

AVAILABILITY, AFFABILITY, & ABILITY



Dr. Katz, assisted by a vascular surgical and interventional radiology team, performs an endovascular procedure to repair an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Outstanding Contributions: Well-known Surgeon Treats Patients Like Family

It's early on a Sunday morning and a telephone ring breaks the tranquility in his Rehoboth Beach home. Turning his attention from his cup of tea and medical journal, Dr. Mayer Katz answers. On the other end of the line is one of his patients calling to ask a question regarding his medical condition.

This is a common scenario for Dr. Katz, who gives his personal contact information to all of his patients.

"Patients should have a lifeline, and their vascular surgeon has to be available," says Dr. Katz, a vascular surgeon with Beebe Medical Group. Dr. Katz, aware that vascular disease is

chronic, makes sure his patients receive personal attention. He lives by the three "A"s—Availability, Affability, and Ability. In his words, the vascular surgeon has to be there for the patient, be able to put the patient at ease, and be able to provide excellent care.

Dr. Katz's calm and precise manner can

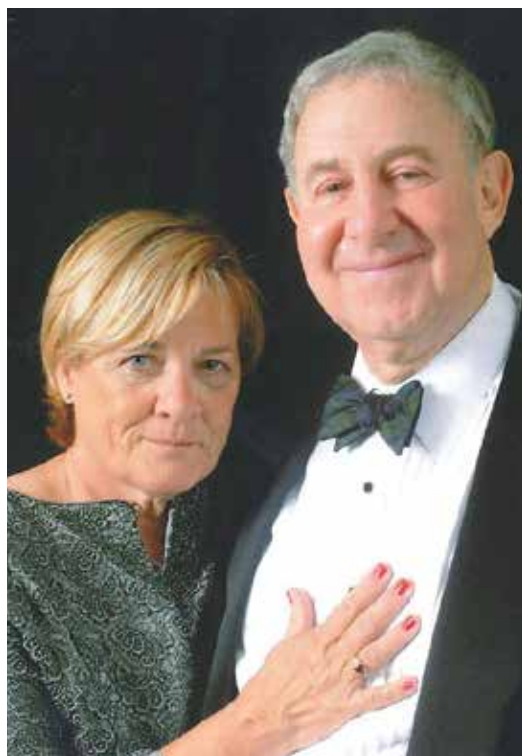
“The legacy of Dr. Katz’s contributions to his patients is immeasurable. His surgical skills and expertise have served this community so well, and we look forward to continuing to build on his tradition of excellence.”

—Jeffrey M. Fried, Beebe President and CEO

put any patient at ease, and it also gives the patient confidence that he is an expert in his field. His expertise is real. Dr. Katz has treated thousands of patients over many years. He established the vascular program at two medical centers, including at Beebe Healthcare in 1990, and he continues to update his own skills and knowledge as he nurtures the growth of Beebe’s program.

“Dr. Katz has made a tremendous contribution to Beebe Healthcare and, in turn, to the communities that we serve,” says Jeffrey M. Fried, FACHE, President and CEO of Beebe Healthcare. “One might consider his approach to his patients as ‘traditional’ or ‘old-fashioned.’ But it’s precisely his personal warmth and accessibility combined with his superb technical skills that make him such a wonderful surgeon in our community.”

Lewes resident Patti Brown says, “Dr. Katz genuinely cares for his patients. He certainly saved my husband’s life. And what impresses me most about him is that he keeps up with the newest technologies and is always on the cutting edge.”



Dr. Katz and his wife Nancy are pictured here at a Beebe Thanksgiving Ball a few years ago. Nancy was an organizer of the event.

Patti says she’ll never forget how Dr. Katz spoke to her and her husband Bill about the seriousness of Bill’s abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA)—a dangerous thinning of the wall of the major blood vessel that supplies blood to the body. Bill’s aneurysm was so large that it could have burst at any time. They had to do surgery as soon as they could. That was in 2005.

“He explained everything, and then what surprised us the most was that he showed us his excellent outcomes for all of those procedures that he had done,” Patti recalls. “I’ve never had a doctor do that before.”

