

The BIG Picture

INTERNIST

Webb's surgical episode began with a \$250 visit to his family physician, Dr. Stuart Ross, who ran a series of basic tests and recommended an immediate catheterization procedure.

CATHOLIC PRIEST

Before and after surgery, Webb was comforted by Father Gustaaf M. Keppens. The hospital charged Webb \$2.29 for his services.

CARDIOLOGY: \$3,943

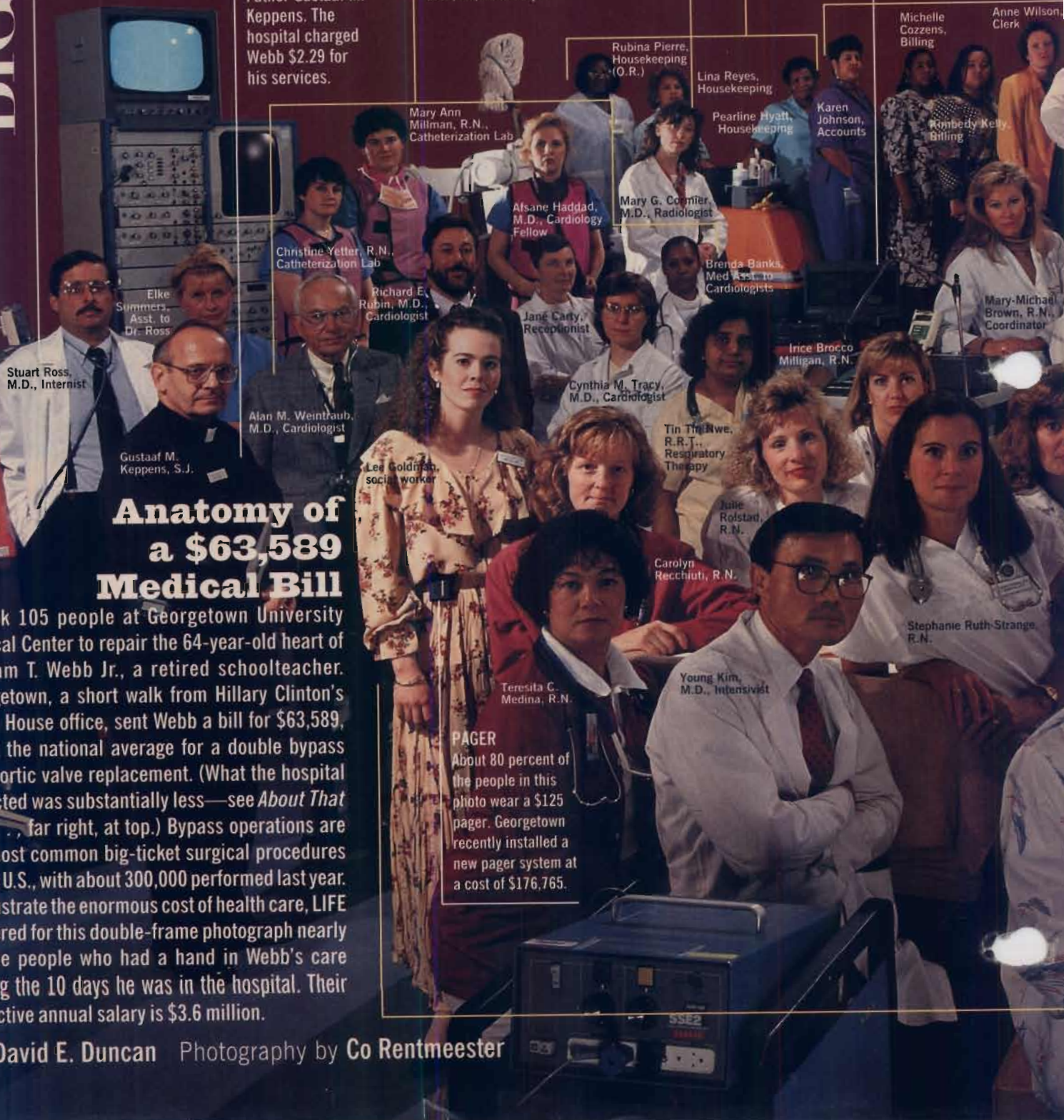
Dr. Richard E. Rubin performed Webb's catheterization, a diagnostic procedure in which a thin tube is inserted in arteries leading to the heart. The tubes release dyes that can be detected by an X-ray device. Rubin's partner, Dr. Alan M. Weintraub, diagnosed Webb's heart disease. They charged Blue Cross an additional \$3,512 not included in the \$63,589 hospital bill.

