Dr. Camille Kanaan
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Undergraduate degree: American University of Beirut, Lebanon
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BY NICOLE RUSSELL

It's amazing when one thinks about it: just how many things must go perfectly right in order for a healthy baby to come into the world. Many women are fortunate enough to have healthy, uneventful, full-term pregnancies and deliver their babies with no cause for concern. However, for those with high-risk pregnancies or complications that arise, medical professionals with equal measures of expertise and compassion are often needed. Fortunately, they need only look as far as Albany Medical Center to find one such expert.

Dr. Camille Kanaan, a board-certified practitioner of Obsterics & Gynecology and Maternal & Fetal medicine, has spent a lifetime connected to the practice of medicine. Born and raised in Lebanon, his father was a physician and a professor at the American University of Beirut, from which the younger Dr. Kanaan would ultimately receive his own medical degree. While studying there, his instructors "made positive impressions and took great care" of their student charges, thereby developing and nurturing his passion for medicine.

While completing his residency at McGill University, Dr. Kanaan was heavily influenced by a well-respected mentor he had who practiced in the field of Maternal & Fetal medicine. Her medical skills, coupled with a warm bedside manner, deeply impacted his education as a physician and sparked his interest in that subspecialty.

"She was very smart and took very good care of her patients. She gave me lots of guidance, but also allowed me to have increasing responsibility. I very much enjoyed my training with her."

Dr. Kanaan honed his medical skills over several years, and his training led him from the Middle East to Canada and finally to the United States. When asked to compare how Maternal & Fetal medicine is practiced by doctors in these very different countries, he points out that the knowledge and treatments physicians utilize are actually very similar.

"What we do is the same, but how we do it differs slightly."

While working in Massachusetts, he was recruited by Albany Medical Center. Attracted by the plethora of resources available to physicians there, he joined their staff and has been there for over a decade. Most of his patients are referred to him due to complications with their pregnancy or because of problems with the fetus. Dr. Kanaan specializes in prenatal diagnosis and managing high-risk pregnancies. He has his staff employ a multitude of tests including fetal echocardiograms to diagnose and treat congenital heart defects, fetal blood sampling, and CVS sampling, which identifies potential health problems in the fetus.

He sees two main challenges in his field: "First, taking care of two patients (mother and baby) at the
same time can be difficult. Sometimes what’s good for one isn’t good for the other. It’s tricky balancing the
well-being of both. Second, guiding patients in an age of so much information is challenging. I try to keep
them from being misguided.” Although he does admit that every once in a while it is he who learns some-
thing new from a patient, which underscores his belief that is always imperative to take the time and really
listen to his patients.

Ultimately, what Dr. Kanaan finds most rewarding about Maternal & Fetal medicine is seeing successful
pregnancies come out of problematic situations.

“We try to reach positive outcomes as frequently as possible, even if it isn’t always 100%. Getting there
is the challenge.”

It is that challenge, and his devotion to patient care, that drives him. However, he is quick to attribute
his success as a physician to not only himself, but the support he receives from others (nurses, surgeons,
genetic counselors, ultrasound techs, nurse practitioners and NICU staff, to name a few) as “critical to allow-
ing me to do what I do and do it safely.”

When he is not attending to patients, developing treatment plans, or consulting with his team, Dr.
Kanaan returns to the place that sparked his passion for medicine: the classroom. As a faculty member of
Albany Medical College, it is his turn to inspire and guide the careers of the next generation of doctors.

At the end of a hectic day, he makes his way back to his home in Slingerlands and occasionally indulges
in his hobbies of cooking, traveling and playing tennis. It is apparent that he still misses his wife, the late Dr.
Jeanne Rabin Kanaan (also in the OB/GYN field), who passed away barely two years ago. But he smiles proud-
ly when he speaks of his son and daughter (a future lawyer and a future doctor, respectively).

“The Capital Region is a great place to raise a family,” he said.

This from a man who helps his patients realize their dream of building their own.