Dr. Katz performed an endovascular stent graft repair on Mr. Brown’s abdominal aortic artery. This endovascular procedure takes precision and expertise. Dr. Katz uses real-time imaging while he inserts a catheter into a large artery in the groin and then guides it up to the damaged abdominal aortic artery. He places a stent and graft into position, giving his patient an opportunity for a healthier life.

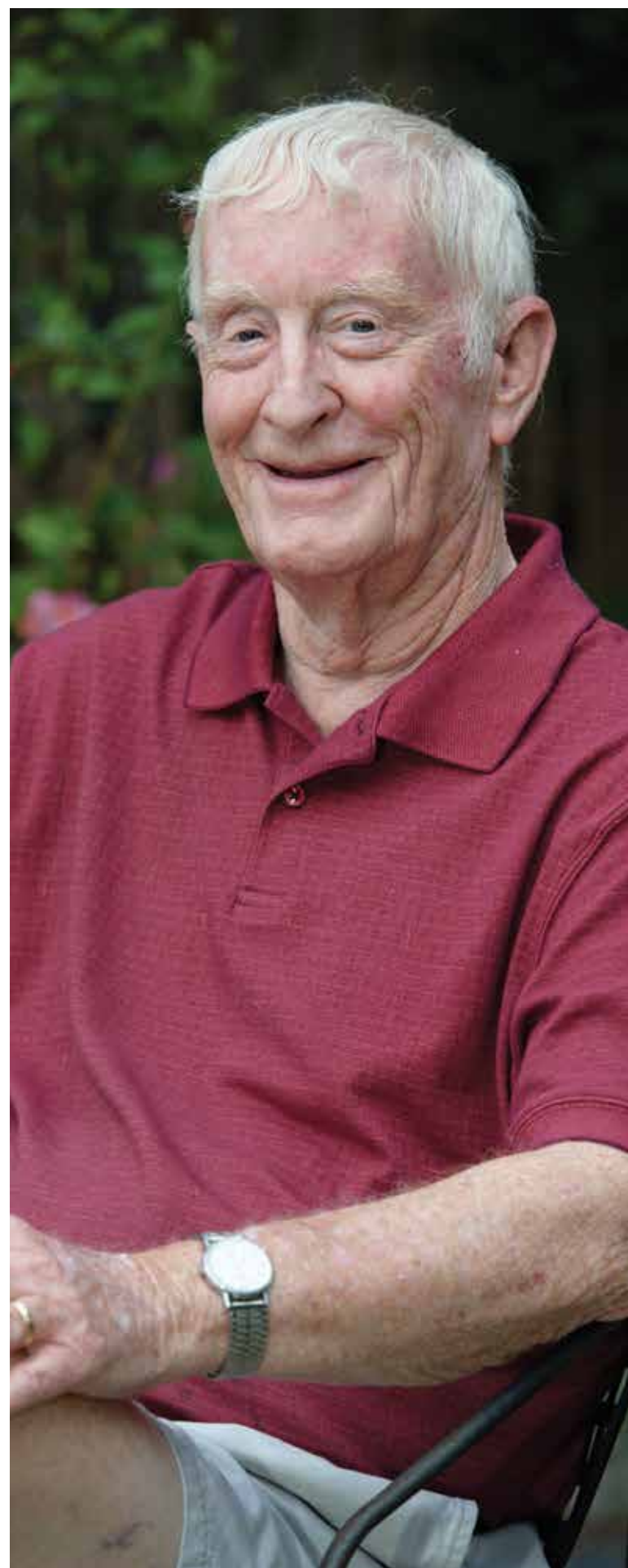
“The sun rises and sets on Dr. Katz,” Bill says. “I will be forever grateful to him and to my cardiologist, Dr. [Alberto] Rosa, who found the aneurysm.”

Bill says he has truly enjoyed getting to know Dr. Katz over the years, and he feels confident that he is in good hands. He gets regular checkups at Dr. Katz’s office. “We hit it off, maybe because we had both played lacrosse, and we also have Hopkins in common.”