RADIOLOGY: \$1,290

Webb had six chest X rays and other radiological procedures before and after surgery.

VENTILATOR

This \$39,000 machine kept Webb breathing after surgery.



Stuart Ross, M.D., Internist

Elke Summers, Asst. to Dr. Ross

Gustaaf M. Keppens, S.J.

Anatomy of a \$63,589 Medical Bill

It took 105 people at Georgetown University Medical Center to repair the 64-year-old heart of William T. Webb Jr., a retired schoolteacher. Georgetown, a short walk from Hillary Clinton's White House office, sent Webb a bill for \$63,589, about the national average for a double bypass and aortic valve replacement. (What the hospital collected was substantially less—see *About That Bill . . .*, far right, at top.) Bypass operations are the most common big-ticket surgical procedures in the U.S., with about 300,000 performed last year. To illustrate the enormous cost of health care, LIFE gathered for this double-frame photograph nearly all the people who had a hand in Webb's care during the 10 days he was in the hospital. Their collective annual salary is \$3.6 million.

By David E. Duncan Photography by Co Rentmeester

Mary Ann Millman, R.N., Catheterization Lab

Christine Yetter, R.N., Catheterization Lab

Richard E. Rubin, M.D., Cardiologist

Alan M. Weintraub, M.D., Cardiologist

Lee Goldman, social worker

Alsane Haddad, M.D., Cardiology Fellow

Jane Carty, Receptionist

Cynthia M. Tracy, M.D., Cardiologist

Teresita C. Medina, R.N.

PAGER
About 80 percent of the people in this photo wear a \$125 pager. Georgetown recently installed a new pager system at a cost of \$176,765.

Rubina Pierre, Housekeeping (O.R.)

Lina Reyes, Housekeeping

Pearline Hyatt, Housekeeping

Mary G. Cormier, M.D., Radiologist

Brenda Banks, Med Asst. to Cardiologists

Tin Tin Awe, R.R.T., Respiratory Therapy

Julie Rolstad, R.N.

Carolyn Recchiuti, R.N.

Young Kim, M.D., Intensivist

Michelle Cozzens, Billing

Anne Wilson, Clerk

Kimberly Kelly, Billing

Mary-Michael Brown, R.N., Coordinator

Irice Brocco Milligan, R.N.

Stephanie Ruth Strange, R.N.

