

# Oh the Places HE HAS GONE

WORDS BY MARYANN BRINLEY / PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HANENBERG

To borrow a classic Dr. Seuss line, *Oh, The Places You Will Go*, is absolutely appropriate in describing Frederick F. Buechel, Sr., MD, UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) class of 1972. The number of places that this physician, world traveler, and co-inventor of the first artificial knee in the United States to move in every direction has gone — geographically and intellectually — is mind-boggling.

In his travelogue, you'll find China, Japan, Sweden, Australia, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, England, Austria, Czechoslovakia, India this past March, Korea later this year and Florida once a month, where he doesn't sit back and relax on a beach but instead scrubs in on robotic, joint replacement surgeries with his son Frederick Buechel, Jr., MD, NJMS '95, a successful orthopedic surgeon with a busy practice there in the Naples area. (Yes, he uses dad's implants for his total knee replacement patients.) If you click the print button on the elder Buechel's electronic CV, 73 pages later, this

professional tour will have taken you into a lifetime of accomplishments starting back near that New Jersey LCS Total Knee Replacement System which he started designing with his former teacher, Michael Pappas, PhD, when he was just a resident in orthopaedics.

It all started when Anthony DePalma, MD, one of the world's leading authorities on the knee and the shoulder, was lured out of retirement by Benjamin Rush, MD, chair of the NJMS Department of Surgery, to set up the Orthopaedics Department at NJMS in 1971. Buechel recalls, "I was Dr. DePalma's last research resident before he retired a second time and he stimulated me to learn more and more about joints. I became the resident who developed artificial joints." Meanwhile, Pappas was an NJIT engineering professor also brought in by DePalma to teach the orthopaedic students all about biomechanics, "a brand new field back in those days of 1973, 74." Mechanical engineering and orthopedic surgery had a lot in common but "we didn't speak the same language," Buechel remembers. "I had to learn Pappas' and he had to learn mine." They clicked.

The knee, in fact, was just the beginning for these guys. Together, they can point to a long list of orthopedic firsts including floating socket shoulders, hemi-shoulders, total shoulders, total hips, mobile bearing knees, total ankles and finger joints. In the beginning, "we were both motorheads," Buechel explains. "We liked motorcycles and both lived in Irvington. I would ride over to his house and he'd ride over to mine. We went back and forth and started designing joints on napkins."

Napkins?



FREDRICK F. BUECHEL, SR., MD  
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