Bill had worked at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore for several years. Later, he worked at the University of Maryland, College Park, before retiring to Lewes. Dr. Katz, a Baltimore native, had earned his undergraduate degree at Johns Hopkins before earning his medical

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—Bill Brown, of Lewes



Lewes resident Bill Brown, a patient of Dr. Katz, relaxes in his garden.

Dr. Katz was honored while serving as a surgeon in Vietnam. Pictured here, LTC Robert Stanek, Commanding Officer of the U.S. Army 22nd Surgical Hospital, presents Dr. Katz with the Soldiers Award for exemplary service.



“You didn’t train in Vietnam, you just did it.”

—Mayer Katz, MD

a longtime Lewes resident and nurse in a local physician’s office. She is one of the many people who have come to know Dr. Katz.

EARLY YEARS AND VIETNAM

Dr. Katz found his passion for surgery while still in medical school.

“As soon as I got into an OR, I knew right away that it was my thing,” he recalls. “I was the best one there.”

He decided to do a surgical internship at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco. It was there that he was inspired by Dr. Edwin Jack Wylie, a vascular surgeon known as a pioneering giant within the international vascular surgery community. Dr. Katz still cherishes his books and remembers his words.

Dr. Katz then went to Boston City Hospital for his residency, where he and his wife Nancy met and later married. Dr. Katz still remembers the day he caught his first glimpse of her when she was a student nurse in the operating room. They have been together ever since.

Dr. Katz was drafted as soon as he completed his residency. He served as a captain and surgeon in the U.S. Army Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) program in Vietnam.

“You didn’t train in Vietnam, you just did it,” Dr. Katz says.

Dr. Katz’s passion became a coveted skill as the brutal war raged in the jungles. For six of the 13 months in 1967 and 1968 that he was there, he also served in a U.S. Marines MASH unit deep in the jungle, where he was under fire continually. He operated, repairing soldiers’ bleeding bodies—torn from gunshot wounds and shrapnel from explosions. His steady hands built new blood vessels, bypassed destroyed arteries, and repaired slivered bones and mangled tissue. Surgeries lasted from two to five hours. Dr. Katz finished one surgery and went on to the next.

One story stands out. With a battle raging, Dr. Katz was called to remove a live grenade lodged in a soldier’s cheek. The grenade could have exploded at any minute. His surgery was

degree at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore.

Dr. Katz was the first Board-Certified vascular surgeon to practice in Sussex County. Today, he performs his surgeries at Beebe’s operating rooms in the Medical Center in



Camille Betts was 87 years old when Dr. Katz saved her life in an emergency surgery. Today, at 89, she tells the story.

Lewes. He also heads Beebe Vascular, the only specialized vascular practice in southern Delaware. Part of Beebe Medical Group, its team includes three vascular surgeons and four specially trained nurse practitioners. (See sidebar on page 5).

“He saved my life,” says 89-year-old Camille Betts, a retired Beebe nurse. She recalls how an aneurysm in her abdominal aortic artery had ruptured just two years before.

“She was in bad shape, and Dr. Katz gave her about a one percent chance of surviving the surgery,” says Camille’s daughter, Connie Walker, a nurse. “He explained to all of us what could happen.”

Camille, still coherent in the Emergency Department, asked her daughter if she should have the surgery.

“I told her it was her decision,” Connie recalls. Camille, determined she would survive, signed the consent form.

“My family was planning my funeral,” she says, enjoying the story of how she survived the impossible.

“Dr. Katz is a miracle worker,” says Connie,

Dr. Katz stands in a U.S. Army Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) in Vietnam. In 13 months, he performed 375 surgeries.



a success, and news of it spread. Nancy was living in Boston with their two children at the time. When her father called her about a story on the front page of the *Globe*, she had to find a copy. What she saw was a photograph of her husband and the story on the front page. For that remarkable surgery, U.S. Army 22nd Surgical Hospital Commanding Officer LTC Robert Stanek presented Dr. Katz with the Soldiers Award for exemplary service.

