

# health watch

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**Doris Ries  
recalls the first  
heart surgery  
at Mercy** *page 5*

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recent heart surgery  
experience** *page 2*

*Pictured: Mercy colleagues gather on the front lawn to celebrate 40 years of heart care*





## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kay Takes, President

**Where were you in 1976?** If you're old enough, you might recall that Jimmy Carter beat incumbent Gerald Ford in the presidential election that year. Canada (Montreal) hosted the Games of the XXI Olympiad, featuring 14 year-old gymnast Nadia Comăneci of Romania, and Bruce Jenner, who set a world record and won the gold medal for the decathlon. Folks paid \$0.59 for a gallon of gas at the pumps; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Rocky* were hot at the box office; and the music of Queen, ABBA and Barry Manilow topped the charts. Apple was founded to develop and sell personal computers. It was the United States Bicentennial and the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed the year at 1,004 points.

So why the focus on 1976? It was a very special year in the history of Mercy Medical Center because we completed our first cardiac catheterization and open heart surgery procedures. Adding cardiology and cardiac surgery capability was a big deal for the people of Dubuque and surrounding communities at the time, and our experience in the 40 years since remains a big deal today. Mercy is proud of our well-deserved reputation as Dubuque's "Heart Hospital", having performed thousands of cardiology procedures and more than 5,200 open hearts since the service was launched 40 years ago. We have state-of-the-art equipment and beautiful, patient-friendly facilities funded, in part, by a very generous and well-informed community. We have a clinical team that is uniquely qualified and passionately committed to delivering excellent outcomes and the very best experience for our patients. They, and all who have served before

them, are primarily responsible for the remarkable success of our cardiac program and we are grateful for their contributions. In fact, some of the Mercy colleagues who participated in those first cases 40 years ago are still on our team today, providing exquisite care that comes with many, many years of experience.

Mercy's history in cardiac care is interesting and impressive, and has helped to shape who we have become in 2016. Our service today is comprehensive, including highly collaborative care across settings, in the home, in the offices of medical providers, in rehabilitation, and in long term care. We work to prevent heart disease, to sustain a great quality of life for patients with chronic heart conditions, and to provide the absolute best quality of care for patients needing medical or surgical intervention.

This year will be remembered as the year of the XXXI Olympiad, with Michael Phelps, Simone Biles and our own Kayla Banwarth bringing home the bronze medal in women's volleyball. Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump will (likely) be elected the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States and, hopefully, the Chicago Cubs will break the curse and win the World Series (I'm writing this well ahead of the post season games.)

It will also be remembered as the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mercy Medical Center's highly esteemed cardiac program. And you have our commitment that we will continue to lead the way, providing expert, comprehensive cardiac care for many years to come.



# a look back at *40 Years of Heart*

**Dr. Tom Johnson has been an integral part of Mercy's heart program since 1979.**



*It has been a privilege and very exciting to have observed and participated in the evolution of*

*cardiac care at Mercy since nearly the beginning. There has been an explosion of new techniques and technology over four decades nationwide and at Mercy, expanding the quality and duration of life for Tri-state area residents. This has involved hundreds of the expert staff at Mercy from multiple disciplines."*

— Dr. Tom Johnson, *cardiologist, Medical Associates Clinic*

**As we celebrate 40 years of heart care at Mercy, we look back at some of the events that have brought us to where we are today.**

**OCTOBER 4, 1976** — The first cardiac catheterization in the City of Dubuque is performed at Mercy

**OCTOBER 26, 1976** — The first open heart surgery in Dubuque is performed at Mercy

**1980** — Invasive and non-invasive cardiology services are consolidated on the third floor

**1983** — Cardiac Medical Unit opens

**1984** — Cardiologists perform the first angioplasty in Dubuque at Mercy

**1986** — Phase I cardiac rehabilitation program begins

**1988** — Phase II cardiac rehabilitation begins

**1991** — Phase III cardiac rehabilitation begins

**1998** — Cardiac rehab program moves to Mercy Wellness Center on third floor of the Professional Arts Plaza

**2001** — Mercy and Medical Associates Clinic form a program for the management of congestive heart failure

**2004** — The community donates more than \$3.8 million for the construction of a new Cardiology Center

**2005** — The Cardiology Center opens on the second floor of Mercy with nuclear medicine stress testing, echocardiography, and two new cardiac catheterization laboratories