BILLING

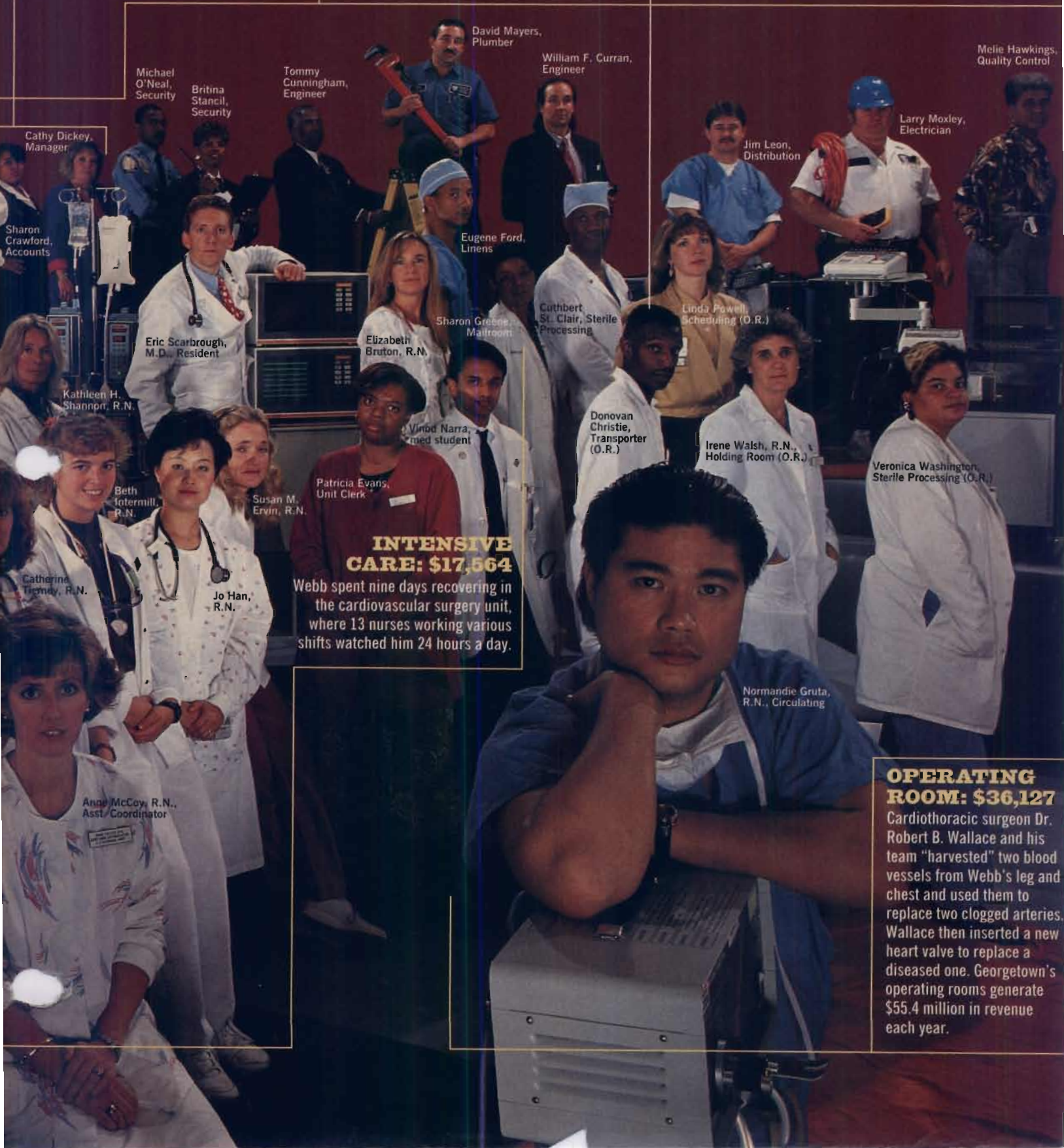
The actual bill totaled 37 pages, which cost \$429 in staff time to produce.

PLANT

Webb's share of annual electricity, heating, plumbing, water, engineering and repairs comes to about \$1,600.

TRANSPORTER

Donovan Christie spent roughly 20 minutes shuttling Webb between his room and the operating area at a cost (based on \$8 an hour) of \$2.60.



Michael O'Neal, Security

Britina Stancil, Security

Tommy Cunningham, Engineer

David Mayers, Plumber

William F. Curran, Engineer

Melie Hawkins, Quality Control

Cathy Dickey, Manager

Jim Leon, Distribution

Larry Moxley, Electrician

Sharon Crawford, Accounts

Eugene Ford, Linens

Eric Scarbrough, M.D., Resident

Elizabeth Bruton, R.N.

Sharon Greene, Mailroom

Cuthbert St. Clair, Sterile Processing

Linda Powell, Scheduling (O.R.)

Kathleen H. Shannon, R.N.

Vinod Narra, med student

Donovan Christie, Transporter (O.R.)

Irene Walsh, R.N., Holding Room (O.R.)

Veronica Washington, Sterile Processing (O.R.)

Beth Intermill, R.N.

Susan M. Ervin, R.N.

Patricia Evans, Unit Clerk

INTENSIVE CARE: \$17,564

Webb spent nine days recovering in the cardiovascular surgery unit, where 13 nurses working various shifts watched him 24 hours a day.

Catherine Timney, R.N.

Jo Han, R.N.

Normandie Gruta, R.N., Circulating

Anne McCoy, R.N., Asst. Coordinator

OPERATING ROOM: \$36,127

Cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Robert B. Wallace and his team "harvested" two blood vessels from Webb's leg and chest and used them to replace two clogged arteries. Wallace then inserted a new heart valve to replace a diseased one. Georgetown's operating rooms generate \$55.4 million in revenue each year.

