

Surgeon of the Month

Maurice Collins, MD

William M. Parsley, MD Louisville, Kentucky



Maurice Collins, MD
Dublin, Ireland

If someone were to write a textbook on how to enter a new field, Dr. Maurice Collins should be featured in the book. However, before we get into the reasons, we need to give a little background.

Maurice was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1947. He attended Belvedere College, which incidentally is where James Joyce was educated. He received his medical training at University College

in Dublin and was then awarded a Fellowship in General Surgery by the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin. He had aspirations to become a Head and Neck Surgeon, so he worked in the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh where he studied in the Head and Neck department. He received the Fellowship in Head and Neck Surgery by the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. He then decided to specialize in Ear, Nose, and Throat Surgery and was awarded the Specialist Fellowship in this discipline by the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

At this time he decided to enter full-time practice, and for 20 years practiced as a Consultant Head and Neck/Ear, Nose, and Throat Surgeon in the prestigious Blackrock Clinic, Ireland's premier private hospital. In the late 1990s, a friend asked him to recommend a hair transplant surgeon. During his investigation, he became interested in hair restoration. He contacted Dr. Dow Stough in Arkansas, who recommended that his friend travel to Paris. Maurice went with him and thought that this procedure was "a piece of cake," and started to consider a career change. Very quickly, he discovered that "it was far from a piece of cake, but rather a technically challenging procedure requiring a huge amount of teamwork and also artistry on the part of the surgeon."

It was at this time that Maurice embarked upon a path that, in my opinion, serves as a good template for any newcomer entering into hair restoration. He relates: "Over the next 5 years I traveled extensively, visiting clinics throughout the world, attending workshops and ISHRS conferences. Hair transplant surgeons who had a significant influence on my career included Drs. Bill Parsley, Brad Wolf, and Gerard Seery. I performed my first hair transplant in the Blackrock Clinic in September 2003. Throughout my training, I realized that the whole foundation of hair transplantation is a team effort and not the individual surgeon."

When Maurice finally decided the time was right to start, he was guided by one principle: to perform the highest quality surgery that could be performed. To that end, he purchased top-end equipment and a quality office setup. His

stereomicroscopes are Nikon 20 degree viewing angle scopes with cross polarization, each costing close to US\$8,000. He also purchased a Nikon teaching scope and began a rigid training program for assistants. His consultations are done using PowerPoint, with the image on large, wall-mounted plasma screens. He schedules frequent meetings with the assistants to review some pictures of the grafts at the end of the day for critical evaluation. If an assistant can't keep up with his standards for graft quality, they don't last long. MaryAnn and I visited his office in September 2006 and admit to being blown away with the quality and innovation. I have visited many impressive offices over the years, and Maurice's office stands among the best I have ever seen. He is very proud of his valuable staff, headed by Joanne Scannell, his senior nurse, to whom he credits much of his success. He is planning to develop a school for technicians in his office. My advice to newcomers is to sign up your assistants immediately, but with one warning: It won't be a weekend course but one that spans over a year.



Dr. Maurice Collins with Maria and Dr. Brad Wolf.

Outside medicine, Maurice's great uncle is General Michael Collins, who signed the Treaty of Independence with Lloyd George when Ireland gained independence from Great Britain (Liam Neeson played the part of Michael Collins in a movie). Maurice is the caretaker of much of his property. He has a wife, Mel Ita, and children Michael, Ailbe, and Nicola. Ailbe is a professional artist with uncommon dexterity, which has led him to become one of the top technicians in Maurice's office.

Maurice owns a helicopter and has flown frequently over the past 15 years. Also, he is an avid mountain climber, having climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Blanc; and, with slight coaxing and maybe a Guinness, he will tell some good tales.

But most of all, Maurice is a credit to the field of hair restoration—and is our Surgeon of the Month. ♦