



DR. JAMES D. O'TOOLE ✧ DR. JOSEPH F. O'TOOLE ✧ DR. JAMES P. O'TOOLE

## “Mediocrity is not an expectation”

**Dr. James D. O'Toole:** “My four children know that I’m a big believer in hard work. Work gives people a sense of worth. Most of us start out fairly equal in intelligence, but the ones that separate out are the ones who apply themselves. That work ethic came from my dad. He worked three jobs and went to night school to earn his high school diploma. Only one in my family of 14 did not go to college. I worked in a grocery store to pay my tuition. Mary and I never pushed our children to go into medicine, but we did insist that they do well in school. I am very proud of all my children. They are well thought of, and they not only met my expectations, they exceeded them. I think that is all a parent can ask for.”

**Dr. Joseph F. O'Toole:** “I thought I was going to be an orthopedic surgeon, but in medical school I discovered that the field I really liked was cardiology. Every day brings lots of puzzles to solve. And it’s an exciting field because you have to take care of emergencies—but you also typically are able to develop a long-term relationship with your patients.”

“I learned a lot about my father, indirectly, when I did my cardiology fellowship at Shadyside. You’d see how he approaches things in the Cath Lab. You’d hear what the nurses say about him. Or what the patients tell me about him. Or reading academic papers that cite him as a reference. These were accomplishments he would never tell me. So I guess there’s a reason I’m a cardiologist. I don’t think it happened by accident.”

**Dr. James P. O'Toole:** “In my family, mediocrity is not an expectation. Growing up, my frame of reference was a father who was willing to work 16 hours a day, every day. You didn’t see Dad often at baseball games. But I was okay with that. You knew he was at the Hospital helping someone. I realized how dedicated he was to his craft, and I saw how generous he was to the people around him. It was a nice lesson to learn, actually.”

“When I was six, I told my mother I was going to be a plastic surgeon. Then as a teenager, I had the opportunity at Shadyside to watch plastic surgeon Bill Swartz sew together a radial artery with a suture that was smaller than a human hair—and that put to rest the thought of any other career.”

*A pioneer in interventional cardiology, James D. O'Toole, MD (center), became Shadyside Hospital's first full-time chief of Cardiology in 1978. His son Joseph F. O'Toole, MD (left), joined his father's cardiology practice in 2004, while his wife, Mary O'Toole, RN, has worked in the office for years. Their daughter Peggy O'Toole, MBA, MHA, is the practice manager. Son James P. O'Toole, MD (right), is a plastic surgeon with his own practice.*