**2006** — Electrophysiology procedures begin

**2008** — Carotid stenting procedures begin

**2011** — The community donates \$3 million for the construction of the new Intensive Care and Cardiovascular Units

**2012** — The new ICU and CVU open on the second floor of the hospital

**2016** — Cardiac catheterization equipment is replaced in both laboratories

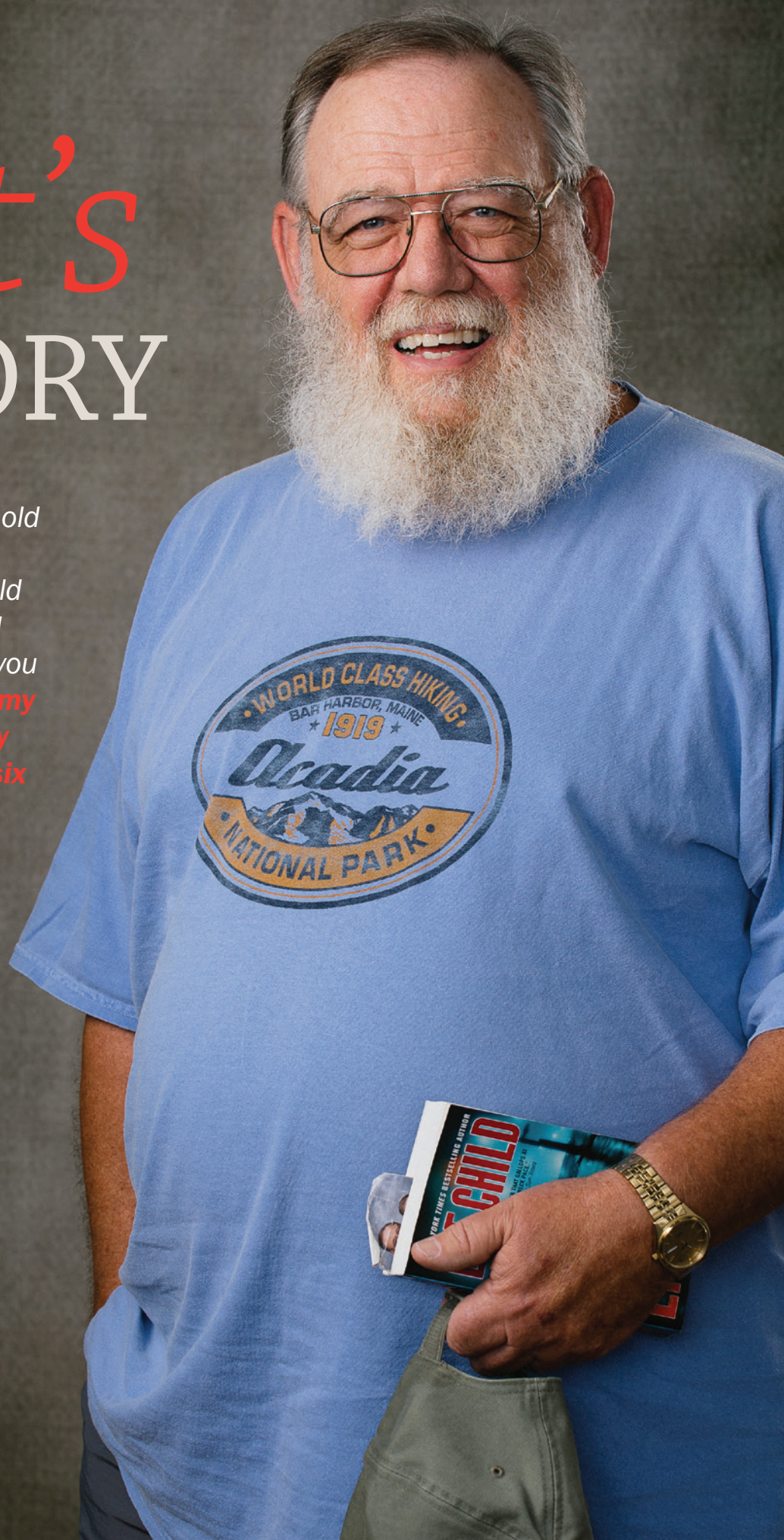


# Art's STORY

“ I don't have the person I would hold hands with, the person who would kick my butt and say this is what you need to do. **But my motivation is my three kids and six grandkids.**”

— Art Miller

After heart surgery, Art Miller is able to fully enjoy his favorite pastimes: reading and spending time with his grandchildren.





“



*Bypass surgery is a very unforgiving surgery. **It has to be done perfectly.** If the graft is kinked in any way, the heart is not going to tolerate that very well.”*

— Dr. Kalyan Vunnamadala

**Absolutely nothing is more important to Art Miller than his family.** He'll proudly show photos of his six grandchildren, talk about his three children, and reflect on memories of his wife of 44 years, Judy. His children and grandchildren are his motivators. Judy is his guardian angel.

For more than a decade, Art has been under the expert care of Dr. Ramabadran, Medical Associates cardiologist. During these years, Art received several stents after experiencing a heart attack and instances of chest pain.

This past February, however, Dr. Ram discovered three major blockages while performing a cath.

“He stopped the procedure and said we needed to do something more serious,” Art recalls.

Dr. Ram consulted with Dr. Kalyan Vunnamadala, Medical Associates cardiovascular surgeon, and they determined that the best route for Art was surgery.

Art's family had been through heart surgery before.

