

Prescriptions for Life Women in Medicine

with Donana Galloway and Kat Donnell

In this the third installment of our **Strong Women** series, we explore **Women in Medicine**. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first female to graduate from a U.S. medical school (Geneva Medical College, later renamed Hobart College, in New York) in October 1849, began paving the difficult trail for women who, before her, could only dream of a career in medicine. Today, though still outnumbered by their male counterparts, women are enjoying the same level of respect, recognition and admiration as men do ... many while also nurturing a marriage, rearing children and managing the household. Life as a physician takes tremendous sacrifice, determination, commitment ... and pure *chutzpah*! These ladies are at the top of their game, each with similar, yet still individual, prescriptions for balancing their professional and personal lives. ■



Lynn D. Canavan, M.D.
General and Breast Surgery

Q: What motivated you toward a career in medicine?

A: My love of science and my desire to work with people. It is not a very glamorous answer, but it is what I loved and where I felt I was talented. The human body is truly fascinating.

Q: Other than your own tireless efforts to become a physician, whom do you credit for keeping your focus through medical school and building your practice?

A: Through medical school, I drew strength from emulating my parents' work ethic. Through residency, my husband was my motivation. He is not a physician but has always been my biggest cheerleader and source of support.

Q: Other than your education, what best prepared you for your career?

A: Having a type A personality. I am a perfectionist and have difficulty leaving a task if it is incomplete, or leaving a question unanswered. I thrive on multitasking, which is absolutely essential as a surgeon, wife, and mother of four.

Q: Come clean on "doctor's orders." As a daily observer of medical professionals, do physicians and others in the profession tend to practice what they preach, or is it more of "a do as I say, not as I do" mentality?

A: I tend to put myself last on the priority list. Recently, however, I have paid more attention to myself and my health. I currently exercise six days a week (many days requiring a 5:15 wake-up time).

Q: What do you consider the highlight of your profession?

A: The best part of my profession is being able to take a woman from diagnosis, through state-of-the-art treatment, to survival when she has been diagnosed with breast cancer. When I see them for follow-up, living a normal life, it is worth every minute of what I went through to become a surgeon and breast specialist.

Q: Define your greatest responsibility as it relates to your profession.

A: There are three. Maintaining my own personal level of training so that I am always able to offer my patients the state-of-the-art treatments; educating my patients of their options; and putting myself in the shoes of my patients and their families.

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Dr. Lynn Canavan

Q: Is it your opinion that medicine (physicians/surgeons) is still “a man’s world?” Or has the time finally come that women physicians and surgeons are as accepted and respected by patients and the establishment as your male counterparts?

A: In the 19 years since I began medical school, there have been only a handful of times that I have been treated differently because I was a woman. Fortunately, University of Texas Southwestern and Parkland Hospital in Dallas accepted women without hesitation. I always took the approach that if I worked hard and did a good job that I would be treated equally.

Q: Whom do you credit as being a pioneer for women in medicine?

A: Every female physician and, more specifically, surgeon who came before me. They blazed the trail so that I may have a profession that I truly love. I would also credit every male physician who had to make a conscious decision to accept a female colleague.

Q: Share your personal formula for balancing family and career.

A: Organization, multitasking and a spouse who does not have a problem with taking on the role that is more traditionally that of a mother. I also make sure I surround myself with quality people whom I can trust.

Q: Speak to the equity or inequity of career *women* versus career *men* when it comes to familial/domestic responsibilities.

A: I am blessed to have never experienced any inequities. My husband and I are a team and whoever has the ability to take on the responsibilities on any given day does so.

Q: One would assume that you must take great care of yourself to meet the physical and mental demands of your profession. How do you manage the trilogy of body, mind and soul with such a rigorous schedule?

A: I try to maintain some sort of exercise schedule and make careful food choices. My husband, Bill, and I spend most of our free time with our children. We all love sports and being outside. Cooking is also an activity the whole family enjoys. Spiritually, I try to have an ongoing conversation with God daily. I ask for guidance often.

Q: Surgical scrubs aside, give us the scoop on your fashion sense and beauty routines. Do you consider yourself high- or low-maintenance when it comes to your personal appearance?

A: I am definitely low-maintenance. Since I have to wear a scrub cap in the operating room, a ponytail is my usual workday hairstyle. Nights and weekends are pretty casual also. A pair of worn jeans and a T-shirt would have to be my favorite.

Q: What one “luxury item” would you take with you were you a contestant on *Survivor*?

A: A journal with pictures of my family taped to the front and a great writing pen.

Q: What personal vice are you proud to say you’ve overcome?

A: Having to always have the last word.

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Dr. Lynn Canavan

Q: Name for us one vice you *wish* you could overcome.

A: My sweet tooth.

Q: What's your most outrageous indulgence?

A: Massages, though I usually only have time for one when I am on vacation.

Q: Share a little-known fact about yourself.

A: I would love to go back in time to high school so I could play second base on my softball team and forward on my field hockey team just one more time.

Q: If, when the curtain is called on your years in medicine, your career were to be whittled to just one detail, what do you hope your professional legacy will be?

A: That I always gave my patients 110 percent.

Q: Leave our readers with your favorite words of wisdom or your life mantra.

A: Most of the problems in our world stem from lack of tolerance for people and groups different from ourselves. If we could all open our minds and be a little more accepting, the world would be a much better place.

For the complete interview, visit www.southernvanity.com



RELAX, SIP, AND ENJOY THE SHOW!

—by Natalie Dyer

UPON ENTERING the timeless **Inwood Theatre**, one is immediately captivated by its historic ambience from the grand lobby to the lighted aquariums along the banister. Though cherished today for its grandeur of yesteryear, the Inwood was once considered

the most modern theatre of its time when it opened to intrigued masses in 1947. While holding true to its structural integrity, progressive enhancements have recently been added throughout the theatre—plush new carpet throughout, renovated restrooms, and digital projection on a 40 percent larger screen. Another perk is the bar is now accessible from the lobby, allowing moviegoers to bring their cocktails into the auditorium to sip while watching the film in the new leather reclining chairs. Without a doubt, the **Inwood Theatre** is committed to pure cinema delight steeped in updated style and comfort. ■