ADMINISTRATION

More than \$2,300 is built into Webb's bill to pay for desks, chairs, computers, paper clips, salaries and malpractice insurance. These costs, like those for food service, plant, billing and even the priest are hidden in billing categories such as Intensive Care and Operating Room.

HEART SURGEON

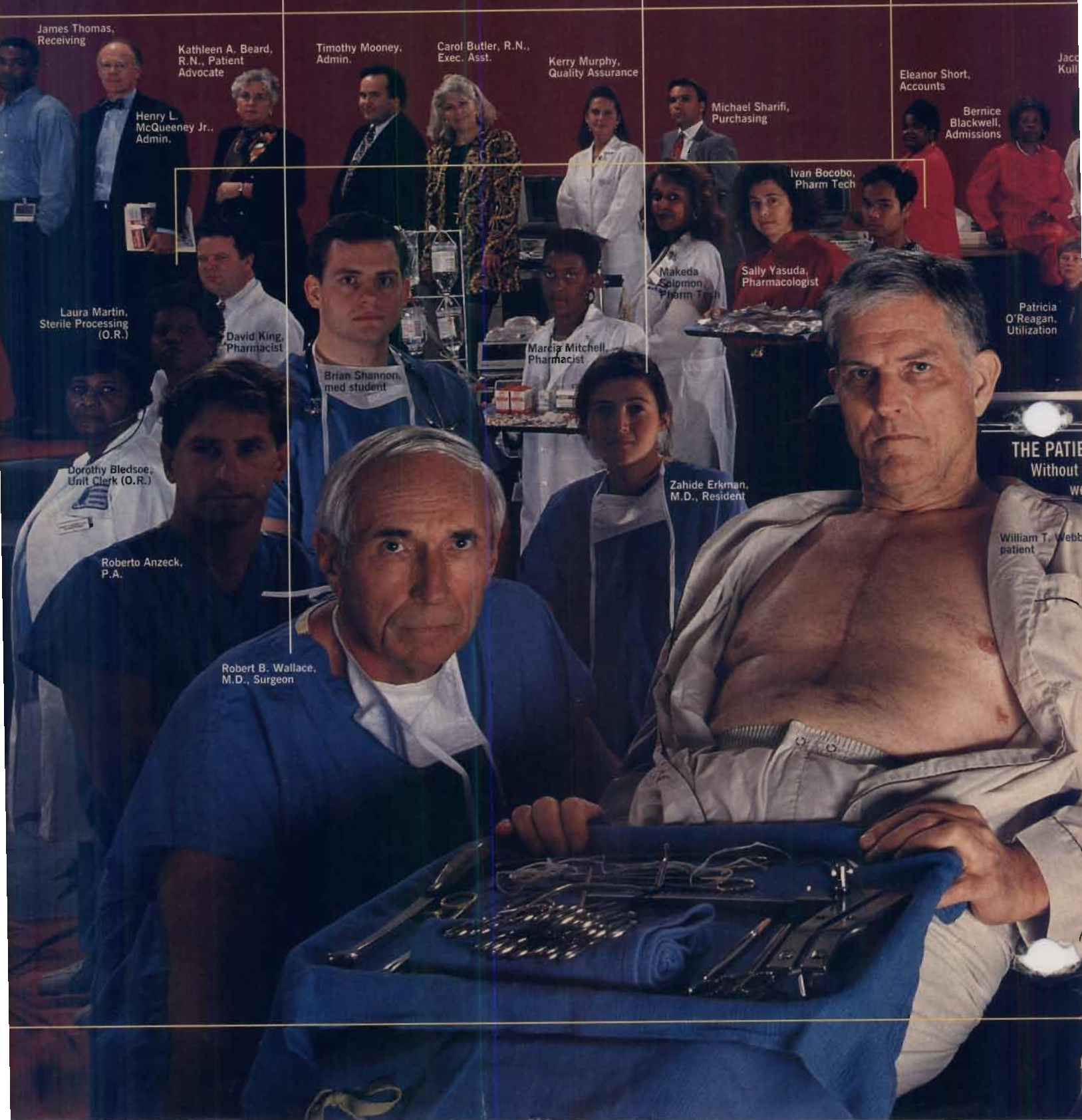
Dr. Wallace, Chairman of Surgery at Georgetown, trained for 16 years to become a heart surgeon—four years in college, four years in medical school, five as a surgical resident and three as a cardiac surgery fellow. In 30 years of practice he has performed more than 10,000 operations and averages about 180 a year now. He charged \$13,305 for this six-hour operation, but insurance paid only \$7,450.