“Judy had open heart surgery in Iowa City, and it was 18 months later that she passed away. So when all of this came up, I just thought, I don't have my Judy to help me through this. I don't have the person I would hold hands with, the person who would kick my butt and say this is what you need to do. But my motivation is my three kids and six grandkids.”

So despite some natural worry, Art was on board with the surgery and was determined to improve his health.

“I met Dr. Vunnamadala, shook his hand and looked in his eye, and I felt very confident right away.”

Dr. Vunnamadala was trained at Baylor College of Medicine, one of the top heart institutes in the country.

“Bypass surgery is a very unforgiving surgery. It has to be done perfectly. If the graft is kinked in any way, the heart is not going to tolerate that very well,” explains

Dr. Vunnamadala. “Art had three areas of blockage but one area of an artery was too small to open safely and put any graft onto it, so he had a double bypass.”

Art's surgery was successful.

“I had no pain whatsoever. And I could breathe. I wasn't fighting for air. I felt wonderful.”

Art began his recovery and returned home, ready for the next step.

“Whether you have stents or surgery, it doesn't fix the underlying disease. Coronary artery disease is still there,” Dr. Vunnamadala states. “So if you continue to smoke, have high blood pressure or high blood sugar, or don't take the medications that are beneficial for your heart and vessels, in six months you'll be dealing with the same problem all over again. Art has been fantastic. He's been an excellent patient and has done everything we asked him to do.”

That included attending cardiac rehabilitation. Cardiac rehab is a customized program of monitored exercise, education, and counseling that helps heart patients achieve and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

“It's a great program. They take good care of you and it's a fun place to be. I'm exercising, and I watch what I eat. I've lost over 30 pounds since March.”

Art lives across the street from Flora Park, so every summer he buys pool passes for his six grandchildren, and they all go to “Papa's Pool.”

