

# INTO THE WILD

High-tech STEALTH-guided **spine surgery** keeps high-country native exploring

BY CARLA CARWILE

Geraldine Copley is a Colorado classic.

A native of the Centennial State, she's been hiking its hills and fishing its streams all of her eight-plus decades. She's climbed several Fourteeners, but isn't one to add the summits to any scorecard: "We just enjoyed seeing the world from up there."

In 2009, while on a road trip from the Rockies to Alaska, Copley found herself fighting debilitating back and leg pain. She could place no weight on her left leg by the time her family reached Anchorage.


What had been planned as a two-week fishing trip for sock-eye salmon ended much sooner with her having to fly home to Westminster for medical attention. "My daughter is a nurse," Copley says, "and she's the one who found Dr. Drewek."

## BACK ON TWO FEET

Michael Drewek, M.D., is a neurospine specialist with InterMountain Neurosurgery and Neuroscience. "He found I had problems at two points in my lower back," Copley says, "one at lumbar Level 1 and the other at Level 4-5, and he recommended surgery."

Using the state-of-the-art STEALTH guidance system, Drewek performed a fusion procedure to stabilize the spine and relieve the pain caused by nerve impingement.

"I had heard all these horror stories about spine surgery, so I was prepared," Copley recalls. "But it couldn't have gone better. I went into the hospital on Friday and was home Saturday afternoon. It's been pain-free and wonderful. I'm back walking all over creation."

To this day, Copley continues to praise the doctor who helped her start exploring the world again. "As for Dr. Drewek, if he doesn't get a big crown on his head when he gets 'upstairs,' something is definitely wrong!" 



Geraldine Copley

## ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY

Michael Drewek, M.D., explains what STEALTH technology is and how it works

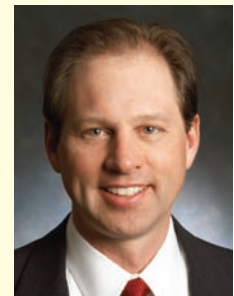
**Q** What is the STEALTH system?

**A** Think of the STEALTH technology as a global positioning system for spine and brain surgery. Like the GPS in your car, it uses a *trilateration* process. For neurospine procedures, that GPS image guidance is in real time.

The STEALTH assists me, for example, in ensuring accurate placement of the pedicle screws used as anchors in spinal fusions to relieve spine-related back pain. Having images *during* as well as *after* the procedure is a major advantage in achieving optimal outcomes.

St. Anthony Hospital's newest STEALTH system features a C-arm high-tech X-ray machine that performs a 360-degree rotation around the patient while he or she is still asleep, producing some 200 snapshots quickly and merging them into a 3-D image.

Generally speaking, the STEALTH technology promotes higher quality of care and safety while reducing time under anesthesia and requiring less X-ray radiation.



Michael Drewek, M.D.

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## Stop the Pain

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