

# A Shoulder to Lean On

**Jersey Shore University Medical Center** *Michael Vaiani is enjoying his retirement, thanks to shoulder surgery.*

Immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, Wall Township resident and U.S. Secret Service agent, Michael Vaiani, now 56, found himself on the street outside of his office building at 7 World Trade Center in New York City. On the radio of an FDNY firefighter nearby, he overheard "Mayday, Mayday, I'm trapped." Michael followed the firefighter into the building and found two additional firefighters attempting to evacuate a severely injured individual on a stretcher. To assist the firefighters, Michael began removing pieces of debris that obstructed their path to the exit. Later that evening, while he was back at home, he experienced extreme pain in both of his shoulders.

The following day, due to smoke inhalation and eye irritation, Michael visited a physician friend to get checked out. For his shoulder pain, his friend referred him to **Mark Seckler, M.D.**, an orthopedic surgeon at Jersey Shore University Medical Center and part of **Meridian Orthopedics**. After doing extensive research on top board certified orthopedic shoulder specialists in the tristate area, he found that Dr. Seckler was indeed well regarded. "Working in New York City at the time, I could have chosen [another hospital], but I wanted to go to the best, so I chose Dr. Seckler," says Michael.

Dr. Seckler found severe damage in both of Michael's shoulders. To regain mobility and relieve the pain, Dr. Seckler prepared him for what would be multiple surgeries and strenuous rounds of rehabilitation. In 2002, Michael elected to have arthroscopic shoulder

reconstruction on both of his shoulders, three months apart. "It is very rare to see both the labrum and rotator cuff sustain such severe damage simultaneously," says Dr. Seckler. "Although both shoulders were reconstructed, due to posttraumatic arthritis, it was just a matter of time before either one or both shoulders would have to be replaced."

Posttraumatic arthritis is caused by the wearing out of a joint that has had any kind of physical injury. Injuries can damage the cartilage and/or the bone, changing the mechanics of the joint and making it wear out more quickly.

In July 2013, following an additional 12 dynamic years as a federal agent, Michael's right shoulder had broken down due to a combination of the previous rotator cuff tear and advanced arthritis. To prolong Michael's career, Dr. Seckler performed arthroscopic rotator cuff repair and decompression. Now recently retired from the Secret Service, Michael is able to enjoy spending time with his family and going to the beach in Spring Lake. As the arthritis in his right shoulder continues to progress, he is preparing himself for a total shoulder replacement in the future, also to be performed by Dr. Seckler. "Throughout all of my surgeries at Jersey Shore, from pre-op to post-op, the entire staff was fantastic," says Michael. "I would recommend Dr. Seckler to my friends and family, and I have."

*By Travis Taylor*



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**Michael Vaiani and his wife, JoAnn, enjoy walking and running on the beach.**



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