“Coming out of surgery, there was a picture of all six kids and I sitting on our front porch, and a picture of Judy and I. I opened my eyes and there they were. That's what getting better was all about—so that the kids and I could go to the pool together this summer. And we did.”

# First open-heart surgery performed at Mercy

By NINA BERGLUND  
Telegraph Herald Staff Writer

Open-heart surgery was performed for the first time yesterday at Mercy Medical Center in Dubuque.

And, according to open-heart program coordinator Robert Boyarski the patient, Harold Licht of 465 W. Third St., is doing fine.

Licht's surgery was the culmination of an 18-month effort to equip Mercy for open-heart surgery. Mercy is the fourth hospital in the state to offer such surgery, according to the Iowa Hospital Association.

Licht, 44, is in Mercy's intensive care unit recovering from the five-hour operation.

Mercy's open-heart surgery includes a program in which the patient and his or her family are invited to the hospital three days before surgery to learn about all procedures.

"They have just been wonderful to us," Licht's wife, Adelyn, said this morning. "And he's doing well. He's breathing on his own and is talking and taking some liquids."

The Project Review Committee of the Tri-State Health Planning Council gave Mercy's open-heart surgery plan an initial okay last October and Mercy received the final go-ahead for the project in November from the Iowa Health Facilities Construction Review Committee.

Mercy then spent the next 10 months installing equipment and staffing the new facilities.

"This is quite an investment in time and talent," Boyarski said. "Mercy has spent about \$150,000 on permanent equipment, plus the costs of personnel and disposable equipment."

Establishment of the cardiac catheterization lab required installation of special respiration equipment, a statistical computer, barometric pressure indicators and external pacemakers, Boyarski said.

Personnel include an X-ray technician, a cardio-vascular technician, registered nurses, scrub nurses, doctors and radiologists.

The cardiac catheterization lab, which opened about six weeks ago, takes an X-ray

Studies done by Mercy showed that more than 700 patients admitted to Dubuque's three hospitals in 1974 could have benefitted from open-heart surgery. Mercy plans to perform two open-heart operations a week, Boyarski said.

Action began on the hospital's proposal to perform open-heart surgery in April, 1975, when Mercy Administrator Sister Mary Corita Heid notified the Iowa Office of Comprehensive Health Planning (OCHP) of Mercy's plans.

Mercy soon received an application for developing the program and then spent nearly four months studying the need for and feasibility of open-heart surgery.

The application, filed in August, 1975, with OCHP, asked permission to establish a cardiac catheterization lab and to develop facilities for open-heart surgery.

The project had to be reviewed by local and state health planning agencies to qualify for federal reimbursement on that part of the cost that could be covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

— by injecting dye into a blood vessel into the heart — that can reveal blocked heart passages or other damage that could require surgery.

After that lab test, a hospital committee determines whether a coronary bypass operation is necessary.

The coronary bypass operation is the only type of open-heart surgery available at Mercy now, but Boyarski said plans for further surgery are on the drawing board.

Mercy has two teams of surgeons performing open-heart surgery. They are Dr. P. Samy and Dr. Ratnam Mullapudi, and Dr. Brent Holleran and Dr. John Patrick.

Dr. Samy and Dr. Mullapudi performed the coronary bypass on Licht, and will perform another coronary bypass Monday.

The other three hospitals in Iowa that offer open-heart surgery are Mercy in Des Moines, St. Luke's in Davenport and the University of Iowa Hospitals in Iowa City.

"Now a heart patient can undergo such an operation right here in his own local community, and his family can be here," Boyarski said.





## REFLECTING ON THE FIRST OPEN HEART SURGERY

*Doris Ries, who works in Mercy’s operating room, was one of the nurses who assisted with the first open heart surgery at Mercy. Here are her memories of that day, in her own words.*

I came into work that morning, October 26, 1976, at 5 a.m., along with my other teammates—Rita McDermott and Margo Wolbers, who were the other two nurses; Mara Schroeder, Lynn Noonan, and Sara Fewell, surgical techs who were scrubbing the case; Greg Johnson, the perfusionist; and Rick Beecher, monitor technician, who later became a perfusionist.

