

Douglas C. Morris, MD
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Dr. Douglas C. Douglas Morris has seen great strides in the treatment of heart disease since his career as a doctor began in the 1960s. He started practicing at Emory in 1973 and joined the Emory cardiology faculty in 1975, when clots in a coronary artery posed a much greater cause-and-effect conundrum then.

"In 1975, we knew a clot was associated with a heart attack, but we were not sure if it was the cause or the consequence," says Morris. "We certainly were unable to stop the heart attack once it started. We put heart attack patients in the hospital and watched and waited. We dealt with complications as they arose.

"Once a clot was established to be the culprit, we began efforts to interrupt the process, to disintegrate the clot, and re-establish blood flow. The course of this illness was altered forever. Now we can generally stop a heart attack in its tracks and avoid the complications. The progress has been amazing."

In 1977, balloon angioplasty – a procedure that involves inserting a catheter into a patient's obstructed coronary artery and inflating a tiny balloon to restore blood flow to the heart - was invented. Morris traveled with his Emory cardiologist colleagues John Douglas and Spencer King, to Zurich, Switzerland, to learn the technique firsthand from famed cardiologist Andreas Gruentzig. Morris and his colleagues eventually helped recruit Gruentzig to Emory, where they performed and advanced the lifesaving angioplasty procedure. Physicians all over the world came to Emory to learn the technique, and Morris was the driving force behind sharing the wealth of knowledge with others.

Born in Marietta and then raised in Americus, Morris received his bachelor's degree in chemistry from Duke University and his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine. He then completed his internship and residencies at Vanderbilt University Hospitals. He completed a fellowship in cardiology at Emory and was then appointed an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine's Division of Cardiology at Emory.

In 1986, he was appointed director of the Carlyle Fraser Heart Center at Crawford Long Hospital (now Emory University Hospital Midtown), and in 1993, he was named director of the Emory Heart Center at Emory Healthcare.

In 1996, he was designated the first J. Willis Hurst Professor of Medicine. Hurst was a long-time Emory cardiologist and editor and author of seven editions of what is considered the definitive cardiology text, *The Heart*.

"I am extremely pleased that Dr. Morris has been selected to receive the J. Willis Hurst Professorship of Medicine," said the late Hurst in an Emory news release. "Dr. Morris has earned a national reputation as a superb clinician and excellent teacher. He has all of the qualities that I believe should be incorporated in a compassionate physician and leader."

Morris is known for being a gracious, compassionate, and kind leader as well as a passionate physician advocate. He is well-loved by patients because he not only cares about their health, but he cares about his patients as individuals. As a testament to his engaging nature and clinical expertise, he was awarded "Outstanding Teacher" seven years in a row by his students and has consistently been named among Atlanta Magazine's "Ten Best Doctors" in cardiovascular disease.

In 1999, Morris was appointed vice chair of the Department of Medicine at Emory University. Most recently, until 2016, he served as the CEO and director of the Emory Clinic, associate dean for clinical affairs for Emory University School of Medicine and CEO and chairman of Emory Specialty Associates, an outreach physician practice organization.

With more than 40 years of service at Emory Healthcare, Morris is currently grooming and preparing Emory physician leaders of the future by overseeing the Emory Medicine Professional Leadership Enrichment and Development Program. A partnership with Emory's Goizueta Business School, the program focuses on enriching leadership skills, enhancing business knowledge and promoting collaborative effort across the enterprise.

"As one of Emory's most trusted physician leaders, Dr. Morris has offered decades of extraordinary leadership at Emory Clinic and contributed greatly to its tremendous growth and outstanding quality reputation," says Jonathan S. Lewin, MD, president, CEO and chairman of the board for Emory Healthcare. "His dedication to his patients, their health and the health of our community is unparalleled. We are grateful for his achievements and service to Emory and to the overall field of cardiology throughout his long and very successful career."

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