

CREATING BRIDGES TO THE HEART



Bethany Beach resident Bob Davis is getting ready for warmer days to play golf. In October 2013, he was the 1,000th cardiac surgery patient at Beebe, establishing a medical milestone for our community.

Beebe's 1,000th Heart Surgery Patient

HIS WIFE SAYS HE HAD BEEN "LIVING ON A BANANA PEEL"

Bethany Beach retiree Bob Davis, age 78, didn't know he had cardiovascular disease. When he took a break while he was cutting the grass, he didn't think he could have a health problem. Even when he passed out on the golf course in July, he blamed the incident on the sweltering 100-degree weather.

In the fall, a friend suggested he check out his heart because of his age and because he didn't seem to have as much energy as he did in the past.

"I felt fine," Bob recalls. But when he went to have a stress test, he could not complete it.

On October 9, 2013, interventional cardiologist and Cardiac Cath Lab Director Ehtasham Qureshi, MD, performed a diagnostic cardiac catheterization. After Bob failed his stress test and multiple blockages were found in his coronary arteries, Dr. Qureshi determined that Bob had blockages that were too many and too serious for angioplasty, so he called in cardiothoracic surgeons M. L. Ray Kuretu, MD, and Nnamdi Azie, MD. Dr. Azie also is Board

Certified in vascular surgery. Bob was also found to have blockages in the carotid arteries in his neck.

Bob needed both heart surgery and carotid artery surgery.

"It was as if he were living on a banana peel," his wife Mary Davis recalls. The doctors did not want Bob to leave the hospital due to his cardiovascular disease. The Davises were concerned about having the surgeries at a local hospital, like Beebe, and were considering taking Bob to a larger hospital in a metropolitan area. After several discussions and consultations with the cardiologists and surgeons, the couple decided it would be best if Bob stayed at Beebe for the procedures he needed.

"He was very sick," Dr. Kuretu recalls months later. "Many in our older population here, like Mr. Davis, have complex medical problems, often without realizing it."

On October 13, 2013, Dr. Azie performed the carotid artery surgery to improve the flow of blood to the brain. Two days later, Dr. Kuretu and Dr. Azie performed the quadruple coronary bypass surgery to improve the flow of blood to Bob's heart.

"Someone said that I was the 1,000th patient," Bob recalls a few months after the surgery. The 1,000th surgery patient was a milestone in cardiac care at Beebe Healthcare, and many in the Cardiac Surgery program recognized that.

"We found Beebe to be a very friendly environment from the moment we stepped into the door until the time we left."

—Mary and Bob Davis

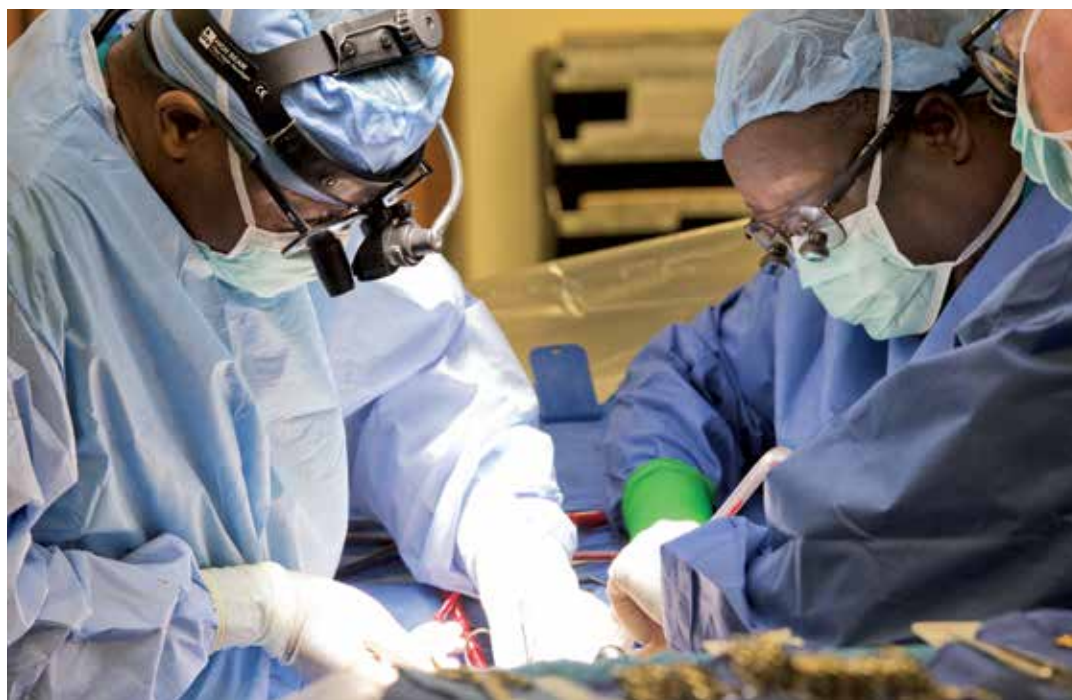
"For me, it wasn't about the number at the time," Dr. Kuretu later recalls. "Mr. Davis was my concern. Each patient is important and each operation is important to help that patient."