We were all excited, a little nervous, and anxious. We had planned for this day for a couple of months. We had gone to Milwaukee and observed open heart cases there. We also did simulations in our OR prior to that day—but today was the real thing.

It took some time to prepare the room that morning. We didn’t have the custom packs with all of the supplies in it like we do now, so every item had to be individually

opened. We had to make a sterile ice slush that was used to rapidly cool down the heart when we went on bypass.

We all worked together as a team even though we had designated roles—Margo and I as the circulating nurses being attentive to the patient and the sterile field, and Rita as the medication nurse assisting the anesthesia provider. Mara first scrubbed, Lynn second scrubbed, and Sara helped harvest the vein graft. Dr. Mullapudi was the surgeon, and Dr. Samy was his assistant. Dr. Mullapudi’s wife, Nalini Mullapudi, gave anesthesia.

When the patient came into the OR, it became real that this was going to happen.

I called the family to let them know that the procedure had started and reassured them that things were going well. I called again when we went on bypass. We did a one-vessel bypass so the time went pretty fast. I remember feeling the anxiety rise as we attempted to come off bypass. This is the critical time in the procedure when you see how the heart is going to respond. I said a little prayer for him and for us to remain calm. He came off bypass without any issues, and you could feel the tension leave the room. I called the family again to let them know that things were going well, that he was off bypass, and we would be closing and should be in the ICU in about an hour. They too expressed relief.

After the procedure, we all regrouped and talked about the surgery. We had that first case under our belt now and would be a little more relaxed when the next patient presented.



## ON-THE-GO BREAKFAST SANDWICH

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

### SAUSAGE PATTY INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound very lean ground pork
- ½ pound ground turkey breast (more than 93 percent fat-free)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon sage
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

### ADDITIONAL INGREDIENTS

- 6 eggs, cooked (one egg per sandwich)
- 6 ultra thin cheese slices (mild cheddar or preferred flavor)
- 6 sandwich thins (pictured: ‘everything’ flavor)

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### To make the sausage patties:

Mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. Form the mixture into 6 patties. Spray a large, non-stick skillet with cooking spray and place over medium heat. Add the sausage patties and cook until browned and juices run clear; about 5 minutes on each side.

#### To complete the On-the-Go Breakfast Sandwich:

Place one cooked egg on top of one sandwich thin, layer cheese on top of cooked egg and place cooked sausage patty on top of cheese slice. Top with other half of bagel thin. Enjoy!

HEART  
HEALTHY



DIABETES  
FRIENDLY



**WALK INTO CHRISTMAS**  
**Gift Show, Bake Sale, and Toyland**

Sunday, November 6 | 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Monday, November 7 | 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Tuesday, November 8 | 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Proceeds benefit children's needs at Mercy Medical Center.



Mercy Medical Center - Dubuque  
250 Mercy Drive  
Dubuque, IA 52001

Celebrating  40 years of heart.

MERCY. DUBUQUE'S HEART HOSPITAL.

» [mercydubuque.com/heart](http://mercydubuque.com/heart)



*Lean Country-Style Breakfast Sausage in an*  
**ON-THE-GO BREAKFAST SANDWICH**

“ School is back in full swing, which means busy mornings. Try this On-the-Go Breakfast Sandwich to provide a complete meal that can be made in advance. **The sausage is prepared using lean ground pork and turkey, cutting total fat content in half** when compared to traditional breakfast patties. Plus, these patties are seasoned with herbs rather than a large amount of salt.”

— Stacy Barton, RD, LD

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:**

303 calories, 5g saturated fat,  
555mg sodium, 25g carbohydrates,  
5g fiber, 19g protein



FLIP FOR  
RECIPE