



## 'Miracle Patient' Undergoes Revolutionary Surgery

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It was Thanksgiving weekend in 2014 when Bob Edwards found his wife, Virginia, slumped on the floor of their suburban Chicago home. She had experienced a hemorrhagic stroke.

She was rushed to NorthShore Neurological Institute where Bob watched over her in NorthShore's Intensive Care Unit and remained her champion through revolutionary brain surgery and rigorous months of rehabilitation.



"We're extremely fortunate," said Bob Edwards. "You wouldn't know today that she even had a stroke."

Today 72-year-old Virginia Edwards is back to doing the things she loves— painting, exercising, cooking and playing with her grandchildren.

The couple is grateful to those who aided in her recovery, including Julian Bailes, MD, the Bennett-Tarkington Chairman of Neurosurgery and NorthShore Neurological Institute co-director, who performed an advanced, minimally invasive procedure to remove a blood clot lodged deep in a critical area of Virginia Edwards' brain affecting her speech and mobility.

Until recently, 85 percent of hemorrhagic stroke cases have been inoperable leaving many patients with severe disabilities including paralysis. Now, new minimally-invasive technologies, including NICO BrainPath, are allowing physicians to access and remove the blood that accumulates from an intracerebral hemorrhage.

Bailes and his NorthShore team are the first in Illinois and only a handful in the U.S. to utilize the new technology that works in concert with Synaptive Servo, a pre-operative 3D rendering and real-time imaging tool enables neurosurgeons to visualize more of the brain, making surgical intervention more precise, safe and detailed.

As the swelling in Virginia Edwards' brain decreased, Bailes used precision imaging to map out the safest route to reach and remove the blood clot through the natural folds in her brain. The operation itself took less than an hour.

“In select cases, taking the blood clot out after a stroke can provide a much better outcome for the patient,” said Bailes, who holds an academic appointment at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. Improved outcomes may include a faster recovery time or fewer deficiencies after a stroke.

“When Virginia awoke from surgery, she had the capability of a one-year-old,” her husband recalled. “But that’s when she went to work.”

Her previous good health provided a strong foundation as she worked tirelessly with NorthShore’s acute rehabilitation unit—a coordinated team of experts including physical, occupational and speech therapists.

“The therapists started working with her just a couple of days after the procedure,” said Bob Edwards. “By Christmas, she was walking without assistance and being called the ‘miracle patient.’”

Occupational therapy proved to be the most challenging, explained Virginia Edwards, who was delighted when she was able to return to the kitchen and cook on her own without any assistance from her husband. Diving back into her passion for painting also was a victory for the accomplished artist.

“She’s been my friend for over 50 years,” said Bob Edwards, who points to his wife’s sense of humor and tenacity as the guiding forces behind her comeback.

“Virginia has made a great recovery, and it’s so rewarding to see her and know she’s able to paint again and live a full life,” said Bailes, who credits her husband’s constant support as a critical part of her recovery.

“Life has become more routine in recent months, and that’s a good thing,” said the mother of two daughters and grandmother to four. “I’m so happy to wake up every day, realizing I get to go out there, do things and live my life. I’m very thankful for the recovery I’ve had.”

*Research on the new technology was published in Neurosurgery and Operative Neurosurgery, published by the Congress of Neurological Surgeons.*