

MINIMALLY INVASIVE COLON SURGERY

Drive to Survive

When he was diagnosed with colon cancer last summer following a colonoscopy and told he needed colon resection surgery, Raymond Kaszyk was overwhelmed by the possibility of a major operation, which he was told was his only option by a local area hospital.

The diagnosis was a shock to him and his family. Mr. Kaszyk had worked in construction for more than 35 years and was physically fit from the labor and his hobbies, which include riding his Harley and restoring classic cars.

Mr. Kaszyk scheduled the traditional colon resection. The procedure requires a long cut of the abdomen. A section of the colon is removed, and the remainder is stitched together. After surgery, patients typically stay in the hospital for seven to 10 days and may wear an ostomy bag for an undetermined length of time. Full recovery can take weeks.

His parents died at a young age from cancer and he worried about his future. When he learned he had colon cancer, Mr. Kaszyk's brother was already battling a different form of the disease.

Determined to have a good outcome, Mr. Kaszyk, his wife, Pat, and their son Brian, researched other options. In October, he found Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ) to see Nell Maloney Patel, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery at UMDNJ-Robert

Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS). Dr. Maloney Patel, a specialist in colon and rectal surgery, told him he was a good candidate for a newer, minimally invasive procedure.

"The major difference from the traditional approach is we perform the surgery laparoscopically or use a robotic approach," she explained. "So the incision is much smaller, the recovery times are generally shorter (about three to four days) and patients usually are back to their normal activities and feeling pretty comfortable within two weeks."

After that meeting with Dr. Maloney Patel, Mr. Kaszyk decided to have the operation. "She was optimistic and confident. The way she explained my cancer and the procedure, I felt safe with her," he recalled. "She gave me so much hope."

Dr. Maloney Patel and Craig Rezac, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery at RWJMS,

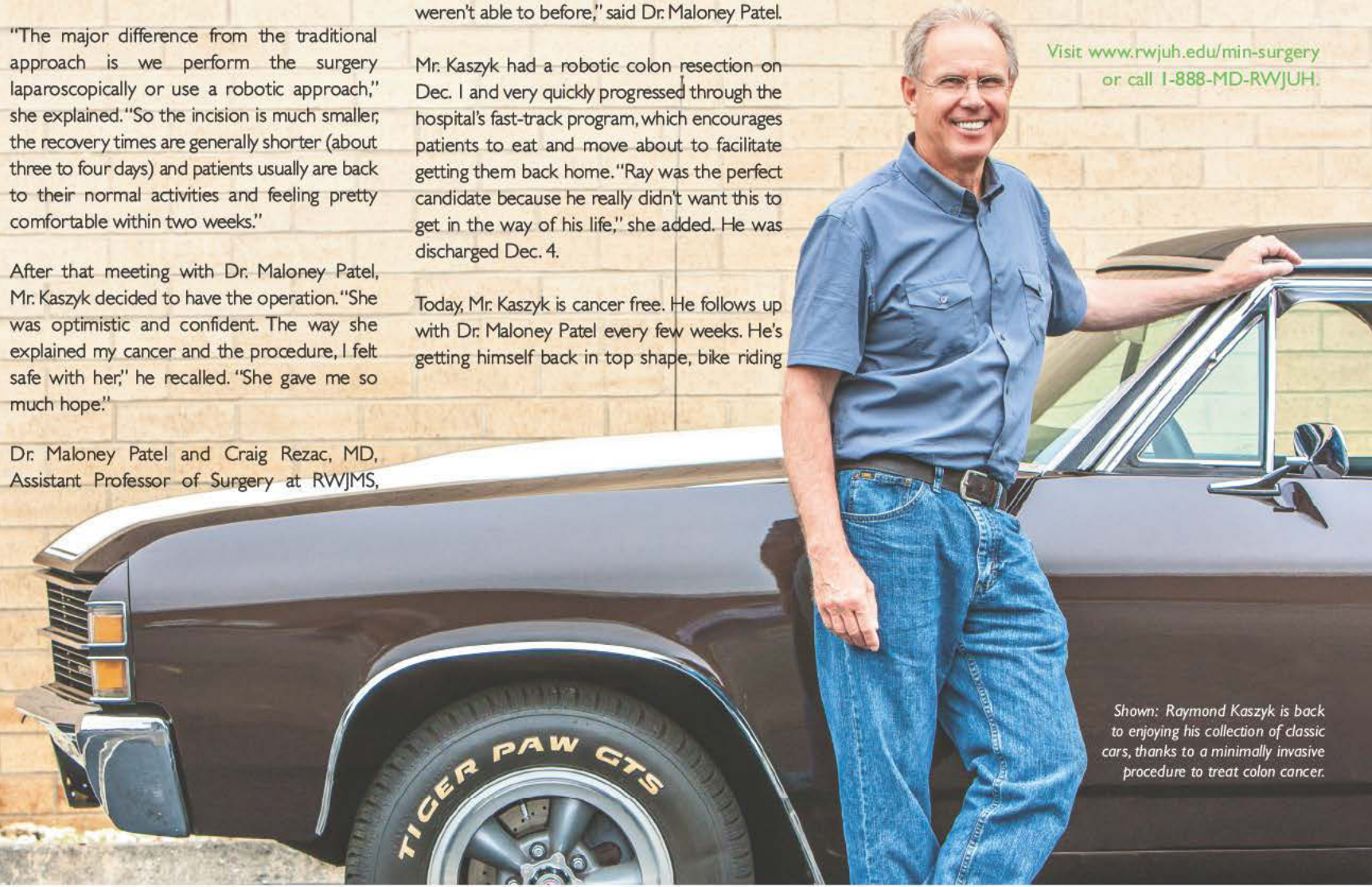
prefer using minimally invasive approaches on appropriate candidates. "You can guide and manipulate the robotic instrument through the pelvis, a confined space, and the camera allows you to see things in a way that we weren't able to before," said Dr. Maloney Patel.

Mr. Kaszyk had a robotic colon resection on Dec. 1 and very quickly progressed through the hospital's fast-track program, which encourages patients to eat and move about to facilitate getting them back home. "Ray was the perfect candidate because he really didn't want this to get in the way of his life," she added. He was discharged Dec. 4.

Today, Mr. Kaszyk is cancer free. He follows up with Dr. Maloney Patel every few weeks. He's getting himself back in top shape, bike riding

with Pat, restoring his '67 Pontiac Le Mans and riding his Harley. "Dr. Maloney Patel guided us through this with such ease and confidence. We can't thank her enough."

Visit www.rwjuh.edu/min-surgery
or call 1-888-MD-RWJUH.



Shown: Raymond Kaszyk is back to enjoying his collection of classic cars, thanks to a minimally invasive procedure to treat colon cancer.