

HERO AT HEART

Dr. Phillip Robinson



This year, 1.2 million Americans will have a heart attack. Half of them will die.

The truth is that heart disease is still the number one cause of death of adults in America — and in Michigan. But the heart doctors of Providence Heart Institute are working to change that. And that's why we salute this week's Hero At Heart.

Meet Dr. Phillip Robinson, Cardiovascular Surgeon on staff at the Providence Heart Institute.

Q: Dr. Robinson, when did you know you wanted to be a doctor?

A: While I was in the Air Force. I had quit college, where I was studying to be an engineer, and was drafted in 1972. When I returned from overseas, I completed my degree in engineering – which was not for me – so I accepted a position with the Air Force. One night I stopped flipping through the cable stations when I found an ear surgery being performed on a deaf girl on the Discovery channel. I decided I wanted to make a difference, so I went back to school to become a surgeon. Heart surgery fascinated me.

Q: What do you think are the challenges of practicing medicine?

A: All the changes in medicine as far as becoming financially responsible while taking into account what is best for the patient. With Medicare and rising insurance costs and co-pays, doctors need to be prudent with new technology. Although new advancements are important, we have to be sure we aren't chasing more expensive equipment if it won't produce measurable results. Overall, doctors need to be patient-oriented, not disease-oriented.

Q: What makes a good patient/physician relationship?

A: Honesty on behalf of the patient, and compassion and knowledge on behalf of the physician.

Q: What's on the horizon in heart care?

A: Arrhythmia surgery and heart failure surgery are the new frontier for us. A new procedure referred to as MAZE is an alternative to drug therapy in many cases. Through a small incision, this highly effective, one-hour procedure requires no radiation and involves very low risk. This is a promising arena for heart surgery.

Q: What is some medical advice the world can't do without?

A: Live a healthier lifestyle. Being proactive rather than reactive with your health is the best medicine. Eating sensibly and exercising while managing the heart disease risk factors such as smoking and stress will decrease the likelihood that you'll need a heart surgeon.

Q: Why did you choose St. John Health?

A: I was attracted to St. John Health because of their commitment to the underprivileged and their explicit spiritual emphasis. As a Christian, I share St. John Health's values and beliefs of providing quality care to all in need. It is St. John Health's niche. Personally, I travel to Ethiopia each year in May to perform heart surgeries, since they currently have no heart surgeons in their country. I am committed to helping them develop a heart program.

To find out your risk for heart disease, visit us online and take our 2-minute heart assessment at www.realmedicine.org/heartcheck

You can find Dr. Robinson at Southeastern Michigan Cardiovascular Surgeons, PC, in Troy and Dearborn. If you would like to make an appointment, please call 1-888-440-REAL or visit us online at www.realmedicine.org.

Dr. Phillip Robinson is an independent physician on the medical staff of Providence Hospital

Providence Hospital is the only hospital in southeastern Michigan with a Cardiovascular Teaching program recognized as a national top 100 heart hospital five years in a row.



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