



PHOTO BY ROB KAUFMAN

# Vision PERSEVERANCE

Dr. Joe Tobin lives by a motto that helped him achieve his dreams.

By Linda Kaufman

Dr. Joe Tobin is on the move – it's mid-afternoon and he is off to pick up his children from school. His family – wife Francine, and children Jacqueline (8), Matthew (6) and Peter (2) are the center of his busy and very rewarding life.

This is a typical day in the life of a devoted father and fellowship-trained joint surgeon. He's there for others when they need him. His sign is easily seen from 278 and he likes it that way. Much like the country doctor, he feels like he's hung out his shingle on his practice and islanders know how to find him. He might see a patient on a Saturday afternoon if that is what it takes to get things done. The pride in doing good work and having satisfied patients is important, because he fully expects to run into them while in line for groceries or wherever he might go in Hilton Head.

Vision perseverance is his theme. While in college, after working as a fireman and emergency medical technician, he wanted to be a physician. In medical school, he chose to become a surgeon despite any hesitations about ability; Dr. Tobin's right hand has a congenital anomaly. To dispel any perceptions that he might not be up to the challenge, he worked harder and longer than other students. Whenever help was needed, he was there. Surgery, he feels, is his calling. The procedure first begins in the mind where you visualize and strategize – the hands then simply move to follow out the plan. He feels he has no disadvantage and believes his non-dominant hand to be more effective than other surgeons' non-dominant hand.

This can-do attitude is reflected in another of his passions: golf. His golf index has been as low as 5. Given his busy schedule, however, he doesn't get out on the links at Indigo Run as much as he'd wish.

Despite all the demands from his practice, he always puts aside time for family fun. He belongs to the Carolina Dreamers Car Club and recently drove his '69 Chevelle convertible in the Bluffton Christmas Parade. His kids and Santa proudly waved from the back seat. He also owns a '67 Impala that first belonged to his dad. He and his brothers all learned to drive on it. His oldest brother Jim has noted if that car could talk, they'd be in big trouble!

What is he most proud of besides his family and practice? Twenty-six years of Catholic education is right on top of his list and inspires him to be of service to those in his community. He operates on patients referred from Volunteers in Medicine and has done mission work in Haiti and The Dominican Republic. He also responded to a call for physicians to treat New Orleans victims of Hurricane Katrina. Organizers could not arrange it, but he'd have been there in a flash.

Perhaps the most noteworthy of his recent accomplishments is the 2004 opening of the Outpatient Surgery Center of Hilton Head just across from his office. His wife Francine, an attorney, was instrumental in providing legal expertise in building this ambitious endeavor. He says he's the driving force and risk taker; she helps him put it together. Along with fellow physicians who provided all the capital, Dr. Tobin has been able to follow through on his vision. This new facility, he believes, offers patients a better, faster and higher quality experience. At present they perform 350-400 procedures per month. He says that studies show that more than half of all islanders go elsewhere for orthopedic surgeries – Savannah, Beaufort and beyond. He hopes that folks realize how much easier and enjoyable the whole experience can be by coming to him. Besides, later, when you see him around town, you can feel like you've made a friend. **M**