



MARCUS MULLIS

BY DAVID GIGNILLIAT | PHOTO BY MARK STAFF

SAILOR WITH A LASER FOCUS

Marcus Mullis is a man of precision. He has to be.

As an expert in working with medical laser equipment, attention to detail is an absolute must, as the machines rely on precise measurements and settings to function properly.

"I've always been very interested in how things work. I'd get a toy or a bicycle for Christmas, and the first thing I'd do is want to take it apart," says Mullis, a longtime Hilton Head resident originally from Valdosta,

Georgia. "It seems like second nature to me. I've just always wanted to know how exactly (something) worked. It's just my inquisitive nature."

Most of the lasers he services are used for outpatient surgeries, primarily for procedures that treat prostate conditions and eliminate kidney stones. His work also includes providing preventative maintenance inspections on the machines every six months, currently across two territories. A call

could come in at a moment's notice, and he'll be on a plane to service a machine.

"One of the things I love about my job is that it's never the same," says Mullis, whose work often takes him on the road three to four days a week. "There's no set schedule. Every week is different. I could get a call today, and be somewhere tomorrow."

The work he does, making sure complicated machines function properly, ultimately helps patients extend their lives.

"Always my first concern when working on lasers is that when I leave, is it going to be beneficial to somebody. That's real, real important," he says. "Even if a tiny thing is wrong, I'll stick around an extra day to make sure it's working properly. Ultimately, the patient is the most important thing to me."

One of the few experts in his field, over the years he's traveled as far as Argentina, Venezuela, Europe and Japan to work on laser devices.

"It's so unique to get to see all of these wonderful places, and it makes you appreciate how really wonderful the United States of America really is," says Mullis, who studied art while in college.

Mullis currently works for Boston Scientific, a leading worldwide developer, manufacturer and marketer of medical devices, and has worked for several laser companies since the early 1980s, when he first started in the field.

Mullis first studied electronics while in the Air Force. After finishing his Air Force commitment, he started working on linear accelerators, which deliver high-energy X-rays that help eradicate tumors. After spending about 10 years in the linear accelerator field, he switched to working with medical laser equipment, and has worked professionally in that field now for more than 30 years.

"I realized being an art major was probably not going to be a very lucrative career," he says.

Mullis owns two condos in Hilton Head, but chooses to rent them out, and lives on his sailboat, *Raising More Cane*, at Broad Creek Marina when he's not working. Sailing has always been an interest, something he may do more when it comes time to eventually retire.

"The view is spectacular. I have a 360-degree water view year-round," he says. "Sailing is my passion in my life. At any given time, I can take the lines out and go sailing. It's very freeing." **M**