

Norwood LAP-BAND doctor, Arthur Glasgow, retires

By Jen Judson/Wicked Local Norwood

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Dr. Arthur Glasgow meticulously cares for things, whether it's a bonsai tree in his backyard or a patient in his operating room.

Glasgow has always been a patient and dedicated surgeon and man, said his son Dr. Adam Glasgow. The 45-year-old said this is one of the reasons the father and son team at Surgical Weight Loss Specialists on Edgewater Drive has done well.

The practice, which concentrates solely on LAP-BAND adjustable gastric bypass system surgery at Norwood Hospital, has performed 900 surgeries since November 2005, Arthur said. Adam said the practice is now one of the biggest LAP-BAND programs in the state.

Arthur turned 70 on April 6, and retired from the practice after over 40 years as a surgeon, leaving Adam in charge of the practice.

"I always maintained that I wanted to retire or go out while I was at the top of my game," Arthur said. "I thought 70 was a nice, round number."

Arthur, who was born in Brooklyn, New York, said he wanted to be a doctor since he was 8. His father, Daniel, had wanted to become a doctor, but, "didn't have a chance to do that," due to the Depression. Daniel instead worked as a hand knitting yarn salesman.

After majoring in psychology at Brandeis University where he met his wife, Marian, of nearly 48 years, Arthur attended New York University medical school in 1961.

When he completed his surgical residency at Boston University, Arthur said he got his first big break, in 1973, becoming the youngest director of a residency program in the country at BU's Boston City Hospital.

Arthur said he worked to be progressive as director, determined to acquire the best residents and improve the experience. He said he wanted to make surgeries a team effort.

Arthur started practicing at Norwood Hospital in the late 1970's. The hospital was "terrific," he said.

In Norwood, Arthur formed Guild Surgical Specialists in 1995 with a group of surgeons. Adam joined the group in 1998, after finishing his residency at Boston University.

Arthur said when laparoscopic surgery was first developed about 20 years ago, "I thought, 'This is really a gimmick.'"

Arthur said he performed gall bladder surgeries using a three to four inch incision, while most surgeons cut six to eight inches. The laparoscopic surgery involved only four small incisions.

As a surgical resident, Arthur exhibited the same efficiency. He said he could perform an appendectomy in six minutes when it took the average resident 30 to 45 minutes.

"I thought, 'I don't have to do this, making four small incisions, I am making one small incision. They were getting people out of the hospital in one day. I was getting people out of the hospital in one day,'" he said. "But as soon as I saw some videos of the laparoscopic surgery, I realized it was a lot easier on the patient."

Arthur fell into LAP-BAND surgery because some nurses at Norwood Hospital were interested in weight loss surgery and asked him if he would consider performing their operations.

By-pass surgery, performed laparoscopically, was the popular form of weight loss surgery at the time, Arthur said.

Arthur looked into the possibility in 2001, discovering LAP-BAND surgery seemed safer than by-pass surgery, but had the same benefits.

An experienced LAP-BAND surgeon from New York guided Glasgow's first three surgeries in 2005. "We did the first two operations, which went very smoothly and the proctor said, 'Alright, I'm leaving. I'm going to catch an early flight back to New York. You've done so well with these first two, I don't have to stay here for the third.'"

Due to increasing demand, the father and son team decided to concentrate solely on LAP-BAND surgeries. In 2006, the Glasgows performed 40 surgeries. In 2007, they performed 90 and in 2008 tallied 180.

"It's very thrilling because, for patients who really work at it and lose the weight, it changes their lives," Arthur said. "As a surgeon, it's gratifying to make patients feel better, but it doesn't always change their life. This did that."

Gail Deneault, a patient since 2008, who lost 125 pounds after her surgery, made a book full of thank you notes from patients and presented it to Arthur when he retired.

“He was always so cute in his bow tie,” Deneault said, which he always wore to the office, representing to her, “an old fashioned, real caring that I think sometimes health care has lost. He has passed that on to his son.”

The Glasgows have always been available day or night and constantly check in on patients to make sure they are doing okay, Deneault said.

“Dad has the patience of Job,” Adam said. “He is pretty admirable and a good role model, someone you want to grow up to be like.”

Adam said he remembered a time when his father was teaching him to drive and he totaled a parked car.

“I thought my dad would never let me drive again,” he said, “but about a half hour later he told me he had errands to run and wanted me to drive him. That was great that he had confidence in me and wanted me to get back on the horse.

Working with his father has raised the stakes, Adam said, “ but it makes you be the best you can be.”

In his retirement, Arthur said he looks forward to the family tradition of Friday night dinners with his three children, their spouses, and his eight grandchildren, all who live ten minutes away.

Now Arthur has more time to tend to 20 bonsai trees, which he has cared for over 20 years. Adam said his dad even leaves his trees at a “bonsai kennel” when he goes out of town.

Arthur is also preparing to create a yoga studio in his house after practicing yoga for over 30 years. One of his retirement goals: to stand on his head.

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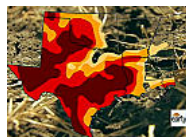
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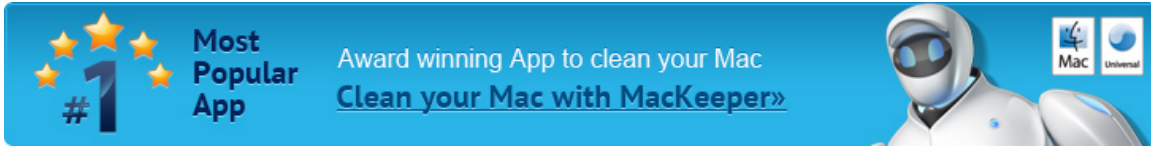
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