Frank C. Seifert, MD, clinical associate professor of surgery, made news in August for his contribution to a rare combination of surgeries that saved a pregnant mother and her premature triplets. The case is being hailed as a “medical miracle.”

The mother had developed a life-threatening aortic dissection, a tear in the inner lining of the main artery leading from the heart. Dual emergency operations were performed in the same operating room: a cesarean section to deliver the triplets followed by open-heart surgery, to save her babies’ lives and then her own.

Dr. Seifert led the cardiac team that repaired the mother’s heart. At the news conference held at University Hospital, he said, “We felt, given the crisis we faced, we needed to save as much time as possible. Without question, this was a life-saving surgery.”

Commenting on the success, Bruce Schroffel, director and CEO of the hospital, said, “This is an extraordinary and remarkable example of what makes our hospital unique in the region. It demonstrates the capabilities we possess in handling these very specialized cases and, most importantly, in saving lives.”

Aortic dissection itself is rare. What made this case so unusual was the presence of triplets, and the need to deliver them immediately.

As Dr. Seifert explained in the New York Times, the heart surgery required that the mother’s body had to be cooled and her heart stopped for 90 minutes. These conditions could have been fatal to the triplets. Therefore, they had to be delivered first.

Dr. Frank C. Seifert (left) with Roseann Errante and her husband, Joseph, at news conference following her successful emergency heart surgery hailed as a “medical miracle.”