Mary says she was glad they chose to stay at Beebe.

"The experience was a good one, before, during and after the surgeries," she says, describing how all the specialists involved in Bob's care, including the respiratory therapist, dietitian, pharmacist, and case manager, as well as the physicians and nurses, visited Bob each morning as part of the daily rounding. "We were happy with the procedure and with the Cardiac Team. We also found Beebe to be a very friendly environment from the moment we stepped into the door until the time we left."

Today Bob and Mary are back at home, getting outside whenever they can. Bob is looking forward to nice weather so he can get back on the golf course.

"Our patients do well," Dr. Kuretu says. "Mr. Davis is an example. Today, he is living his life, and that makes me feel good."



CARDIAC SURGERY AT BEEBE HEALTHCARE

THE MOST COMMON OPEN-HEART SURGERIES PERFORMED AT BEEBE:

- Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting
- Aortic Valve Replacement
- Mitral Valve Repair and Replacement
- Tricuspid Valve Repair
- Aortic Aneurysm Repair
- Aortic Dissection Repair
- Pericardial Window for Pericardial Effusion
- Pulmonary Vein Isolation for Atrial Fibrillation
- Open Surgery of the Great Vessels

ALWAYS DIAL 911 FOR LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES.

Nnamdi Azie, MD, and M. L. Ray Kuretu, MD, work in tandem as they perform open-heart surgery at Beebe Healthcare.

Diane Lane enjoys a beautiful day at The Peninsula on the Indian River Bay, where she works as a real estate sales agent.



A Fish Out of Water

DIANE LANE NOW LIVES A FULL LIFE THANKS TO BEEBE HEALTHCARE'S CARDIAC TEAM

An enthusiastic bicyclist and gardener, Diane Lane was pulling down vines in her backyard in late June when her chest tightened and she struggled to catch her breath.

"I would take deep breaths, but it was like they weren't going anywhere," Lane says. "I felt like a fish out of water."

At other times, she would wake up breathless in the middle of the night.

"I would walk to the bathroom for a drink of water and then feel fine, so I would go back to sleep," Lane says.

Lane's father and aunt both died from heart disease at a young age. She knew she needed to act fast to save her own life so she contacted her doctor.

"I always knew I had a family history, so I

"Drs. Kuretu, Azie, and Physician Assistant Eugene Isaacs are the perfect blend of seasoned experience, young brilliance, and great personality. They told me what to expect, explained everything, and answered my questions so I felt comfortable and knew what I was dealing with." —Diane Lane

tried to eat well and stay physical," says the 63-year-old Milford native, who moved to Lewes two years ago to be closer to her children and grandchildren. "I am a very active person and I don't have diabetes or any other warning signs of heart disease."

Lane's doctor, Charles Wagner, MD, recommended she see Lewes cardiologist Georges Dahr, MD, who scheduled her for a stress test. "In the first 40 seconds of the stress test, the [technician] shut the machine off and told me I had to go to the hospital for a catheterization," Lane says.

