



by Jackie Perrone



Dr. Garrison Morgan

Three years ago this publication had the privilege of featuring local cardiologist Dr. Garrison Morgan and his ground-breaking achievements in the field of structural heart disease. (Lexington Life, June 2018). His team at Columbia's Providence Hospital was blazing a trail with innovative techniques and hardware that improved life expectancy and quality dramatically for many cardiac patients. Now, in 2021, it's fair to say the momentum has not let up, and things are still going strong under his leadership at this respected institution.

"Even through the stress of the Covid year, we have developed more advances in treatment of structural heart problems," he says. "Everything is going very well with the Watchman and the MitraClip, things which can correct problems and eliminate the need for blood thinners. Soon we will be starting some international trials."

The international trials are sponsored by Boston Scientific, which chose 150 cardiac centers to participate in its "Champion A-F," (for Atrial Fib). The Providence team in Columbia was among the first 30 of those chosen. Normally this honor would have been presented at a large conference, but in the Covid year, it's virtual. Perhaps by the conclusion of the trial, Covid will be in the past and the honorees will meet to celebrate their achievements.

An update on Dr. Morgan's career includes some significant honors. He has been inducted into the national medi-

cal honor society Alpha Omega Alpha, unusual for a medical professional still under 40 years old. And last January, he received the 2020 USC School of Medicine Young Alumni Award, with an in-person ceremony just before the Covid quarantine restrictions.

Covid placed high degrees of stress on all medical personnel, including Dr. Morgan's family. Their oldest child Graham is himself a heart patient, having had three open-heart surgeries at the age of 8. These have been successful and his father describes him as "happy, energetic and rambunctious." Along with his little brother Reed, 3, and baby sister Olivia, 1 ½, the family has been kept in close confinement with their mother Kristin for all of 2020. Kristin's professional life had been as an accountant, but these days she is home-schooling three lively children and keeping the household running.

"It was a huge relief to me when I got my second Covid vaccine in January," says Dr. Morgan. "I had been spending my days in close contact with hospital patients and plenty of Covid patients, then coming home to family which includes a high-risk individual and praying that I would not bring infection into the family. Now that I am vaccinated, I feel a huge burden has been lifted from my shoulders."

Besides his position at Columbia's Providence Hospital, Dr. Morgan leads a clinic in Lexington, located at Palmetto Park Blvd. in the downtown area. ■