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**Patient Testimonials** ▶  
*"You think about heart surgery— it's so overwhelming. But by June, I was running around on the beach with my kids"*

## Night and Day - Reoperative Minimally Invasive Aortic Valve Surgery

Nick Napolitano, 57, doesn't need to read a book on the history of medicine to know how minimally invasive heart surgery techniques have revolutionized cardiothoracic surgery. He's a living example. As a child, he suffered a bout of rheumatic fever, damaging his aortic valve. He had the aortic valve replaced in 1977 and again in 1994, when the first aortic valve replacement wore out. Both times, he underwent conventional, open-heart surgery, which requires a large incision and breaking of the breast bone. "Sneezing, coughing, even laughing, would really hurt my chest," he recalls. "It was a solid two months until the pain and discomfort went away." In early 2009, his old "friends" - fatigue and weakness - returned, signaling that his second aortic valve replacement was past its due date. Another heart surgery operation was in order. Knowing that the heart surgery could now be done with several small incisions, he booked an appointment with Dr. Greg Ribakove, a pioneer in the field, at NYU Langone Medical Center. "This time was totally different," says Mr. Napolitano, a contractor in Manhattan. "I was out of the hospital in four days, compared to seven the last time. The day after I got home, I went out antiquing. I walked all over the place. I did get tired, but the difference was night and day." Just three months later, he was back at his physically demanding job.



**Contact a Heart Care Professional**  
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