All in all, he operated on 375 wounded and near-death soldiers, and of those, eight died. He remembers every patient and has documented all of their stories. Today, he and Nancy, a professional writer, are working on a book about the experience.

As a seasoned vascular surgeon following Vietnam, Dr. Katz's first job was to establish a vascular program at Beloit Memorial Hospital

in Beloit, Wisconsin. At the same time, Nancy, who had already had a degree in nursing, earned another in creative writing from Beloit College.

ARRIVING IN COASTAL DELAWARE

Dr. Katz was recruited in 1989 to come to Beebe to establish a Vascular Services program. He and Nancy discussed the opportunity. By then, their grown children had returned to the East Coast. They decided to visit the area and see what they thought.

"We liked it immediately," Nancy says. "And people were so friendly."

They met members of the leadership of Beebe, including Dr. James Beebe, Jr. and his wife Betty Mann Beebe. The couple arrived in 1990, and Dr. Katz began work on developing

FELLOWSHIP-TRAINED VASCULAR SURGEONS JOIN DR. KATZ IN VASCULAR SERVICES PRACTICE

Vascular surgeons **Carlos Neves, MD**, and **Sean Ryan, MD**, have joined Mayer Katz, MD, in Beebe Vascular, the only specialized vascular practice in southern Delaware. It has offices in Lewes, Ocean View, Millsboro, and Milford and is part of Beebe Medical Group. Its team includes three vascular surgeons and four specially trained nurse practitioners.

Both Dr. Neves and Dr. Ryan are fellowship trained in vascular and endovascular surgery.



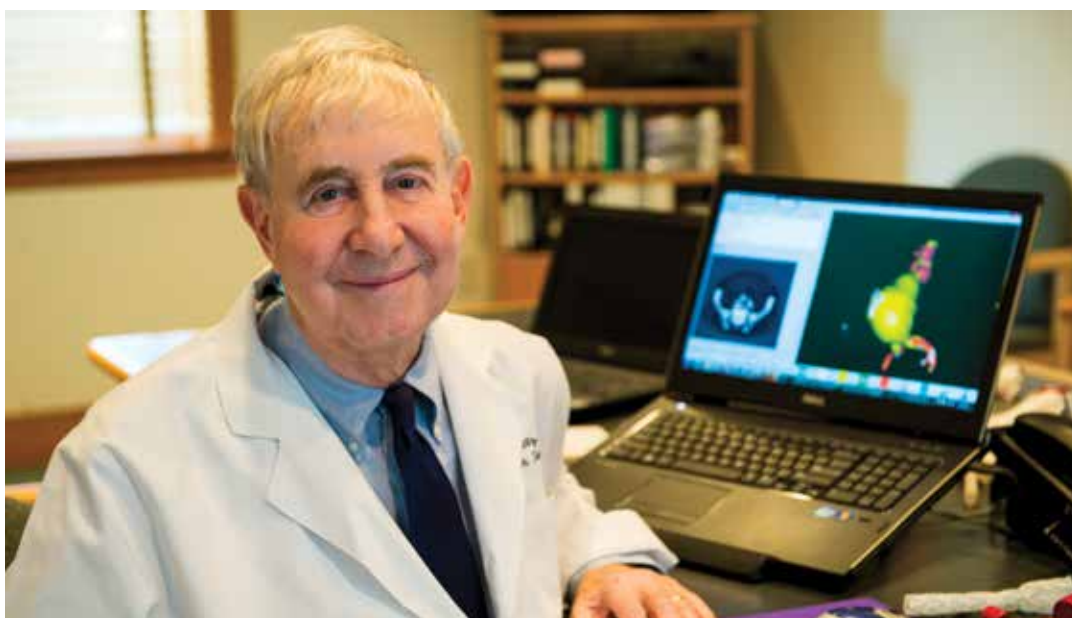
Dr. Neves earned his medical degree at the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Piscataway, New Jersey. He completed his residency at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, and his fellowship in Vascular and Endovascular Surgery at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey. He is a member of the American College of Surgeons and the Society for Vascular Surgery.



