

# EMS Medical Director Dr. Mark Glaser Retires

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Retiring Harnett County Emergency Services Medical Director Dr. Mark S. Glaser, third from left, with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. From left are Emergency Services Director Jimmy Riddle, Commissioners Vice Chairman Gordon Springle, Commissioners Chairman Jim Burgin, Commissioner Barbara McKoy, EMS Division Chief Ricky Denning. Daily Record Photo/Shawn Savarese

In a hall full of family and friends, colleagues and staff, politicians and media, Dr. Mark Glaser M. D. celebrated his retirement, accepting awards and recognition from Harnett County and the State of North Carolina.

Originally of Cincinnati, Dr. Glaser studied for his bachelor's degree at Notre Dame, received his degree in medicine from Georgetown and in 1978 he was a 29-year-old medical intern with Ohio State University. It was at that age when the opportunity to work with the National Health Services Corps in a North Carolina community health center arose. A year later he met his wife, Marilyn, while she was working as an administrative assistant for a seed company in Laurinburg. They went on to have a son, Kevin, who is now a married wedding photographer in Atlanta.

In 1980, Dr. Glaser began working in the emergency room at Good Hope Hospital. Two years later, in August of 1982, he was presented with the chance to act as Harnett County EMS System Medical Director alongside Dr. J. Stanley McQuade. Dr. McQuade also worked in the Good Hope Emergency Room as well as Campbell University.

The plan then was for the pair to alternate as medical director each year, but after one year, Dr. Glaser never left.

When he began his 34-year tenure, there were three dispatch locations. One in Erwin, one in Dunn and another Harnett County dispatch in Lillington. At the time, EMS was training to upgrade from the basic level to the intermediate level, and Dr. Glaser was given the opportunity to lecture. After being introduced to the dedicated and enthusiastic group at Harnett County EMS, he was hooked.

Since then they have gone from basic, to intermediate, to advanced- intermediate, to paramedic level in 1992 and regional dispatch operations have been consolidated into one Harnett County Dispatch Center.

“Other than me saying, ‘It’s a good idea,’ and, ‘You have my support,’ they are the ones that do the work,” Dr. Glaser said of the EMS staff. “I try to throw my support behind them, when I can.”

It is his belief that Harnett County has an “excellent EMS system, as good as any in the state” and he has based that assertion on key factors.

## **Factors To Success**

The first factor is teamwork; Dr. Glaser said everyone works together within the system. He accredited the teamwork to fine planning and development from EMS Division Chief Ricky Denning, Emergency Services Director Jimmy Riddle, EMS training Officer West Barefoot as well as Director Gary Pope.

He said the team looks forward, in anticipation of events, stating that emergency management involves continuous proactive planning. Dr. Glaser elaborated on measures taken to constantly and consistently improve the system and its performance through thorough case review.

One of the programs developed using this concept was a program that met the care and quality criteria of the American Heart Association and earned Harnett County Emergency Medical Services the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline EMS Silver Award for implementing quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks in May 2016.

Though Dr. Glaser spearheaded the creation of numerous countywide Emergency Medical Services response plans, committees including the Harnett County Peer Review Committee, Emergency Response policies he has experience in the field as well.

Dr. Glaser recalled an incident in the late 1980s, well after midnight, a call came over the radio from dispatch into Good Hope Hospital of an ambulance off the road.

## **Emotional Event**

"What had happened was the paramedic had a sudden cardiac arrest," Dr. Glaser said. "They got help out there, and they brought him to to me. I remember working that code on that paramedic ... we probably worked it longer than was necessary, but it was one of our own so we wanted to give him every possible chance," he said.

Dr. Glaser recalled the incident with calm in his voice and emotion in his eyes, recollecting on the moment he exited the emergency room and i to the lobby at 6 in the morning. "The lobby was full with paramedics, with the administration, Dan Gardner was there," he said. "Just thinking about what kind of team this was and what a brotherhood EMS is ... that might have been one of the most touching moments for me, and one that really committed me to EMS."

His commitment has brought health, safety and care to so many. In the time before 911 with the history of Quick Response Vehicles , through today's ambulance education and training achievements, Dr. Glaser supported Harnett County EMS and touched a great deal of people.

"Over the years being involved in EMS and working with so many enthusiastic and dedicated people was one the highpoints of my medical career if not the most important thing I did with my medical career," he said. "You touch so many patients with all of the paramedics out in the field that you are working with, you really multiply your ability to help people."