I thought they were trying to play a practical joke on me until I was given the letter to see for myself. After that, I had this big Kool-aid smile on my face because I've always dreamed of winning an award like this one. Just like they say, dreams do come true!"

Larry recently celebrated his first wedding anniversary with his wife, Fellonise. He has two daughters and four stepchildren. Fellonise says, "I would like to congratulate my husband on all of his accomplishments and especially on receiving this award. Larry, we are all very proud of you. Larry is a man that prides himself in doing nothing but the best in everything he does. He'll bend over backwards and go out of his way to give help to anyone. No questions asked. His love and devotion for his family, friends, job and his clients is far greater than anyone could imagine. This award is given to a very much, well-deserving man."

In honor of his dedication to his profession and his family and his sensitivity to his clients, the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association is proud to recognize Larry "L.L." Lewis as the TLPA 2005 Paratransit & Contracting Driver of the Year. ■