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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
[@cedarvilleneews](https://www.facebook.com/cedarvilleneews)

Anesthesiologist Gives Life-Saving Action on the Tennis Court

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Swift reactions and execution are key factors in winning a tennis match, but for Dr. John Vitaliti, an anesthesiologist, it also made the difference in saving his friend Abraham Awabdy's life when he fell into cardiac arrest.

Vitaliti and Cedarville first responders will be honored by Premier Health at a special ceremony Tuesday, Aug. 9 at 8 pm in the Village of Cedarville's Volunteer Fire Department.

Vitaliti, from Beavercreek, Ohio, and Awabdy, 81, from Cedarville, Ohio, were playing a tennis match at the Cedarville University tennis courts on July 8, 2022 before Awabdy fell to the ground.

"We had just gone up one game," said Vitaliti. "When I turned around, he was lying flat on the ground on his back, unresponsive."

Upon reaching Awabdy, Vitaliti was unable to feel a pulse, so he promptly gave chest compressions (CPR) on Awabdy. Once Cedarville University's response team, including Don Parvin, captain of campus safety, and Jayson Neri, campus safety officer, and the University's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team, they supported the effort to revive Awabdy.

"When Cedarville University's EMS and campus safety personnel arrived, they were able to use an automatic external defibrillator to revive his pulse and quickly transport him to the hospital," said Vitaliti.

Without the quick thinking of Vitaliti and the other first responders, Awabdy may not have made it to the hospital, where he recovered to the point he could return home three days later.

"The survival rate for people going into cardiac arrest is only 12%, it's pretty rare," said Elizabeth Sheridan, EMS coordinator with Premier Health's Miami Valley Hospital (main campus) and Beavercreek Emergency Center. "These circumstances point to divine intervention," said Vitaliti. "God put me there at the right moment because the Lord had more plans for Abe."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Alex Boesch