After Dr. Dahr found areas of Lane's heart were up to 90 percent blocked during the cardiac catheterization, he consulted with Beebe's Cardiac Surgery Team.

M. L. Ray Kuretu, MD, Medical Director of

Cardiac Surgery, said Lane's blockages were so severe that he did not want her to leave the hospital. Lane was concerned about having major surgery, but after learning about the background and expertise of the Beebe Cardiac Team, she felt confident having the procedure in Lewes.

Lane underwent quadruple coronary bypass surgery at Beebe to restore the blood flow to her heart. In most cases, patients can expect a short hospital stay with minimally invasive surgery.

Beebe's cardiothoracic surgeons Dr. Kuretu and Nnamdi Azie, MD, used a minimally invasive harvested vein from Lane's leg to transplant to her heart and bypass the blockages in her native blood vessels.

"It is like creating a bridge around a

blocked area," says Dr. Azie of the surgery, which was performed at Beebe July 2, 2013. "We use a combination of a vein and an artery to bring the blood supply beyond those blockages."

Both Dr. Kuretu and Dr. Azie were trained by large, university hospitals and were then recruited to come to Beebe, says Eugene Isaacs, physician assistant for the program. "The idea is to make cardiac surgery available to the community so residents don't have to travel away from their home."

"The three of them are the perfect blend of seasoned experience, young brilliance, and great personality," says Lane. "They told me what to expect, explained everything, and answered my questions so I felt comfortable and knew what I was dealing with."

While Lane never had a heart attack, all the warning signs were there, Kuretu says. She had chest pain and was lucky to receive treatment quickly to prevent any significant heart damage.

"She was very fortunate," Kuretu says, "because most people come in with a heart attack. When I saw her chart and information, I knew it was urgent to do the operation." Beebe's cardiac surgeons have completed more than 1,000 heart surgeries since the program was created.

"I have total trust in my doctors," Lane says. "My father never had this chance. I was very lucky."

COMPETING AGAINST HERSELF

After her successful bypass surgery, Lane was discharged from Beebe July 5. She was scheduled for 32 sessions with Beebe's Cardiac Rehab program.

"It's about attitude, and I knew I couldn't get upset or give up," Lane says. "The surgery knocks you down, so you have to start with baby steps. I dove right into rehab and tried to really push myself and compete with myself."

At her first session, Lane did about three minutes of activity, which exhausted her. As an active adult, Lane was surprised how the simplest activity could drain her energy.

"I could feel my strength coming back," Lane says. "The rehab is critical to living a full life. The rehab team knows exactly what they are doing, so I was in good hands." ■

Beebe Doctors Have a Window Into the Arteries of Your Heart

Beebe Healthcare now offers another way for doctors to determine, without performing an invasive procedure, if patients who are experiencing chest pain have narrowing in the arteries that supply blood to the heart or risk of heart disease.

The diagnostic method is the cardiac computed tomography angiography (CCTA), which is performed by using a powerful X-ray machine called a Philips 256-slice iCT scanner.

This exam, which only takes around 15 minutes, lets the specially trained cardiologist see clear images of the arteries and provides valuable information about the function of the heart, the valves, the aorta, and even the lungs. The test also provides a calcium score, which can indicate hardening of the arteries and even predict the possibility of future heart problems.

This high-speed X-ray delivers less radiation to a patient than other CT scanners.

"It is a powerful tool used to look at the coronary arteries," says Lewes cardiologist Georges Dahr, MD, who is one of the Beebe Healthcare cardiologists certified to read and interpret the CCTA images. "It provides us the opportunity to clearly see any calcification in the arteries and is indicated when the stress test is inconclusive and more information is necessary to either confirm or exclude a diagnosis and severity of coronary artery disease."

This diagnostic X-ray does not replace the use of the cardiac catheterization, which allows a specialized cardiologist, when necessary, to concurrently open blocked arteries to restore blood flow to the heart.



Cardiologist Georges Dahr, MD, is pictured here with images of the heart taken from a cardiac computed tomography angiography (CCTA) performed by using the Philips 256-slice iCT scanner, a powerful X-ray machine.