JUNIOR RESIDENT

Zahide Erkman, M.D., assisted the chief surgeon during Webb's operation. Georgetown residents work as many as 100 hours a week for an average salary of \$26,000.

PHARMACY: \$1,433

Webb consumed 36,218 milligrams of drugs including the painkiller Percocet (\$1.90 per day) and aminocaproic acid (\$14.70 per day), which controls bleeding.



James Thomas, Receiving

Kathleen A. Beard, R.N., Patient Advocate

Timothy Mooney, Admin.

Carol Butler, R.N., Exec. Asst.

Kerry Murphy, Quality Assurance

Henry L. McQueeney Jr., Admin.

Michael Sharifi, Purchasing

Eleanor Short, Accounts

Bernice Blackwell, Admissions

Ivan Bocobo, Pharm Tech

Laura Martin, Sterile Processing (O.R.)

David King, Pharmacist

Brian Shannon, med student

Marcia Mitchell, Pharmacist

Makeda Solomon, Pharm Tech

Sally Yasuda, Pharmacologist

Patricia O'Reagan, Utilization

Dorothy Bledsoe, Unit Clerk (O.R.)

Roberto Anzeck, P.A.

Robert B. Wallace, M.D., Surgeon

Zahide Erkman, M.D., Resident

THE PATIENT Without Webb

William T. Webb patient

FOOD SERVICES

Dietitians organized the hospital menus during Webb's stay. He was served 23 meals and charged \$188.60 for them.

Judy Pervine, R.D., Dietitian
Carol Teague, Dietitian
Shirley-Ann Nwafor, Asst. Dietitian Asst.

LAB: \$3,232

Doctors ordered 86 separate tests on Webb, from a \$13 urinalysis the day before surgery to \$581 worth of tests run during the operation.

ABOUT THAT BILL ...

Georgetown sent Webb's bill to his insurer, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, which agreed to pay only \$35,751. Georgetown says its cost for Webb's care was \$36,855, and that it lost money. "The bill is largely fiction," admits Gerald Beaulieu, Georgetown's associate administrator for finance. Most hospital bills are routinely marked up higher than actual cost. "At one time, most insurers paid the marked-up price," says Beaulieu. "Now only a few pay it. Everyone else negotiates deep discounts."

Earline Adbel-Wahab, Admissions

Earline Adbel-Wahab, Admissions

Judy Pervine, R.D., Dietitian
Carol Teague, Dietitian
Shirley-Ann Nwafor, Asst. Dietitian Asst.

Nancy Miller, Specimen Tech

Shirley Black, Microbiology

Diense Adams, Patient Reports

Peggy Phillips, Med Tech

Albert Langeberg, Blood Bank

Genethia Pilly, Coagulation

Tyrone Johnson, Phlebotomist (O.R.)

Sharon Richardson, R.N., Anesthesia

Linda Goodman, M.D., Resident

Barbara Chen, M.D., Anesthesiologist

Zenaida Evangelista, Chemistry

Shari Hancock, Med Tech

Rachel Keren-Paz, Immunology

Sandra Bowers, Blood Bank (O.R.)

the operation, William Webb could have died within five years, says his cardiologist. With it, he should live another 15 to 20 years if he maintains a healthy lifestyle. Webb personally is paying less than \$400 for the surgery.

CARDIOPULMONARY BYPASS PUMP

This \$55,000 machine acted as temporary heart and lungs to circulate and reoxygenate blood while Webb's heart was stopped.

Kristen Koeppen, R.N., Scrub Nurse

Bryan Buchholz, C.C.P., Perfusionist

PERFUSIONIST

Bryan Buchholz ran the heart-lung pump that kept Webb alive during the operation. This skill earns an average of \$60,000 a year at Georgetown.