

The Doctor is In

Local doctor Mark Mostovych on his career, hobbies and unique outlook on medicine

Cancer has a way of clarifying one's life. At least that was the case with Dr. Mark Mostovych. Encouraged to go into the field of medicine by his parents, Mostovych attended medical school at the University of Louisville before completing his residency at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). After stints in Boston and then Dallas, he was recruited by St. Vincent's Medical Center and came to Jacksonville. "Subsequent to coming here, I recruited three other guys from MGH and we formed one group [Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgical Associates]." In 2001, though, his life changed dramatically when he was diagnosed with lung cancer. An avid runner, Mostovych recovered with a renewed zest for life and new outlook of his profession.

● "My parents were off the boat immigrants from Ukraine," says Mostovych. "My dad was a doctor and professor of medicine and radiology at the University of Kentucky. So, like father like son, I went into medicine."

● It has been 14 years since Mostovych went to the doctor for a routine chest X-ray and discovered he had cancer. "My wife and I got the flu and went in for a chest X-ray. Once I saw the little blip on the screen, I knew exactly what it was."

● At the time of his diagnosis, there were no minimally invasive procedures that could help Mostovych. "It was a low-grade malignancy, so it didn't require chemo, but it did require an intensive surgery and left a large scar. It took the wind out of my sails for a while." Shortly after he recovered, Mostovych made it his mission to look into more minimally invasive approaches to cardiovascular and thoracic surgeries.

● Dr. Mostovych's wife, Rhonda, is a certified registered nurse anesthetist. They have three children: Alexander (18), Sophia (16) and Stefan (14). All three were born at St. Vincent's.

● Asked about his greatest professional accomplishment, Mostovych is quick to respond. "We have the top-notch cardiovascular surgical program in the city. I take a lot of pride in being a major contributor to that program, but of course I owe it to the entire team as well."

● "I've always been a runner. When I was diagnosed, it was a very dark period in my life. One of my friends handed me the book, *It's Not About the Bike*, by Lance Armstrong. That book sort of brought me out of the darkness and into the light. I really started cycling a lot after that, partly to recover and partly as an attestation that I'm alive and I'm okay. I try to do as many triathlons as I can each summer." ■

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