Dr. Ryan earned his medical degree at the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Piscataway, New Jersey. He completed a residency in General Surgery at Christiana Care Health System in Newark, Delaware, and a fellowship in Vascular and Endovascular Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia. He is a member of The American College of Surgeons, the Society for Clinical Vascular Surgery, and the Society for Vascular Surgery.

Dr. Neves and Dr. Ryan both have earned the Registered Physician in Vascular Interpretation (RPVI) credential from the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® (ARDMS®).

Beebe Vascular's main office is at 33664 Bayview Medical Drive, Unit 2, Lewes. It also has satellite offices in Ocean View, Millsboro, and Milford. The telephone number is (302) 644-4954.



An image of a patient's abdominal aortic aneurysm can be seen on the screen behind Dr. Katz.

WHAT IS VASCULAR DISEASE?

The heart pumps blood to the body through a system of vessels called the circulatory system. Arteries carry the oxygen-rich blood from the heart, and the veins carry it back again.

Vascular disease is disease of these vessels, as well as of those in the lymphatic system, which is a system intertwined with the circulatory system that removes liquid from the tissues in the body and carries it to the circular system.

The most common vascular disease in the United States is hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), which occurs when plaque builds up on the artery walls and interrupts the normal flow of blood and oxygen to the body. Organs in the body can be damaged when they do not receive enough blood, and atherosclerosis can lead to heart attack and stroke.

There are other common vascular diseases and conditions, including:

- Aneurysm (a ballooning of the vessel wall which may lead to rupture or a hole within the artery)
- Blood clots in the legs (deep vein thrombosis) that can travel into the lung and cause a pulmonary embolism
- Peripheral venous (vein) disease, when the valves in the veins are damaged so the blood is unable to return effectively to the heart
- Blood clotting disorders
- Lymphedema, when the lymphatic system is damaged or not working properly, which can cause swelling, discomfort, and recurring infections

People who smoke, who are overweight, and who live a sedentary lifestyle are at risk for vascular disease caused by atherosclerosis. Also people with high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes are at risk. While it is very important to control all of these factors, it is necessary to understand that one risk factor that cannot be controlled is heredity, which can play a major role. Trauma, the removal of lymph nodes, and cancer surgery and radiation treatment can result in lymphedema.

Vascular surgeons specialize in treating patients with these diseases and conditions, even when surgery is not indicated.

a vascular program.

"It is a complicated process," Dr. Katz says, explaining that Beebe needed a specialized vascular staff and the people and technologies to establish the necessary testing and treatment programs. It took detailed planning and knowledge. He invited a team from Beebe to visit Beloit to see the program there. Dr. Katz also brought some of

his experienced team with him from Wisconsin, including vascular nurse Lynn Amey, who today is Executive Director of the Beebe Healthcare Cardiac and Vascular Services program.

Nancy, meanwhile, had struck up a friendship with Betty Mann Beebe, and the two worked tirelessly to establish fundraising activities for Beebe, such as Beebe's Thanksgiving Ball and the annual tree-lighting ceremony. Nancy also began writing for the newly established *Cape Gazette* newspaper, and she continues to do so. She also developed her passion for watercolors, which led to her

Dr. Katz brought an experienced vascular team with him from Wisconsin when he established the Vascular Services program at Beebe in 1990. He is pictured here in 2000 with vascular nurse Lynn Amey. Today, Mrs. Amey is Executive Director of Cardiac and Vascular Services at Beebe.



active involvement with the Cape Artists Gallery in Lewes.

They both enjoy getting together with friends, attending local events, seeing familiar faces around town, and visiting with their children and grandchildren. For Dr. Katz, his passion remains his patients—and knowing that he is making a difference in their lives.

"The legacy of Dr. Katz's contributions to his patients is immeasurable," says Jeff Fried. "His surgical skills and expertise have served this community so well, and we look forward to continuing to build on his tradition of excellence." ■



Dr. Katz works with the interventional radiology team on a patient.