My Experiences with Colon Cancer Surgery

Charles M. Williams, Professor Emeritus of Computer Information Systems, J. Mack Robinson College of Business

I am pleased to report the operation appears to have been a total success. Five days after the operation, I walked out of the hospital unaided and returned home pain-free, where I had no trouble with stairs or the steep driveway down to the mailbox. I got up the courage to try taking mile-long walks on the hilly streets in my neighborhood a few days later.

Recovery

One week after surgery, I visited my family doctor, thanked him for getting me into the hospital and apologized for not following his advice to get a colonoscopy last fall. He was astonished by my rapid recovery. A week later, I paid a visit to my surgeon, thanked him for his terrific work, and told him I was walking briskly but keeping my mouth shut to avoid heavy breathing. He replied that I should open my mouth and get moving. He was ecstatic about my rapid recovery and attributed it to my physical fitness and low body fat.

By late April I had progressed to the extent that I could race-walk a mile at a pace that was within striking distance of where I had been a year ago. I participated in the weekly, 1500-meter race-walk competition at the Atlanta Track Club All-Comers track and field meets that began on May 6.

Obesity

During my eight-day stay at the hospital, I became increasingly appalled by the amazingly high percentage of obese patients. It seems to me that most of those folks were in the hospital and had undergone surgery after not paying attention to anything remotely connected to fitness or wellness.

I was delighted to observe, however, that the hospital staff had trimmed down a lot from what they were last fall when my wife had a bladder infection. The doctor had complimented her then on her physical condition and lack of body fat.

My mission now is getting the message out that using one’s own initiative to improve one’s health actually works. We cannot buy good health, and it won’t magically appear.

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Those of us who are old enough to retire recall that every movie we used to see in the theater began with the words “Preview of Coming Attractions.” This is a preview of a movie that has been years in the making, and is coming soon to a television station near you.

For the past four years, I have worked with former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young, his daughter Andrea, a talented group of filmmakers and a large cast of others to make a film. The title of the film is “Andrew Young and the Making of Modern Atlanta.” In late January, Georgia Public Broadcasting will air the first half of the two-hour documentary we have all worked so hard to make.

The story of the making of the film is almost as interesting as the film itself. Some years ago, Ambassador Young was asked to speak to a younger generation of leaders in Atlanta. He began telling the audience how the city of Atlanta we know today came into being. The story spanned generations of public leaders, starting with Mayor Bill Hartsfield, who formed a partnership with black leaders and white downtown businessmen to deal with important issues facing the city. It is a story of remarkable continuity about how things were done in Atlanta, but one that the younger audience had never heard.

This was the beginning of a project that would also enable Young to share the story of the shaping of modern Atlanta with eager audiences of leaders from other cities.

My new resolution is to add $1 to my donation to the Rialto Theatre for every day I walk the 10,000 steps recommended by public health officials. That’s a lot of steps for someone who spends discretionary time reading, playing bridge and doing a variety of needlework, but it will be good for me and for our community. It’s a resolution and a promise.
One of the most exciting aspects of retirement is the freedom to undertake new activities and adventures, and the Georgia State Emeriti excel in this regard. In March 2015, the Emeriti Association will unveil a new event at which members share their activities and adventures, this time emphasizing travel. This event will take place in association with the Georgia State Authors Series.

On March 5, following the presentation, “Improbable Women, Five Who Explored the Middle East,” by Bill Cotterman (11 a.m., Colloquium Room, Library South) and a light lunch, three emeriti professors will present brief slide shows on recent trips: Anne Page Mosby on her travels to Australia and New Zealand, Rankin Cooter on his trip to southern Africa and Terry Frey on his tour of Cuba. These presentations will be exciting and informative, even for those of us who are not able to travel, and similar events will be planned in the future, emphasizing travel and novel activities in which our members are engaged. Please join us on March 5 for a couple of hours of interest, food and fellowship.
My Experiences with Colon Cancer Surgery

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TV Interview

Piedmont Atlanta Healthcare’s television interview of me in May was featured in the August edition of “Living Better” and is posted on the GSU Emeriti Association website.

After performing emergency prostate surgery on me in June, my surgeon gave my physical condition the thumbs-up in October.

I’ve recovered much of my upper-body strength and physical endurance by heavy lifting work in the backyard, gym workouts and race-walking on neighborhood roads. And I’m back to hiking up Kennesaw Mountain on the steep trail from Burnt Hickory Road to regain my stamina for race-walk competition.
2015 Upcoming Events:

We will send all emeriti invitations with information about each event closer to the event date. Updated information will also appear on the Emeriti website, emeriti.gsu.edu.

**February**

**Basketball Game**
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21 • Noon
GSU Sports Arena

Come and support the Panthers as they play Appalachian State University. Additional details to come.

**March**

**Author Series**
THURSDAY, MARCH 5 • 11 a.m.
Library South, Eighth Floor, Colloquium Room

Professor William Cotterman will discuss his book, “Improbable Women: Five Who Explored the Middle East.”

