



CARDIAC CARE

A Life-Saving Friendship

*Joseph Scancarello has lived
a full and interesting life.*

Shown: Joe Scancarello, 75, coach of the West Point skeet-and-trap team, recently suffered a severe heart attack and was rushed to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, where he had access to expert cardiac care and treatment.

The 75-year-old retired maxofacial prosthodontist from Glen Rock once served as the New York Mets team dentist developing lasting friendships with Mets legends like Ed Kranepool. He also mentored aspiring dentists as Chair of the Prosthodontic Department at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Hackensack and later served as Director of Dentistry at Overlook Hospital in Summit and Professor at Columbia's College of Dental Medicine.

Despite his hectic schedule, Dr. Scancarello always found time to pursue his passion of coaching young cadets on the United States Military Academy's rifle team at West Point.

Through it all, Dr. Scancarello built many lifelong friendships which served him well when a sudden, severe cardiac arrest left him fighting for life.

Dr. Scancarello was attending a business meeting in Matawan when he had to excuse himself due to what he thought was a severe acid reflux attack.

"I had been having acid reflux for awhile so I thought that's what this was," Dr. Scancarello explains. "I got up, excused myself from the meeting and that's all I remember."

Minutes later, Dr. Scancarello collapsed in the rest room due to a ventricular fibrillation. Thankfully, Dr. Scancarello was accompanied by several long-time, close friends at the meeting, one of whom was a retired Air Force colonel, Ramon Martinez, who was skilled in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

"He jumped in and started chest compressions until help arrived," says Dr. Scancarello's wife, Margaret. "The police officer hit him once with the (Automatic Defibrillator) paddles and his heart started again. When the rescue squad asked where they should take Joe, his friends recommended Robert Wood Johnson."

Luckily Dr. Scancarello was only minutes away from Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ), which is home to a Cardiovascular Center of Excellence. Working in partnership with faculty at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and private community physicians, The Center offers patients a highly skilled and experienced team of cardiologists, surgeons and nurses equipped with innovative technology to treat the most seriously ill cardiac patients.

Because Dr. Scancarello's brain was deprived of oxygen and he was comatose, nurses and doctors initiated a Code Chill procedure when he arrived in the Emergency Department. "Code Chill" is the term medical personnel use when they induce mild hypothermia to treat comatose patients who have experienced sudden cardiac arrest to hasten the recovery of the brain from damage caused by the lack of oxygen. It is a non-invasive patient cooling system that controls, monitors and maintains a patient's core body temperature at 91 degrees.

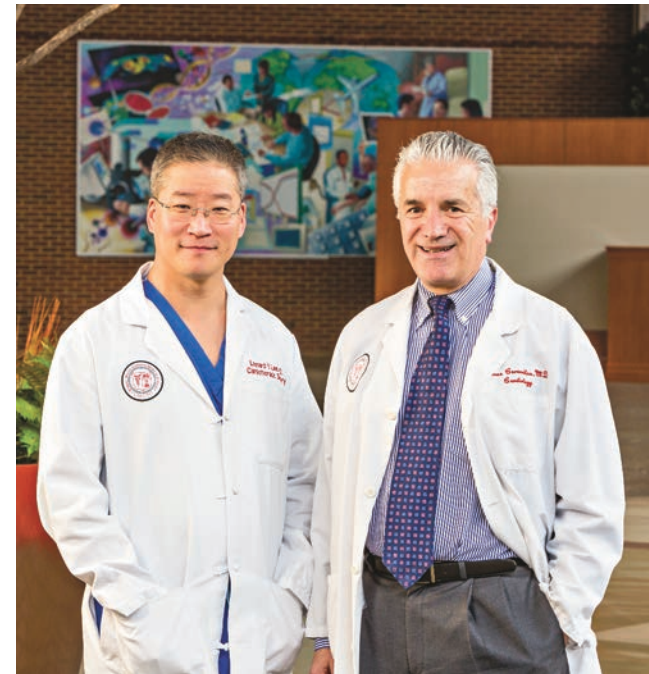
Once stabilized, Tudor Vagaonescu, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Cardiology at RWJMS and RWJ, performed a cardiac catheterization and determined that

Dr. Scancarello had blockages in all three coronary arteries including, the left main coronary artery. Coronary artery bypass surgery was needed to treat the ischemia that caused the cardiac arrest. That surgery was performed by Leonard Lee, MD, Associate Professor of Surgery at RWJMS and Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at RWJ.

"He was very fortunate to come here," says James Coromilas, MD, Professor of Medicine and Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Diseases & Hypertension at RWJMS. "From emergency care, Code Chill, cardiac catheterization, cardiac surgery to the excellent nursing care he received on the critical cardiac care units, a total team approach saved his life."

Dr. Scancarello was at RWJ from August 21 to September 9, 2012. He completed inpatient cardiac and physical rehabilitation and returned home on September 20.

"I couldn't feel much better than I do," he notes. Now, he is looking forward to returning to West Point in the spring to resume coaching. "Everyone was so good to us, especially Marie (Ciuffo, RN) and all of the nurses on the critical cardiac care unit," Mrs. Scancarello adds. "From the doctors, to Miss Lil in the cafeteria to the gentleman who valets your car and security who would walk me to my car every night, I can't say enough about the care we received."



Shown from left: Leonard Lee, MD, Associate Professor of Surgery at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS) and Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ) and James Coromilas, MD, Professor of Medicine and Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Diseases & Hypertension at RWJMS and RWJ led the comprehensive team that cared for Mr. Scancarello.

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