

Profile on William Silver, M.D., F.A.C.S.  
10/09/07  
by Julie Budnik

"I thought everyone went into medicine" said Dr. William Silver in a recent conversation about his career choice. Silver's father, a cosmetic dentist, and his uncle, a cosmetic surgeon, were wonderful role models. As a young boy growing up in Atlanta, Bill Silver loved sculpting and photography. His uncle recruited him at the young age of 12 to take before and after photographs of the patients he treated in his practice.

Silver saw first hand what a difference a surgeon could make in someone's self esteem and quality of life. From that point on he was "hooked" and eventually would attend Emory University for his undergraduate degree and the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta where he obtained his degree in medicine. Dr. Silver completed a one year surgical residency program at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York followed by a three year residency in Otolaryngology at Bellevue Hospital at New York University Medical Center. Upon completing his residency training, Silver served in the United States Army as a Major stationed at Fort Jackson in South Carolina.

Silver's training would prepare him well to treat the wounded soldiers returning from Vietnam with catastrophic injuries. In 1970 after being honorably discharged with the Army Commendation Medal, Bill Silver returned to his native Atlanta and opened Premier Image Cosmetic and Laser Surgery. Premier was the first whole body cosmetic and reconstructive surgery practice of its kind in metro Atlanta. He also helped to establish the newly formed American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery where he became a Fellow and would eventually become a Diplomat. He remains active in this organization today and was elected to the Director of Fellowships a position he has held for the past 19 years. Fellows serve under Dr. Silver's skillful tutelage for a one year period in his Atlanta practice.

Originally Silver and his associates offered both cosmetic and reconstructive procedures to patients. In 1982, Premier was the first practice to open an outpatient surgery center in the state of Georgia. Today with the advent of insurance changes, Premier has changed with the times and focuses on elective cosmetic procedures and the development of the anti-aging medical spa. A multitude of cosmetic services are offered at Premier including traditional full face lifts as well as the QT Mini Facelift, a process developed by Premier's physician group. Rhinoplasty, revision rhinoplasty, facial sculpting and CO2 and Erbium Laser Skin Resurfacing are just a few of the many services patients will find at Premier.

Silver is very active in many organizations including the American Academy of Otolaryngology where he serves as the Chairman of the Board of Governors and was the 2006 recipient of the Lester Brown Service Award. "Receiving the award meant so much to me because it was voted on by my peers" said Silver. Locally Dr. Silver serves as the current President of the Medical Association of Atlanta (MAA), the largest Physician's group of its kind in the metro area. As a native Atlantan, Silver felt compelled to serve and give back. Currently the MAA is heavily involved in the Grady Hospital Crisis (see inset).

Perhaps one of the most generous ways in which Silver has given back is through a program called Face to Face. Face to Face began on an international level as a collaboration of physicians from all over the United States coming together for the sole purpose of helping people in other countries in dire need of their services to correct birth defects, deformities or disfigurement from traumatic injuries. Specialists were able to come together in this manner because of the lack of licensure restrictions overseas. Silver has made multiple trips to Vietnam along with his colleagues not only to help those in need but also to train physicians in that country in advanced techniques so that they may become self-sustaining. Typically one physician will lecture on the procedure being done while the other physicians operate on the patient. In this manner a teaching format is possible that was previously unavailable to Vietnamese physicians. Even though back in the states Silver focuses on cosmetic procedures his roots are in reconstructive work. Silver says "It's a way to pay back for all that I have been given."

Because of the success of Face to Face internationally, Silver wanted to try and find a way to have a similar program closer to home. A collaboration of the Partners Against Domestic Violence (PADV) and the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) was formed to develop a Face to Face program in Georgia. Silver serves as one of the advisors to the group and works with patients who come to him through PADV. Patients are prescreened to be sure they are in a safe situation and able to move on to the next phase of their lives complete with surgical procedures to assist in restoring part of what they have lost.

Silver has had many special patients come to him through the Face to Face program but one in particular stands out above the rest. The patient was a young woman when she came to him and told him about her abusive husband who had repeatedly beaten her in an effort to make her miscarry the child with whom she was pregnant. In the course of time she had sustained a fractured nose and face which had not healed properly. Money was a factor because she had a minimum wage office job and no hope of being able to afford the procedures she needed. Silver donated his services and arranged for other services to be donated to her. "Four years later I got a note from her saying that

she had saved her money and gone to nursing school to help others like I had helped her." Said Silver. "It's been an incredibly rewarding experience."

Today Sliver enjoys his busy schedule working with multiple medical associations, his students, and his practice. Bill Silver and his wife of 47 years Susan enjoy spending time with their two children and 5 grandchildren. He still loves photography and sculpting and can be found on the golf course or racquetball court on occasion.

Although it is a challenge to keep up with the continual stream of new information in the field Silver says "Sharing what I have in terms of knowledge and skill with others is the best part of what I do." Many years ago Silver's father gave him the following insight "There is never a time when teaching that the individual doing the teaching doesn't learn more." Silver says that he constantly learns from his students especially where computer technology is involved. To be successful and happy in life "you have to have a passion for what you do." says Silver. William Silver continues to practice medicine with a true passion that benefits not only his patients but those who have the good fortune to train and serve with him.