**Emeriti Travels**
THURSDAY, MARCH 5 • 12:30 p.m.
Library South, Eighth Floor, Colloquium Room

Immediately following the author series, join us for a light lunch and presentation on recent Emeriti travels.

**School of Music Recital**
THURSDAY, MARCH 26 • 12:30 p.m.
Florence Kopleff Recital Hall

Join us for a concert featuring student performers from the School of Music followed by a reception in the Green Room.

**April**

**Tour of Oakland Cemetery**
TUESDAY, APRIL 21 • 10:30 a.m. (tour) • Noon (lunch)

Join us for a docent-led tour by Teryl Frey of Oakland Cemetery followed by lunch on your own at Six Feet Under. Free parking is available in a lot just outside the front gate or along the street on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Oakland Avenue. If parking inside the cemetery, pull your vehicle to the right and off any asphalt paved roadway, leaving space for cars to pass.

**May**

**Author Series**
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 • 11 a.m.
Library South, Eighth Floor, Colloquium Room

Hear from another Georgia State author. Additional details to come.

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**2015 Georgia State University**

**St. Valentine’s Day Emeriti Luncheon**

**Rialto Center for the Arts**

**Friday, February 13, 2015**

11:30 a.m. Reception 12:15 p.m. Lunch

Join us for our annual Valentine’s Day luncheon. Every year the university treats us to a reception where we meet friends, former colleagues and current deans and other administrators. This time of fellowship and “catching up” followed by an elegant lunch on beautifully decorated tables includes Georgia State’s best entertainment. As usual, the Valentine’s Day party will be at the Rialto Center for the Arts, 80 Forsyth St. NW, on the corner of Forsyth and Luckie streets. Parking is available in the Equitable Parking Deck and will be validated.
The IRA Charitable Rollover Extension for 2014

By Anne Page Mosby, professor emerita, University Library

WENDY HAMAND VENET

Book: “A Changing Wind: Commerce and Conflict in Civil War Atlanta”

Nov. 6, 2014

Georgia State History Professor Wendy Venet described the experiences of civilians in Atlanta during growth, conflict, devastation and Reconstruction after observing the march of Sherman’s Union forces to Savannah 150 years ago. “A Changing Wind” highlights the stories of several citizens of that era, many of whom are buried in historic Oakland Cemetery, the plot of land where the modern city and the Civil War meet. The city’s population had been a diverse one of white and black, free and enslaved, who laid out a commercial and transportation hub that is still developing today. The entire metro area is part of the “changing wind” that transformed a small town during years of war and reconciliation.

The IRA Charitable Rollover is legislation that was reinstated in the middle of December only to expire again on January 1, 2015. This legislation previously expired at the end of 2013 but has been enacted, expired and reinstated many times since 2006. The IRA Charitable Rollover permitted an IRA owner, aged 70½ or older, to give up to $100,000 to charity to avoid paying federal income taxes on the distributions. The rules required that (a) the IRA owner be aged 70½ or older, (b) the funds come from a traditional or Roth IRA – not a 401(k) or 403(b) – and (c) the funds come directly from the plan administrator and not pass through the plan participant. The guidelines provided that required minimum distributions (RMD) could be used to satisfy an IRA Charitable Rollover. The IRA Charitable Rollover is a valuable tool to use to make charitable gifts. And, it is particularly valuable for traditional IRA owners who do not need the account money to live on, but who must take out a RMD each year once they reach that septuagenarian deadline.

In mid-December 2014, Congress passed legislation that reinstated 55 tax provisions that expired at the end of 2013, including the IRA Charitable Rollover. It did so for calendar year 2014 only. President Obama then signed it into law, leaving donors little time to act on making charitable donations from their IRA assets. Because the IRA Charitable Rollover was only be reinstated for 2014, we are now back to where we were and without the ability to give from your IRA directly to a charity to avoid paying income taxes.

Until the legislation is reinstated, our advice will remain the same. If you are required to take an RMD by 2015 year-end, and/or want to use these distributions to make a charitable gift to Georgia State, do so by giving the distributions to the Georgia State University Foundation directly from your plan administrator. That way, if the legislation is ultimately reinstated, temporarily or permanently, you will be in the position to report the distribution and note that it isn’t taxable on your IRS return. If the legislation is not signed into law, you will be no worse off for you could (a) report the distribution to the IRS, (b) pay the taxes as you would have to do in any event and (c) take an income tax charitable deduction if you itemize your deductions. We advise this with one cautionary note – DO NOT make a contribution in excess of your RMD, for to do so could cause the entire distribution to constitute taxable income if the IRA Charitable Rollover is not reinstated for 2015. This would subject you to negative tax treatment.

If you are interested in learning more about the IRA Charitable Rollover to plan for calendar year 2015, please contact me at the numbers below or by email, and be sure to check with your financial adviser to make sure such a gift is the most tax efficient gift vehicle for you and fits in your estate plan.

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