



Piedmont Performs Its First Liver Transplant

By Diana Lewis



On April 15, 2005-just before his 53rd birthday-Clarence "Copeland" Shavers received a new liver and a new chance at life, thanks to the Piedmont Hospital transplant team led by Mark W. Johnson, M.D., transplant surgeon and surgical director for Liver Transplant Services.

"I can't wait to get back on a horse and ride," says the Milner, Ga., resident, who has spent his life training dogs and horses. "And hopefully, I will never miss another rodeo that my nine-year-old granddaughter, Leah, competes in. She is an excellent horsewoman."

Copeland taught Leah how to ride at age three, and later, how to train her own horses. Despite being treated for hepatitis C, he was going about life with his wife, Alice, and his two grown daughters, who live nearby with their families, when his liver began failing last October. Suddenly, his future was in question. He wondered if he would live long enough to teach his four-month-old grandson to ride and enjoy his second granddaughter, who was expected to be born in March 2005.

Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus. It can develop into a long-term infection, chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Over time, this viral infection can cause the liver to stop functioning, and a liver transplant is the only option for life.



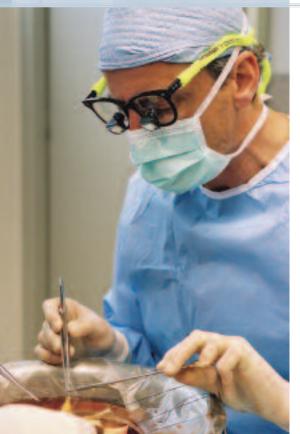
"We were not able to get on the liver transplant list at other facilities," recalls Alice, a retired schoolteacher. "We began to accept that Copeland wasn't going to survive. Then our doctor learned that Piedmont Hospital was starting a liver transplant program. We knew we were blessed when the office of gastroenterologist Raymond Rubin, M.D., called to say they had a cancellation and to come in immediately for testing."

Copeland's procedure marked the first liver transplant performed at Piedmont, making the hospital one of only two liver transplant centers in Georgia.

"We are optimistic that Mr. Shavers will be celebrating many transplant anniversaries with the Piedmont Hospital transplant family," says Dr. Johnson, who came to Piedmont from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with 20 years' experience in transplantation.

"Last year, several hundred Georgians who needed transplants left the state seeking treatment," Dr. Johnson comments. "With the addition of liver transplantation at Piedmont, more patients can now receive quality care closer to home."

Liver transplantation is the second most common transplant procedure, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). Over the past decade, the number of people



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The Mason Transplant Clinic

Piedmont's Mason Transplant Clinic was established in 2001 with a grant from the Carlos and Marguerite Mason Trust, which funds Georgia nonprofit institutions to increase Georgians' access to transplant services. This grant helped Piedmont enhance existing clinic services and facilities and provided a central, convenient location for pre-transplant evaluation and post-surgical follow-up care on an outpatient basis.

In 2002, the Mason Trust enabled renovation of the clinic. A year later, it funded Piedmont's intravenous gamma-globulin (IVIG) program to improve transplant success rates in certain patients diagnosed with end-stage renal disease. This program ultimately helped transplant centers across Georgia pursue Medicare approval for the use of IVIG for living donor kidney transplants.

Today, the number of living donor transplants performed at Piedmont exceeds the national average, and Piedmont patients experience shorter wait times for organs than the national average.

With more than 1,550 Georgians currently awaiting transplants, the need for donor organs continues to exceed supply. For information about organ, tissue and eye donation, call 1-866-57-SHARE or visit www.shareyourlife.org. #

waiting for liver transplantation increased nearly ninefold, from 2,217 in 1992 to a peak of 18,505 in 2001. In Georgia, 111 liver transplants were performed in 2004. Currently there are 254 Georgians awaiting liver transplants, UNOS reports.

In addition to liver transplantation, Piedmont Hospital's Transplant Services performs kidney and pancreas transplants. Piedmont is among the top 10 percent of all kidney transplant programs in the country, based on total number of transplant procedures. In 2004, Piedmont recorded 130 transplants—including 126 kidney transplants, two kidney-pancreas transplants and two pancreas transplants. Of the 130 transplants, 70 involved living donors.

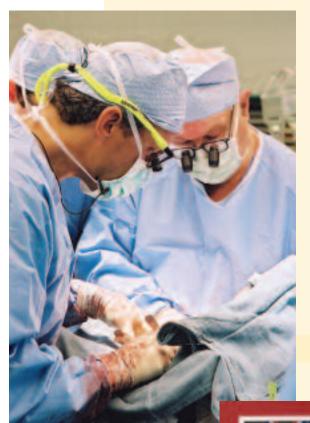
For more information on Piedmont Hospital's Liver Transplant Program, call 404-605-4600 or visit www.piedmonthospital.org. #



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- Clarence "Copeland" Shavers

PIEDMONT RECEIVES NATIONAL ORGAN **DONATION MEDAL OF HONOR FOR** TRANSPLANT SERVICES



Piedmont Hospital has been awarded the Organ Donation Medal of Honor by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Health Resources and Services Administration for outstanding achievement in its transplant program. The award signifies that Piedmont meets HHS's criteria of having at least eight potential donors in a 12-month period and an organ donation rate of at least 75 percent. In other words, 75 percent of eligible candidates at Piedmont became actual organ donors between September 2003 and March 2005, while the average national donation rate in 2004 was 55 percent.

For more information on Piedmont Hospital's Transplant Services, call 404-605-4600 or visit www.piedmonthospital.org. To learn more about how to become an organ, tissue or eye donor, call 1-866-57-SHARE or visit www.shareyourlife.org.